



2018:2

Sida Decentralised Evaluation

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# Evaluation of IRC's Humanitarian Programme 2014–2016

Final Report

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**Final Report**  
**November 2017**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
ADAPT	Analysis Driven Agile Programming Techniques
AMU	Awards Management Unit
CAR	Central African Republic
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESPT	European Strategic Partnerships Team
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HQ	Head Quarters
HR	Human Resources
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IHL	International Humanitarian law
IRC	International Rescue Committee (denotes the global organisation)
IRC Inc.	International Rescue Committee based in New York, USA
IRC-UK	International Rescue Committee based in London, UK
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NYC	New York City
OEF	Outcomes and Evidence Framework
ProMMS	Protection Mainstreaming Monitoring System
PSS	Psychosocial Support
RRM	Rapid Response Mechanism
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SCAN	Systematic Cost Analysis
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMT	Senior Management Team
ToR	Terms of Reference
TU	Technical Unit
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion
WPE	Women Protection and Empowerment

# Acknowledgements

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# Executive Summary

This evaluation was conducted on behalf of Sida. It looked at the multi-year Humanitarian Framework Agreement (HFA) established between Sida and the International Rescue Committee – United Kingdom (IRC-UK) for the period of 2014-2016. The evaluation is meant to provide information for Sida in terms of developing a further multi-year agreement with IRC for the period of 2018-2020. Given that this is the third HFA between Sida and IRC, it is also meant to provide recommendations on how the IRC/Sida collaboration could be further strengthened. In this broader sense, the evaluation explored the comparative advantage that IRC provides in terms of helping Sida to realise its humanitarian strategy.

The evaluation was conducted between June and October 2017 by a three-member team. It covered two broad lines of questioning, looking at programmatic support, and progress achieved at the level of institutional and organisational capacity. Data was collected through interviews with Sida and a two-day interview process conducted at the IRC-UK Head-Quarters (HQ) in London; a series of Skype interviews conducted with regionally and globally based IRC personnel and external experts; and two field level case studies conducted in Turkey and Central African Republic (CAR).

## **Programme Support 2014-2016**

This multi-year HFA III comprises four main operational components: humanitarian projects in complex contexts (of which the Turkey and CAR Programs are examples); ‘methods’ support; a learning component; and a Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM); and is supported by a Coordination and Management sub-component led by the Awards Management Unit (AMU) Frameworks Team, which is in charge of the oversight and coordination of these operational components. While this management support is key to effectively implementing, managing and reporting on the HFA and strengthening and developing the relationship with Sida, the operational strength of the HFA is in the holistic value of the four components as a collective. Moreover, as a multi-year construct, the HFA establishes important flexibility, which is further supported by Sida’s understanding of the flexibility necessary to realise the activities articulated in the framework.

As an expression of collaboration between Sida and IRC, the HFA correlates closely with Sida’s strategic intent to support needs-based, principled and coordinated humanitarian response; accountability; learning; and innovation to reach the most vulnerable people in crisis situations to save lives, alleviate suffering and protect their dignity. It is also a reflection of IRC’s 2015-2020 institutional strategy, which commits IRC to engage in some of the worst humanitarian crises; working with the



most vulnerable people to protect their basic rights; while also working to learn how to work more effectively in these difficult circumstances; developing best practices through experience as well as through more rigorous study; and disseminating this learning to others more broadly. Further, due to this approach and their commitment to stay on ground in difficult circumstances, IRC has also become an important source for global level actors including Sida, informing them of the experiences of people living through violence and crisis and the consequent human suffering, as well as advising on action required in such circumstances.

While IRC's 2020 strategy aligns very well with Sida's humanitarian objectives and strategy, the HFA III frames the collaboration required to better meet the humanitarian needs of crisis affected populations in some of the worst and/or forgotten humanitarian crises. It emphasises supporting some of the most vulnerable women and girls in these localities by increasing the level of protection needed to enable them to survive and thrive. Included in this, is the aim of enhancing IRC's capacity to be more responsive to acute on-set crises and unexpected acute needs of populations of concern (e.g.: through a RRM); and to support IRC to continue to build the evidence-basis for best practices as learned through evaluations and action research; and disseminate these lessons learned.

In studying these elements, the evaluation has shown that there are indeed very important synergies between Sida and IRC and that the design of the HFA III and the coherence between the four components has created a process that has generated results that are more than that which the individual elements would likely generate independently. Critical to this is the fact that the agreement is multi-annual and is designed with 'flexibility' in mind. The 'methods support' has enabled the development and roll-out of the ADAPT initiative,<sup>1</sup> which presents a fundamentally different conceptual framework upon which humanitarian programming could be constructed in order to make use of this flexibility.<sup>2</sup> Building on a Conflict Sensitive Analysis tool kit that equips an operational team to gain a nuanced insight into a number of complex factors influencing a crisis context including the drivers of conflict, social networks, and power dynamics, the approach calls for programming commitments that are fixed at the level of outcomes, but allow for significant flexibility at the level of in-puts, activities and out-puts, as well as geography and intervention logic in terms of 'theory of change', allowing the responder to adapt, in

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<sup>1</sup> ADAPT stands for: Analysis Driven Agile Programming Techniques. While Sida has support the development of this initiative and its piloting in some countries, has been applied more widely as well.

<sup>2</sup> As opposed to the more traditional 'log-frame', which assumes a linear unfolding of events and a static nature of crises and is often under-pinned with simplistic and thus unrealistic assumptions. Projects conceived on such unrealistic grounding are often profoundly hampered when reality unfolds in its complex and non-linear manner. Projects can completely fail as a result.

real time, to the dynamic realities of acute crisis contexts and the shifting needs of the affected populations.

Important impact in relation to the project objectives has been achieved with some of the most vulnerable people within the crisis-affected populations during this implementation period.<sup>3</sup> Especially in support of women and girls at risk, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) programming has included health care and psychosocial support, which is repeatedly appreciated as critical support that without IRC's presence, would reportedly be largely unavailable. Taking this to a deeper level, individuals made vulnerable due to their protection issues have also been confidentially integrated into economic recovery programs. CASH Programming has been used in both Turkey and in CAR to support beneficiaries to meet immediate needs and build income-generating capacity. In CAR women have been supported through training and resource in-puts, to create revolving funds together. Building upon this, participating individuals report being able to generate independent economic endeavours including growing saleable produce; selling cooked food products and other consumables. One woman was making a viable living from oil and soap-making, reportedly thus being able to send her four children to school. Resilience has reportedly been measurably enhanced in these cases, with especially female beneficiary respondents reporting a solid confidence in the sustainability of their newly gained independent economic capacity and thus their individual capacity to ensure their household level food security, pay school related fees and even support others facing urgent need with temporary loans. Community-level awareness on protection risk avoidance has grown, and children and youth have been actively drawn into such processes. Indeed, important results stem from the integration of protection into all sector activities undertaken.

However, the IRC approach seeks also to draw attention to 'how' humanitarian action is done. Rather than simply focusing on sector specific technical activities, IRC has developed and promoted a range of initiatives that draw the focus of engagement deeper into social dynamics, tackling issues related to influence and power dynamics, social cohesion, and other social processes as a means of better ensuring the well-being of the most vulnerable individuals. Sida's 'methods support' has been critical in this. For example, both 'Protection Mainstreaming' and the 'Client Responsiveness' aim at this. Implicitly, such initiatives have their greatest operational relevance at the point of interface with the beneficiary population. To ensure they deliver on their

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<sup>3</sup> This evaluation included field visits to both CAR & Turkey. However, while the Turkey visit was not intended to include direct engagement with beneficiaries, the loss due to unforeseen circumstance (explained in the Constraints section) of much of the data collected during the visit has resulted in much of the project-related observations and analysis being based on findings collected in CAR. Details relating to Turkey are included to the extent feasible.

promise to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people at risk, they must not remain as ideas, but must be operationalised at the deep operational level. However, as these deep field teams are typically the least informed on the details of these initiatives, this is currently the most difficult aspect in executing the complex and nuanced approach IRC is developing.<sup>4</sup>

The regional and global level technical support available to operating teams is repeatedly identified by country management and coordination teams as one of the unique strengths of IRC. While this exceptional support is readily available and utilised at the capital level, it has proven difficult to ensure it penetrates to this deep field level due to the persistent problems of access, insecurity, staff turn-over, inadequate resources, etc.<sup>5</sup> Further, IRC's initiatives draw on skills that are different than those of technical programming. They typically highlight complex social processes. They also require decentralised critical thinking and decision-making among the deep field teams who carry out the final stages of the 'translation' of these initiatives from their idea form into concrete activities.

This reiterates the fact that there are no easy means of ensuring effective humanitarian response in acute crisis contexts. IRC is not the first organisation to try to tackle these challenges. There are numerous frameworks that re-articulate the principles for engaging at this deeper level of 'how' humanitarian action should be done.<sup>6</sup> However, the humanitarian community has long struggled to translate these concepts into concrete action. In this sense, rather than being 'innovative', IRC's approach is notable for the tenacity with which it holds the spotlight on these most difficult contexts and commits to sticking with these challenges. This requires resources that can be utilised in a flexible manner. It also requires an institutional tolerance for 'failure', not in the least due to these difficulties in translating these ideas at the deep field level. Thus, while IRC is making strides in developing their operational expertise in these difficult humanitarian contexts, there is still a lot of work to be done. In this sense the RRM, through which Sida provides pre-positioned resources, has enabled IRC to operationalise a further dimension of their emergency response capacity, responding in a rapid manner with reach and scale proportional to the needs of the affected population.

Further, in efforts to capture the learning along the way, Sida has supported IRC's investment in a 'learning' dimension, which includes more rigorous study of the

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<sup>4</sup> This observation varies significantly from one context to the next and more specifically from one initiative to the next, however the challenge of supporting the deep field to the greatest extent is a persistent challenge.

<sup>5</sup> Although these challenges are recognised in Turkey, they are especially evident in CAR.

<sup>6</sup> These same principles are itemised in the NGO Code of conduct and more recently in the Core Humanitarian Standard, among others.

cause and effect implications of the different approaches adopted. This creates the necessary space for intensive questioning, while building the evidence-basis for the different aspects of the approach articulated in the HFA. However, in this case, generating evidence is useful to the extent it is applied, thus *execution* needs to remain the priority.

This research has also fed into IRC's role in terms of influencing policy advocacy as well as best-practices within the humanitarian sector. Insights drawn from the deep field level within some of the harshest humanitarian crises equip IRC to play an important role as 'advisor' in the Policy realm, with political actors drawing on this field-level expertise, as well as their reputation as a 'thinking' agency to get contextual and humanitarian information, as well as analytic insight on high-level policy issues concerning humanitarian action, better protection of the rights of people at risk, and so on.

This illustrates that the IRC is evolving on many fronts. The design of the HFA III has supported progress on these multiple lines. Although there are currently many moving parts, this web of exploration, learning and development is critical to ensure that IRC does learn how better to work effectively in the most critical humanitarian contexts. Important impact has been achieved in terms of health care, protection, enhanced economic capacity and the building of resilience, especially through integrating protection into other sector activities. Initiatives and tools have evolved and are being rolled-out. However, this is a work in progress.

IRC's capacity has been enhanced during the 2014-16 timeframe. But the deeper challenges inherent to responding to the most challenging humanitarian crises persist. As a thinking agency seeking to push efforts to improve humanitarian response in such operating contexts forward, IRC is an important partner for Sida. As such, this evaluation recommends continued collaboration, building further on the synergies between Sida and IRC. It is recommended that this collaboration be progressed to the next level, in terms of ensuring adequate flexibility in the funding arrangements to enable the adaptive and responsive programming that IRC is seeking to develop.

This should entail a multi-year Framework Agreement that combines both project and programme funding as a transitional step,<sup>7</sup> evolving towards a more comprehensive

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<sup>7</sup> In this case, 'project' funding refers to funding that is tied to more tightly defined commitments that are fixed at the level of inputs, activities, and outputs to be undertaken in relation to a given problematic in a given context. Being fixed at a relatively more detailed level, such 'projects' are relatively less flexible or adaptable and as such are most applicable in relatively stable humanitarian contexts. In contrast, 'programme' funding refers to funding that is tied to commitments made at the level of 'Outcomes'. The Programme Approach, generally undertaken over a longer period of time, is by definition, less strictly defined and bounded. Being more flexible at the level of in-puts,

Programme Approach that fixes commitments at the level of Outcomes, but allows for substantial flexibility in terms of use of available funds, geographic focus, and inputs, activities and out-puts as well as intervention logic in terms of the ‘theory of change’. While a Programme Approach would provide less structure, the 2020 IRC strategy, the Outcomes and Evidence Framework, and the country level Strategic Action Plans (and in some cases such as CAR, the Emergency Preparedness Plans) provide the clarity, focus and structure required. The following section illustrates important strides made in terms of organisational capacity to support this.

### **Progress in IRC organisational capacity**

The entire IRC organisation has experienced a significant growth over the past years, almost doubling the IRC global income from 2012 to 2016 and IRC-UK has had a similar trend providing approximately 27% of the global income (FY2016). The organisation has grown organically during this time; in July 2013 IRC-UK had a staff of 38 people and in July 2017 the number of staff was 95. The entire IRC organisation grew from approximately 8.000 people to 10.000 during the same time.

Essentially, there were two main changes initiated in the evaluation period namely changes in the Senior Management Teams in both the US and the UK and the formation of the Awards Management Unit (AMU).

In IRC-UK, a new Europe Senior Management of 11 members was created to reflect the operations in Europe and at the same time a new concept was formed, the IRC Europe.<sup>8</sup> In IRC Inc., two management teams were created; one Senior Leadership Board (of nine members), which consists of all the Senior Vice Presidents and some other officers such as CFO and a General Counsel and a Senior Leaders Group (36 members) with a wider group of Directors and essential managers including regional directors and IRC-UK directors.

The impact of the leadership team changes has improved communication, information being cascaded to teams on more local levels, improved coordination between IRC Inc. and IRC-UK, and the organisation became tighter globally.

A major change in the operation was the restructuring of grants and programme management, which was previously divided between New York and London in the

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activities, and out-puts, it allows for far greater flexibility and adaptation vis-à-vis a shifting context and changing needs of at-risk populations, thus necessitating flexibility at the level of in-puts, activities, and outputs; geographic focus; and beneficiaries targeted.

<sup>8</sup> A recent comment from IRC-UK have indicated that the European Senior Management as described by the former Executive Director and presented at the IRC-UK website is not implemented as a formal team.

International Programmes Team (IPT). This set-up was identified in the previous assessment as being one of the causes of inefficiencies and creating tension between decentralisation and demand for control. The new unit was established which includes staff from both organisations working together, sharing information in an AMU. After some stumbling steps in the beginning attempting to get this unit off the ground it is now progressing fast and while still in its development phase with vacancies to fill there is a positive feeling in the unit and also in the field where communication lines appear clearer.

The objective of the AMU is to coordinate and facilitate the Grant lifecycle from identifying opportunities to close of programmes by using well-defined processes and systems for transparent information for grants oversight, donor compliance, and organisational decision-making. Though it is a bit premature to assess the effects on this reorganisation feedback indicates that the changes so far are positive. The expected impact of this change is greater accountability, reduced number of layers between the field and the grants management, more streamlined processing, standardisation to achieve better quality, being systematic and process oriented.

In preparation for improving the communication between the field and the home offices a major investment has been made in the IT-infrastructure and connectivity in the field to streamline the work globally. The need for this and the preparations were recognised in the 2013 assessment and the upgrading of the infrastructure will enable systems development that will enhance the capacity of IRC. The financial management system is going to be replaced with a modern ERP integrated with a supply chain system, which will improve productivity and real-time information. Budget analysis and follow-up systems have been improved but will benefit further from this improvement.

The anti-corruption policies and guidelines are still fragmented in as much as different policies contain specific areas of possible fraud and violation. The main document is the IRC Way that sets the “framework for IRC staff conduct and the organisation’s expectations” for the IRC staff while several other important documents detail specific areas of corruption and ethical misbehaviour. Though further detailing of the ethical threshold and inclusion of a whistle-blowing mechanism has taken place, the weakness still remain of a single anti-corruption policy document where more complete information is available on what constitutes corruption and the implications thereof. The IRC Way is under revision and will bring together standards of conduct and anti-corruption policies.

The procurement manual is being revised to become more process oriented with an overview complemented with standard operating procedures having clear procedures and templates. The systems are regarded as solid and “heavy” but also regarded as well developed, clear and transparent by users.



The IRC has been and still is rigorous with auditing requirements both when it comes to internal as well as external auditing. The auditing instructions are clear and the donor requirements are captured during the grant opening meeting and communicated to the concerned field offices. The procedure to capture the recommendations or issues and creating an action plan is clear. The follow-up of the action plan is a decentralised responsibility and it appears that there are different approaches to ensure that the points in the action plan actually are taken care of, and information from the field confirms this. With the increased emphasis of forming local partnerships this will also be strengthened in the partnership management system (SPMS).

Accountability and compliance focus is a trait in the organisation recognised already in the previous assessment. Quality assurance takes place in many different areas depending on what needs to be checked. The Global Supply Chain QA team reviews contracts and procedures in the procurement area. Quality assurance in compliance with grant management is done in the AMU, primarily by the Frameworks Team in collaboration with the AMU Policy and Compliance Unit. By consolidating and restructuring the international programmes into AMU, which is where the Frameworks Team sits, the quality assurance is further strengthened as all reporting comes directly to the post-award unit, which is responsible to follow up the implementation and producing reports to the donor.

Partner management and sub-granting is a major effort of IRC to move towards the Grand Bargain and align itself to the partnership principles and agenda. The development of the Sub-Award Partnership Management System (SPMS) is a step in that direction by developing a system of policies and guidelines for changing the way IRC has approached partnering in the past. However, the SPMS is still under development and has only been field tested in a few countries. It is planned to be rolled-out in the field in October 2017. The SPMS is expected to enhance IRC's capacity to build long-lasting partnerships in the countries it operates in and to work with capacity building of organisations and authorities to build national and local capacities to meet humanitarian needs.

The Board Audit and Governance Committee together with the Risk Management Group in IRC-UK are responsible for risk management. The review of risks both internally and internationally is using a risk management framework that identifies several prioritised risks, evaluates the likelihood, and level of impact.

Diverse donor funding was identified as a challenge for IRC-UK as the dependency on DFID has been significant in the past and has grown to be bigger over the last years consisting now of more than 60%. Donor diversification is a top priority and the strategies for this include strengthening the cooperation with major European international donors, implementing a private sector funding campaign and branding of IRC in Europe. The fundraising department, which is responsible for the private

sector has been strengthened over the past years and an ambitious strategy, has been developed.

In summary, the evaluation concludes that several organisational changes in IRC have had a positive impact on its capacity and on efficiency and effectiveness. The restructuring of AMU will, when fully implemented, and this will also add to the capacity of IRC-UK to handle more European grants.

The reassessment of certain issues from the 2013 assessment reveals that the capacity of IRC is still strong; some of the weaker scoring in the 2013 report was mainly due to structural reasons between IRC-UK as the contractual partner to Sida and IRC Inc. being the implementing part of IRC. Considering the changes that have been implemented in previously weak areas it can be concluded that the previous assessment is still valid. The IRC could be therefore be considered for another framework agreement and with the anticipated strengthening of the organisation also be able to implement programme support.<sup>9</sup>

## Recommendations

### For Sida

- Continue to collaborate with IRC through multi-annual arrangements
- Continue to support the four operational components of the HFA and its coordination & management sub-component
- Incorporate both a Programme & Project Approach to funding of the next multi-year HFA with the intent to evolve to a more comprehensive Programme Approach assuming the evidence gained through piloting of the Programme Approach supports this migration
- Support IRC to explore the applicability of ADAPT as a framework that allows for greater fluidity between emergency scale-ups, on-going humanitarian action and more developmental activities in contexts like CAR
- Consider supporting the development and roll-out of the Sub-award partnership management system in light of the Grand Bargain Commitments
- Seek to more proactively capitalise on synergies with IRC by engaging in dialogue with a wider multi-disciplinary team of stakeholders, also including Sida geographic and thematic leads.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The anticipated strengthening is outlined later in the report and involves the AMU, the SPMS, the ERP system, the Global Supply Chain system, the BvA and others.

<sup>10</sup> The linking of IRC with conflict and peace building initiatives within Sida is a good example of this. It is noted that this is a wider recommendation for Sida, applicable to most of their humanitarian partners



**For IRC**

- Be more daring in terms of taking the lead and testing the boundaries of their collaboration with Sida
- Continue to improve efforts to spotlight critical humanitarian crises
- Continue to improve efforts to tackle these most difficult operating contexts to both make an impact and to develop the evidence-basis for influencing how these contexts are addressed
- Finalise the implementation of the Sub-Award Partnership Management System and employ partnership-building experts at the country level
- Establish a balance between efforts to progress the rigorous research, while ensuring that this learning is applied at the deepest levels of operations restructuring
- Ensure adequate unrestricted funds to bridge funding gaps
- Establish a more realistic balance between the intent to influence externally and build internal capacity.
- Continue to move forward with a continuous development process of the AMU
- Continue diligently with the implementation of the ERP system
- Establish a more consolidated Anti-corruption policy in the revision of the new IRC Way.

# 1 Introduction

This evaluation has been conducted on behalf of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Sida has cooperated together with the International Rescue Committee – United Kingdom (IRC-UK) since 2008. This evaluation reviews the Sida Humanitarian Framework Agreement (HFA III) with IRC-UK in the period 2014-16.

The evaluation followed two distinct lines of exploration, focusing on the programmatic support, asking how well IRC has performed in relation to the programme vision and objectives; and examining IRC's organisational capacity, asking how much progress has been gained since a full organisational assessment was conducted on behalf of Sida in 2013.

Conducted in June-August 2017, the evaluation comprised of three primary data collection means: i) a series of face-to-face interviews conducted with Sida and in IRC-UK Head Quarters (HQ) in London; ii) a series of Skype interviews conducted with IRC regional and New York-based personnel, and other global level experts; and iii) 'case-study' field visits to Turkey as an indication of IRC's response to the Syrian crisis) and to Central African Republic (CAR) as an indication of response in a forgotten crisis. Both macro and micro level data, observations and insights were analysed in relation to a set of questions that were established in Sida's Terms of Reference (ToR) and in the evaluation inception report.<sup>11</sup> Quality assurance was provided by a senior external evaluator providing advice and comments throughout the evaluation process.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> These documents are available in Annex 1 & 2.

<sup>12</sup> This evaluator reviewed the findings of the evaluation and the overall logic and consistency of the first draft of the report, providing feedback prior to its submission to Sida.

## 2 Background

IRC-UK is one of Sida's humanitarian partner organisations. Cooperating together since 2008, they established a Humanitarian Framework Agreement (HFA) together in 2011, which comprised multi-annual support designed to cover a number of humanitarian interventions in a number of contexts; 'methods support'; and support in relation to Sida's Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). This HFA I was implemented in 2011-2013. The HFA II was implemented during 2013-14. Established in 2014 and implemented during 2014-2016 (with an extension for 2017), it is the HFA III that is under review in this evaluation, specifically the operational period of 2014-2016.

IRC is very appreciative of Sida's willingness to engage in these earlier multi-year frameworks, reporting that they have enabled a steadier planning horizon and more continuous work in some of the most difficult humanitarian contexts, including Central African Republic (CAR), the Sahel Region, Nigeria, Cameroon, Yemen, and the Ebola response in Sierra Leone and Liberia, along with the Syrian crisis. Sida is recognised by IRC as a leading actor in relation to the pre-positioned and non-earmarked contributions through the RRM, underlining that this support has been critical to enabling IRC to develop and implement their Emergency Response programme as a critical dimension of their overall strategy. This combined with Sida's 'methods support' has underpinned IRC's tenacious approach to learning how to work more effectively in some of the most difficult humanitarian contexts in the world and their will to disseminate this learning to the wider humanitarian community. IRC's will and ability to remain present and active in these critical humanitarian contexts has resulted in their garnering unique insights, which they have used at all levels to influence both practice and policy. In this line, IRC-UK has especially been able to keep Sida informed on the crises within which they are active, as well as advising on specific policy issues from their operational humanitarian perspective.<sup>13</sup> The HFA III was designed to build further on successes gained in the earlier HFAs, as this continues to be an important 'work in progress'.

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<sup>13</sup> For example, having developed a notable expertise in the protection of women and girls in crisis, IRC has been active in supporting the high-level 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies', which as a multi-stakeholder initiative, aimed at transforming the way gender-based violence (GBV) is addressed in humanitarian emergencies. The Swedish Government assumed the chair of this initiative from the US in 2015.

IRC-UK is an integral part of IRC-Inc., which is head-quartered in New York. However, IRC in the field is an integrated entity, thus making it very difficult to differentiate specific contributions from IRC-UK at the operational level. Operationally, IRC's humanitarian action is structured around their 2015-2020 Strategy. This strategy defines IRC's target populations as including refugees, but also host populations and those who remain or are trapped in the crisis areas from which the refugees originate. It also states that IRC aims to work in some of the 'toughest places in the world', prioritising so-called 'crisis-places' in countries that are experiencing acute violence and extreme poverty. In this, they claim 'a high-risk appetite to programme in remote and hostile places'.

This aligned extremely well with Sida's 2011-2014 humanitarian strategy.<sup>14</sup> To contribute to saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity for people affected by crises, Sida was committed to:

- Needs-based, principled and coordinated humanitarian response
- Partnerships, professional and flexible financing
- Accountability, learning, quality and innovation

With the same broad objective, the 2017-20 strategy similarly commits Sida to contribute to:<sup>15</sup>

- Needs-based, fast and effective humanitarian response in a similar sense as described above
- Increased protection for people affected by crises and increased respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles
- Increased influence for people affected by crises
- Greater capacity and efficiency in the humanitarian system

With the broad aim of 'helping people to survive, recover and gain control of their future', IRC's efforts align very closely with Sida's humanitarian objectives. As such, there is a strong incentive for collaboration. Thematically, IRC prioritises: safety (in the sense of protection from physical, sexual, and psychological harm); health; education (in the sense of literacy and numeracy, and life as well as foundational and vocational skills); income generating; and power (in the sense of supporting people at risk to have better influence over decisions that impact on their lives). Moreover, through the IRC 2015-2020 strategy,<sup>16</sup> they commit to developing a deep knowledge of what works in the humanitarian field, with a specific resolve to adapt this to local

<sup>14</sup> See: Strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid provided through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) 2011-2014 which was extended into 2016. More details are provided in Annex 5.

<sup>15</sup> See: Strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid provided through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) 2017-2020. More details are provided in Annex 5.

<sup>16</sup> See: IRC Strategy 2015-2020 Part 1: Mission, Vision & Objectives and Supporting Infrastructure (pp.3-7)

contexts of extremely difficult humanitarian contexts. Embedded within this, is the intent to create the institutional space and attitude to ‘experiment and fail in order to learn’. Putting this experience and learning to use in a broader sense, IRC also seeks to take a lead role in the humanitarian field, pro-actively disseminating what they see as best practice, as well as influencing policy and practice at all levels. These strategic elements are also very apparent in the programming approach articulated in the HFA III.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.1 EVALUATION OBJECT AND SCOPE

This evaluation seeks to study IRC’s performance in relation to the HFA III that was supported by Sida during the period of 2014-2016 for a total of 284 000 000 Swedish Kroner.<sup>18</sup> The evaluation has two parts. One focuses on the programmatic support provided during this time frame, exploring the extent to which the operational vision is realised. As such, it draws a comparison between the programme vision as presented in the HFA III and by Sida and IRC-UK HQ personnel with the on-ground realities as observed in the two case studies of Turkey and CAR. The second aspect of the study is concerned with progress that has been made at the level of organisation capacity, with a comparison being made to an Organisational Assessment of IRC, which was done on behalf of Sida in 2013.<sup>19</sup>

Building on IRC’s commitment to ‘innovative programming in volatile contexts’, the HFA III is supported by the AMU Frameworks Team which leads the coordination and management sub-component which oversees and ensures its effective management.

The HFA III is structured around 4 operational components:

- *humanitarian action in complex contexts including:*
  - Chad / Mali / Niger (with programming aimed at reducing vulnerability and building resilience for communities in the Sahel); Central African Republic (CAR) (as an example of a ‘forgotten crisis’, with programming aimed at improving protection mechanisms and economic opportunities for communities in Nana Gribizi prefecture); and Iraq / Lebanon (with programming aimed at enhancing protection of refugee women and girls in

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<sup>17</sup> See: ‘Fragile or Forgotten – Saving lives in complex emergencies’, prepared and submitted IRC-UK, March 2014; and the updated application by the same name, prepared and submitted by IRC-UK, March 2016.

<sup>18</sup> See ToR in Annex 1

<sup>19</sup> Please see: Organisational Assessments of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in view of possible qualification as Sida’s framework and/or strategic partner organisations, International Rescue Committee, Final Report, 27 September 2013, SIPU International.

urban settings as relates to the Syrian crisis and its impact on neighbouring countries)

- *a thematic or methods focus including:*
  - Protection Mainstreaming: and the broadening of its evidence base and enhancing IRC's lead role, advocating at both global and local levels for the centrality of the fundamental principles of improved access, safety and dignity in all humanitarian action. However, the aim to promote 'innovative programming' in these difficult operating environments is also constructed upon the development and dissemination of '*ADAPT*'<sup>20</sup>; *conflict sensitive analysis* tools; 'Client Responsiveness' and other initiatives developed and supported by IRC-UK
- *a learning component:*
  - Which supports a commitment to evidence-based action. This 'evidence' is expected to be amassed through existing methods (such as programme evaluations, analysis and review) that are to be injected with a more systematic effort to capture and draw out lessons learned through on-going operational experience, all of which is then intended to be corroborated through more rigorous *action research*. This overall learning process is designed to support both the evolution of the various thematic initiatives, but also deepen the humanitarian understanding of these complex contexts and the needs and interests of the affected populations.
- *a Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM):*
  - In line with their commitment to increase the scale, speed and reach of their response to acute crises, the RRM component that entails pre-allocated funds, pre-positioned resources, stand-by technical expertise creating a holistic emergency response system is designed to better enable IRC to reach crisis/disaster affected populations within the first critical hours.

These four operational components of the HFA III collectively contribute to IRC's capacity for responsive programming.<sup>21</sup> As such, they were studied by the evaluation team through document review, through dialogue with IRC-UK HQ respondents;<sup>22</sup> and through field visits to CAR and Turkey.<sup>23</sup> This programmatic aspect of the evaluation was conducted simultaneously with the review of the organisational capacity that exists to support such programming.

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20 ADAPT stands for: Analysis Driven Agile Programming Techniques

21 Responsive programming is described by IRC as the ability to adapt and adjust their interventions in 'real time' to the rapidly shifting realities of fragile and difficult humanitarian contexts in order to mitigate the consequences for at-risk populations within these contexts, while preserving and/or building their capacity to better cope with, overcome and move beyond these consequences.

22 And other technical experts located at the regional and global levels who are largely the architects and technical advisors supporting the IRC programming approach and the evolution of the various specialised initiatives.

23 Please see brief sketches of these two contexts in the annex.

The review of the organisational capacity was done in relation to a 2013 organisational assessment that was conducted on the IRC-UK as an applicant to qualify as a Strategic Partner of Sida. The assessment model applied was based on a set of criteria corresponding to the Sida appropriation “Support via Humanitarian Assistance”. The assessment included 46 criteria under four different sections:

- the degree to which the organisation is representative, independent and has well-anchored operations;
- the existence, effectiveness & compliance to the organisation’s internal management & control systems;
- the organisation’s capacity & skills to achieve and report relevant results towards the strategy; and
- the organisation’s capacity & skills to undertake policy and methodological work

While IRC scored well, the main weaknesses were found in the areas related to structural reasons that stem from the nature of IRC-UK’s relationship with IRC-Inc. Since the previous assessment, changes have taken place inside the IRC network and initiatives may have changed the previous evaluation. The scope is to not to repeat the previous organisational assessment but to review the areas where changes have occurred during 2014-2016.

## 3 Purpose

This is an evaluation of IRC's performance in relation to the objectives articulated in the Sida-funded HFA III that was implemented in 2014-2016. The purpose of the evaluation is to inform Sida about IRC-UK's implementation of their programme and its capacity as an organisation. This will inform Sida's decisions regarding future multi-year collaboration, as well as how this collaboration could be strengthened. Moreover, as the evaluation examines some of IRC's strengths and weaknesses, it also provides feedback to IRC on its performance as well.

### 3.1 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

As stated, this evaluation was divided into two lines of questioning. The original ToR detailed a number of questions to be explored in each aspect. These were rationalised in the inception report and the summary of the questions addressed in each section are presented in brief here.<sup>24</sup>

#### 3.1.1 Evaluation Questions Regarding Programme<sup>25</sup> Support Provided

The 'programme support' aspect of this evaluation aimed to study the extent to which the programme vision and objectives, as articulated both in the HFA III and by the IRC-UK HQ programme and technical experts, has been achieved at the ground level and is making a difference in the lives of the people the IRC response is meant to serve. Woven within that broader questioning, is the more technical question of the relevance, efficiency and impact of the various initiatives and tools that have been developed to better enable IRC to be responsive in the complex humanitarian context which it commits to. The questions considered are summarised as follows:

- Considering the following sub-questions, what evidence is there of any comparative advantage that IRC offers Sida?
  - How well has IRC performed, using the cases of CAR and Turkey, to deliver appropriate assistance effectively and efficiently to the affected population, taking into consideration gender and vulnerability?
  - What impact have the interventions in CAR and Turkey had, to the extent that it is possible to estimate this?

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<sup>24</sup> Further details of the questions explored in this evaluation are discussed in both Sida's ToR and the inception report. These are available in annexes 1 & 2.

<sup>25</sup> In this case, the term 'programme' refers to the HFA III programme



- To what extent have the tools that IRC uses to support Protection, Cash, Accountability, Outcome and Evidence, and Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) been applied in practice?
- To what extent have IRC's innovative tools contributed to IRC's performance globally?
- To what extent has IRC's use of the Rapid Response Mechanism contributed to Sida's ability to achieve its strategic objectives to reach people in acute distress?
- To what extent is IRC poised to migrate to a programme approach for the framework with Sida?

#### **3.1.2 Evaluation Questions Regarding Progress of IRC's Organisational Capacity**

The 'organisational capacity' aspect of the evaluation was designed to gain insight into the progress made in IRC's organisational capacity as a means of informing Sida about IRC's capacity as a partner moving forward. The questions responded to in this section are summarised as follows:

- How has IRC's institution capacity developed? Specifically:
  - What impact has changes in IRC's management and organisation, financial management, anti-corruptions policy, and procurement guidelines had on IRC's effectiveness and efficiency?
  - To what extent has IRC addressed issues identified in the previous evaluation, namely systematic audit follow-up, quality assurance, sub-granting, administration fee, and risk management?

## 4 Methodology

A detailed explanation of the methodology applied in this evaluation is available in the Inception report, which is provided in Annex 2. The primary sources of data included: document review; key-informant & expert interviews at the global and country level and focus group discussions at the field level; and direct observation. Collection of primary data was largely conducted through various forms of interviews and discussion sessions,<sup>26</sup> comprising three broad tranches:

- 1) *Face-to-face interviews with key actors in the Sida & IRC-UK Head-quarters (HQ) in London:*  
Sida Head Quarters was visited June 12-13. A series of interviews were also conducted by the three-member evaluation team in the IRC-UK London office with a number of senior managers; programmatic personnel (including the team managing the HFA); and technical experts on June 28-29, 2017. A total of 19 interviews were conducted.
- 2) *Skype interviews with a broader range of participants:*  
A series of Skype interviews were conducted in July and August with specifically selected thematic experts; regional and globally responsible (i.e.: from IRC-Inc) programme and technical personnel; and various external experts including OCHA, UNHCR and other protection experts, as well as various individuals within the London humanitarian network. A total of 18 Skype interviews were conducted.
- 3) *A case-study approach comprised field trips to operational sites in both Turkey and Central African Republic<sup>27</sup> between July 15-26, 2017.*  
The plan was to collect field-level data through document review; direct observation; interviews and focus group discussions with especially the local IRC team, and local key informants. Interviews were to be conducted with international and national IRC staff; individuals from other INGOs, the UN and the donor community; local experts and authorities; and direct and indirect

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<sup>26</sup> A list of interviews undertaken is provided in the Annex.

<sup>27</sup> While a part of this evaluation was conducted in the capital Bangui, it also included a visit between July 19-22 to Dékoa in Le Kémo prefecture in the north central zone of CAR, where IRC conducts some of its Sida funded activities. The 'parent' field office of the Sida Programme is Kaga Bandoro, in Nana-Grébizi prefecture (slightly north of Dékoa). This had been intended as the site to visit, however due to a recent attack on their compound by armed men, the IRC team was evacuated from Kaga Banderero during the evaluation visit.

beneficiaries in the case of CAR and local partners in the case of Turkey.<sup>28</sup> The evaluators were also to attend ad hoc meetings (e.g.: technical, coordination, security, etc) as feasible and relevant. While some 46 interviews were conducted in CAR with this planned diversity of participants, details regarding the process in Turkey were lost due to the evaluator suddenly falling ill directly following the visit. No data was recovered from that visit. However, broad-stroked findings were captured and incorporated into the report as a result of a series of Skype calls with centrally placed key informants from within the IRC programme.

## 4.1 TARGETING & SELECTION

For the most part, respondents in this evaluation were purposefully selected, with most being selected as individuals well positioned to provide the information being sought, whether they were technical experts, programming experts, local partners or direct and indirect beneficiaries (who were taken as experts on their lived experiences of both being affected by crisis, as well as being participants in a humanitarian programme). Although time to discuss with direct beneficiaries was limited a total of some 50 individuals were met with in CAR, primarily in focus group and small group discussions. With an age and gender diversity being sought, some 60% were female, with representatives of the elder, child and youth populations also included in the evaluation process.<sup>29</sup> As indicated above, the details of the data collection process were unavailable for the field visit to Turkey.

## 4.2 CONSTRAINTS

Although this evaluation is meant to examine the performance of IRC-UK, IRC-UK is an integral component of the larger IRC entity. Throughout the evaluation this distinction was often difficult to draw, with interviews being conducted in London-HQ, as well as with respondents based in IRC-Inc. (New York) and other IRC Offices, as well as at the field level in CAR and Turkey. Further, much of the document review was based on documents provided by and relating to both IRC-UK and IRC-Inc. Especially at the field level, IRC exists as one integrated entity.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, it was often the case that expatriate respondents in the field did not know where some of the individuals providing them virtual technical support are located and/or to which aspect of IRC they are connected. This is further compounded by the

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<sup>28</sup> Due to the remote nature of cross-border programming in Syria, the evaluator was not planned to meet or speak with IRC or partner staff located in Syria, or with beneficiaries, local authorities, etc (i.e. the deep field). Staff, partner, and stakeholder meetings were to be conducted in Turkey at the management and coordination level.

<sup>29</sup> For example, a group of demobilised youth who were receiving skills training engaged in focus group discussions; while two child friendly spaces were visited with some 40 children each.

<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that this 'merging' is seen as a positive result within the institution as a whole, which has consciously worked to avoid the risk of fragmentation that could easily result given its global structure.

fact that in some cases, Sida funding is combined with that of other donors.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the IRC system is vastly decentralised, implying that methodological developments, innovative endeavours and information more generally flows in multiple directions simultaneously. Given the complexity of the organisation, the holistic effort was considered as opposed to singling out IRC-UK's role and contribution. In this light, despite the large number of documents assessed, and a fair number of interviews undertaken, this assessment cannot claim to be comprehensive.

Given the intention to study the extent to which IRC-UK's vision unfolds at the national and sub-national levels in the operational contexts, a large proportion of the respondents were internal to IRC, with distinctions made between IRC-UK, IRC-Inc. (i.e.: macro), the IRC Country Management/Coordination Team (meso); and the Deep Field Teams and implementing partners (micro). While external actors were interviewed at the deep field level (e.g.: including local authorities, partners and direct and indirect beneficiaries in CAR), along with other members of the international community accessed at the meso and macro levels, it remains that the findings presented in this report largely reflect the views of various IRC respondents and IRC documents reviewed which reduces the opportunity for triangulation.

Access and freedom of movement during the field visits were constrained due to insecurity. In CAR, insecurity prevented the evaluator from visiting the main operational site, Kaga Bandero, from which the Sida funded activities are coordinated. The site had been evacuated a week prior to the field visit due to an armed attack on the IRC Compound, thus a sub-office was visited. Further, due to the remote nature of cross-border programming in Syria, the evaluator did not expect to meet IRC or partner staff located in Syria (i.e.: the deep field), nor local authorities or direct beneficiaries of these operational efforts. All interviews were to be undertaken in Turkey, focusing largely on issues of management and coordination. This limited the degree to which beneficiary insights could be folded into the evaluation analysis.

Given the time constraints, the IRC team recommended key informants including both international community at the capital level and local authorities at the local level. They also provided translators, with the individual in CAR being a member of the IRC team. While greatly appreciated in pragmatic terms, these factors together generate constraints in terms of rigor, introducing potential biases. However, as the evaluation emphasises the internal workings of IRC more so than the impact achieved

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<sup>31</sup> For example, in the case of 'methods support', while Sida had funded some aspects, others are funded by others. While Sida funds IRC's engagement with Protection Mainstreaming at the global level, the operationalisation of this effort (i.e.: capacity building of local actors in Turkey) is funded by DFID and UNHCR.

within the target populations (which would have been unrealistic in the timeframe), constraints were managed.

However, far more fundamental constraints limited the capacity to effectively capture the meso and micro level perspectives in Turkey. Beyond the fact that no direct interface with the beneficiaries was feasible, the more immediate issue was the fact that the Team Leader, who was the evaluator who conducted the Turkey field visit, fell critically ill immediately after that visit and was unable to complete the process. As is typical, it was the Team Leader who had been responsible for holding the overview of the evaluation process. He had conducted the original discussions with Sida and IRC to establish a clear understanding of the purpose and the scope of the evaluation. None of these notes, nor the data collected during the field visit were made available for analysis and/or integration into this report.

As this constraint did not become fully apparent until very near the original submission date for the final evaluation report, the feasibility of covering the data gaps were limited. Roles and responsibilities were quickly reorganised among the remaining two evaluation team members and a concentrated effort was made to capture at least the broad strokes of the Turkey evaluation. Thanks to their will to help to manage a difficult situation, IRC personnel were prompt in facilitating this recovery effort. A number of internal key informants related to the Turkey programme were identified and agreed to be re-interviewed.<sup>32</sup> Although significant efforts were made by all, it remains that the potential for an in-depth analysis of the Turkey programme and a systematic comparing and contrasting of the findings between the two case-studies has been notably constrained.

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<sup>32</sup> The timing of this recovery effort unfortunately corresponded with both down-sizing of the Turkey office, as well as a 10-day national holiday for Eid al-Adha, thus compounding an already difficult task.

## 5 Findings

This section presents the findings of this evaluation. Corresponding to the two lines of questioning mentioned above and the questions summarised in section 3.1, the inception report and the ToR, section 5.1 relates to programme support, while section 5.2 relates to institutional capacity development.

### 5.1 FINDINGS RELATED TO PROGRAMME SUPPORT

Programmatically, the objectives of the humanitarian response, articulated in the HFA III, focus on meeting the humanitarian needs of crisis-affected populations in some of the worst and/or forgotten humanitarian crises. This includes supporting especially vulnerable women and girls through direct protection, health and IGA services, in order to promote positive coping mechanisms and greater resilience. This is to be done in some of the most difficult humanitarian contexts where IRC is working to enhance their capacity to be more responsive in such contexts generally as well as building the capacity to respond to sudden on-set crises and unexpected acute needs within affected populations. Finally, all of this is foreseen as being underpinned by a continuous effort to build the evidence-basis for best practices as learned through evaluations and action research, with IRC being proactive in their efforts to disseminate lessons learned. While exploring the extent to which these objectives have been achieved, this section more broadly examines the comparative advantage that IRC offers Sida. It also explores the extent to which ideas and initiatives developed at the global level are transmitted and operationalised at the field level. To do so, it contrasts the global perspective (i.e.: IRC-UK) with that of the country and deep field level as well as draws periodically on the perspectives of external observers. This section is organised according to the DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

#### 5.1.1 Relevance

While questions about the relevance of humanitarian programming typically examine the extent to which certain activities meet the priority needs of the target population, this evaluation, in addition, examines the relevance of the IRC's approach in relation to the comparative advantage they offer for Sida.

In terms of added value for Sida, both the HFA and the IRC 2015-2020 Strategy commit IRC to engage in some of the *most difficult* humanitarian contexts by responding to the needs of the *most vulnerable* people. This aligns directly with Sida's humanitarian strategy, which prioritises saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity for people affected by crises. This is done through supporting: needs-based, principled and coordinated humanitarian response; increased

protection for people at risk and increased respect of IHL; increased influence for people affected by crises; accountability; learning; quality and innovation partnerships; professional and flexible financing; and enhanced capacity and efficiency of the humanitarian system (as sketched in section 2.1.1 and annex 5).

This evaluation confirms that IRC is indeed engaged in some of the most difficult operating contexts. In Turkey, IRC has adopted a complex cross-border response in order to access some of the hardest-to-reach and most vulnerable populations affected by the Syrian crisis.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the Turkey office was being down-scaled, due in part to the difficult political context of Turkey. At the same time, operational bases in CAR are established in zones that have consistently been among the ‘hottest’ throughout this five-year crisis. Indeed, given the complex dynamics of violence, characterising the CAR context, IRC has unsurprisingly faced many security challenges, for example periodically losing access in Nana Gribizi (i.e.: IRC non-local team has been evacuated twice since October 2016)<sup>34</sup>. Meanwhile, IRC staff members have recently been attacked in Ouham Pende. The challenges inherent to these toughest of humanitarian contexts emphasise the importance of IRC’s choice to commit to their complex approach.

IRC is generally recognised by INGOs as an organisation that engages with some of the most difficult humanitarian challenges.<sup>35</sup> It is important to highlight that internal expatriate respondents expressed a solid confidence in this commitment. For example, when some NGOs in CAR pointed out that they are considering closing their operations (due to various factors including: a hostile operating environment, poor humanitarian access, a lack of global engagement, and a dearth of funding), one staff member, in contrast, stated that ‘with IRC you can plan into the future even when it is difficult’.

This suggests that without a clear commitment to take on such difficult cases, some of the most vulnerable populations would simply remain without humanitarian support. The humanitarian projects undertaken in the contexts visited are seen as being highly relevant.<sup>36</sup> Although implementation rates have indeed been hampered by the

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<sup>33</sup> This is discussed further in section 5.1.5 in the subsection on ‘remote programming’.

<sup>34</sup> The originally-planned site visit had to be changed due to the IRC team being evacuated following an armed attack on the IRC compound only days earlier. This same team was also evacuated in October 2016. More details on the operational contexts of the evaluation contexts are available in annex 10.

<sup>35</sup> Not all actors are aware of or understand IRC’s approach. For example, an ECHO respondent in CAR, referring to a 2015 experience, questioned IRC’s engagement in these most difficult contexts, emphasizing that their loss of access had resulted in ‘low implementation rates’. This was seen as a problem of ‘poor analysis’. Apparently, IRC had been unable to effectively communicate the strategic intention of tackling these most difficult contexts – despite this elevating the risk for ‘failures’ such as periodic loss of access, lower implementation rates, etc.

<sup>36</sup> While direct engagement with the Syrian beneficiaries was not possible, CAR beneficiaries agreed that the objectives of the project had been achieved, although they called for wider engagement.



challenges inherent to these difficult contexts,<sup>37</sup> the broad aims of enhancing coping capacities and building resilience and economic empowerment of especially women and girls remain relevant and important in both contexts. More generally, it is the collective impact of the four operational components of the HFA III (including: specific humanitarian projects; methods support; the RRM; and a learning component) that together support IRC in achieving its ambitious approach.

While the RRM was not applied within the contexts visited, it is nevertheless seen as a critical dimension of the HFA. It enables IRC to enhance the scale, speed and reach of its emergency response in line with its strategic plan in the most difficult contexts. It is made even more relevant with the folding of an RRM capacity directly into some country programmes, such as CAR.

The ‘methods support’ and the learning component of the HFA III are equally relevant in their contribution to IRC’s capacity to figure out how to operationalise their ambitious strategy. With Sida’s ‘methods support’ IRC-UK has either led or contributed to the development of a variety ‘methods’ and initiatives, designed to enhance IRC’s capacity to work more effectively in contexts, where humanitarian action has long failed to be effective. A tenacious focus on evolving and applying these initiatives and tools is the key to figuring out how to overcome the challenges inherent to these contexts.

Central to this is the Analysis Driven Agile Programming Techniques (ADAPT) initiative. As an alternative to traditional programme ‘log-frames’ that tend to promote a fixed and linear programme implementation plan,<sup>38</sup> ADAPT is grounded in the realisation that flexibility is the key to effective humanitarian response in volatile contexts. It embeds flexibility directly into the project design and implementation, equipping operational teams with greater agility within shifting contexts. Alluding to above, the relevance of such an initiative is repeatedly illustrated by the realities of the rapidly shifting conflict contexts of both CAR and Syria. Based on the analysis of constraints and opportunities,<sup>39</sup> IRC has drawn on Sida’s flexible funding to ensure that the humanitarian effort, even if constrained, has remained relevant and continued to progress.

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<sup>37</sup> This includes the loss of access due to insecurity; looting and destruction of project efforts; and population displacement in CAR; and difficulties related to cross-border action and manipulation by de facto authorities in Turkey.

<sup>38</sup> The inflexibility that stems from linear log-frame logic can and indeed has caused the complete failure of humanitarian programmes. Alternatively, the ADAPT approach seeks to embed greater flexibility into project design and implementation.

<sup>39</sup> The feasibility of responsive action in difficult contexts relies on an internal capacity to anticipate shifting dynamics. Thus, embedded within ADAPT is IRC’s *Conflict Sensitivity Analysis* tool-kit which includes tools for analysing conflict causal pathways; crisis timelines; scenario planning; social network analysis; influence mapping; etc.



Closely related is the ‘Client Responsiveness’ initiative. With IRC-UK HQ respondents emphasizing that IRC has identified ‘responsiveness’ as one of its institutional objectives (as per the 2020 strategy), Client-Responsive programming calls on operational actors to systematically seek the perspectives of their ‘clients’; to use this information in programme design and delivery; and to account to ‘clients’ regarding programmatic decisions and subsequent action. ‘Protection Mainstreaming’, as the central element of the HFA III, is equally important in this line. Stressing that ‘it is not about changing WHAT we do; it is about modifying HOW we do it’, ‘Protection Mainstreaming’ is seen within IRC as another vehicle through which meaningful access; participation and accountability; and the safety, dignity, and empowerment of the most vulnerable, including women and girls, can be better achieved.

Notably, the principles of beneficiary participation, influence and accountability upon which these initiatives are constructed, align very closely with the priorities articulated in the Sida’s humanitarian strategy. Their relevance is further attested by the fact that these principles are also embodied within a number of other humanitarian initiatives.<sup>40</sup> Looking beyond the challenge of meeting the material needs of the concerned population, both Client Responsiveness and Protection Mainstreaming, along with other initiatives, seek to shift the emphasis towards questions regarding ‘how’ humanitarian action is being done, as opposed to simply focusing on ‘what’ needs to be done. Even though the key to effective humanitarian programming has long been identified, the successful operationalising of these principles has remained largely elusive. This is because they are each entwined with complex social processes. As such, a concerted effort, which ensures that such principles are actually operationalised in humanitarian action, is relevant. This underlines the importance of IRC’s tenacious engagement with such challenges. This tenacity is central in order to figure out how to work more effectively in difficult contexts.

The learning aspect of the HFA III is relevant as a means of supporting, capturing and consolidating the operational creativity, which is required to crack the challenges that are taken on. Much of the IRC approach, articulated in the 2020 strategy, is ‘evidenced-based’, as a result of a serious institutional investment in studying the existing literature and humanitarian experience. Further ‘action research’ has played an important role in tackling particularly stubborn operational challenges, with IRC being recognised in an important thinking role in the humanitarian sector. Often,

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<sup>40</sup> These principles have been articulated in the 1994 Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs. The more recent framing is the so-called Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). Please see: <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/Core%20Humanitarian%20Standard%20-%20English.pdf>. The Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP) Initiative is another similar framing.

attention is drawn to critical issues through publishing seminal research pieces, which create the space for presenting findings and proposing alternatives. This is also how IRC has usually prompted change.<sup>41</sup> These elements are explored in more detail in the next sections.

### 5.1.2 Effectiveness

Questions regarding *effectiveness* examine the extent to which a programme attains its objectives, while considering the influencing factors. In this case, we have also been aware of the extent to which IRC's internal vision, ambitions, long term plans and strategies (as articulated at HQ) have provided sufficient guidance for effective implementation at the country level. It further asks if the IRC response covers the breadth of priority needs of the most vulnerable; and if IRC has learned from its operational lessons.

#### *Coverage – considering vulnerability & gender*

While the section above indicates that the specific objectives of the HFA III are relevant and have been met in broad terms, this section explores 'coverage' challenges, which are inherent to the humanitarian projects undertaken in the crisis-ridden areas visited. This is done through vulnerability and gender lenses.

#### **Vulnerability**

The notion of vulnerability is central to the IRC's beneficiary selection. IRC emphasises the intent to work with the '*most vulnerable*' portion of crisis-affected populations. In line with both the 'Client Responsiveness' and 'Protection Mainstreaming' initiatives, vulnerability criteria is reportedly defined in discussion with the concerned communities, while community-based participatory beneficiary selection processes are applied. However, such processes have repeatedly proven to be quite complex.

This is, partly, due to the fact that the notion of vulnerability is socially constructed and is, therefore, perception-based. In this sense, many forms and degrees of vulnerability emerge from crisis-affected communities. Moreover, reflecting what is commonly referred to as a *social amplification of risk*,<sup>42</sup> crisis-affected individuals naturally see themselves at risk and, thus, vulnerable. With nearly all individuals

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<sup>41</sup> For example, IRC published a CASH Programming document in 2014 which quickly became a reference piece regarding CASH programming in relation to the Syrian crisis. (Emergency Economies: the impact of cash assistance in Lebanon (IRC, 2014). Available at: [https://rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/631/emergencyeconomies\\_evaluationreport-lebanon2014.pdf](https://rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/631/emergencyeconomies_evaluationreport-lebanon2014.pdf). Similar results have been achieved through timely publishing of research pieces on SGBV and the plight of women and girls in armed conflict.

<sup>42</sup> Please see: Roger E. Kasperson, Ortwin Renn, Paul Slovic, Halina S. Brown, Jacque Emel, Robert Goble, Jeanne X. Kasperson, and Samuel Ratick (1988) 'The Social Amplification of Risk - A Conceptual Framework'. Available in *Risk Analysis*, Vol. 8, No. 2.

seeing themselves as vulnerable, most believe they deserve IRC's support. A nuanced judgement of who is the *most vulnerable* within a crisis-affected community in terms of their inclusion and/or exclusion in IRC activities, is a lot to expect. For example, following a cash distribution intervention, the IRC Turkey team received over 900 responses from the community, with an estimated 90% of these being complaints from individuals, who were not included as recipients.<sup>43</sup> This proves that the inclusion of the affected community in such processes is a complex undertaking. The specific skills and patience together with the complex social processes – like the actual hours required at the deep field level to fully operationalise meaningful participation and client responsiveness – must not be underestimated. Navigating the realities of socially amplified sense of risk is but one factor.

These challenges are especially amplified when the magnitude of urgent needs exceeds the absolute capacity of the project. For example, while the deep field staff in CAR could articulate clear vulnerability criteria, the number of individuals who met the criteria far exceeds their resource capacity. As such, the final selection the '*most vulnerable*' was reduced to a quota process negotiated among community-based selection committees in each quartier. Thus, ensuring that programming is both consultative and responsive to the needs of the '*most vulnerable*', is a complex operational challenge. However, the bigger issue is ensuring that the response capacity (i.e.: funding) is proportional to the response required.

### **Gender**

The HFA has a strong positive bias in favour of women and children, reflecting IRC's broad commitment to bring the interests of women and girls – who are recognised as typically being disproportionately impacted by conflict and crises – from the margins to the heart of humanitarian programming. In this light, IRC is widely recognised for their programmatic emphasis on 'Women's Protection and Empowerment' (WPE) and their particular expertise in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). However, it is important that this emphasis is operationalised within a holistic operational approach.

IRC in CAR is strongly associated with 'working with women and female survivors of sexual violence' by both internal and external respondents. The term '*gender*' was often equated with 'a focus on females' by the deep field team. This has created an analytic and operational bias, leading to gender-based programmatic distortions,

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<sup>43</sup> While this example is drawn from a cash distribution program that is not Sida funded, it illustrates the broader point.

especially in terms of protection.<sup>44</sup> This has been well identified within the Coordination Team and, as a result, measures are being taken. This is discussed further below.

However, this further emphasises the fact that many such challenges are grounded in complex social processes. For example, the above-mentioned issue led a number of community-based male respondents to stress that IRC needs to do more for the broader community. However, when women were asked about this, they argued that because men are accustomed to having all the advantages, they are jealous of the support IRC is providing for the women. While this illustrates the subjectivity of such issues, these ‘jealousies’ cannot be ignored, as they can quickly become problematic in fragile contexts.

While the above-mentioned example of complaints of exclusion is observed in Turkey, similar examples are evident in CAR. For example, a woman who received Income Generating Activity (IGA) support and was now managing well independently, reported being harassed by ‘non-recipient’ members of her community because they did not have the same opportunities. In this case, the success of IGA programming exposed formerly extremely vulnerable individuals to a whole new set of threats. Such risks must be proactively managed as part of the deeper engagement with the population. This demonstrates the importance of IRC’s assertion that changes need to be made at the level of *how* humanitarian action is done by engaging with the complex ‘social dynamics’.<sup>45</sup>

Effective engagement with such issues takes time (i.e.: coming at the expense of more direct service-oriented activities), resources and a distinct set of skills. For example, not every agronomist or economist, who might be recruited for ERD programming, has training on social change processes, which sit at the heart of these challenges. Nevertheless, deep field teams are regularly required to unpack these kinds of ‘social dynamics’ that characterise their local contexts. Indeed, as one expatriate staff underlined, the capacity to operationalise these initiatives is the key if IRC wants to work in these hotspots. But does IRC’s operational capacity and specific skillsets correspond, especially at the deep field level, to these demands? Issues relating to human resource capacity are explored in the next section.

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<sup>44</sup> For example, despite the fact that analysed protection trends at the national level indicate that the majority of targeted exactions (i.e.: violence perpetrated against individuals by armed actors) is against male targets, the IRC protection programme for adults is essentially exclusively female oriented. Although no one denies that men & boys also have significant protection problems, there is nevertheless far less programmatic consideration of the specific vulnerabilities & threats they are facing.

<sup>45</sup> The CAR Coordination Team was planning to explore some of these issues as part of a ‘culture of violence’ study.

### ***Capacity***

The above alludes to the fact that IRC's operational approach is complex. Influence *how* humanitarian action is done demands a significant understanding of human nature and social dynamics. The challenge this poses varies according to the operational context and the collective capacity of the national and expat staff together. IRC's capacity to attract and retain capable personnel is thus important.

IRC-UK HQ respondents suggested that IRC has the capacity to retain their best expatriate staff through creating opportunities for movement as well as by keeping them engaged in creative programming. The expatriate staff members repeatedly confirmed this.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the duration of expat postings in especially the toughest contexts is typically very short. For example, although well-experienced in humanitarian action, almost all of the management/coordination team in CAR was new to the context (i.e.: within the year). While each was, for the most part, well informed, engaged and enthusiastic about their sector of expertise, those coming from other organisations were not necessarily well-versed on the nuances of IRC's way of doing things. Reflecting this concern, a Coordinator who has been with IRC for a number of years, noted that some Coordinators focus far more on their technical activities and 'what' they are doing as opposed to engaging with the deeper questions of 'how they are doing it', as discussed above. While some indicated that the Senior Management plays an important role in setting the tone in this regard, as important, in their opinion, is the 'virtual' and field visit support that is available to operational teams.

### **Strong Technical Support**

Many field level expatriate respondents appreciated the strength and breadth of the support that they received from the larger IRC entity. This was repeatedly described as an exceptional strength of the organisation. Both programmatic and technical experts, located regionally and globally (i.e.: in New York, UK, & Geneva), are described as accessible, available and extremely relevant. A senior manager underlined that "technical support is always available in IRC; this is a great advantage", while another member of the Coordination team added that "you never feel alone".

The team members are clearly encouraged to and indeed do take advantage of the technical resources available to them. While the support is visibly folded into the daily work, trainings, workshops and evaluations are also regularly planned. Stating that "the roles are well defined", a senior manager explained that "the HQ waits for

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<sup>46</sup> In contrast, national staff respondents in CAR claimed that there are few opportunities for movement.

the field to ask for support; they are not imposing”. A Coordinator added: “When we want to change and adapt, the support is there from HQ”. For example, in the following months in CAR, visits from technical experts were to support them on Livestock Emergency Guidelines; Conflict Sensitive Analysis, with Gender Analysis integrated; Outcomes & Evidence Framework; among others. Respondents in Turkey equally appreciated this very accessible support, with one Coordinator noting, “you learn a lot when working with IRC”. However, while technical support is readily available to the Coordination team, there are questions about how extensively it penetrates the deep field teams and/or the local partners, who most directly interface with the beneficiaries.

### **National Staff**

The capacity of the local operational teams varies significantly between contexts, as is well indicated in the examples of CAR and Turkey. The majority of the national staff and partners in Turkey have university degrees and professional backgrounds (e.g.: as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and psychologists). As such, technical experts have been brought in to do direct on-the-job mentoring (e.g.: with psychologists to ensure that international standards in psychosocial support (PSS) are respected). In contrast, the technical level of average national staff in CAR is typically significantly lower. Compounding this is the fact that national staff in both cases often have a short history with IRC.<sup>47</sup> Some also reported that people leave IRC because they see few internal advancement opportunities.<sup>48</sup> Short contracts compound this, with national staff indicating that if opportunities arise with other NGOs, they are not necessarily committed to remaining with IRC, due to the uncertainty that comes with short contracts.<sup>49</sup> As it is typically the best trained and highest-performing staff who can most easily move to other organisations, IRC is thus constantly ‘starting over’ with their national staff.<sup>50</sup> It has thus proven difficult to amass the requisite knowledge within the deep field teams. In this sense, the capacity to operationalise their more complex approaches remains relatively limited.

In Turkey, a higher professional level generally equips national teams to engage in a more nuanced manner, but this is still seen as occurring in an ad hoc and reactive manner because the daily demands of the operating context keep the team focused elsewhere. Indeed, respondents from both locations underlined that their ‘front-line’ operating environments are exceptionally demanding, with critical issues arising on a

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<sup>47</sup> The majority of national staff interviewed at the field site visited in CAR had been with IRC for less than one year.

<sup>48</sup> There is also a perception of comparatively low salaries, but the Human resource manager reports that the salary scale in CAR is on the high end of average in a comparative analysis among INGOs.

<sup>49</sup> The Finance Manager attributes this funding cycles, which limit longer-term commitments to their national staff.

<sup>50</sup> Although a persistent problem, IRC is working to address this challenge through better budget design. Further, HR is developing a training plan for national staff. One aspect will include personnel exchanges between projects (and potentially country programmes) to promote cross-fertilised thinking. However, this is still in concept stage.

daily basis. Problem solving and the need for urgent action consume the team's energy. This leaves little space for reflective capacity, which is key to operationalizing a more nuanced approach. In this light, Coordinators in CAR acknowledged that 'significantly less time has been spent on the softer dimensions' noting that 'the field teams are busy with their concrete activities'. In Turkey, similar constraints are further compounded by the complexities related to cross-border activities and working through partner organisations. This alludes to the fact that all of these initiatives are competing for the little time of the operational teams. And where they most need to deliver on their promise, it is most difficult to execute them. The following section looks more precisely at the 'translation' challenges.

### *Translation of Initiatives & Tools*

This section explores the 'translation' challenge, exploring the extent to which the concepts articulated at the global level have been translated into concrete activities. While the contexts of both CAR and Turkey illustrate the need to come up with new ways of tackling complex humanitarian crises, this implementation period has seen a complex scheduling of informal,<sup>51</sup> pilot, and formal roll-out of a number of different approaches, initiatives and tools, many of which were supported through Sida's engagement with the 'Methods Support'.<sup>52</sup> However, some internal respondents have raised questions regarding the extent to which so-called 'special initiatives' including ADAPT, Client Responsiveness, Monitoring for Action, etc. are integrated to on-going action will be sustainable without special support. This section explores the operationalisation of some of these initiatives in more details.

### **ADAPT**

While ADAPT has not been officially rolled-out in either of the two case studies during the implementation period, it is relevant in both and thus certain aspects were applied both formally and informally. For example, aspects of adaptive management have been regularly applied in Turkey when contextual constraints have limited their capacity to move their planned activities forward.<sup>53</sup> Further, the Coordination team in CAR is adamant that the initiative is especially applicable to their context, and is thus working hard to fold it into their SAP.<sup>54</sup> With IRC currently located in two of the hottest locations in CAR, the contextual evolution is unpredictable. With conflict and

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<sup>51</sup> As the principles embodied in these initiatives are commonly referenced, aspects of initiatives have been sometimes spontaneously adopted (e.g.: Client Responsiveness is not yet formally rolled-out, but its principles are prevalent).

<sup>52</sup> The evaluation team did not specifically track the specific timing of each of the various roll-out plans.

<sup>53</sup> Conflict sensitivity training was provided, but this was outside of the 2014-16 implementation period.

<sup>54</sup> One senior manager particularly emphasised the value of programming in relation to three conflict scenarios (i.e.: worst, best, and most likely) and shifting flexibly between these according to how the contextual realities unfold.



violence trends being anything but linear, *conflict sensitivity analysis* has been key. However, operationally, this requires a high level of critical thinking, on-going analytic reflection, and decentralised decision-making, which directly implicates the deep field team. From their perspective, although they recalled receiving training in *Conflict Sensitivity Analysis* in late 2015, when asked how the training had impacted their activities, they were quick to state that ‘this is not yet applied here’. Although they had received training, they had not applied the concepts to their work.<sup>55</sup> When pushed on this, a member of this team claimed that they see themselves as ‘an execution team’, suggesting that they do not expect to take on the responsibility for such critical thinking and decentralised decision-making. This illustrates but some of the challenges confronting the up-take of these initiatives at the deep operational level. Translating them into concrete action is a work in progress.

### **Client Responsiveness**

Transparency & accountability are central to the Client Responsiveness framework. The means and mechanisms for operationalizing this varies significantly according to context. In Turkey, the team described complex and varied communication mechanisms, which together create important opportunities for meaningful participation. The community has also been directly involved in the evolution of these communication/participation mechanisms. For example, concerns raised by the community regarding transparency in terms of management of their complaints, led IRC to adapt the approach.<sup>56</sup>

In CAR, a transparent and comprehensive community-based complaints mechanism has not been formally established.<sup>57</sup> However, seen as ‘being close to the community’, there are indeed a number of channels through which IRC has meaningful exchange with the local population. For example, every sector (including protection, health and ERD) has a team of ‘animators’ combing the community. This has created a wide reach into the community and raises the visibility of IRC. Regular engagement with beneficiaries via focus group discussions reportedly serves as a primary means of gaining insight into the perceptions, ideas, and recommendations of the local population, especially throughout the project cycle. However, the team themselves report that they are not yet comprehensively utilising the information they collect, with one Coordinator observing that ‘we often have individual pieces but we don’t put it together systematically’. Reiterating that ‘this takes time; it must be done regularly’, another added that this is not necessarily seen as a priority. As such, the

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<sup>55</sup> This point was noted by the Coordination Team, who are working to overcome such challenges.

<sup>56</sup> Although these initiatives were reportedly explored in depth during the evaluators field visit, these details were not available due to difficulties discussed in the constraints section.

<sup>57</sup> In contrast, NRC located 50 meters down the road, posts a weather-proof diagram on their front gate which illustrates how their complaints mechanism works.



team agreed that these processes can be strengthened and better mainstreamed in all programs.

### **Protection Mainstreaming**

Building on in-house learning and expertise, with Sida funding, IRC-UK co-chairs (with UNOCHA since 2014) the Protection Mainstreaming Taskforce that sits within the Global Protection Cluster. IRC-Geneva respondents described their main achievements as including the progressive evolution and promotion of the approach, the development of operational guidance and a training tool-kit, an electronic App, and a Protection Mainstreaming Monitoring System (ProMMS). Both OCHA and UNHCR respondents reiterated these achievements at the global level, being very appreciative of IRC, stressing that they have contributed to generating significant buy-in and coherence at the global level.

However, these same respondents admit that the successes have been less positive in terms of transmitting the initiative at the country levels, despite significant energy having been invested. While this effort has been shared among OCHA, UNHCR and IRC, all agreed that there have been significant challenges for gaining field level buy-in. For example, although IRC-Geneva led a Protection Mainstreaming training in CAR in 2015, one local analyst reported that at its peak, Protection Mainstreaming in CAR was driven by a few individuals as opposed to being institutionalised. When these champions left CAR, the initiative lost its momentum. An INGO protection respondent reported that although a Protection Mainstreaming country strategy was developed, related issues are currently addressed in coordination on only an ad hoc basis. Others added that as a ‘cross-cutting’ theme it has had trouble gaining traction. Further, overlapping with many other initiatives come report growing confusion. As such, the Protection Mainstreaming team working to articulate common ‘good programming’ principles to better support operating actors to clarify and adopt the core ideas.

The role that IRC country teams have played in relation to promoting Protection Mainstreaming varies. In Turkey IRC has taken the lead in capacity building of local NGOs in Protection Mainstreaming. They work with Protection and Camp Coordination Clusters supporting the role out of Protection Mainstreaming, promoting best practices at the operational level. Beyond providing the 2015 training, in CAR IRC is not particularly associated with Protection Mainstreaming, by either internal or external respondents.

### **Protection as a Method**

With IRC respondents identifying ‘protection’ as a core competency of IRC, the lead role they have taken within the humanitarian sector to promote Protection Mainstreaming is seen as a natural fit. However, internally, there were some questions regarding who should be the Protection Mainstreaming focal point because protection coordination is typically divided between WPE and CYPD. While both are seen as responsible for gender mainstreaming, neither were expressly responsible for promoting Protection Mainstreaming in CAR.

This is but one problem that stems from this differentiated approach to protection coordination, which splits the focus between WPE and CYPD. This fractured perspective has generated blind spots in protection context analysis, fostering a protection approach that seeks out exclusive and pre-determined target populations. Recognising this, a holistic approach to protection programming is being restored, with WPE & CYPD coordination being consolidated under one broad protection umbrella. In CAR, the former WPE Coordinator is now the ‘Protection Coordinator’.<sup>58</sup> With a wider mandate, she is now expressly responsible Protection Mainstreaming, as well as harmonising the protection approach. Noting that a similar process was underway in the Middle East, a Turkey respondent described an ‘integrated protection programming’ approach designed to avoid precisely these risks of fragmentation.<sup>59</sup>

From a slightly different perspective, it is notable that as opposed to the more specific social-based process of promoting access, safety, dignity and participation that are more classically associated with ‘Protection Mainstreaming’, it has rather been understood in IRC’s CAR programme in the sense of ‘integrated programming’. As such, IRC has very effectively integrated a protection logic into their overall programme approach. Indeed, the CAR project could be described as ‘protection-driven’, with an extremely positive correspondence having been established between economic recovery, health and protection programmes, with referrals regularly made between them as illustrated in the following cases.

#### **Case Examples:**

Once receiving health and psychosocial support through IRC, female survivors of sexual violence are then typically referred to the economic recovery and development (ERD) programme. In efforts to help her to build and/or restore her independent capacity one particularly vulnerable woman was trained and provided with the necessary cash and materials to initiate a soap making micro-business. As a result of producing and selling this soap locally, she has since been able to support both her husband and son to invest in grain grinders and thus develop their own businesses. She also reported being able to support other women in difficulties through providing them with emergency credit.

<sup>58</sup> The receptivity of Protection Mainstreaming is reportedly good among the Coordinators. It is also widely acknowledged that the national staff require a fair amount of training on this.

<sup>59</sup> Evidently, concerns, learning and strategies have not yet been effectively shared between the various programmes grappling with such issues.

In another case, IRC supported a Women's Association which has confidentially incorporated three individuals surviving SGBV. These women have been trained in 'entrepreneurial skills' and now manage a revolving fund among them. They report that this has enabled the individuals of the group to engage in a diversity of income-generating opportunities (e.g.: production and sale of vegetables; petty trade; sale of prepared food, etc). One member of this group expressed confidence in the fact that their group would sustain itself, even if IRC was to leave the area, because they have established this diversity among them.<sup>60</sup> Describing the positive impact this has generated within their households, these women encouraged IRC to continue to support other women like them in a similar manner.

This notion of protection-led action has been further nuanced in Turkey with the team distinguishing protection driven skills training, which intentionally integrates psychosocial and social cohesion components along-side the technical training. More technical skills training did not necessarily intentionally engage with this 'well-being' aspect. However, after the protection and ERD teams discussed this issue, it was concluded that because all participants in IRC programming are suffering the humanitarian implications of crises, and as such, are all likely to benefit from the integration of a psychosocial dimension into their activities. As such, today, even purely technical skills trainings have integrated at least a minimal psychosocial well-being component.

Shedding light on the extent to which the objectives of these projects have been achieved, these examples also illustrate the relevance of this protection-led integrated programming. However, while important, the more profound relevance of IRC programming is yet to be realised. The opportunity to push this work to the deeper level of operationalizing basic human rights principles such as meaningful access, safety, dignity, accountability, participation and empowerment is available as well. Looking beyond simply meeting material needs (which is significant in itself), the action can also engage more concertedly with the subjective or lived experience of the beneficiaries.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, one of the strongest arguments for CASH Programming is its contribution on this level. For example, noting that the beneficiary feedback on cash programming in CAR 'is extremely positive' an ERD Coordinator reported that those receiving cash support have used it to buy food and pay for health care. Arguing

<sup>60</sup> This precisely reflects outcome that was anticipated in the 2014 HFA III Application, which speculated that 'after three years and by the end of this project, protection mechanisms and improved food security will increase women's resilience to the ongoing and future crises' (2014, p.19). This was expected to be the outcome of the 3-year work-cycle that was proposed for CAR, which is discussed further in section 5.1.5.

<sup>61</sup> For example, a group of demobilised youth are being trained in income-generating skills, but the 'socialisation' aspect of such a programme is not well developed. Social cohesion opportunities are not being capitalised upon.

that ‘this is a matter of dignity’, he explained that it increases the autonomy and empowerment of the beneficiaries.

### **CASH Programming**

In addition to promoting dignity, choice and empowerment, CASH Programming is presented within IRC as a means of ensuring the strategic objectives of the 2020 strategy of especially ‘speed and timeliness’ and ‘responsiveness’ of action. More pragmatically, it is a core component of their commitment to ‘better aid’. Arguing that CASH Programming is among ‘the most efficient and fastest interventions to reach people in need’, in-house experts stress that such assertions are founded on ‘overwhelming evidence’. Indeed, IRC’s CASH Programming is widely described internally as being underpinned by extensive evidence gleaned from both first-hand experience, assessment and review, as well as extensive literature review conducted in relation to the OEF process. It was repeatedly stated that overwhelming evidence says that cash transfers are often more cost efficient, timely, more readily enable scalability, and more responsive to the clients needs protecting their right to ‘choice’.

Thus, IRC’s ‘cash first’ policy commits them to scaling-up to distribute 25% of their total humanitarian assistance in cash form. As of 2015, this registered at about 6%, rising to 7% in 2016. 2017 is reportedly on track for a significant increase, likely meeting as much as 10%. In this line, the technical personnel supporting CASH Programming have been active in the recent months reviewing what this ‘25%’ commitment means for country programmes, exploring the specific opportunities within each of 34 different countries, and the kind of support each country programme will require to begin to capitalise upon these opportunities. They have also assisted programmes to fold CASH Programming into the SAPs.

Operationally, the aim is to especially increase the use of cash in acute circumstances. For example, the ERD Coordinator in CAR argued that ‘if the markets are still functioning, cash can lead to rapid changes in the circumstances of the beneficiaries’. However, issues hampering Cash Programming in CAR are both security related, as well as the profound infrastructural under-development (no electricity, unreliable cell-networks, no banks in the interior, etc.), which hamper distribution mechanisms. Nevertheless, as part of their Emergency Preparedness Programme (EPP), the ERD team is developing a ‘Cash Prepositioning Plan’,<sup>62</sup> which requires a rapid response ‘supply-chain’.<sup>63</sup> Further, reflecting the intent to use cash in a multi-sectoral manner,

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<sup>62</sup> This is a priority for New York. It especially seeks to improve methods/options for the actual transfer of cash.

<sup>63</sup> In cash programming this includes rapid identification of beneficiaries and pre-awareness of functional/feasible distribution mechanisms in order to ensure that IDPs can access markets within 72 hours of displacement. CAR is planning to receive a technical expert visit on this issue in August 2017.

the Protection Coordinator reported good collaboration with ERD, agreeing that Cash has become an integral component of the GBV programming (e.g.: paying for immediate expenses such as medication, transport, etc. of individuals at risk).

More broadly, IRC asserts that the humanitarian community as a whole should scale-up their use of cash transfer programmes, stating that cash transfers should become ‘the default humanitarian aid delivery mode in as many contexts as is feasible’.<sup>64</sup> In this sense, the biggest CASH Programming evolution is seen in the response to basic needs (e.g.: NFIs) and agricultural and rural livelihoods programming (e.g.: for the purchase of seeds & tools; IGA in-puts, etc), where the provision of material goods is being replaced with cash transfers. Health and Protection programming reportedly have a lower ratio of CASH Programming, as cash is often used on an individual basis (as opposed to blanket distribution), being used to pay for individualised expenses, emergency assistance, and assistance to reduce individual protection risks (e.g.: improved shelter). The evidence-basis regarding the theory of change between cash programming and health, protection, WASH and nutritional outcomes is also reportedly less established than the former sectors.<sup>65</sup> Thus, research is planned in Turkey to study the causal relationship between protection outcomes and the use of cash. However, IRC has already published a number of important reference documents and assessments with analysis that has sought to promote the evolution of CASH Programming.<sup>66</sup>

As such, IRC is well known within the humanitarian community as a CASH Programming agency. In terms of coordination and efforts to influence best practices, IRC is active in a range of CASH coordination networks including: the Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis,<sup>67</sup> and the and the Markets in Crisis Community of Practice (which IRC co-founded);<sup>68</sup> the Cash Learning Partnership, which is a community of NGOs, UN, academics, private sector that work together to also move the programming forward. In this case IRC is on the Board as well as on the technical advisory committee. The ‘Better than Cash Alliance’ draws those who are committed to promoting the use of digital payments (i.e.: as opposed to the use of hard cash) as their distribution means. They also manage a resource website.<sup>69</sup> While IRC is

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<sup>64</sup> See for example: ‘Better Aid: principles to reform and transform humanitarian financing’ (IRC) available at: <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/910/betteraidbrief.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> A series of sector specific cost-efficiency studies relating to cash transfers are available at: <https://www.rescue.org/report/cost-efficiency-unconditional-cash-transfers>

<sup>66</sup> For example, ‘Emergency Economies: the impact of cash assistance in Lebanon’ (IRC, 2014). Available at: <https://rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/631/emergencyeconomiesevaluationreport-lebanon2014.pdf> became an important reference for cash programming in relation to the Syrian crisis.

<sup>67</sup> EMMA. Please see: <http://www.emma-toolkit.org/>

<sup>68</sup> Please see: <https://dgroups.org/dfid/mic>

<sup>69</sup> Please see: <https://www.rescue.org/topic/cash-relief>

typically active at the field level in the food security and livelihoods cluster, they often lead the CASH task force that is usually associated with this cluster.

### 5.1.3 Efficiency

Questions of *efficiency* measure the outputs in relation to inputs asking if activities are cost-efficient and timely. This section also briefly reviews IRC's commitment to developing and implementing methods and tools designed enhance cost-effective and efficient programming. Framing this as 'better aid', IRC argues that not only more aid, but also better use of scarce resources is required. Some of the core elements of this include: greater clarity on the collective outcomes the sector is seeking to gain; relying more extensively on an evidence-basis for response; greater cost efficiency, effectiveness and results; greater use of CASH Programming; and greater transparency and accountability.<sup>70</sup>

### *Outcomes and Evidence Framework (OEF)*

IRC's OEF is central to its strategic approach. The OEF is structured around five 'outcome areas' of: safety, health, education, power and economic well-being. Each of these has a number of outcomes associated with them. Each outcome has a theory of change explaining the pathways to achieving it. As the name suggests, the OEF is said to be underpinned by extensive evidence. It is the result of what some describe as a 'significant effort' to study existing literature and operational experience in order to glean the evidence illustrating these pathways.

As the OEF is not yet fully rolled out, expectations of finding reference to it in the field were low. However, Coordination teams proved to be quite fluent with its content even if they did not always use the formal terminology. IRC personnel expressed significant confidence that the framework is extremely well reasoned and evidenced, with field staff, including M&E experts, regularly stating that 'the evidence supports this' when referring to their various approaches.

More generally, field respondents noted that their country level SAP is a contextualised expression of the 2020 IRC strategy.<sup>71</sup> Noting that 'they are all integrated', one Coordinator stated, 'these frameworks keep us focused on our priorities'.<sup>72</sup> A Manager added that 'we do not work outside of this framework; it sets the perimeters; the focus is clear; this keeps us on track; it prevents us from being pulled into the many other urgent needs'. These frameworks are credited with shifting

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<sup>70</sup> See 'Better Aid: principles to reform and transform humanitarian financing' (IRC)

<sup>71</sup> While noting that this process has a strong top-down emphasis for the purposes of global coherence, Coordinators also appreciated the fact that they had significant opportunity to shape their country SAP.

<sup>72</sup> Field-based expatriate respondents noted that both are used to explain their approach to donors and other NGOs.

their focus away from the level of activities and outputs, spotlighting the deeper level of impact and outputs.

This also alludes to an enhanced commitment to monitoring & evaluation (M&E) that is widely referenced by the IRC-UK HQ. Reflecting the spirit of responsive programming, M&E is being shifted away from the obvious intent of monitoring of action, towards the more proactive intent of ‘monitoring for action’.<sup>73</sup> An in-house M&E expert described this as an effort to prompt analysis of findings, and distilling this into something that is actionable. However, while noting that important progress is being made, she was careful to add that ‘while this is the intention; we are not there yet’. M&E is reportedly being more systematically integrated into all stages of emergency response programming, with a particular effort made to regularly conduct ‘real-time’ evaluations. The challenge is more stubborn in CAR.

### *Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) tool*

An institutional effort has been made to help operational teams to apply the evolving tools to best answer the most relevant questions to support them in making effective programming decisions. The four primary lenses include: monitoring for action; context analysis (e.g.: conflict sensitive analysis); client responsiveness; and cost efficiency. Tied to the commitment to make the ‘best use of resources’, the Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) tool is central to gaining insight into cost efficiency, providing a ‘live’ analysis of the cost efficiency (or in cases where outcome data is available, cost effectiveness) ratios of on-going activities in order to inform operational decisions to better ensure ‘the best use of resources’ in efforts to improve reach and impact of the effort.

SCAN has been in development since mid-2016, and is currently used in 10 countries (in only two of which is an applied standard across all sectors), with an additional 4-5 countries expected to engage in the coming year. With global support provided according to field demand, staff in Turkey have been trained, and further training is planned in the coming months. No such training has taken place in CAR.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> This shift in emphasis is expected to shift the focus away from simple execution of pre-planned activities towards more reflective evaluation that supports more responsive and adaptive programming (i.e.: supporting adjustments made in ‘real time’ as opposed to waiting until the next project period to adapt).

<sup>74</sup> While not yet operational in CAR, a fairly complex ‘manual’ value for money assessment process is currently applied that involves the Finance Manager, the Supply Chain Manager, and Programmes who together review expenditures regularly making cost/quality and cost/efficiency judgements especially in terms of purchasing programme materials. A Coordinator added that they also seek beneficiary feedback on such issues (i.e.: client responsiveness).



The evolution of the tool has reportedly benefited from a relatively slow roll-out, with countries opting in on their own initiative.<sup>75</sup> The process has been iterative, allowing the technical experts time and opportunity to reflect in depth with those teams who have adopted the tool. The most apparent weakness of the tool relates to the challenges for the field teams to interpret the data generated and to make decisions about what to do as a result of the findings. Without some training, this is not necessarily intuitive. Thus, in order to ensure it is utilised, teams need training on interpretation, as well as on how best to weave their findings into decision-making in relation to the project cycle.

Learning has been significant in relation to the feasibility of developing and applying such a tool in a deeply decentralised manner in order to support this type of analysis being done in a standardised and systematic manner. Importantly, the tool can draw on existing data bases, thus making it widely applicable and more user friendly. In this sense, it is not uniquely an IRC tool, but a number of other INGOs are also in talks to begin piloting the tool, including for example, Save-UK & US; DRC, NRC, OXFAM, Mercy Corps and others. With this wider application, a growing pool of comparable data is being developed, allowing for richer analysis of cost efficiency of different programme approaches.

Importantly, the richest data pool exists on CASH Programming, which as discussed above are rapidly gaining traction as one of the more efficient programming approaches (in terms of administrative cost per dollar value), thus enhancing the operational capacity to reach large numbers of people in need, while protecting their dignity to enabling them greater control in terms of managing their lives. One of the findings emerging from such analysis is that ‘scale’ is the largest single factor driving cost efficiency of such programmes, with cost/household declining as more are reached (i.e.: is shared across a wider pool of beneficiaries).<sup>76</sup> This is but one example of the learning that can be expected to emerge as larger pools of common data are established, with more such evidence-based principles being captured and applied to inform more cost-effective programming frameworks.

#### 5.1.4 Impact

While questions of *impact* examine the positive and negative changes produced by the intervention,<sup>77</sup> this section also particularly looks at the question of impact on policy and practice.

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<sup>75</sup> 2020 is the deadline for all countries to mandatorily adopt the tool as part of the institutional business process.

<sup>76</sup> See: ‘Cost Efficiency Analysis: Unconditional Cash Transfer Programs’ available at: <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/954/20151113cashcefficreportfinal.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> Given that the evaluator spent only 2 days at the operational site and more than half of this time was spent in discussions with the operational team, detailed insights into impact are somewhat limited.



### *Achieving Project Objectives*

The objectives of the humanitarian projects supported by the HFA III focus on meeting basic needs of crisis affected populations in the worst humanitarian crises and supporting the most vulnerable women and girls by addressing their protection needs and enhancing resilience and ability to survive and thrive. Positive coping mechanisms and increased resilience are supported through protection, health and economic security activities, especially for women in some of the most affected communities. As mentioned above, the teams have developed an impressive level of programming integration. This has seen vulnerable individuals, identified according to protection criteria, being confidentially integrated into on-going IGA activities. Individuals interviewed who had received this support in CAR were systematically positive and appreciative of IRC's activities. Those supported reported establishing a diversity of individual IGAs, systematically emphasising a sustainable, and indeed multiplying impact, in that they have been able to extend support to others in many cases.<sup>78</sup> The main complaint raised by the community is that IRC works with too few people. While the impact of those individuals receiving supported has been very positive, the collective impact is seen as being too limited.<sup>79</sup>

The deeper questions relate to the above discussion. Especially if resilience is understood in the sense of social cohesion, the project is missing opportunities to generate a wider impact. For example, in the case of a programme for demobilised youth in CAR, while IGA skills training was provided, there was no structured psycho-social or 'social responsabilizing' dimension of the programme. Further, especially men resented being excluded, having little understanding that women are more in need of IRC's support. Indeed, the Mayor himself suggested that IRC should work with the male merchants who had lost their resources in the war, because the restoration of this capacity would have the largest impact on the community. He was clearly thinking in purely economic terms and was not sympathetic to the idea of working with the *most vulnerable*. Thus, if resilience is understood in the sense of social cohesion, the project is missing opportunities to generate a wider social impact – which again requires specific skills.

At the activities level, IRC supports a 'psychosocial support' (PSS) worker and a mid-wife in the health facility, working especially with survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Both individuals had received periodic trainings but asked for

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<sup>78</sup> Further observations and programming information are provided in Annex 8

<sup>79</sup> This underlines the larger issue that has already been noted – the magnitude of urgent needs exceeds the absolute response capacity of these projects.

more,<sup>80</sup> stressing that they provide critical support to women in the community. The PSS listening centre receives between 5-10 female clients a week, many of whom (i.e.: SGVB survivors) are referred to the midwife, medical services, and IGA support. It is notable that the listening centre has only received some three male clients in a year. While agreeing that ‘these cases exist’, the female PSS worker suggested that men would not make use of their services for various cultural reasons. Importantly, IRC has conducted research on protection vulnerabilities faced by Syrian refugee men in Lebanon.<sup>81</sup> The study indicates that a lack of clear evidence regarding the vulnerabilities of these men has reinforced the misperceptions that they have none. With these vulnerabilities often being unrecognised by responders, they remain unaddressed. A similar scenario likely applies in CAR.<sup>82</sup>

In terms of internal processes, the launching of the 2020 IRC strategy triggered the introduction of a range of different initiatives, approaches and tools, largely developed at the global level, that were to be adopted and operationalised at the field level. This was widely reported as being initially overwhelming. Recognising this, IRC-UK HQ respondents described the ‘Exemplar initiative’, which identifies client responsiveness; monitoring for action; best use of resources; and sophisticated context analysis as core elements, seeking to ensure coherence between them. In relation to the ‘absorption capacity’ of given operational team, support is provided through the development & provision of tailored guidance & tools; controlled piloting; and again, the documenting of lessons learned. However, this exemplar does not apply in either of the case studies. Thus, although field respondents note a better balance has emerged due to country teams taking more control, there are still concerns over fragmented action and support.<sup>83</sup>

Taking this further, some have asked if IRC is investing proportionally too much energy into developing initiatives and tools, thus detracting from the core task of responding directly to the needs of people at risk. However, given that IRC chooses to focus on some of the most difficult operating contexts *and* figuring out how to work more effectively in these contexts, ‘simply’ addressing material needs is not an option on-going learning is central to this strategy. There is no avoiding the fact that

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<sup>80</sup> Local personnel linked with the SGBV programme, including the mid-wife, the psychosocial support worker, and a community outreach worker, reported receiving 3 2-day trainings provided by IRC since 2015.

<sup>81</sup> See: Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugee Men in Lebanon: Investigating protection gaps, needs and responses relevant to single and working Syrian refugee men in Lebanon (January 2016). Available at: <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/464/irclebanonrefugeemensvulnerabilityassessment.pdf>

<sup>82</sup> This raises questions regarding cross-fertilisation and the sharing of learning from one context to the next.

<sup>83</sup> For example, one senior manager suggested that experts promoting a given often initiative want to have a corresponding person at the field level. Noting the infeasibility of this, the IRC-CAR team has begun calling on the various technical experts to work together to make it easier for the operational teams to integrate their various initiatives into their on-going activities. For example, they have recently specifically to ask for a training that integrates conflict sensitivity analysis & gender. This is planned for August.

the development of a diversity of initiatives and tools is integral to overcoming the challenges they take on. Thus, the importance for a capacity to both tolerate and work effectively with shortfalls in relation to stated objectives. While these tools and initiatives are being developed, expectations must be proportional to the challenges such contexts pose. Comparatively speaking, the current level of success in achieving project objectives is moderate. However, as the core tools are progressively better understood and more comprehensively applied, especially at the deep field level, the overall impact for the affected population can be expected to increase. Establishing the balance between the development and their operational application is a critical challenge, with this evaluation suggesting that a greater emphasis is required at the application, especially at the deep field level. However, it needs again to be noted that, even more fundamental, the projects implemented are small in relation to the magnitude of urgent need they are meant to address. Thus, the importance of the RRM.

### ***Rapid Response Mechanism***

A question posed for the evaluation team concerned the extent to which IRC's use of the RRM has contributed to Sida's ability to achieve its strategic objectives to reach people in acute distress. From the IRC HQ perspective, the RRM as an integral component of the HFA is a critical factor in ensuring that IRC is able to achieve their strategic commitments of rapid response to acute crisis, especially in terms of scale and reach; speed and timeliness; and responsiveness.

At the heart of their pure emergency response capacity is the Emergency Unit located in New York. This unit has some 35 full-time 'emergency responders' and a roster of another 40+ emergency experts of various profiles (technical, management, support) to draw from.<sup>84</sup> These individuals are now ready to move within 24 hours, which is a key indicator of the evolution, with 72 hours being the original target. This is, to some degree a result of the effort that has been dedicated to anticipation. The magnitude of a response is determined by two separate lines of questioning: one concerns the severity of the crisis, and the other makes a judgement regarding the response required by IRC (e.g.: based on trends of human suffering; others responding; IRC's added value; etc.). In some cases, they decide on no response, in other cases they take on a full substitutive role replacing the existing country team. In others the emergency team becomes the 'team' if a crisis occurs in a country where IRC was not present. In this sense, the RRM is described as a *mechanism*, enabling

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<sup>84</sup> IRC draws on this external roster in larger-scale disasters and crises.

response both through prepositioning of funds and resources, and the human capacity to carry out both the analysis and action.

Sida's RRM funds are reported to make up some 30% of the global emergency funds that IRC retains for rapid response to new emergencies as they occur.<sup>85</sup> During each HFA year, between 6-10 responses were funded by Sida.<sup>86</sup> These actions ranged from health crises (Ebola), conflict, natural disasters (flood and drought), food insecurity, and displacement. The importance of this mechanism was underlined by many IRC respondents. As one emergency expert explained, 'the RRM is a critical component to IRC's aggressive approach to global emergencies – it allows us to set the tone and scale of our response, which impacts on the number of lives saved in the short term and the way in which lives can get back on track in the medium/long term'. IRC continues to build its response capacity (as indicated in the 24-hour responsiveness). As the capacity evolves, a corresponding increase in funds is required to make best use of this capacity in acute crisis. As one expert stated, 'the more funds that we can be empowered with via this relatively unearmarked mechanism the more responsive we are to needs on the ground'.<sup>87</sup> In this light, Sida is encouraged to make more funds available for IRC's use through this modality.<sup>88</sup>

Further, while this global capacity is important, IRC is increasingly looking at means of developing in-country emergency response teams in those cases where acutely escalated crisis is the 'norm', and it thus is infeasible to rely upon an external RRM. This entails creating a mobile rapid response capacity from within the in-country resources. The best national staff have been drawn together and trained on how to run an emergency response in South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia and Niger among others. This is also seen as extremely relevant to CAR. Rather than drawing on the global RRM funds, emergency responses in CAR have been funded through the flexibility of Sida funding dedicated to the country programme. Given the 'normalcy' of crisis and the regularity with which the team is confronted with such acuity, this is seen as an appropriate strategy. As such, albeit in its early stages, the Management team is integrating an emergency response capacity (as articulated in their EPP strategy) directly into the country SAP, thus centralising in-country emergency response as one of the core objectives of the country programme. While the ADAPT initiative

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<sup>85</sup> The global funding of the RRM is complex, with additional funds coming from the START network, DFID's Rapid Response Facility and IRC's Dutch sister organisation Stichting Vluchteling.

<sup>86</sup> These expenditures were provided by IRC-Inc. Please see annex 9 for more details on individual responses.

<sup>87</sup> Currency exchange and the consequently lower procurement power was pointed out as a constraining factor.

<sup>88</sup> The RRM is central to the 2020 strategy of responding in a timely manner to scale according to the need. IRC has developed a very complex analytic framework for determining whether they should respond based on magnitude of need, the extent to which this is unmet, and their capacity to add value. Their model is 'needs driven' in many senses. Their draw on pre-positioned RRM funds can thus be taken as a good reflection of urgent humanitarian need.

(including the *Conflict Sensitivity Analysis* tool-kit) is central to this, the potential value of a *Programme Approach* would also be key in terms of creating the necessary flexibility to realise such an approach (discussed further in 5.1.5).

### *Learning from Lessons*

Building the evidence-basis for best practises as learned through evaluations and action research, as well as disseminating this learning is a core objective of the HFA III. IRC does exceptionally well at this. A notable capacity and enthusiasm for innovative, creative and critical thinking is extremely evident within both IRC-UK HQ as well as field level Management / Coordination Teams. The institutional intent to strive ‘to do better’ promotes an evident will and curiosity to study complex problems and to operationalise solutions. Describing IRC as an institution that is asking how they can do humanitarian work better, a Coordinator observed that ‘this creates a certain energy within the organisation; it encourages people to ask questions and to be creative in finding solutions to the big challenges’. This is directly observable.

The Turkey team credits the above-mentioned regional support for prompting the operational teams to be more reflective. Expatriate respondents appreciated the fact that, being well versed on IRC but not immersed in the demands of the day-to-day activities, regional personnel can support them in re-analysing issues, looking through ‘different lenses’, and making correlations with experiences from other parts of the world, and helping them to learn different things from old data. They are also the ones who keep the closest tabs on gaps in evidence to support policy and advocacy work, often prompting field teams in terms of identifying research needs and opportunities.

Indeed, one respondent observed that IRC is often better at identifying these larger-frame issues and opportunities for doing formal research than they are at doing so within the more mundane day-to-day processes, suggesting that IRC is relatively less skilled at learning from their on-going day-to-day experiences. To some degree, this is tied to the issue of ‘tolerance for failure’. The ‘will to learn from mistakes’ is regularly referenced in the IRC-UK HQ. This sentiment is also evident within the Coordination teams, prompting a will and capacity for critical reflection. However, this attitude is far less evident at the deep field level being difficult to convey at this level for many reasons. Indeed, the deep field team in CAR was clearly reluctant to admit ‘failure’ in relation to some of their most difficult humanitarian challenges.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> For example, on the issue of community-based beneficiary selection, team members were adamant that the mechanism they were applying avoids risk of exclusion and/or marginalisation of the most vulnerable, although

While this ‘resistance’ was recognised in Turkey, the primary influencing factor was seen as ‘the leadership of their team and the environment created’.

More broadly, there is a strong institutional intent to learn from lessons gained in the field. Indeed, IRC continues to invest significant resources into rigorous action research, done according to academic research standards. Observing that ‘the HQ spends a lot of time reflecting on how the IRC ways of working can be improved’, a senior manager in CAR explained that ‘they generate research for this purpose’, suggesting that these study, reflections and learning processes are indeed very deliberate. He added that ‘it is this capacity for action research that enables IRC to be innovative and adaptive; they are always asking questions and they have the in-house technical expertise to study issues to find answers’.

This has fostered a reflex among Coordination teams to think of ‘research’ as a means to understanding the complex challenges they face and discovering new ways for tackling them.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, an in-house M&E expert suggested that IRC has created a niche for doing such research in their typical operating contexts (i.e.: some of the most difficult humanitarian contexts). Other IRC respondents added that IRC is particularly good at applying the learning they engage in, especially in the case of Women’s Protection and Empowerment and in CASH programming. In this sense, a Coordinator who was new to IRC agreed that IRC is particularly good (i.e.: as compared to other NGOs they have worked with) at translating their operational experience into ways of improving their approaches to humanitarian work, concluding that ‘IRC is always trying to improve the way they work; it is a tendency in the organisation’.<sup>91</sup> The internal demand for an ‘evidence-basis’ is closely tied to this, with one Coordinator appreciating that ‘it ensures that data collected is actually studied and then applied to continuing activities’.

### ***Influencing Policy and Practice***

IRC-UK aims to be a ‘thought leader’ in Europe. Intending to act as a ‘hub of knowledge on European donors’, they seek to be recognised as ‘driving transformational policy and practice change’. IRC seeks to occupy a leading role in the humanitarian field as a whole, shaping policy and influencing practice based on their own experience and learning.<sup>92</sup> They support this with the intent to ‘use

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‘failures’ were quickly noted by beneficiary respondents.

<sup>90</sup> Indicating the extent to which this approach to learning is being operationalised, a number of research initiatives were being planned for the coming months in CAR while the evaluator was on ground.

<sup>91</sup> Others appreciated the fact that resources are made available to realise this within IRC, noting that many other NGOs do not make such a commitment to learning, and thus risk remaining stagnant in their approaches.

<sup>92</sup> IRC Makes much of their research, policies and best practices available to the wider community of practice on their



evidence to inform policy and practice'. This reiterates the importance of rigorous research discussed above, and the role of the 'Research, Evaluation, and Learning Unit'. Indeed, IRC-UK respondents suggested that their operational innovation and rigorous research together have combined to give IRC a unique credibility. This reputation was corroborated by external observers from within the London humanitarian network. Moreover, UN, donor and INGO respondents during the evaluation noted that IRC has developed both operational and conceptual/analytic expertise on key issues including women's protection and SGBV,<sup>93</sup> and CASH programming, with some recalling that they have produced research documents on these issues.

IRC's visibility in relation to various high-level policy issues has further enhanced this perception. For example, IRC was one of the prominent INGOs involved in the 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies'.<sup>94</sup> Further, IRC's high-profile senior individuals, in both management and on the board, are well positioned to put this expertise and credibility to work in the global policy realm,<sup>95</sup> as has been seen in relation to the Syrian crisis.<sup>96</sup> IRC-UK HQ Advocacy respondents also report playing the role of a discrete 'internal advisor' promoting policy issues within various European policy circles. IRC also regularly publishes timely policy statements and best practices in relation to their priorities. For example, following the acute periods of 2013-14, the crisis in CAR began to fall off the agenda. Recognising the risk of forgotten crises, IRC produced a reference piece making the argument against pre-mature withdrawal of support in 2015.<sup>97</sup> In relation to the Syrian crisis, in collaboration with the International Center for Research on Women

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website at: <https://www.rescue.org/>

<sup>93</sup> For example, IRC facilitates a globally accessible website for 'GBV Responders Network' that provides access to research, policy pieces, best practices, tools and so on, available at: <http://gbvresponders.org/>

<sup>94</sup> They produced a number of research and analytic documents for background reference for this initiative including: 'Lifesaving, Not Optional: Protecting women and girls from violence in emergencies' (IRC 2013). Available at: <http://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/LifesavingNotOptional-Discussion-Paper-ENG.pdf> which served as a reference document for the initiative; and 'Are We There Yet? Progress and challenges in ensuring life-saving services and reducing risks to violence for women and girls in emergencies' (IRC 2015). Available at: <http://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Are-We-There-Yet-Report.pdf> which examined the progress made through the Call to Action. Finally, with support from Sida, IRC produced 'The Impact of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies' (June 2017) which examined the impact of the Call to Action' initiative. Available at: <http://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Impact-of-the-CTA-on-protection-from-GBV-in-emergencies-FULL-WEB.pdf>

<sup>95</sup> IRC's President is regularly visible on political talk shows on BBC discussing such issues.

<sup>96</sup> Given the visibility of the crisis globally, IRC has invested in a regional policy advocacy and communications team that is tasked with generating press releases, communication pieces and analysis. This informs these Senior Members, who then seek to leverage policy change related to: protection of civilians, respect of international norms, etc.

<sup>97</sup> 'Too Soon to Turn Away Security, Governance and Humanitarian Need in the Central African Republic' (2015). Available at: <http://feature.rescue.org/carreport/#recommendations>

(ICRW), with Sida funds, IRC published a report on ‘innovative’ mobile approaches to reaching refugee women survivors of sexual violence in Lebanon.<sup>98</sup>

### 5.1.5 Sustainability

Questions of sustainability examine the extent to which the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after the support is withdrawn. In this case, the evaluation studied partnerships; flexible and multi-year funding; and the *Programme Approach* in relation to the sustainability of IRC’s programming.

#### *Partnerships*

The primary means through which IRC has engaged with the ‘Grand Bargain’ and the localisation agenda is through an increased engagement in partnerships. This is also seen as a primary means of achieving sustainability. Given the political situation related to the Syrian crisis, IRC systematically engages with civil society as opposed to formal authorities to the extent feasible. In the case of forgotten crises such as CAR, with the international interest waning often long before the acute crisis and more enduring governance issues are resolved, the building of capacity of national Civil Society Organisations is critical. However, with a long history of direct service delivery in crisis contexts, many internal respondents noted that it is taking time to build the capacity to work effectively with partners. A comprehensive review of the organisational approach to partnerships has led to an overhaul of IRC’s approach & policies on partnerships, as articulated in the Sub-Award Partnership Management System (SPMS).<sup>99</sup> However, the current competencies and confidence in relation to operationalising the SPMS varies significantly from one context to the next. Reflecting a lack of confidence held by some, one field-based expatriate suggested that some teams are struggling to move this forward because ‘it is not really seen as a specialisation of the organisation’.<sup>100</sup> In CAR, the partnership engagement is currently an add-on to existing responsibilities of managers, which is unsustainable over the long run given the magnitude of the task.<sup>101</sup> Given that the Turkey programme relies upon remote programming, partnerships are key.

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<sup>98</sup> IRC, ‘Reaching Refugee Survivors of Gender-Based Violence: Evaluation of a Mobile Approach to Service Delivery in Lebanon’. Available at: <https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ICRW-Mobile-Services-Assessment-IRC.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> This issue is discussed more extensively in Section 5.2.2

<sup>100</sup> While not necessarily representative, it is important to note that some operational staff do hold such views.

<sup>101</sup> UK-HQ respondents pointed out that while the expertise has so far been developed on a case by case basis, the SPMS is designed to make this more systematic.



### **Remote Programming**

While the ‘remote programming’ used to be seen as a short-term or temporary solution rather than an actual mode of operating, it has become the ‘new normal’ in a number of difficult operating contexts, as seen in Syria. Adopting a range of remote programming models, IRC’s Syria action is implemented by both IRC personnel in-country as well as by local and diaspora partners also working cross-border, while the leadership teams are based in Turkey. While such operational models have proven critical for gaining access to some of the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations, they are also associated with a diversity of (both perceived or real) potential risks. These include: compromised programme quality and thus impact; poor information management; various forms of corruption, fund diversion or informal ‘taxations’; poor monitoring; security challenges; etc.<sup>102</sup>

IRC has adopted various strategies to manage these risks. Recognising that any form of remote programming entails some degree of delegation of authority to the individuals on ground, IRC has made significant investment in their local/diaspora partners. Building management and accountability capacity has reported gone beyond the usual training on ‘how to report’ or ‘how to meet financial reporting requirements’, to include support of consultants to tackle deeper issues such as change management. In technical terms, IRC has also provided Continuing Professional Education for medical staff, as well as training and mentoring to enhance operational skills related to protection and other technical issues.<sup>103</sup>

Further, to strengthen the linkages between the on-ground implementing teams and the management team in Turkey, IRC has a small number of Syrian staff (5-7) who are on a Government of Turkey approved list and are thus able to cross the Turkey/Syria border. They are thus able to ensure direct monitoring of activities. Further, the risk of important issues going unnoticed or unreported is further managed through the contracting of third party monitoring agents.<sup>104</sup> However, this in itself extends the chain of intermediaries, with analysts pointing out that an increase in the number of parties involved risks compromising coherence, as well as but also exacerbating ethical issues (e.g.: confidentiality in relation the health and protection activities). Further given the presumed potential risks of corruption, diversion of funds and/or abuse of aid, such programming often falls under intensive scrutiny, thus making already complex programming even more demanding in terms of compliance

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<sup>102</sup> See for example: A.M. Rivas (2015). ‘No Longer a Last Resort: A Review of the Remote Programming Landscape’. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/11707265/Working\\_paper\\_No\\_Longer\\_a\\_Last\\_Resort\\_A\\_Review\\_of\\_the\\_Remote\\_Programming\\_Landscape](https://www.academia.edu/11707265/Working_paper_No_Longer_a_Last_Resort_A_Review_of_the_Remote_Programming_Landscape)

<sup>103</sup> The main partner contrasted IRC very favourably with others which they described as just providing funding.

<sup>104</sup> Analysts note that increased numbers of parties involved carries its own risks both in terms of coherence, and ethical issues (e.g.: confidentiality especially in relation the health and protection activities).

processes. For example, while the evidence-basis regarding the relevance of CASH programming in this context has been established, the actual implementation remains extremely complex especially due to compliance demands.

Further, such programming is also impacted by the above discussed ‘deep field’ challenges. For example, while the need for careful reflection in such approaches is extreme, the demands on the operational actors are also enormous, indeed often overwhelming, thus restricting the reflective space. There are also ethical concerns regarding the transference of risk to the few actors that are able to reach the target populations. Nevertheless, despite the complex challenges, IRC continues to be creative in managing them through their institutional commitment to learn how to work in some of the most difficult contexts. As one respondent emphasised, IRC remains open to a diversity of implementation strategies to capitalise on the few opportunities available in order to deliver the best outcomes possible for these difficult-to-reach and highly vulnerable populations within the extremely difficult operating contexts.<sup>105</sup> As with many elements of the IRC approach, remote programming is a work in progress.

### ***Multi-year Funding***

Adaptive Management requires flexible funding, both in terms of line items as well as time-frame. Sida is consistently appreciated for their notable flexibility. The CAR Management Team underlined the importance of this flexibility ‘because the context is always shifting; it can explode at any time; we can lose access; people displace; we need to be able to respond’, adding that ‘Sida is special in that way; they understand the ground reality’.<sup>106</sup> Arguing that it is precisely this flexible type of funding that is essential to enable the application of an ‘adaptive management approach’, the CAR Management Team noted that their fourth-year agreement has far greater flexibility built directly into the design – although underlining that it still works on an annual basis, when what they really need is a multi-year funding commitment in order to confidently implement an adaptive approach.

### **Arguments for multi-year Sida funding cycles in CAR**

Although a three-year funding commitment was made to CAR, in actuality, the projects have been operationalised as annually funded projects.<sup>107</sup> Each phase/year

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<sup>105</sup> It is worth noting that while the Turkey office was being down-sized during this evaluation, the level of programming was reportedly sustained at a constant level.

<sup>106</sup> While the AMU Framework Management Team deals directly with Sida on the country teams’ behalf, they report that changes were readily agreed, allowing for the flexibility needed to be responsive to their shifting context.

<sup>107</sup> The HFA management team suggest that these constraints stem from unclear guidance from Sida regarding the fact that multi-year financing equated with multi-year programming. As such, unclear communication from HFA management team to the field resulted in the Programme being conceived on a yearly allocation system.

reportedly required a certain degree of ‘re-negotiations’, which caused ruptures in the funding, and thus forced a discontinuation of activities and interrupted the continuity of the projects. As such, the call for multi-year funding was made from many perspectives, both within IRC and from their beneficiaries in CAR. Various IRC respondents highlighted the value in terms of creating an adequate planning horizon; for building the capacity of the local staff; for working jointly with and for building the capacity of the local population directly; for working in effective partnerships; and for creating a meaningful impact – all of which takes time.

Both the Finance and Human Resources Managers emphasised the importance of being able to ensure a longer-term employment commitment so as to avoid constant turn-over of personnel, adding that ‘with a greater commitment from IRC, the staff are more motivated’.<sup>108</sup> When funding contracts are re-negotiated, funding flow is interrupted. National staff is ‘discontinued’ during that period. In this, IRC tends to lose their best trained and highest-performing staff to other organisations. Thus, they are constantly ‘starting over’ with their national staff. A lack of internal unrestricted funds to ensure programme continuity in such cases proves to be problematic.

The Finance Manager further argued that multi-year funding allows for spending planning to be developed over a longer horizon, taking into account seasonal factors, availability, the logistics supply chain, etc. This ensures more timely support for on-going activities. Pointing out that even basic materials are often not available in-country, the Supply-Chain Manager underlined that due to persistently high levels of insecurity, non-functioning national markets, and profoundly bad infrastructure, the procurement cycle can be many months long. In shorter implementation periods, they are thus often unable to develop and carry-out a sophisticated purchasing plan, rather being forced take more immediate solutions that risk compromising quality and/or reliability and can directly undermine programme impact.

Deep field staff also argued for multi-year funding, explaining that ruptures of their activities have prevented them from achieving real impact within a short operational period. Others pointed out that the more sophisticated programming approach that IRC is seeking is simply not feasible in short operational periods. For example, in the case of the programme for demobilised youth in CAR, once the programme preparations were completed, and a trainer was recruited, little time remained for follow-up after the three-month skills training. Multi-year funding would allow for a phasing of this programme which was proposed by the team to include: stage 1) socialisation; 2) technical training; 3) social responsabilizing; 4) follow-up; etc. Both

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<sup>108</sup> Because of short project funding periods, they are obliged to provide contracts, which for the most part, are significantly less than one-year. Moreover, 1-3 month funding gaps force gaps in personnel contracts.

the participants of the training and the trainer agreed that the training on its own will have limited impact. More time would ensure that the skills training has a sustainable impact in economic terms, but possibly more importantly, the psychosocial dimension could be addressed, laying an important foundation for reversing learned habits of reflexive use of violence for dispute resolution, and more proactively, fostering social cohesion and a sense of social responsibility as a means of rebuilding the fabric of a deeply affected society and preventing further violent conflict in the future. The local population also reported that the training initiatives for the population are too short, with the Mayor for example, arguing that ‘this does not allow people to master the topic’.

### *The Programme Approach*

The evaluation team was asked to reflect on the extent to which IRC is poised to migrate to a programme approach with Sida. The discussions above indicate that while IRC has been extremely proactive in terms of thinking carefully about what is required to work effectively in critical crisis contexts and developing approaches and tools to do so, this is a work in progress. While the implementation period under review here has seen extensive exploration, experimentation, and reflection, this has fed into operations in somewhat of a patchwork manner and with a relative top-down impetus. The next phase should see a shift towards more coherent integrated action driven from the bottom-up with responses being contextualised, adapting to the local realities.<sup>109</sup> This should be conceived within the Programme Approach for at least some operational countries as a means of ensuring adequate space and flexibility.

However, this evaluation has revealed a lack of clarity, especially between IRC and Sida, regarding what the Programme Approach means. As such, this section strips the idea to its core components, aiming to extract the ideas from terminology that is in some cases causing confusion.<sup>110</sup> The core components that such an approach needs to ensure include:

- *Intervention logic and activity flexibility*: which allows for fluid shifting between original responses and adapted responses (intervention logic) in order to adapt to acute shifts in the given context. This requires fixed agreements at the level of Outcomes, but flexibility at the level of in-puts, activities, and out-puts, as well as the theory of change, with action being adapted in real-time in relation to contextual shifts and shifting needs of the affected population.

<sup>109</sup> Importantly, the Research, Evaluation & Learning resources have been reoriented to emphasise programmatic learning in order to study the many lessons learned during this implementation period, and to study how the various initiatives can best be folded into a contextualised programme approach.

<sup>110</sup> For example, differing understandings of what the ADAPT initiative entails has introduced some confusion. A concerted effort is required to establish a common understanding of these terms.

- *geographic flexibility*: which includes the capacity to follow populations in the case of large-scale displacement, especially when displacement is cyclic; or to shift locations if IRC loses access in one area due to prolonged insecurity; etc.;
- *budget flexibility*: which allows for the above described flexibility. While the overall budget would be fixed, programme fund expenditure need to facilitate adaptability at the level of material, human resource, and other associated costing that will vary according to the above operational shifts.
- *multi-year funding*:<sup>111</sup> which allows for programming that is conceived over three years as opposed to three consecutive years of annual programmes.<sup>112</sup>

While the Programme Approach is designed to generate greater flexibility in order to allow for responsive and adaptive programming, it implicitly comes with far less structure than the existing Project Approach. This raises concerns whether IRC has the institutional capacity to work effectively within a far less structured framework. Importantly, between the Outcomes & Evidence Framework (OEF) and the country level SAPs, IRC has established frameworks that provide significant institutional clarity. The OEF provides the global reference regarding the institution priorities and focus. As part of the 2020 strategy process, this framework is well-known at the field level. Pointing out that ‘it sets the perimeters; the focus keeps us on track; it prevents us from being pulled into the many other urgent needs’, expatriate personnel asserted that this framework provides them with clear focus, as well as articulating IRC’s programming logic, their priorities, how they intend to respond, and what they expect to achieve.

While they are adamant that this provides country teams with a solid framework for multi-year programming,<sup>113</sup> the country-level five-year Strategic Action Plans (SAPs) articulate the country specific application of the 2020 strategy and OEF, thus reflecting a contextualisation of the global strategy. The SAP provides a very clear road-map for the institutional vision as it applies within the given country context. It also provides a clear framework upon which the Programme Approach could be constructed.

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<sup>111</sup> It is apparent that multi-year funding will not be applied across the whole of the Sida funded portfolio, however pilots to systematically test the feasibility and added-value should be undertaken.

<sup>112</sup> A three-year programme plan might entail an initial 6-month inception period in which community-level analysis is conducted of the context, needs, and prioritisation (i.e.: applying Client Responsiveness tools); an intensive capacity building effort could be under-taken with the community at the same time. The second year might see a set of relatively standard activities supported with action research to study options and impact, etc, while the third year may focus more on exit opportunities, emphasizing work with partners; etc.

<sup>113</sup> Stressing that the level of institutional support from both the region and global levels would not allow any wayward programming, country level Managers and Coordinators were confident that they could take advantage of the increased flexibility, while at the same time being able to manage the associated risks.

Nevertheless, the impact of the Programme Approach remains relatively speculative. Applying their typically systematic approach to evaluating the pros and cons of new approaches, IRC should pilot the Programme Approach before engaging at a large-scale. As such, it is proposed that the next HFA reflect a combination of the project approach (i.e.: the current funding structure), with select countries being identified to adopt the Programme Approach.<sup>114</sup> At the same time, the framework agreement should be structured in a manner that allows for a progressive evolution towards greater engagement with the Programme Approach over the implementation period, assuming that the evidence supports this.

More immediately, there is a need for an animated dialogue between IRC and Sida to more comprehensively explore the nuances of this approach,<sup>115</sup> ensuring that it is conceptualised in a manner that accommodates the needs of both institutions and best capitalises upon mutual synergies. Indeed, including a wider set of actors in these discussions could prove to be useful in terms of stimulating reflections and generating new potentials for mutually beneficial collaboration.<sup>116</sup> More aspirational opportunities may be identified through introducing IRC to a wider reaching multi-disciplinary team within Sida, including for example relevant thematic and/or geographic leads, as well as moving outside of the humanitarian-specific frame.<sup>117</sup> The complex challenges that confront effective response to people at risk in the most complex operating contexts demand open and creative reflections in order to both identify and create opportunities for new ways of tackling these challenges.

## 5.2 FINDINGS RELATED TO INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

### 5.2.1 Reported institutional changes and impact in the IRC

#### *Management and organisational set-up*

The entire IRC organisation has experienced a significant growth over the past years, almost doubling the IRC global income from 2012 to 2016 and IRC-UK has had a similar trend. In FY 2016 IRC-UK provided 146.3 million GBP (201 million USD) of

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<sup>114</sup> CAR should be one such country, as their SAP and Emergency Preparedness planning would greatly benefit from the flexibility that the Programme Approach entails.

<sup>115</sup> With both institutions being large, change processes are often cumbersome and time consuming thus timing of such dialogue needs to allow for this.

<sup>116</sup> A concrete example is IRC's engagement with Sida's conflict and peace building initiative as a potential means for overcoming the humanitarian/development divide.

<sup>117</sup> This of course needs to be complemented with IRC's proactive effort plan and link humanitarian and more development oriented support as they develop the SAPs for each country, approaching relevant donors in advance, and ensuring that they are effectively explaining their unique approach to as many stakeholders as possible so the synergies are facilitated from all angles in advance/anticipation of urgent needs.



the global income of 740 million USD (27 %) <sup>118</sup>. The organisation has grown organically during this time, in July 2013 IRC-UK had a staff level of 38 people and in July 2017 the number of staff was 95 with an additional 11 positions vacant (a total of 106 positions in the structure). The relative growth was the greatest in the Technical Unit & IPD and Policy & Practice including External Relations and Fundraising where it almost tripled and in the AMU where it doubled. The entire IRC organisation grew from approximately 8 000 people to 10 000 during the same time. <sup>119</sup>

The previous assessment of IRC-UK in 2013 provides an in-depth detailed description of the structure and governance as well as the management and strategic leadership. <sup>120</sup> In most aspects this still applies and the organisation is very well founded in the UK political and commercial society through its Board of Trustees. However, the composition of the Board has changed slightly instead of 12 members there are now 14 members. The Board is chaired by Sir John Holmes and he sits also on the IRC Inc. board, which creates an important linkage between the two organisations. The IRC-UK board has four sub-committees, the Audit & Governance Committee, the Policy & Advocacy Committee, the Development Committee, and the Nomination Committee, which have important roles in the governance in the organisation through the sub-committees. The roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are formulated in a policy document. <sup>121</sup>

A new Executive Director took over the leadership of IRC-UK in 2014 and under her tenure pivotal organisational changes took place both in IRC-UK and IRC Inc. Prior to her entry into the organisation, the new IRC Inc. President, David Miliband, made changes in the management structure of IRC Inc., especially in the composition of the senior leadership. The main focus of which was to make the management of IRC Inc. more inclusive, decentralised and increasing the managerial span of Senior Vice Presidents (SVP) and Directors.

Two main management teams were created; one Leadership Board (9 members) which consists of all the Senior Vice Presidents and some other officers such as CFO and a General Counsel and a Senior Leaders Group (36 members) with a wider group of Directors and essential managers. The Leadership Board meets monthly and the Leaders Group meet every two weeks.

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<sup>118</sup> The share of global income in FY 2016 was 26.6 %, IRC Financial Statement FY 2015/2016

<sup>119</sup> A recent development in the AMU is that ESPT is now part of the AMU. This team has been moved under former Donor Relations & Analytics Unit which is now called – AMU Strategic Partnerships & Analytics.

<sup>120</sup> Sipu International AB; Organisational Assessment of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in view of possible qualification as Sida's framework and/or strategic partner organisations, International Rescue Committee. Olivia Lazard and Delphine Thizy, September 2013

<sup>121</sup> IRC-UK; Roles and Responsibilities of IRC-Uk Trustees, April 2011

The new director of IRC-UK created a new management team that mirrored the set-up in IRC Inc. The new Senior Management Team is called Europe Senior Management and at the same time the concept IRC Europe was created, though not as a formal organisation, mirroring the set-up in Europe.<sup>122</sup> IRC Europe includes IRC-UK, the IRC offices in Berlin, Belgium, Geneva and a cooperating partner in the Netherlands. A new strategy deals with the strategic issues for IRC to expand in Europe both in fundraising and programming. The inclusion of a wider circle of Directors and managers in the management teams has had substantial impact on the global network.<sup>123</sup>

The noted impact of this has been:<sup>124</sup>

- Increased professionalisation of certain functions of the extended management team
- Improved communication which in the past was halting, both internal and external
- Advocacy has improved and been enhanced to include also programming. Before it mainly concerned advocacy towards governments and contracts but now it also concern programming and humanitarian issues and dialogue.
- Expanding the Sr. Leaders Group brings the organisation together, on all levels by cascading information to the teams on more local levels. Preparations are done locally before each meeting, which enhances the information used for decision-making and inclusiveness. It also brings the IRC HQ closer to the field.

A very positive impact is that the inclusion of regional and UK senior officials also brings IRC-UK closer and becomes more a part of the global operations. There are also several management committees with members from both organisations.

However, the greatest structural impact on IRC has probably been the on-going set-up of the Awards Management Unit (AMU) and implementation of several initiatives to streamline and harmonise processes, not the least improvements in ICT and on-line applications.

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<sup>122</sup> Hence the title of the IRC-UK Director was changed to Executive Director and Senior Vice President Europe.

<sup>123</sup> A recent comment from IRC-UK have indicated that the European Senior Management as described by the former Executive Director and presented at the IRC-UK website is not implemented as a formal team.

<sup>124</sup> This has been attested from both the UK and US side and to some extent also in the field.



### *The AMU restructuring*

When the IRC President joined the organisation he went into the field to find out what the hindrances were and what needed to improve. The main request was to have improvements in the grant management system, which was deemed to be fragmented and multi-layered. The processes were not streamlined and most of the time the staff had to go to different places to get information to get things done. It was not only a US/UK problem but an internal structural problem as functions were duplicated and sometimes the information and reports had to be sent to different places increasing response time and causing delays.

A plan to form a new AMU structure was presented by the end of 2014, and was approved in April 2015. The rollout of the AMU, however, was hampered by certain challenges such as deployment of team resources, lack of clarity in processes, roles and how to meet the needs of the field, HQ and donors. A reset was initiated in 2016 and the Senior Vice President US Programs was made responsible. After an extensive consultative process, a new plan was approved and work started in December 2016 and was structured in three phases to deal with certain aspects. The first phase started in January, the second phase in April and the last and third phase in July. The process is expected to complete by October 2017.

The objective is to create an AMU that serves to coordinate and facilitates the Grant lifecycle from identifying opportunities to close of programmes by using well-defined processes and systems for transparent information for grants oversight, donor compliance, and organisational decision making.<sup>125</sup> “The AMU should focus on functions where it provides the greatest added value due to its central view across the entire grants portfolio, specialised technical expertise, and access to donors.” Ultimately the enhancement of AMU is aimed at providing better, more consistent, more flexible and more accessible support to the field. The new AMU is a total integration of the Pre-award, Post award and grant management activities where functions in both US and UK is formed within one unit shared between London and New York and with staff in both locations. There is also staff in Brussels, Geneva and in the regions.

AMU is built upon five pillars, which focus on:<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> IRC Power-point presentation of the AMU reorganisation project.

<sup>126</sup> The pillars of AMU has recently been renamed to 1) Training, 2) Strategic Partnerships & Analytics, 3)

1. Training
2. Donor Relations & Analytics
3. Compliance & policy setting
4. Business development
5. Grant management Support and Frameworks.

The AMU is a centralised function to ensure organisational-wide consistency, risk management and adherence to policies. It is both field and donor focused to serve as a bridge and translator between the two. The AMU will house specialised technical competence, which would be inefficient to be in each region. Being external from the program implementation it can serve as a separate, objective function for compliance and risk related issues. Working across all regions, the AMU is able to ease capacity gaps across regions and countries.<sup>127</sup>

One important action as part of the AMU structure was also to upgrade and re-emphasise the importance of the OTIS system. The system has been experiencing some decay over the years, hampered by problems with its data and discipline in keeping it updated. This was partly due to the fact that the system was not owned by the users. Improvements in data hygiene, discipline, user friendliness and improvements in connectivity was necessary to make sure the users were using it and the data input was essential and correct data. The ownership has been transferred to the AMU Donor Relations and Analytics pillar and progress have been made in getting it updated and used by the field to provide real time data.

The expected impact of this new structure is:

- Greater accountability – improved link between system approvals and organisational decision making
- Reducing the number of layer between the field and the grants management
- More streamlined processing
- Better clarity to be able to pin-point weaknesses
- Greater standardisation driving towards better quality
- Being more systematic and process orientation to clarify so people know when and where to provide input.
- OTIS as a system of record. Taking charge of the OTIS system with staff monitoring the data quality- consistent information at all levels of decision making and implementation.
- Having training for the AMU team

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Compliance & Policy, 4) Programme Development, 5) Grant Management & Frameworks. However, the previous names are used in the report.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

- Have policies developed for the award management and practices
- A strengthened Sub-award partnership management implemented from October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### *Financial management*

#### **Accounting System**

IRC uses SUN Systems accounting software. A standard Chart of Accounts and coding structure is used throughout all IRC programs. Utilizing the SUN system, New York maintains a consolidated ledger for the worldwide operations except for IRC-UK. Each US office also has a SUN Systems database on the NY Server and maintains a ledger for their office. The international office databases are local and loaded in the HQ SUN database on a monthly basis.

The SUN system is using 10 different codes (objects) that can be used for various identification and analysis purposes such as project, budget, sector, place, country, staff member, local partner (sub-grant). The SUN system has capability to handle three different currencies: GBP, USD, and EUR.

The SUN system is going to be replaced by a Microsoft Dynamics ERP system expected to be rolled out in 2019. The ERP system includes a new functional financial system integrated with modules for procurement and supply chain management. The system does not include a grant management system, which has to be developed separately. In the meantime, the OTIS system will be upgraded and eventually slowly phased out.

The ERP system is a cloud based system and the information will be available everywhere in the organisation and will be a true real-time system unlike the current SUN system and all IRC offices included IRC-UK will be included<sup>128</sup>. This will be a significant change to information management and decision-making capability of IRC. The main components of the ERP will be a powerful financial management module with unlimited dimensions and project accounting, a fully integrated supply chain system, and other support systems will be attached. As already mentioned the OTIS has been upgraded and it will be a later decision how and if it will be replaced. The ERP system includes most grants management information but not all. The gap has been determined to be relatively small and discussions are beginning as to which systems will cover the gap in the future. The ERP system appears to be an

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<sup>128</sup> The formal legal requirements as well as the grant information requirements to include IRC-UK is being investigated and will be determined during the design phase.

information management system, which will enable IRC to continue to grow and meet the requirements of an organisation of IRC's size.

### **Financial Manual**

The financial manual exists in a global version and is mainly for the IRC Inc. operations; however applicable sections are being used in IRC-UK since there is no specific financial manual for the UK operations.<sup>129</sup> The IRC UK finance department is in the process of collecting all the procedures and processes with the aim of developing a financial manual themselves.

The global financial manual is an impressive document with over 400 pages with detailed instructions of general finance and accounting, internal control framework and auditing, payroll and personnel management, inventory and assets control, foreign currency management and budgeting. It also includes grants accounting and grants management, budgeting, insurance and risks, and opening and closing of country operations. "The manual is designed to provide IRC country programs with the financial policy, procedures and guidance required to manage their financial activities. In order to maintain good financial practices and ensure consistency in accounting and reporting, all IRC programs are required to comply with the policies and procedures presented in this manual."<sup>130</sup>

A large section is devoted to European grant and donor reporting where each larger donors, including Sida, where specific requirements are referenced.

### **Budget Analysis and Follow-up**

Budget analysis and follow-up is being done in the finance department in IRC-UK for the grants that are implemented and led by this office. The Project Finance Officer in IRC-UK is responsible for following up on the four different sub-components receiving Sida funding. The budget is being followed-up monthly on spending. There are different managers/ technical leads for each budget. The relevant manager/technical lead meets monthly with the Project Finance Officer to follow-up on spending against budgets.

One of the problems in the current system has been not working in a real-time environment where budgets could be monitored with updated actual information without an extensive time-lag. Mainly a number of different excel sheets have been used which required an extensive amount of manual work where local information had been put in, in addition to data extracted from the Sun system. A new application

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<sup>129</sup> International Programs Financial Manual, edition 09/30/2016

<sup>130</sup> As stated in the introduction of the manual.

called BvA (Budget vs. Actual) has been rolled-out with an add-on, which provides the budget holder with more real-time information on spending.

The BvA system started its development phase in late 2015 and has been on-line since last year, mainly for the field offices. It is a web-based stand-alone system but is extracting data from the Sun system and is updated with local information from the supply chain management.

It provides the users with an immediate and current follow-up in real-time of the spending vs. budget. Everything is being logged in the system and creates and generates an audit trail. The application is a tool to assist the field officers in real-time follow-up rather than a change in the monitoring procedures. The process has not changed very much and has been focussed on assisting the field offices, some of the supply chain procedures have been harmonised to the workings of the BvA. The BvA application has been rolled-out in all the field offices but there are not many users yet in the US HQ and UK. It will move into a more operational stage to support monitoring and will include staff in US and UK in AMU and grant management. When the AMU comes on-line it will be given an application with real-time capability to monitor the spending vs. the grant budget rather than relying on monthly data which will speed up the reporting process significantly.

The application is highly acclaimed by its users and has helped the IRC field teams to better analyse their budgets versus actual in a real-time manner as a result of feeding the supply chain procurement decisions directly into the BvA application. The grants teams are able to better manage the donor funding, greater compliance with restrictions, increased efficiency and provides an overview of the procurement in a country thus resulting in improved reporting to donors and better real-time information for decision making.

### ***Anti-Corruption***

The IRC anti-corruption guidelines have not changed since the assessment in 2013 and are still divided in several documents which together sums up the anti-corruption policy. The documents are The IRC way, the Transactional Compliance policy, the Fiscal Integrity Policy, the Financial Manual, and the Procurement Manual. There is no place where all the aspects of anti-corruption are collected. The organisation leans on The IRC Way to set the ethical code for its staff being “We do not engage in theft, corrupt practises, nepotism, bribery, or trade in illicit substances”. The document also

spells out the standards for ethical behaviour and as such set the threshold for anti-corruption.<sup>131</sup>

The Finance Manual elaborates more on the IRC Way in its Internal Control framework where it says: “IRC Way emphasises integrity, service and accountability in every aspect of the work that we do and is the foundation of each of IRC’s policies. Any inconsistency with the IRC Way is encouraged to be reported either through line managers or anonymously using EthicsPoint™. These incidents are reported to Ethics & Compliance Unit (ECU).<sup>132</sup> It also states: “IRC’s assessment of potential fraud considers fraudulent reporting, possible loss of assets, and corruption resulting from the various ways that fraud and misconduct can occur across the organisation. The IRC undertakes to investigate and, if necessary, take legal action against any person(s) who, on strong grounds, can be suspected of corruption or other inappropriate gain.” Any potential, suspected or known instances involving fraudulent, unlawful or unethical acts should be reported to the ECU. This includes any IRC personnel or related third parties that may be viewed as acting on IRC’s behalf such as partners, sub-grantees, subcontractors, suppliers, or incentive workers.

The Procurement Manual is not very specific when it comes to corruption but it does discuss areas such as Conflict of interest and segregation of duties, Supplier relations, gifts, hospitality and travel, confidentiality. There is also a Supply Chain Code of Conduct to be signed by everybody working in the supply chain.

Fiscal Integrity Policy states that any accounting fraud or fiscal impropriety is strictly prohibited (gives examples). It also states that violation of the policy will result in disciplinary action, termination, civil liability, criminal prosecution based on the severity of the offense. The Transactional Compliance Policy deals with compliance towards laws related to international business activities such as anti-bribery laws (US Foreign Corrupt Practices and the UK Bribery Act). IRC is committed to full compliance and has thus adopted this policy. Violations will be met with disciplinary actions, termination, and referral to law enforcement as applicable.

Each employee is introduced to the IRC Way when he or she joins the IRC during the orientation. The contents and knowledge is refreshed each year on the IRC Way Day which is a mandatory event held each year. The IRC Way has recently been revised

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<sup>131</sup> A more detailed description of the anti-corruption implementation is provided in a new annex, Annex 11

<sup>132</sup> The ECU is a newly formed entity within IRC responsible for ensuring that the organisation has the capacity to detect, prevent and investigate serious misconduct, financial impropriety in the grant programs, potential violations of law, violations by sub grantees and suppliers.

and will be reissued in the fall of 2017. From there on all staff will have to re-read the IRC Way each year and sign the document.

In addition to the above mention policies, there is also an IRC Global Reporting Guideline, which describes how to make a report when an employee has direct knowledge of behaviour inconsistency with the IRC Way or breaches organisational policies or has concerns that a policy has been violated. There is also an option if the employee wants to be anonymous to use EthicsPoint™, which is an independent third party reporting service. No matter how an incidence has been reported it will be channelled to and registered in EthicsPoint™ and thereafter an investigator will evaluate the report.

According to the Ethics and Compliance Unit (ECU), the IRC received 523 reports of alleged misconduct from January 2016 up to September 2017. 89 % were closed, 5% were referred for review/action and 26% remain open.

### ***Procurement***

There is very little procurement being done in the IRC UK office, mainly travel and hotel arrangements. For these purposes IRC-UK has agreements with travel agents and hotels. All other procurement is managed by the Global Supply Chain unit in IRC Inc and by Procurement officers in the regional and country offices. The procurement is regulated by an international supply chain manual.<sup>133</sup> The latest version of the manual was issued in 2016 and is a result of an on-going revision that started in 2014. Relevant sections are being used at IRC-UK.

The organisation has turned global and is present in IRC's 5 global regions. Each region is headed by a Regional Supply Director who is responsible for the implementation of the procurement Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). There are also Supply Chain offices in Nairobi and in Lebanon responsible for making sure all contracts are in accordance with IRC standards for specific procurements.

In 2014-2015 the procurement manual started to be revised and is moving towards a manual being more of an overview complemented with SOPs having much clearer procedures and steps to take in any given process. These SOPs resides on a global website. Previously the manual also included inventory management procedures; these have now been converted to SOPs. There is a view in the field that the systems and procedures are "heavy" and time consuming, but at the same time they feel

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<sup>133</sup> IRC Global Supply Chain Manual, Procurement Manual for International Programs, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2016.

confident that the systems ensure that funds are used efficiently and reduce the risk of fraud.

Many of the changes in the global supply chain organisation are changes implemented or strengthened as a result of the corruption and collusion detected in Turkey. IRC has made a large investment in this area with a compliance and audit unit in NY, a QA team of five regional QA managers, three based in Nairobi and two based in Beirut led by a director in Nairobi. This team's background ranges from fraud investigation and audit professional who review every agreement above \$20 000 prior to the execution of the procurement to ensure that proper diligence has been done and to perform risk-based enhanced due diligence. The SOP's discussed below was strengthened and IRC began documenting a debarred supplier list which has become part of the due diligence check. Two staff instead of one is required to receive and verify goods and samples are required to be retained for NFI purposes. Staff has been trained in compliance, what constitutes ethical behaviour for IRC, and on IRC's expectations.

The next upcoming version of the manual will continue the process of streamlining the manual to the extent that it is not actually a manual but more of a policy document giving an overview of the processes. Guidance will be found in the process SOPs and templates residing on the global website for download.

The Sida checklist confirms that the current procurement procedures are in compliance with and in some areas exceed Sida Procurement Guidelines. The assessment of the procurement processes in 2013<sup>134</sup> is still valid and the updated manual appears to be more streamlined and process oriented than the previous Procurement Manual (5<sup>th</sup> edition).

### 5.2.2 Reassessment Questions

#### *Audit*

IRC-UK has a Board Audit and Governance Committee, which is charged with the task of enabling Board of Trustees and the senior management of the Company to affirm that internal controls are firmly established and are fully effective.<sup>135</sup> In doing so it monitors IRC Inc. internal audit, audit plans, visits and reports, noting any significant risks to European donor grants as well as discuss with the external auditors

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<sup>134</sup> Organisational Assessments of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in view of possible qualification as Sida's framework and/or strategic partner organisations, International Rescue Committee, September 2013.

<sup>135</sup> IRC-UK Board Committee, Audit and Governance, Terms of Reference. Updated 20 June 2017



any problems and reservations arising from interim and final audits including a review of the management letter incorporating management responses, among other tasks.

IRC-UK does not have an internal control department and the internal audit function is within IRC Inc. The internal audit unit reports to the Audit Committee of IRC Inc. board where the IRC-UK board has a seat. Through this arrangement the board of IRC-UK can review audit reports and recommendations from country offices and programmes.

According to interviews in IRC-UK there is currently no specific oversight procedure or policy how follow-up the reported audit recommendations in a systematic way by the Audit Committee for oversight purposes, but a process is being developed at IRC Inc. by ECU and IPD. The ultimate goal is to record all recommendations and assign responsibilities for all actions. This is being done, as a norm in all audits but not always as formally as is intended. There is always a follow-up of the previous audit when new audits are carried out and according to the interviews at IRC-UK the Post award unit in AMU will always check actions on recommendations when preparing the reports.

The IRC International Finance Manual has a section on Audits for both internal and external audits. According to the manual the management (Country Director or HQ) shall prepare a corrective action plan after receiving the final audit report or a management letter from an external audit to be reviewed and approved by the Internal Audit Director. This corrective action plan shall be reviewed quarterly to ensure appropriate action has been taken. The Director of Internal Audit presents the audit findings to the Audit Committee on a regular basis and the Chair of the Audit Committee is copied upon the issuance of each individual audit report.

From the field visit to CAR it was learned that every budget is audited at the end of the implementation period. The auditors often do a presentation of their findings for the team before they depart. Draft reports are reviewed by IRC-CAR Finance, Country & Programme Directors, & New York. If there is a Programme issue, the relevant Coordinator is brought into the process. A final auditor's report is usually accompanied with a table of follow-up on recommendations, including: the issue, the person responsible, the action required, the time-line, etc. This table is completed with actions taken and is then attached to the original report. It serves as a report for the next auditor on action taken vis-à-vis recommendations made. The New York Finance Department has the oversight, but really only gets involved if a significant issue emerges, although they are reportedly always scanning these processes.

### *Quality assurance, monitoring and learning*

By consolidating and restructuring the international programmes (into the AMU) all reporting is being channelled to the AMU post award unit who is responsible to

follow up the implementation and producing the reports to the donors. The focus has been on improving programme quality; being self-critical; identifying key challenges and this said to be attributed to the new leadership and a clear emphasis on strategy. A big shift in focus has been the shift away from ‘activities’ to ‘outcomes’ and a commitment to being evidence-based. The shift towards outcome-based reporting should be noticed by Sida in the upcoming reports.

The AMU staff is responsible for all reports to European based grants and in the case of Sida it is the Frameworks Team in collaboration with the grants management regional team. Country offices are required to submit all interim and final reports for European Grants i.e. ECHO, EU, DFID, Irish Aid, SIDA funded projects to the UK office with a copy to their Regional Controller. Country offices in conjunction with the AMU shall be responsible for follow up on receiving funds from the donor. The IRC-UK will present a report monthly to the Finance Controller with a copy to the Regional Controller of the Field Financial Status Summary for each European grant indicating funds received, transfer, expenses and funds held by the UK. All UK correspondence and action in regards to European Donors must be sent to the country teams and the Regional Controller for the respective country when it relates to financial and audit reports. The UK team may request a Regional Controller to authorise, in his/her absence, submission of the financial report to a European Donor.

### ***Partner management and Sub-granting***

IRC-UK does not forward funds to country offices or partners in the field, this is the responsibility of IRC Inc. Money from European donors is paid into US Dollar accounts of IRC-UK, usually separate for each donor as it is for Sida. Up until July 1<sup>st</sup>, requests for funds came in to IRC-UK from field offices and were being disbursed directly to the field. Now all the funding will be transferred to IRC Inc. where the funds will be managed and disbursed to the field offices. Partners in the field will receive their funds from the respective Country Offices. The IRC Inc. will provide funds for the operating budget of IRC-UK.

The IRC-UK will keep track of the donor grants received through different balance sheet accounts and proper transparency will be observed (observing International Aid Transparency initiative). However, the IRC-UK does not deal directly with the partners in the field and the partnerships are being managed by IRC Inc. through the Country Offices. The IRC Inc is responsible for the sub-granting by doing proper capacity assessment of internal control and management, M&E, audit requirements

etc. The accountability rests with IRC-UK and this is being monitored through the Ethics and Management Committee and Award Management Committee.

There is a mix of service contracts and sub-granting/sub-awards in working with partners. The IRC is one of the organisations, which have endorsed the Grand Bargain principles and have for that reason developed detailed partnership principles.<sup>136</sup> The previous policies and procedures are no longer in use and will be replaced by SPMS. The finance manual includes a section which consist of detailed instructions how to process the sub-awards and service contracting from a financial standpoint and pre-award assessments and will be harmonised with the SPMS procedures.

### *The IRC Sub-Award Partnership Management System (SPMS)<sup>137</sup>*

It should be noted that the IRC-UK is not actively part of the partner management as the operational aspects of implementing projects and programmes is the responsibility of IRC Inc. However, IRC-UK as a contractual partner to Sida is responsible to assure the compliance to the contract, which is done via the AMU Framework Team.

The Sub-Award partnership is a bit of cultural change to the IRC and the field staff. IRC staff has worked with partners in the field for many years but not in a structured and uniformed way and not with clear guidance when it comes to fund management, accountability and compliance. Especially the capacity building of partners has not been evident. But this new system is also something the field has been asking for. The field is very responsive to the policy and is confident that it will be implemented.

The partnership processes were previously governed by two policy documents and compliance processes in the international finance manual.<sup>138</sup> In the previous assessment of IRC in 2013 the partnership system was deemed to be insufficient compared to the Sida's goals in the humanitarian strategy.<sup>139</sup> The weaknesses were primarily focussed on selection, capacity building and recognizing partnerships as an essential skill and asset to develop. Capacity building was mostly focused on compliance issues and not so much on technical capacity to achieve results.

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<sup>136</sup> The Sub-Award Partnership Management System (SPMS)

<sup>137</sup> Please note that the partnerships are also discussed in the programme section (5.1.5) of this report.

<sup>138</sup> Two documents, IRC Inc. Partnership: Program Goal and Outcome Guidance Sheet and Partnership: Shifting Perceptions, were indicated by IRC to be out of date and replaced by the SPMS.

<sup>139</sup> Sida: Strategy for humanitarian assistance 2011 – 2014

According to IRC, the ambition with SPMS is to redevelop IRC's policies, systems and tools to ensure that they are best practice and address the Grand Bargain, demand from donors, partners and the vision of IRC in regards to partnerships in the field.

The follow-up of donor compliance and accountability is one of the pillars of the new AMU and as such it is inherently integrated in the new Sub-Awards partnership. Training is being given to the field staff on the policy and for the implementation, and a helpdesk has been set-up to support a systematic roll-out.

The implementation and the input of the policy will be monitored closely to learn lessons. There is no target internally how much of the grants that shall be channelled through the partners, but IRC is well aware that the donors are stressing for it and that there is an external expectation from the Grand Bargain of an aggregated target of at least 25 % by 2020.

The objectives of the IRC's Sub-Award Partnership Management System are to establish policy, process, guidance and tools to promote effective sub-award partnerships, which are highlighted in the SPMS policy documents by:

- enabling the IRC to pursue its strategic vision with respect to local and national partnerships;
- identifying, allocating and appropriately mitigating programmatic, operational, financial and reputational risk;
- promoting greater accountability for effective and efficient delivery of aid;
- establishing a strong contractual foundation for strategic partnerships that extend beyond program implementation to incorporate mutual capacity strengthening and broader collaboration;
- appropriately catering for the diversity of sub-award partnerships that the IRC engages in, as well as the variety of contexts that the IRC operates in; and
- promoting the core partnership principles of equality, transparency, complementarity, responsibility, and a results-oriented approach in all our interactions with partners.<sup>140</sup>

The principles of Partnership as described in the last bullet point are adopted by IRC and also been endorsed the principles through the Charter for Change in 2016.<sup>141</sup> The SPMS is stated to be designed to promote and operationalise the principles in partnership relationships.

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<sup>140</sup> Sub-Award partnership Management System, Part One: Overview

<sup>141</sup> <https://charterforchange.org>

The Sub-Award Partnership Management System was designed primarily for in sub-award partnerships with local and national civil society organisations. However, the system applies equally to partnerships with international civil society organisations, government agencies, and private sector organisations<sup>142</sup>. Effective partnership with local and national civil society organisations is expected to enable the IRC to pursue the strategic objectives of the IRC 2020; effectiveness, best use of resources, Scale and reach, speed and timeliness, and responsiveness.

The development of the SPMS is an on-going process and in the policy will consist of 10 sections:

Part One. Overview

*Part Two: Internal Management*

*Part Three Civil Society mapping and Analysis*

*Part Four: Partner Identification*

Part Five Due Diligence

Part Six: Sub-Award Funding Instruments

Part Seven: Sub-award Agreement Development

Part Eight: Sub-award Management, Monitoring, and Accountability

*Part Nine: Capacity Strengthening*

Part 10: Award Closure

As of July 2017 six of the ten parts have been developed under the first phase of the programme and were released in June 2017. The other four parts marked in italics are currently under development as part of phase two of the SPMS development. When the entire system is complete it will be complimented with around 30 tools available on IRC's rescuenet. As of October 1<sup>st</sup> the system will become formal policy of IRC and its use will be mandatory. However, the four missing parts will be added later.

### **Identification and assessment of partners**

The guideline for identification of partners, which is part 4, has not yet been formalised into the policy and is under development and should be included later on in 2017 or early 2018. The assessment of the partners implementing capacity is described in part 5 – Due Diligence.

Before getting into a sub-award agreement with a potential partner the system prescribes a comprehensive due diligence review. The purpose is to get an understanding of the partner organisation's history, relationships, past performance,

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<sup>142</sup> Guidance on appropriate modifications is scheduled to be developed in 2017.

reputation, and capacity. This is done in two steps as is explained in Part 5, the first step is a partner vetting process and report which includes the anti-terrorism clearance (ATC) and the second step is the Pre-Award Assessment (PAA).

The vetting process is to comprehensively map the organisations background and staff and follows a systematised checklist to document the process. The Pre-Award Assessment process is to ensure that the partner have the capacity to competently, ethically and accountably implement the funded project. The Pre-Award Assessment tool (PAA) addresses areas such as governance, program quality, grant management, monitoring and evaluation, accounting and finance systems, cash management, personnel and payroll, procurement and asset management and sub-award management. The capacity assessment is usually done by the field office staff and is guided by a Pre-Award Assessment Instruction for use. The PAA combined with the Vetting process provides the IRC with a comprehensive view and assessment of the partner's capacity and the assessment scores provide an indication on the issues that might be mitigated. Where significant concerns or deficiencies are identified special conditions that targets those concerns are noted.

Designing a “Sub-Award partner support” program is one of such special conditions. This could include technical support, training and mentoring for compliance, finance, supply chain and human resources as well as supporting the partner to develop risk assessment plans.<sup>143</sup> Experiences are reported to be good and a partner in Turkey has attested that the capacity building had been “extensive” in both administrative as well as professional training.

### **Partner agreements.**

Part Six outlines a number of different Sub-Awards instruments, Cost Reimbursed Sub-Award, Simplified Grant, Fixed Amount Award, and Contribution-in-kind Award. The first category is used where a partner organisation has authority for determining how a program is executed technically and operationally and performance is measured by the accomplishment of program objectives. This could involve advance funding if IRC assess the organisation's capacity to manage funds is in accordance with compliance requirements. The use of the different instruments above is dependent upon the nature of the relationship between the IRC and proposed partner and the ability of the partner to comply with donor requirements. If the partner is not deemed to qualify for being a sub-awardee a service contract could be appropriate.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> SPMS Part Five, page 5 and Part Seven, page 12.

<sup>144</sup> SPMS Part 6 p.1 & 6

Part Seven outlines the process of setting up the partnership agreement which includes financial, programmatic, and monitoring, reporting and audit terms. The specific requirements from a donor in regards to the partner agreements are noted in the Grants opening meeting where the compliance requirements are noted and entered in the OTIS as part of the quality assurance process.

### **Systems for responsible withdrawal and exit strategies.**

The last module in the SPMS deals with the Sub-Award closure. This deals mainly with how the relationship with the partners shall be closed from a formal standpoint to ensure that both parties have completed their respective obligation. The process shall also analyse and document the performance of the partnership and reflect on opportunities to continue beyond the sub-award framework.<sup>145</sup> However, there is no guidance in the module how such a relationship could be forged. According to IRC this will be included in module three (*Civil Society mapping and Analysis*).

### ***Administration fee***

The IRC charges administrative fees (in-direct cost recovery) to all donors and is calculated at a percentage rate added on to the invoicing each month. The base for the invoicing is the direct project cost that has been incurred in the field offices and no administrative overhead is added at any other level in the organisation. In general, the add-on for administrative costs is 7 % for institutional (government) funding and 10 % for private foundations. According to IRC the industry norm in the industry is 7-9 %, DFID is paying 7 % in most of their grants but there are instances where the charge is 9.2 %. The administrative fee could be adjusted for donors with a different and complex aid structure, which in that case put a higher requirement on administrative resources. The Sida HFA is charged with the normal 7 %, which also is the maximum allowance based on operating costs stated in the guidelines for humanitarian support by Sida.<sup>146</sup> The 7% rate is also found in several of the Sida CSO framework organisations.

The IRC has clarified its calculation of the overhead percentage in a response to Sida in 2016.<sup>147</sup> It is explained that admin costs are based on costs incurred in the IRC Headquarters in New York and the IRC-UK office. In the IRC NY Headquarters services are provided the support to operations globally and include cost elements for international programme support and HQ support functions such as Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology, Administration, Global Supply chain,

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<sup>145</sup> SPMS Part 10: Sub-Award Closure, page 1, overview.

<sup>146</sup> "Guidelines for Sida support for humanitarian action through civil society organisations", issued 2015-11-27.

<sup>147</sup> Response to Sida clarification questions on HFA III Year 3 application (2016)



Awards Management, Internal Audit, and Executive Management. In the IRC-UK services are provided to support the IRC country offices on compliance to European donor rules and regulations, quality assurance, and building relationships, with European donors and providing capacity building. It was also noted that this does not include the costs for the specific coordination of the HFA, which is budgeted and invoiced separately.

The HFA programme include a coordination component from with IRC draws costs for i) Coordination with Humanitarian Actors and ii) Coordination with Sida. This appears to the evaluation that this coordination is a value-added service by IRC to Sida and the humanitarian assistance at large and is costs beyond the programme administration. Coordination of the HFA is included in this component with the cost of one Grant manager.<sup>148</sup>

### ***Risk management***

The responsibility for risk management rests with the Board Audit and Governance Committee. The committee shall oversee the risk management framework and the effectiveness of the management of risks, to ensure key risks are reviewed and prioritised by the IRC-UK senior management team and established systems are in place to mitigate all significant risks.<sup>149</sup>

An IRC-UK Risk Management Group (RMG) is set-up to manage and mitigate risks and vulnerabilities in a systematic and coordinated way by keeping the risk register updated and follow-up on mitigation actions, coordinate with IRC Inc. Risk Committee to ensure that risks are managed across the IRC network, and develop, implement and update policies relating to risk management.

The review of risks both internally at IRC-UK, within UK, and internationally is using a risk management framework that identifies and priorities risks, evaluates the likelihood of risks and the level of impact they would have. The risks are being assessed through the use of a risk matrix using areas as strategic risks, reputational risks, field operations, UK operations, financial risks and statutory compliance. The RMG meets monthly to review the risk matrix. It appears as if the risk management works both proactively and preventively. The weakness identified in the previous assessment was with risk assessment of partners which is expected to be rectified within the SPMS.

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<sup>148</sup> HFAIII Annual Report year 2, 2015/2016

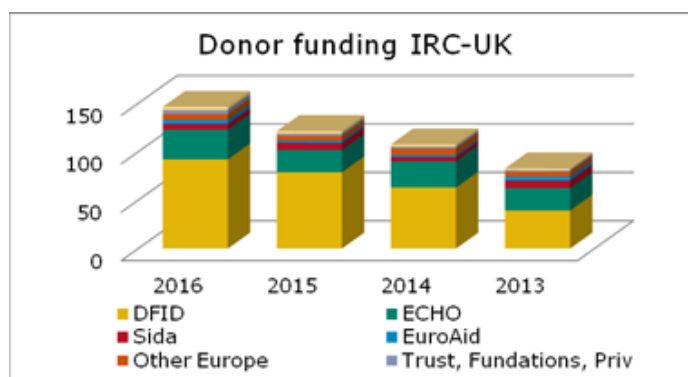
<sup>149</sup> IRC-UK Risk management Group: IRC-UK Approach to Risk, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017

The responsibility for compliance of IRC's field offices is transferred to IRC Inc. through Grant Implementation Agreements. Identifying and mitigating risks at the country office level occurs in a number of ways at IRC through:

- 1) Training in IRC policies and procedures to establish expectations;
- 2) Risk-based Internal Audits using a team of internal auditors based out of Nairobi and NY;
- 3) External audits using international audit firms;
- 4) Country-specific risk assessment (FFAT<sup>150</sup>);
- 5) regular monitoring visits to capital, provincial and field offices and those of implementing partners by internal auditors; and,
- 6) work of the Ethics & Compliance Unit.

### *Diverse donor funding*

The total income of IRC-UK has been growing steadily over the years. According to the previous assessment, it increased by 54% between 2011 and 2012. Between 2013 and 2016 it increased by 75 % to 146.3 million GBP. IRC-UK relies mostly on institutional donors and it



seems to have been fairly consistent over the years, around 95% of the total income. The biggest share is from DFID and the DFID share keep increasing every year, from 41.1 % in 2011 to 63 % in 2016 despite a small drop. Sida is the third biggest donor, slightly higher than other European government funding combined. The contribution by IRC-UK to the global income of IRC is about 27%.

In the IRC strategy for Europe 2015-2020 it aims to increase the European donor's share of the global income to 40-50% with 15% funding to be unrestricted. At the same time IRC-UK is also putting increased emphasis on its private sector fundraising in its IRC 2020 Private Sector Engagement Strategy. The fundraising department consists of 12 people divided into 6 areas, Corporate Partnerships, Philanthropy, Trusts & Foundations, Digital Fundraising, strategic operations, and Ben & Jerry partnership. There is massive investment to scale up on private funding

<sup>150</sup> Financial Risk Assessment is performed using the Field Finance Assessment Tool (FFAT)

and the target for 2017 is 6 million GBP up from 2.4 million in 2015. For IRC-UK the focus is on pan-European partnerships in Sweden, Germany, Switzerland and Netherlands, large individual donors shall be treated individually and specially. The European strategy is targeted to achieve 19-20 million by 2020. Part of the growth is expected to come from “digital” fundraising in social media, building philanthropy teams, and corporate relationships where Ben & Jerry is the model. Digital fundraising is very flexible as a campaign can be started and stopped based on need and profiling in social media will enable easier targeting. By raising more funding from the private sector IRC is expected to get access to more un-restricted funding as 20-25% of private contributions are unrestricted. The target is 300 million USD globally in 2020 of which 20 million in Europe

***Ability to provide predictable, rapid and flexible financing of partners humanitarian work***

IRC-UK has access to funding that can be used for rapid responses to immediate humanitarian crisis. Sida has made its Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) available (as reported on earlier) as well as similar funding from the Irish aid and DFID. This will of course be depended upon having partners identified and assessed and under a partner agreement after due vetting and assessment processing.

In CAR, they started in 2015/16 making a call for proposals on a range of activities that correlated with IRC activities (e.g. gender & GBV). They received submissions from 75 NGOs, and selected 15 NGOs and 30 CBOs.

The funding for the NGOs was provided in a progressive manner, capacity building was provided both in terms of financial and systems management as well as on a programmatic level, with the aim of working in a partnered manner to ensure the delivery of quality services. The capacity building aimed to ensure that CBOs and small national NGOs will have the expertise and network necessary to continuing their activities after the end of the project.<sup>151</sup> One national staff involved with this effort observed that these efforts were hampered by the fact that the engagement was on a short-term basis, thus limiting the sustainability.

***Capacity building***

The capability of IRC for capacity building is a very important aspect in the partner management process. For verification of the ability we will use examples and testimonies from the field visits.

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<sup>151</sup> IRC HFA III Narrative Report Year 2 (2015-16), p.10

**Have the capacity and skills to work with capacity building of organisation and authorities in partner countries.**

Although some IRC-CAR technical staff suggested that IRC is not really expert at working with local NGO partners, a number of external observers (e.g.: ECHO and Europe Aid) pointed to IRC's efforts with local partners as important added value. As such, the IRC-CAR Team appreciated the fact that there is a fairly well-developed 'partnership engagement' process described in IRC's 'Sub-Award Partnership Management System'. They reported that there is also a Regional Director for Partnership Management available to support them to undertake this. Moreover, IRC-New York is currently rolling out training on this as it is now an institutional priority.

It is notable that in CAR, there is no specific strategy for the capacity building of local organisations. It is rather simply an add-on to the management team, which would then draw on members of the coordination team according to correlations between capacity and needs would suggest. It was noted that there is no one in the team that was specifically appointed to develop a capacity building strategy, with the required time and resources to do so. However, it is noted that coincidentally, one of the senior managers in CAR actually had a very appropriate professional background to do so, but was already over-burdened with her management responsibilities.

Nevertheless, one senior manager suggested that addressing this process as 'add-on' under-estimates the technically specific demands of the task; as well as the effort required to ensure this is done in a comprehensive manner. The assessment team has not been able to verify whether there is actual capacity available for capacity building of local organisations and/or authorities in partner countries, either by partner staff or IRC country staff, regional staff or through the technical units.

As mentioned above, in Turkey IRC has given a great deal of support to build the capacity of its main local partner. This has included not just the usual training in "how to report" or "how to meet financial reporting requirements", but also continuing Profession Education. Management consultant support was used for change management in the partner, and accompaniment of change processes.

**Contribute to enhanced national and local capacity to meet humanitarian needs.**

In CAR, IRC has done some infrastructural development as a means of contributing to the development of public good. For example, they rebuilt the central market in one location after it had been destroyed in the violence. They have done some road repair as 'cash for work' activities. IRC has also conducted many technical trainings and capacity building sessions at different levels (i.e.: local and in Bangui), with national & local authorities being regularly invited to participate along with technical staff. However, such efforts have also generated various challenging consequences as well.

For example, in CAR there is now a tendency for authorities, especially at the local level, to look to NGOs to take the leadership on issues that are the responsibility of

these authorities. Thus, the IRC teams are also engaged in on-going efforts to push such responsibilities back into the hands of the local authorities, while providing them with training and support to better take up their responsibilities. In complement, a substantive effort at the community level more generally aims broadly at supporting the community to articulate their needs and work together with their leaders to see how these can be addressed locally.

### *Safety assessment*

#### **Carry out safety assessment for its own activities, for possible partners, as well as for those concerned by the interventions.**

IRC has a Global Security Policy that provides Guidelines for Security in Insecure Environments. It deals with how to assess different risks relate that to safety and security and different actions that can be taken when the situations demands it. Both of the field visits taken for this assignment went to locations where safety and security assessment is a norm for the daily operations and an example from CAR is used to demonstrate how it is being applied.

Given the complexity of the operating contexts that IRC is working in, they take security management seriously, both in terms of assessment and management of exposure to physical danger as well as political risks. In the case of Turkey, some of the most immediate threats are those related to manipulation and consequences by local de factor authorities and other power brokers as such, there is careful analysis regarding the risks that operating in such contexts might generate for the beneficiary population (i.e.: in the sense of doing no harm) with strategies developed to mitigate such risks.

In CAR, the risks are far more blatantly related to physical threats, although as the armed groups continue to fracture and small arms are increasingly prevalent, the diversity of the sources of risk have increased. Individual armed banditry targeting NGOs is now an imminent risk. As such, IRC has recently scaled-up their security management capacity, recently (April 2017) employing an expatriate security expert who is tasked with conducting their security analysis country-wide. Given the complexity of the security context, a number of complex security management networks have been developed across the country for the purposes of sharing incident reports and analysis of conflict and violence trends as they evolve. IRC is also included in a number of security management alert 'trees' (e.g.: that of UNDSS) as well as having an internal alert communication system that aims to keep all their staff country-wide informed and alerted to any changes in the security levels of the areas they are located within. These networks are based on inter-agency cooperation and coordination.

At the deep field level, each work day starts with a 30-minute security meeting in which all the staff are invited to report any incidents they have heard of through their personal networks, while also being briefed on any updates coming into the Head of Base from the IRC Security Responsible. He triangulates local analysis with his local

informants and other NGOs on ground and then sends his security analysis back to the Security Responsible. As such there is extensive vertical and horizontal exchange of information and analysis. Security and medical evacuation plans are in place for both expatriate and national staff. However, this is not a ‘zero risk’ operating environment.

Indeed, CAR demonstrates all too well the complexities that are inherent to IRC’s choice to focus on working in some of the most challenging and complex humanitarian contexts. Even with this level of management of security risks, the Kaga Bandero team was evacuated during this evaluation due to an armed attack and looting of the IRC compound. Despite extensive security arrangements in place with MINUSCA (located some 500 meters from the IRC compound), they received no security support during the attack, although the IRC team was housed on MINUSCA’s base for the night prior to evacuating the area the next day.

### *General Humanitarian work*

#### **Contribute to greater respect for international humanitarian law and principles.**

With the promotion of basic human rights being at the heart of their humanitarian approach, IRC is active in advocating for the promotion of respect for international law, including international humanitarian law, as normative frameworks designed to protect people at risk in humanitarian crises. Rather than being technical legal experts, they rather argue for such respect from the perspective of the humanitarian suffering they observe and document while working in proximity with the at-risk populations they work with. Indeed, this illustrates another dimension of the relevance of the learning component of the HFA. IRC is recognised by a number of influential global actors as a credible source of information and analysis on such crises due to the quality of work in this line that they have generated to date, much of which has been generated through more rigorous data collection and analytic processes than that which is central to programming.

Blatant promotion of IHL and/or human rights more generally at the local level is somewhat more complex, as this in itself may be perceived as provocative. As such, any such efforts entail a careful analysis of the local contextual risks and the thematic reality, which is then infused with technical/theoretical backstopping from the technical expertise available to the field teams at the regional/global levels. Indeed, senior managers pointed out that they do not necessarily focus on this at the country level because they do not have the technical expertise on-ground. However, during the evaluation visit to CAR, IRC was drafting what was to be a collective NGO statement, calling on all actors to better respect IHL and humanitarian principles. They reported receiving significant support from the regional level. Programmatically, efforts to promote the respect of IHL and human rights were seen as starting with promoting this awareness among the national team. As such, national staff in CAR have been supported to participate in IHL and Humanitarian principles training provided by the in-country NGO Coordination Committee. As access to

services is a basic right under humanitarian law IRC is also engaged on this as both a humanitarian advocate, as well as an implementer of legal support programming.

**Contribute to enhanced humanitarian coordination in the field.**

IRC is an active member in the humanitarian sector and plays a proactive role in coordination. However, while the role adopted by both the IRC-UK HQ and IRC-Geneva is very external oriented with a strong intent and prioritisation of influencing policy and promoting best practices, this is somewhat moderated at the country level. While the Coordinators are all active contributors in their relevant sectors, they are more selective in the lead roles they take on. For example, IRC in CAR engages in the protection; health; and livelihoods clusters, although they are especially active at the sub-cluster level, serving as co-leads in the Child Protection, SGBV, SEA in protection; and IGA and cash for work within the livelihoods cluster. They are also active in an ‘urbanisation’ initiative. In Turkey, they specifically head the Protection Mainstreaming capacity building sub-cluster, thus being very active in moving this agenda forward at the local level.

At the field level, there is a fairly clear distinction between operational coordination and higher-level political and policy coordination.<sup>152</sup> In CAR, IRC is also very active at this higher level (e.g.: NGO political coordination,<sup>153</sup> and within the HCT),<sup>154</sup> with the intention of leading and shaping NGO political positions. In addition, IRC is also acknowledged for contributing actively into the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) Process.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Country teams report receiving strong support from a Regional Director (based in New York doing more political level support) and a deputy RD (located in Dakar providing technical support) to ensure they are informed and can be relevant on whatever the issue of the day is.

<sup>153</sup> The new IRC Country Director is chair of the Committee de Coordination des ONG International (CCO) which is a coordination mechanism for some 45-member NGOs funded by ECHO. This position gives IRC access to the HCT, Civil-Military coordination mechanism, and the HRP selection committee.

<sup>154</sup> The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in CAR consists of: Operational UN members; donors; the CCO chair; executive committee of the INGOs (5 members); MINUSCA; the HC; and an observer (UNFPA).

<sup>155</sup> The management team reports actively seeking to gain a seat in the HRP Selection Committee.



## 6 Evaluative Conclusions

### 6.1 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING 2014-2016 PROGRAMME SUPPORT

The HFA III was designed as a collaborative effort between Sida and IRC to tackle some of the most difficult humanitarian contexts (e.g.: CAR, the Syrian crisis, Yemen, Chad, Mali and Niger); focusing on protection, health care and economic recovery and more generally reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience. The strong humanitarian synergies that the HFA III seeks to capitalise upon begins to indicate the comparative advantage or added value that IRC-UK offers Sida. This section draws this out further.

*IRC is tackling complex acute crises in a tenacious manner:* One of the most notable elements observed in this evaluation is the tenacity with which IRC has committed to tackling some of the most difficult humanitarian operating environments. While holding the spotlight on these contexts, they have also concentrated resources and energy on tackling some of the most obstinate challenges inherent to humanitarian action. Although a work in progress, a distinct potential for working effectively in these most difficult operating contexts is being progressively realised.

*IRC's tenacity is as valuable as its innovation:* Broadly speaking, much of what the IRC strategy commits to is not necessarily new. Similar ideas have long been acknowledged within the humanitarian sector. Importantly, they have seldom been successfully executed. What is unique in this case is the tenacity with which IRC has committed to learning how to operationalise the commitment to work effectively in these most difficult contexts. This *tenacity* is relatively unique and is an important added value.

*IRC is a thinking institution:* IRC is recognised as such by both INGO personnel at the global level and by some donor representatives at the country level, being specifically acknowledged for the various initiatives, frameworks and tools they have developed. It is recognised that IRC has contributed extensively to the global humanitarian knowledge pool and are influencing best practices in a wide range of sectors, especially leading in aspects of protection (SGBV) and CASH programming. Internally, the commitment to being a 'learning agency' has created an attitude and the energy required to engage with the ambitious agenda articulated in the 2020 strategy.

*IRC has applied ‘lessons learned’ to an impressive level:* Taking the intent to construct action from an ‘evidence basis’ to a very sophisticated level, extensive document review and analysis of the collective humanitarian learning underpins the Outcomes & Evidence Framework. Drawing on this broad evidence-basis, multiple theories of change have been developed to demonstrate different operational pathways to creating the intended outcomes. Importantly, this conceptual basis has penetrated into the operational logic at the level of the Coordination Teams who demonstrate a good understanding.

*IRC has developed a wide array of approaches, initiatives and tools during this implementation period:* This is a critical element in realising the commitment to learn how to work effectively in these most difficult contexts. Although overwhelming at times for the field teams, this proliferation of options is critical to moving beyond the standard ways of working (which have all too often fallen short). They are re-define what can work. However, while many of these elements are very well articulated, the piloting, roll-out and concrete operationalisation at the deep field level is evolving at a slower rate.

*The Analysis Driven Agile Programming (ADAPT) Approach is one of IRC’s most valuable innovations for working effectively in extremely difficult operating contexts:* It has long been argued that humanitarian programming must be responsive to what are typically rapidly changing contexts, which inevitably alter the needs of the affected population. The ADAPT initiative defines an approach as well as providing detailed and nuanced tools for operationalising project responsiveness.<sup>156</sup>

*Translation of initiatives and tools at the deep field level remains a critical operational challenge:* Capital level country teams have taken the various initiatives up with significant enthusiasm, demonstrating a nuanced understanding. Transmitting the complexities of these approaches and tools to the operational teams (whether IRC or partners) is difficult. Although the deep field staff and partners have the most direct and consistent engagement with the beneficiaries, they are typically the ones who have the least theoretical information on these initiatives. Further, given the demands at their level to *act* on immediate urgent issues, they have the least opportunities for being ‘reflective’. As such, achieving effective translation of the ideas into concrete activities at that level remains a significant challenge.

*Many of these initiatives are structured in relation to complex social processes and require specific skills:* Rather than simply implementing technical service delivery

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<sup>156</sup> Importantly, Sida & IRC currently have varied understandings of this initiative. This should be addressed.

activities, the IRC approach tackles questions of ‘how’ humanitarian action is done. This requires both an awareness of social processes – which is a significantly different skill-set than that which sector experts (e.g.: agriculturalists, economists, or health workers) are expected to have; as well as the time and the energy to engage in reflective analysis.

*Retaining both international and national staff to accrue learning and expertise is critical:* IRC as a whole is effective in recruiting and retaining the high-quality technical and programmatic expertise required at both the advisory and operational levels. They have in some cases (e.g.: CAR), been significantly less successful in retaining national staff, especially due to short-term funding cycles that perpetuate short-term employment contracts. Cyclic loss of their best personnel and repetitive re-starting with new teams creates an inability to build level of expertise required to operationalise the IRC approach at the deep field level. This compounds the above point.

*Important impact has been achieved for the target populations in both CAR and Turkey:* Critical protection services for survivors of sexual violence have been put in place, with both health and psychosocial services being made available. Individuals rendered particularly vulnerable through protection risks have been included in economic recovery activities. The use of CASH as an operational tool has been tested in CAR and applied more extensively in Turkey.<sup>157</sup> Beneficiaries underlined the importance of the protection activities, and described impact in terms of growing confidence due to new capacities to support themselves, as well as others in dire straits (i.e.: in terms of personal loans). A strong indicator of the value of the IRC programme is the request of the local population for more of the same, but to include a larger portion of the population.

*Needs exceed response capacity in a far broader sense:* the Sida funded projects address only a small portion of the critical needs of the affected populations that IRC is working with. With crisis contexts typically characterised by collapse at many different levels, access to basic services is often profoundly challenged and the needs are dramatically increased for many as a consequence. Humanitarian action at the best of times can only address the most urgent of these needs and is truly life-saving as opposed to more generally addressing the basic rights of affected populations. In this sense, the needs systematically exceed the humanitarian response capacity and the challenges of determining who is *the most vulnerable* is very difficult task at the point of interface with the affected population.

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<sup>157</sup> While this is not specifically within the Sida funded activities, it makes a more holistic point.

*A tolerance for ‘failure’ is an important aspect of the IRC’s approach:* Taking on some of the most difficult operating contexts forces IRC teams into direct confrontation with the multiple challenges that characterise such contexts. Even with the more nuanced and adapted approaches and tools that IRC is developing, this work is inevitably extremely challenging. Recognising that many other actors avoid these challenges by simply extracting themselves from such contexts, both IRC and donors need to have a tolerance for ‘failures’ that come in many forms. Age-old challenges, including security threats, constraints imposed by de facto authorities, and needs that all too commonly overwhelm response capacity, although unsurprising, inevitably hamper the results achieved in these difficult contexts.

*IRC’s aspirations for being an influential thought leader manifests differently at different levels:* In operational terms, IRC is especially recognised at the global level for its leadership in relation to specific thematic, including SGBV and the protection and empowerment of women and girls; Protection Mainstreaming; and CASH programming. This leadership role is less evident at the country level, with coordination teams participating actively in technical coordination, but typically tending to focus their energies on enhancing in-house operational capacity as opposed to prioritising the influencing of the practices of others. At the global level, IRC is well positioned to make good use of the evidence they are generating and the deep field level insights they gain through their activities in order to be credible, relevant and insightful in terms of policy and practice at the global level. Their influential senior management and Board are able to make good use of this in the global realm.

*IRC’s added-value and comparative advantage to Sida has many dimensions:* While commenting on the comparative advantage of the IRC-UK in relation to what other institutions may offer is beyond the scope of this evaluation,<sup>158</sup> IRC’s comparative advantage in an operational sense is a sum of what has been discussed above. Firstly, the alignment between the humanitarian strategies of IRC and Sida is significant. Secondly, Sida’s willingness and capacity to be flexible complements IRC’s willingness to be aggressive in their operational efforts. IRC’s commitment to responding in some of the most difficult humanitarian contexts is at the heart of this. While this is a work in progress, and continues to confront significant challenges, the tenacity with which they engage and the clarity and focus they have brought to learning how better to do so ensures that Sida has a capable partner in some of the most difficult contexts. The four components of the HFA are critical to creating a holistic impact, with the RRM adding an additional dimension through which both are able to act upon their primary aim to save lives, alleviate human suffering and

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<sup>158</sup> This evaluation team is in no position to compare and contrast the details of IRC’s capacity with other actors.

preserve dignity. Further, the importance IRC places on ‘evidence’ has generated a wide-reaching evidence-based logic within the organisation. In this line, IRC continues to make highly relevant contributions to the humanitarian knowledge pool, as well as prompting others to make use of this to improve practices. Finally, the ‘methods support’ has seen a number of initiatives and tools evolved in parallel to IRC on-going response.

*In Summary:* this 2014-2016 implementation period has seen a complex and intensive period of learning. However, the tools and approaches that are being developed are essential to ensuring IRC’s capacity to deliver on their 2020 strategy and the projects articulated in the HFA III. As such, there was no alternative to launching the many lines of activities that the HFF has supported. While there was a risk of too much being taken on and the core operations suffering as a result, especially at the outset of the implementation period, this is no longer evident. Country teams are now able to draw on resources as they see fit, engaging with initiatives according to their needs. As stated above, pushing complex learning to the deep field team is the challenge at hand. This characterises humanitarian action more broadly and is an aspect that the IRC needs to continue to study and figure out how best to overcome.

*IRC has the capacity to migrate to a Programme Approach:* This evaluation positively concludes that Sida should continue their collaboration with IRC. A Programme Approach structured should be embarked upon to create adequate flexibility (i.e.: at the level of funding, activities, and geography; and more operationally at the level of in-puts, activities, out-puts, as well as theory of change, while the commitment to Outcomes is fixed), especially for select countries (including CAR). This approach should be structured upon IRC’s Outcomes and Evidence Framework and more specifically the country-level Strategic Action Plans. Given IRC’s propensity for piloting and drawing on evidence, they propose a transitioned process in which the next three-year framework agreement sees them adopting the Programme Approach combined with multi-year funding to be piloted in a limited number of countries. Assuming the evidence supports this, they should then prepare to migrate to a more comprehensive Programme Approach. The following sketches the conclusions regarding the evolution of organisational capacity, underlining that IRC is well positioned to take on this more sophisticated Programme Approach.

## 6.2 SUMMARY OF PROGRESS IN IRC’S ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

The organisational assessment carried out in 2013 provides a comprehensive mapping of the IRC organisational capacity and operations. Most of the conclusions that were made at that time are still valid and in several cases identified improvement areas have been addressed. The organisation as a whole has experienced rapid growth since 2013 and this has prompted a number of changes in both the organisational structures and in methods and applications.

*The governance structure* is a bit complex since there are two formal organisations involved with their own legal frameworks to work within, but even so the Boards and the management teams operate together with openness and full information sharing, essential committees necessary for the governance are practically duplicated in both organisations. This enables IRC-UK to fulfil its monitoring responsibility to comply with Sida requirements. The IRC-UK board is uniquely founded in the UK civil and political society and is deemed a strong asset to the governance of IRC-UK.

*The structural changes* that have taken place in the senior leadership in both the IRC Inc. and in IRC-UK have resulted in a more decentralised decision-making capability by including managers outside the head offices. At the same time, the two organisations appear to merge by sharing critical functions. The changes in the senior leadership in IRC-UK has strengthened the IRC Europe concept by including management from other offices in Europe and will strengthen the support to implement the IRC Europe strategies for 2015-2020.

The set-up of *the Award Management Unit* brings together the grant management from IRC Inc and IRC-UK, along with regional staff based in both the US and the UK, into a single unit, which will strengthen the capability of IRC in acquisition of new grants through the Pre-award functions, ensuring compliance and quality assurance through the Post-award function and the Grants and Frameworks, annex 7.<sup>159</sup> By combining staff from the IRC in NY and IRC-UK in one unit but still localised in both places will ultimately alleviate the redundancies that were expressed in the previous assessment and increase efficiency in the grant management. This would enable the IRC to meet the expected continued growth of funding in future. The Grants and Framework unit has developed unique competence in handling the Sida and Irish Aid frameworks. The AMU is expected to be fully reorganised after the third phase in October 2017.

There has been a significant scale-up of the *investments in IT-infrastructure* in recent years, which will add capability to the management, monitoring and quality assurance to the IRC global organisation. The upgrading of the OTIS grants management system and the future ERP system will enable a more effective AMU.

*The financial management* is still relying on the SUN system but the migration to the Microsoft Dynamics ERP system will enable IRC to work in a real-time and true decentralised environment. The integration of several functions will provide instant

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<sup>159</sup> In a recent development according to IRC, the AMU finalized structure will also include the Policy and Practice Grants Manager providing support in the post-award stage of Policy and Practice grants funded by European donors as well as the Regional Grants Director who will be reporting both to the AMU and IPD Regional structure.



information for decision-making, reporting and access to relevant information through the cloud-based system. The rapid growth of IRC during the last years necessitates a transition to a powerful management information system if the organisation is going to grow in the same rate years ahead. The current International Finance Manual (edition 2016) is impressive in its coverage and size. It has been continuously updated and expanded and is a powerful guideline for the financial management in the field offices. IRC-UK has been relying on relevant sections of the manual but since there are different governance requirements in the UK the development of a UK manual is of importance.

*Anti-corruption policies* are strong throughout the IRC organisation and this is articulated in several policy documents. The IRC Way is referenced in most cases as setting the ethical code and by signing it IRC regards that it is known to the staff. Further dissemination of the anti-corruption policies is given annually on the IRC Way day and through mandatory training. In order to get the full picture of what actions constitutes a breach of the ethical code in the IRC Way, several documents need to be consulted. All the documents combined with the whistle-blowing mechanism emphasise the strong stand IRC has on corruption. However, not having a single document that provides an overview and summary of the details and sanctions taken for violations is a shortcoming in assuring awareness by the staff. Past incidents demonstrate that cases of suspected fraud and possible corruption are detected and dealt with according to policies.

The *current procurement manual* for international supply chain management demonstrates an ambition to streamline procedures and becoming more process-oriented through the introduction of SOPs and templates. A comparison with Sida requirements confirm that the procedures are in compliance. The streamlining and process orientation is going to be an asset when integrating with the ERP system.

The financial management and the supply chain management system described above have been found to be very comprehensive and to be up to Sida standards, and in many cases exceed the standards. Despite being fragmented the anti-corruption policies, when assessed in its totality, conforms to the Sida standards. The organisation engages in several ways of making the policies known to the employees and there are procedures to enforce the policies. However, this could be more systematically integrated in the policies.

The IRC is rigorous with *auditing requirements* both when it comes to internal as well as external auditing. There is a procedure to capture the recommendations or issues and creating an action plan by using a table of follow-up actions. This table is attached to the final audit report and will be checked by the auditor the next time. It appears that follow-up of recommendations is done in different ways depending on the location. IRC-UK cannot follow-up on all the recommendations directly, however, the Board Audit and Governance Committee will follow-up audits concerning IRC-UK grants through the corresponding committee of IRC Inc. Also,



the frameworks/ regional grants officer will check the audit report when writing the report to the donor. Guidelines for systematic follow-up of action on audit recommendations do not exist at the IRC-UK level but is said to be work in progress.

*Quality assurance and reporting* to the donors is being channelled to the AMU post-award unit and compared to previous practise this have made the process clearer for the field offices. By consolidating the international programmes to the AMU the quality assurance for donor compliance, monitoring and learning is centralised to one place, which should make it more efficient. For the Sida funded programmes the AMU Frameworks Team is doing this in close collaboration with the post –award team. The Quality Assurance is to become more outcome and evidence-based, which might give more focus on improving programme quality. The recent restructuring of the AMU has not given the assessment team an opportunity to verify the impact of this change.

*Partner management and sub-granting* is a major effort of IRC to move towards the Grand Bargain and align itself to the partnership principles and agenda. The development of the Sub-Award Partnership Management System (SPMS) is a step in that direction by developing a system of policies and guidelines for changing the way IRC has approached partnering in the past. However, the SPMS is a very recent development and has yet only been field-tested in a few countries. Nonetheless, the system is not completely developed and four out of ten components are not in place. The components rolled out are to a large extent risk assessment, compliance, and award contract focused while the softer parts such as mapping of the civil society, identification of partners, and capacity strengthening remain to be developed. This could be a shortcoming when the system is to be rolled out. These steps are the pre-requisites of selecting and establishing successful partnerships.

A pivotal part of the system is *the due diligence process* during which the vetting and pre-award assessment (PAA) takes place. This is a very comprehensive process during which the partner is assessed in its inherent capacity to deliver programme quality and meet compliance requirement. The outcome is a risk assessment associated with partnership and how this could be mitigated. The system has a great potential and an extensive change management process will be necessary and is also underway to implement this. There is a risk that the assessment will be too heavy on the compliance part and become short on the objective of capacity building to ensure sustainability as part of an exit strategy, yet the due diligence process also includes in the PAA a capacity assessment of the partner. A due diligence process is a complex process and having local competence and experience in such processes will be a challenge.

The IRC is aware of the challenges in this respect, and the partner management is an intrinsic part of the 2020 strategy and using the system will be mandatory by October 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. On example to illustrate the commitment and the seriousness in implementing the partnership agenda is the video clip that is posted on You Tube

where senior management describes the importance of a successful implementation.<sup>160</sup>

The Board Audit and Governance Committee at IRC-UK together with the *Risk Management* Group are responsible for the risk assessment and management at IRC-UK. This is being done by assessing six different risk areas and summarised into a Risk matrix. This process is being done regularly and at specific intervals. It appears to the evaluation team that the IRC-UK has both the resources and the capacity to assess and determine the risk levels, to work both proactively and preventively, at the same time the IRC Inc. Risk Committee is also consulted. The weakness identified in the previous assessment was with partners which is expected be addressed within the SPMS and the sub-award partner support.

*Diverse donor funding* has been a challenge for IRC-UK as the dependency on DFID has been significant in the past and has grown to be bigger over the last years and is now more than 60%. Donor diversification is a top priority and the strategies for this are to increase the cooperation with major European international donors, implementing a private sector funding campaign and branding of IRC in Europe. The fundraising department, which is responsible for the private sector has been strengthened over the past years and an ambitious strategy and plan have been developed.

Besides building partner capacity, the previous Sida humanitarian strategies included building capacity of organisations and authorities as well as to meet humanitarian needs. In the IRC this is also one of their priorities and will be strengthen as the SPMS is becoming operational and it is very likely that this will be complimentary to the SPMS. On the field IRC is working with capacity building and enhancing humanitarian capacity with partners, local organisations and when opportunity gives, authorities. However, the evaluation team has not found a systematic approach integrating capacity building of local/national organisations and authorities into the SPMS programme. But in the reporting of the HFA (2015/2016) there is a reference from CAR stating that “the IRC will initially provide services to the direct beneficiaries, these CBOs, national NGOs, and local authorities will receive the necessary support to enable them to provide services in the future”. This example gives credence to the fact that this capacity building focus exists.

Providing correct and clear *safety assessments* is an important aspect of IRC’s work in humanitarian countries and contexts. The Global Security Policy provides broad

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<sup>160</sup> <https://youtu.be/uruEFnDwOVk>

guidelines to be included in security management plans. The policy establishes management and individual responsibilities and indicates that due to the varying contexts each field office must adapt local security plans and protocols. The effectiveness of these plans and protocols is inherently dependent upon the assessment by the Country Director and the assessment of the environment, and is followed-up by four regional security advisors and the Global Safety and Security Director. The field trip to CAR demonstrated clearly how this is taking place in a context which is highly volatile and the measures taken is an example of the seriousness taken by IRC. However, measures for including partners working for the IRC security and safety measures has not been found in a structured way in policies or the SPMS.

*In summary*, from the findings the evaluation concludes that there are several changes in IRC that has had an impact on the capacity on the efficiency and effectiveness. The organisational changes have, according to the staff met, made the organisation more cohesive, communication has improved, more management staff are included in the strategic decision making, IRC Europe is recognised as an IRC entity managed from IRC-UK. The restructuring of AMU will, when fully implemented, certainly add to the capacity of IRC to handle more European grants and also to improve the management of the international programmes. Other system changes in both financial management and supply chain management are going to have an impact when completed. The anti-corruption policies are strong as a whole, but are fragmented. This was also commented on in 2013.

The reassessment of certain issues from the 2013 assessment reveals that the capacity of IRC is still strong; some of the weaker scoring in the 2013 report was mainly due to the relationship between IRC-UK as the contractual partner to Sida and IRC Inc. being the implementing part of IRC.

The Sub-Award Partnership Management System is promising but many of the important parts of it have not yet been formalised. Nonetheless it is work in progress and will be an important process of IRC programming in the field when it is fully in place and the field has been trained to apply it, it has the potential to enable IRC to build strong partnerships.

The imbalance in donor financing is still there, and has not improved since 2013. If anything, the reliance on Dfid is stronger. On positive side is that the management of IRC-UK emphasise that this is a priority for the future. There is a strategy of working closer with the governmental donors of Europe and with EU to build partnerships and the investments in the fund raising in the private sector and capacity build-up of the fundraising department is expected to contribute to more diverse funding. In other areas, it can be concluded that the previous assessment is still valid.

The growth of IRC both globally and in particular IRC-UK necessitated changes to its programmatic and management processes. The implementation of processes and

procedures mention above is some of the systemic improvements which would indicate that the capacity is going to absorb continued growth in the funding.

## 7 Lessons Learned

This section seeks to summarise the key points of learning that have emerged in this evaluation. The first point is that the four operational components of the HFA: humanitarian projects in critical crisis contexts; methods support; a learning component; and the RRM when applied together complement each other, creating further opportunities to generate impact. The management and coordination support provided for the IRC-UK office is recognised as providing important oversight and guidance.

A multi-year funding frame creates a different opportunity for conceiving a programme. Rather than consisting of three consecutive annual programmes, multi-year funding creates the space to conceive of one coherent programme cycle developed over the three-year duration.<sup>161</sup> This relates closely to the call for IRC's migration into a Programme Approach which should be structured on commitments at the level of a funding package tied to Outcomes to be achieved. Important institutional frameworks, upon which such an approach can be structured, include the 2015-2020 IRC Strategy and the associated Outcomes and Evidence Framework as the broadest articulations, and the country level SAPs which contextualise of these. Importantly, the ADAPT initiative provides a clear framework and operational guidance for a country programme to integrate 'flexibility' and adaptability directly into their operational plan.

More generally, while IRC demonstrates a significant capacity at the level of conceptualizing and articulating complex models and initiates, there is still some work to be done in terms of rolling these out and translating these ideas into concrete activities. Many of the initiatives that IRC has developed with Sida's 'methods support' engage at the level of social dynamics, power dynamics, etc, all of which are elements of complex social processes. Operationalising principles such as meaningful participation, respect of dignity, accountability, transparency, etc. require an awareness of social change processes. However, none of these elements are easy to operationalise, even if they come with tool-kits. They often require different skills than those required to implement technical WASH or ERD programmes for example. These initiatives often require intensive analysis, critical reflection and weighing of options and decentralised decision-making. These elements begin to highlight the

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<sup>161</sup> While this opportunity was not well capitalised upon in CAR, the importance of such an approach is repeated underlined.

complexity of the challenge of pushing nuanced programming into the deepest operational levels.

While significant technical support is available to the country management team to explore these initiatives, less is available for the deep field teams who roll-out the final phases of the translation of these ideas into concrete action. As such, proportionally greater emphasis on supporting the deep field to engage more comprehensively with these so-called social dynamics is required. More concentrated mentoring and on-the-job technical support will help to more comprehensively transmit the technical know-how from the Coordination Team to the operational teams that interface with the beneficiaries.

However, while capacity constraints limit the IRC response to some degree, the larger issue is that the demands often out-strip the response capacity in a much larger sense. The RRM is thus identified by IRC personnel as an essential tool for enabling effective action in acute crises, allowing IRC to meet its aspirations in terms of speed, scale, reach and impact, setting the tone of an action in the very early days of a crisis. Moreover, Emergency Preparedness Planning (EPP) takes on a different tone in hyper-volatile contexts (e.g.: South Sudan, CAR, etc) in which high-level crisis is the norm, and acute escalation repeatedly compounds an already dire state. In these cases, rather than thinking in terms of repeatedly drawing on external emergency response support (i.e.: via RRM), IRC's approach is shifting towards building this response capacity directly into on-going programming. It is in this sense that IRC-CAR is proposing to fold their EPP directly into their SAP thus creating the flexibility to move fluidly between on-going programming, acute response, and longer-term programming when the few opportunities present. A single funding framework needs to be designed to support all forms of action as integral components of a coherent operational plan.

While IRC's work, through the OEF, is largely evidence-based, learning through rigorous research remains an important addition to their overall effort in that critical challenges cannot always be tackled through operational trial and error. However, a careful balance needs to be struck between learning, thinking and application. There may be a tendency to focus more on the conceptual end, while under-estimating the hard work of application. Effective roll-out and application are yet to be cracked.

At the organisational level, the past four years has seen an ever-increasing rate of implementing initiatives, organisational changes, redefined systems and procedures and a push to upgrade the IT-system to create more coherence in the entire organisation. The growth of the organisation has been significant and changes undertaken were necessary to meet the challenges of that growth. The roll-out of all these changes has created stress within the organisation and it is mostly the country offices that carry this burden. Notwithstanding that the management in the country offices expresses satisfaction over the availability and provision of support, they also acknowledge that the change load competes with the programme implementation.

IRC has taken big strides in developing systems and processes to improve compliance and accountability to a level where it shall meet the requirements of all donors. In the field, the procedures are viewed as becoming more and more rigorous and are in certain instances not improving efficiency but become heavy with many checks. The procurement procedures are one such example. At the same time, there is an understanding that this is necessary and it has been expressed that ‘it is nice to know it gets done right’. However, the focus on systems, compliance and accountability may distract people’s focus, resulting in a less satisfactory work environment.

The restructuring of the AMU is described as a halting process in the beginning with progress being slow. This and other processes were probably hampered by the organisational culture and were in conflict of the core identity of the organisation at that time. The assignment of one of the Vice Presidents in IRC Inc. with a very long history within IRC to lead the AMU restructuring reinforced the credibility of this process. The following restart and extensive consultative process and infusing the AMU with new staff hired from the outside probably injected the energy that could overcome the internal resistance to change.

The significant investments in the IT-infrastructure in recent years has enabled the rapid advances in providing new add-on applications to the field to increase efficiency, like the BVA application, and providing for connectivity to strengthen communications and the migration to the ERP.



# 8 Recommendations

## 8.1 FOR SIDA

- Continue to collaborate with IRC through multi-annual arrangements.
- Continue to support the four components of the HFA and its coordination & management as a collective effort:
  - The RRM budget should especially be reviewed as this represents the most immediate life-saving component.
- Provide both a Programme & Project Approach to funding during the next multi-year HFA with the intent to evolve to a more comprehensive Programme Approach (assuming the evidence gained through piloting of the Programme Approach supports this migration) with the aim of creating:
  - Fixed commitments at the level of total budget and Outcomes to be achieved;
  - Flexibility in terms of application of budget, geographic focus, and theory of change
  - Flexibility at the level of in-puts, activities, out-puts to pursue different pathways to achieving the Outcomes agreed to.
- Collaborate with IRC to explore the applicability of ADAPT as a framework that allows for greater fluidity in shifting response between emergency scale-up, on-going humanitarian activities and development-toned engagements especially in contexts like CAR
- Consider supporting the development and roll-out of the Sub-award partnership management system in light of the Grand Bargain Commitments.
- Seek to more proactively capitalise on synergies with IRC by engaging in dialogue with a wider multi-disciplinary team of stakeholders, also including Sida geographic and thematic leads.<sup>162</sup>

## 8.2 FOR IRC

- Be more daring in your collaboration with Sida by exploring different funding modalities.
- Improve efforts to spotlight critical humanitarian crises and the commitment of resources and effort necessary to engage in these localities despite high risks of failure.

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<sup>162</sup> The linking of IRC with the conflict and peace building thematic leads within Sida is a good example of this.

- Improve efforts to tackle these most difficult operating contexts with the intent to both make an impact and to develop the evidence-basis for influencing a change in how these contexts are addressed through humanitarian action.
- Finalise the implementation of the Sub-Award Partnership Management System and employ partnership-building experts at the country level to lead this initiative (as opposed to conducting it as an add-on).
- Establish a balance between efforts to advance learning through rigorous research, while ensuring that this learning is applied at the deepest levels of IRC operational engagement (i.e.: at the point of interface between the deep field teams and the beneficiaries) through providing more direct on-the-job training and mentoring to ‘translate’ initiatives into concrete activities.
- Ensure adequate unrestricted funds are available to avoid repeated disruptions of on-going operational programmes between institutional funding agreements.
- Establish a more realistic balance between the intent to influence externally and build internal capacity, especially at the national and sub-national levels.
- Continue to move forward with the restructuring process of the AMU and consider this as an on-going process of development.
- Continue diligently with the implementation of the ERP system as it probably will be the biggest gamechanger for IRC to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the future. Do not underestimate the roll-out cost in capacity building and people focus.
- Establish a more consolidated Anti-corruption policy which includes the pertinent information from all other sources and is clear on the consequences of violations.

# Annex 1: Terms of Reference

## Terms of Reference for the evaluation of IRC's Humanitarian Programme 2014-2016

Date: revised 2017-04-24

Case number: 13/001269, 52040485

### 1. Background

Sida is commissioning an evaluation of the International Rescue Committee, United Kingdom (hereinafter called IRC-UK) which is one of Sida's humanitarian partner organisations. The IRC-UK and Sida/HUM have cooperated since 2008. In 2011, the cooperation was extended to a broader Humanitarian Framework Agreement covering a number of humanitarian interventions in different contexts together with methods support, some capacity support and financing through Sida's Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). In 2014, another multi-year agreement was entered into between Sida and IRC-UK in 2014 for the period 2014-2016 which was recently extended with a fourth year: 2017. The total Sida humanitarian financing through IRC-UK for the period 2014-2016 is 284 000 000 SEK. The extension for the year 2017 added another 97 900 000 SEK to the current agreement.

In the early 1980s Sida introduced a system for support to a limited number of civil society organisations (CSOs), named framework organisations. The underlying rationale was to facilitate Sida's and the organisations' administration of support to CSOs in the light of increasing contributions. In 2005, a number of selection criteria for framework organisations came into force. This was part of a broad discussion concerning the framework system and developmental trends within civil society. In 2010, an evaluation of Swedish humanitarian assistance (2005-2010) identified the need for Sida to streamline the administration of its humanitarian assistance, and recommended that Sida establish multi-annual agreements with its humanitarian partners and extend the rapid response mechanism (RRM) to also include international CSOs. Based on the findings from the 2005- 2010 evaluation, Sida identified a number of qualification criteria<sup>163</sup>. During 2012-2013, some 30

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<sup>163</sup> Kriterier för civilsamhällesorganisationers behörighet som ramorganisation inom anslagsposten Stöd genom svenska organisationer i det civila samhället och strategisk partnerorganisation inom anslagsposten för Humanitära

organisations interested in becoming a framework and/or strategic partner organisation to Sida were assessed against these criteria<sup>164</sup> aiming at capturing an organisation's overall capacity to contribute to the achievement of the overarching objectives of Sida's support to CSOs and humanitarian actors. Based on the results of that assessment, IRC was one of 11 organisations that became a strategic partner organisation and signed a multi-annual agreement with Sida. The evaluators (SIPU International) concluded that IRC-UK is a well functioning organisation with appropriate systems for its operations. A new agreement between Sida and IRC-UK is planned for a new multi-year period from 2018 to 2020. The assignment, "Evaluation of IRC-UK's Humanitarian Programme 2014-2016", that now is announced by Sida through these ToRs, will include both to review progress in IRC's organisational capacity and to evaluate parts of the previous support.

The agreement with Sida is with IRC's European headquarter in London, United Kingdom, IRC-UK, while all operations in the field are led by IRC Inc. (US), New York, which is the global headquarter, leading the IRC network. IRC-UK works with donor relations/fund raising, quality assurance towards donors and policy advice. The humanitarian projects that IRC is implementing with Sida funding are implemented by IRC's country teams and technical units which are organisationally part of IRC Inc. In some countries/projects a part of the budget is used to sub-contract local partners. For some contexts, IRC uses remote monitoring.

The current multi-year agreement, 2014-2017, has also provided a 3-year funding for IRC's humanitarian work in CAR. The other funding from Sida/HUM is allocated on an annual basis, following Sida's annual humanitarian crises allocation process (HCA-process). The budget for CAR was initially 4,8 MSEK per year for 2014-2016. Additional funds were provided in 2015 and 2016 that together now makes up a total budget of 16.7 MSEK for the project: "Improving protection mechanisms and economic opportunities for communities in Nana Gribizi". The response via the IRC Turkey office has a budget of 10 MSEK for 2015 and 10 MSEK for 2016<sup>165</sup>. Due to confidentiality, detailed information about the project via IRC Turkey will be provided to the winning bidder.

Sida's humanitarian assistance for the period under assessment is governed by the Strategy for humanitarian assistance through Sida 2011-2016. There is a new humanitarian strategy from 2017.

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insatser och konfliktrelaterad verksamhet. Sida, augusti 2011. (published only in Swedish)

<sup>164</sup> The criteria can be found in the attached Annex E, which is the previous assessment of IRC-UK.

<sup>165</sup> Please note that year 2015 ran from 1 August 2015 to 14 August 2016 and that it was reported early 2017. Year 2016 (the following year) is still undergoing.

## **2. Evaluation Purpose**

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide information to Sida regarding IRC's implementation of the current programme and its capacity as an organisation for a new multi-year collaboration. The assignment can be divided in two parts 1) to evaluate the current support during the period 2014- 2016, and 2) to review progress in organisational capacity and operational performance<sup>166</sup> (comparing with the previous organisational assessment, Annex E).

### **1) Evaluation of the current support, 2014-2016**

The evaluation of the current support shall be done with regard to, a) Programme implementation and results during 2014-2016 focusing on the projects in CAR and Syria (via IRC's Turkey office) with regard to appropriateness, effectiveness, coverage, and impact, and b) Methods and tools with a more global approach and focus on CASH, Protection, and Localisation.

### **2) Review progress in IRC's organisational capacity**

A full organisational review of IRC-UK was conducted 2012-2013 by SIPU International in accordance with a number of set criteria. This evaluation is not intended to repeat the SIPU evaluation. However, as a new multi-year agreement is planned to be assessed for 2018, the evaluation is to review the areas where changes have occurred during the period 2014-2016.

The consultant is expected to identify strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations to IRC- UK and Sida on how future collaboration can be improved and strengthened. Based on the findings from the evaluation, IRC-UK will be requested to prepare a management response. Sida will assess how IRC-UK is addressing the findings before entering into a new multi-year agreement.

## **3. Evaluation areas and questions**

The questions for each of the two areas listed below are expected to be refined by the consultants in the inception phase of the evaluation.

### **1) Follow up of the previous collaboration 2014-2016**

Follow up of the previous collaboration is to be done for the period 2014-2016 in terms of a) Programme implementation and results, and b) Methods and Tools. The evaluation of the previous collaboration shall focus on the results from the projects in

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<sup>166</sup> Organisational Assessments of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in view of possible qualification as Sida's framework and/or strategic partner organisations, International Rescue Committee, Final Report, 27 September 2013, SIPU International.

CAR and IRC-Turkey (for the Syria Response). The evaluation shall also evaluate some particular methods and tools of interest both from a compliance point of view and for documenting some lessons learned. The evaluation questions for this area can be divided as follows:

a) Programme implementation and results based on field visits to CAR and Turkey

- *Appropriateness*: Did the intervention consider the priority needs (and the different needs of women, men, girls, and boys) in relation to the protracted humanitarian context?

Did the intervention address the priority needs of the beneficiaries of all ages?

- *Capacity*: How did the capacity of the IRC country office comply with the project implementation?
- *Adaptation and flexibility/prioritisation*: Have changes in the humanitarian context in the country taken place during the intervention and how has it been handled by IRC and how has it impacted the project?
- *Accountability*: How is accountability to the affected population ensured?
- *Effectiveness*. To what extent has the project achieved its objectives, if so why, if not why not?
- *Coverage*. Have the project results reached its beneficiaries of all ages and gender?
- *Impact*. How have the results impacted the lives of the beneficiaries?
- Identify lessons learned for the project period (2014-2016 as far as possible) and how they have been used/documentated by IRC?
- Does IRC's *internal vision, ambitions, long term plans and strategies* providing sufficient guidance for effective implementation at the country level?
- *IRC-CAR*: Assess challenges and advantages with multi-year funding in CAR 2014-2016 (this is the first multi-year funding for Sida/HUM) and what are the lessons learned?
- *IRC-Turkey* (Syria Response): Assess the experiences from having remote-monitoring 2014- 2016, and assess challenges/advantages/limitations?
- *IRC-Turkey*: How did the risk assessment and remote monitoring capacity of the IRC-Turkey comply with the project implementation?
- *IRC-Turkey*: Describe what type of partnership IRC-Turkey has entered into with the sub grantee for the implementation (service provider/long term capacity development etc.)?
- *IRC-Turkey*: How have the improvements of the procurement system in 2015-2016 been implemented and what are the results/challenges?

b) Methods and tools

- *Protection as method support*: Assessment of results and impact of the Sida financing of the methods support to protection? What is the level of implementation so far?, need of strengthened capacity internally and at field level? How has it been shared/worked with on a global level? Describe lessons learned of the implementation?
- *CASH as a tool*: IRC has a commitment to promote “better aid” and has adopted principles to reform and transform humanitarian financing (collective outcomes and evidence to cost- efficiency and transparency). Have IRC investments in cash in any significant way enhanced collective outcomes and evidence to cost-efficiency and transparency? What is the experience of IRC to link cash to data-based cost analysis and its purpose to inform what it costs to deliver different programmes/projects in different contexts? Lessons learned internally at IRC- UK and how they have been taken forward internally? Lessons learned on a global level and how they have been taken forward? What networks on cash are IRC part of and how does IRC contribute and share experiences with those networks? How much cash does IRC undertake including multipurpose cash? Generally in what types of projects have cash been used as a tool? What is IRC-UK’s policy on cash and how has it complied with the project needs? What have been the advantages/challenges for IRC-UK, IRC field offices, beneficiaries, local society, private sector (market) in the introduction of cash as a tool in the projects?
- *Accountability*: How is accountability to the affected population ensured? What is the level of implementation, strengths, weaknesses and experiences of the IRC’s Client-Responsive Programming Approach, including Actions and Enablers.
- *Outcomes and Evidence Framework*: The IRC’s Outcomes and Evidence Framework supports people working in development and humanitarian aid to design effective programmes/projects. What is the level of implementation so far (at country level in particular), strengthened capacity of human resources, strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned of the implementation?
- *Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) tool*: The SCAN tool will simplify the process of conducting cost analyses for country-based and technical staff, ultimately facilitating programme/project decision-making processes to achieve greater reach and impact for crisis affected populations. What is the level of implementation so far? How has IRC-UK and field offices taken in the SCAN tool in decision making processes? What are the strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned of the implementation and utilisation of the tool so far?



## 2) Review progress in IRC's organisational capacity

While the organisational assessment of IRC-UK in 2013 confirmed that the organisation fulfils the criteria to be a strategic partner to Sida and that it has relevant systems in place for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, changes have taken place at IRC-UK since 2013, both organisationally and with revisions of policies/regulations. There were also recommendations/comments in the previous assessment that needs to be followed up. The following sub-areas are of particular importance to look into and comment on within this second area for the evaluation:

### a) Reported changes that have taken place since the previous assessment

- *Management and organisation*: IRC undertook i.e. a restructuring of the Award Management Unit, AMU, in 2014/2015. There needs to be an assessment of the current organisational set up, including the AMU set-up. Is the organisational set-up appropriate for the increased flow of funding (from Sida) since 2013 and the financial control, monitoring and follow up that is required by Sida?
- *Financial management*: Assessment of updated Financial Manual. How does IRC work with budget analysis and budget follow-up? Are expenditures monitored and reported against budget? Does the organisation have accounting software that allows for adequate accounting records for an organisation of its size and operations? Is project accounting possible in the accounting software?
- *Anti-corruption*: Assessment of the new anti-corruption guideline. How has IRC-UK taken sufficient steps to ensure that its anti-corruption policy, guidelines and handbook is implemented in practice? Is the organisation's detection and handling of corruption cases in accordance with its policy and regulations?
- *Procurement*: Assessment of updated Procurement Guidelines.

### b) Particular reassessment questions

- *Audit*: Does IRC-UK follow-up on recommendations on weaknesses identified in the audits in a systemised way?
- *Quality assurance, monitoring and learning*: Assessment of the quality assurance system including the role of IRC-UK, as an agreement partner, towards Sida.
- *Forwarding of funds/sub-granting*: Assessment of the sub-granting which has been identified in previous assessment as an important area for development and investment by IRC. How has partnership issues evolved since 2013? Does IRC assess the organisation's capacity with regard to competence, resources, internal management and control, including work on anti-corruption, monitoring and reporting and audit and if so, in what way? Are these assessments documented? Are the agreement requirements in

- accordance with what is stipulated in the agreement between Sida and IRC-UK? What reporting requirements does IRC-UK place on its partners? Are eventual findings and weaknesses in the audit reporting from the partner followed up on by IRC-UK in a systematic way and documented? Does IRC-UK provide capacity building to partners to strengthen their competence, resources, internal management and control etc.?
- *Assessment of the administration fee:* What is included in the administration fee charged to Sida together with any other overhead costs for global administration of IRC's projects? Is it reasonable compared to other similar organisations and are there any risks for double counting of costs between the various IRC levels when budgeting?
  - *Risk management:* Does IRC-UK regularly analyse risk and are there routines for identifying, analysing and taking risk reducing measures? Provide analysis of if IRC-UK has capacity and resources to work preventively and proactively with different types of risks?
  - What is the *comparative advantage of IRC* (compared to other similar organisations) as an implementing humanitarian strategic partner to Sida?
  - *Capacity to receive financing and implement programme support:* Assess the advantages and challenges in entering into a programme support with IRC-UK in the future.

It is important that the evaluation report clearly presents what, in the organisational reassessment, is still valid or has changed compared to the previous assessment and what the recommendations are for the future. The previous assessment is enclosed, Annex B.

#### **4. Evaluation scope and delimitations**

A full organisational review of IRC-UK was conducted 2012-2013 by SIPU International in accordance with a number of set criteria. This evaluation is not intended to repeat the SIPU evaluation. However, as a new multi-year agreement is planned to be assessed for 2018, the evaluation is to review IRC's progress on organisational capacity development in order to reassess and report on sectors where changes have occurred during the period 2014-2016.

The focus for the evaluation will be on Sida's agreement partner IRC-UK, which is a separate legal body, and its organisational relationship with IRC Inc. It is expected to include visits to IRC-UK (London) and IRC's CAR and Turkey offices and skype calls to IRC Inc. (New York) and other IRC offices and partners as needed. For the follow up of the previous collaboration, the focus shall be on year 2014 and 2015 where annual narrative and financial reports are available but also 2016 (activity period finishes 30 April 2017) as far as possible with the assistance of interviews and reporting available at IRC-UK.

## **5. Approach and method**

Sida's approach to the evaluation is utilisation focused which means the evaluator shall facilitate the entire evaluation process with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect uses of the evaluation. It is expected that the evaluation team will use gender-aware and participatory approaches to seek the views of beneficiaries and, where appropriate, non-beneficiaries. Inclusive techniques will be expected of the evaluators, to seek active participation in the evaluation by beneficiaries and stakeholders. It is expected that the consultant proposes an appropriate approach and methods in the tender. The evaluation approach and methods are expected to be further developed and explained in the inception report.

## **6. Organisation of the assignment and stakeholder involvement**

Sida finances the evaluation and manages the administration of the evaluation contract. Sida approves the reports in collaboration with IRC-UK. The evaluators communicate directly with IRC-UK for carrying out the assignment. The Swedish Embassies abroad can only be expected to provide limited support. The Consultants provide the services in accordance with the ToR and carries out the assignment within the contract period. Humanitarian coordination partners in the field shall be consulted as key informants in the evaluation process such as, UNICEF, OCHA, ECHO, and UNHCR.

## **7 Evaluation Quality**

## **8. Time Schedule, Reporting and Communication**

The evaluation is expected to be conducted between mid-May and end of September 2017 (from contracting to delivery of final report). The expected starting date of the contract is 20 May 2017. A draft report and a reporting meeting shall be ready and presented to Sida by 10 September 2017. The draft report and the findings and recommendations presented in the "reporting meeting" shall be possible for Sida and IRC-UK to use in the dialogue for the upcoming new application. It is expected that IRC-UK will provide an application for the new agreement period by the end of October 2017. The application by IRC-UK shall follow the CSO-guidelines (Annex F).

The tenders to Sida for this evaluation shall include an overall time and work plan, in relation to when the final evaluation is expected. Sida encourages that the field visits are scheduled during June and possibly July as there may be conflicting vacations by international staff in UK, CAR, and Turkey during August. The report shall be written in English and the final report shall be professionally proof read and submitted in a suitable format decided by Sida.

<b>Action/Output</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Kick-off meeting with Sida and by skype with IRC-UK	By 31 May 2017
Draft inception report presented to Sida	By 1 June 2017

<b>Action/Output</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Inception report finalised	By 9 June 2017
Field visits and evaluation main phase	June-July 2017
Draft report of the evaluation	By 5 September 2017
Reporting meeting at Sida and by skype with IRC-UK for review and input (based on the draft report)	By 10 September 2017
Final comments from Sida and IRC-UK	By 20 September 2017
Evaluation report finalised	10 October 2017

All reports shall be written in English. The final report shall have a maximum of 40 pages, excluding annexes. The final evaluation report shall contain the following main sections: Executive Summary, Introduction, The Evaluated Intervention, Findings, Evaluative Conclusions, Lessons Learned, Recommendations and Annexes (including the Terms of Reference). The methodology used shall be described and explained, and all limitations shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed.

The evaluator shall, upon approval of the final report, insert the report into the Sida template for decentralised evaluations and submit it to Citrus (in pdf format) for publication and release in the Sida publication data base. The order is placed by sending the approved report to sida@citrus.com, always with a copy to the Sida program officer as well as Sida's evaluation unit (evaluation@sida.se). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field and include the name of the consulting company as well as the full evaluation title in the email. For invoicing purposes, the consultant needs to include the invoice reference "ZZ600201S", type of allocation "sakanslag" and type of order "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas."

## **9. Resources**

The ceiling amount for the assignment is SEK 650,000.

All relevant documentation will be made available to the evaluation team at the start of the evaluation. Sida is responsible for making available all Sida produced documents and IRC-UK is responsible for making available all IRC produced documents.

## **10. Evaluation Team Qualification**

The Evaluation Team will be required to have:

- Proven capacity and extensive experience in evaluation of humanitarian assistance,
- Strong methodological and analytical skills,
- Solid knowledge of humanitarian assistance,
- Experience (through at least two similar assignments) in evaluating organisational processes of CSOs, including systems for internal management and control.

- Strong understanding and experience of assignments regarding humanitarian organisations (CSOs, UN, Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, as well as donors),
- Knowledge of humanitarian assistance in refugee contexts,
- Recent (within the past 5 years) and proven experience (through at least one similar assignment) in CASH as a tool in humanitarian assistance,
- Proven experience (through at least two assignment) with conducting field work in unstable and humanitarian situations,
- Proven experience (through at least two assignment) in working in a team and in assignments requiring facilitation.
- At least one team member must be able to read and communicate fluently in Swedish (as some background information will be in Swedish), fluently in English (for the report writing and field visits), working knowledge in French.
- Familiarity with OECD/DAC guidelines for evaluations.

The tender should detail the specific experiences of the suggested team with evaluation work and the specific methods applied. The ideal team combines a high level of evaluation experience with field level experience from humanitarian work and strong academic background related to humanitarian assistance.

All suggested profiles will be assessed with a view to the role, competencies and tasks they are suggested to cover in the team. The tenders should clearly state who of the proposed team members covers which qualification criteria. The team must have experience with all methodologies and tools suggested in the tender.

The organisation of the team's work is the responsibility of the consultants and should be specified and explained clearly in the tender. It is expected that the Team Leader is closely involved in the elaboration of the tender, and this should be indicated in the technical offer. The Team Leader is responsible for the team's reporting to and communication with Sida and for the organisation of the work of the team. The Team Leader will participate in meetings related to the evaluation. The evaluators must be independent of the evaluated activities and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

## **11. Annexes**

### **Annex A: List of key documents**

- A. Sida's Template for Evaluation Reports
- B. Sida/HUM's Allocation process
- C. IRC's narrative reports for year 1 (2014) and 2 (2015)
- D. IRC's applications 2014 ,2015 and 2016
- E. SIPU's report on the Sida commissioned organisational assessment of IRC, 2013.
- F. Guidelines for Sida support for humanitarian action through civil society organisations (CSOs), dated 27 November 2015

**Annex B: Data sheet on the evaluation object**

<b>Information on the evaluation object (i.e. intervention, strategy, policy etc.)</b>	
Title of the evaluation object	Fragile or Forgotten – Saving lives in complex Emergencies IRC 2014-2016
ID no. in PLANIt	52040485
Archive case no.	13/001269
Activity period (if applicable)	1 May 2014 – 30 April 2017
Agreed budget (if applicable)	284 000 000 SEK
Main sector	Humanitarian aid
Name and type of implementing organisation	International Rescue Committee, United Kingdom, IRC-UK
Aid type	Humanitarian aid
Swedish strategy	Strategy for humanitarian assistance through Sida 2011-2016 Strategy for humanitarian assistance through Sida 2017-2020
<b>Information on the evaluation assignment</b>	
Commissioning unit/Embassy	Sida's Humanitarian Unit
Contact person at unit/Embassy	Annlouise Olofsson
Timing of evaluation (mid term review, end-of-programme, ex-post or other)	End of programme evaluation
ID no. in PLANIt (if other than above).	

# Annex 2: Final Inception Report



Revised Draft Inception Report

## Evaluation of IRC's Humanitarian Programme 2014-2016

Sida Framework Agreement for Evaluation Services 15/0007000

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Framework consortium led by FCG Sweden.

Consortium partners:



Please note that due to the short timeframe between the meetings with Sida, the initial discussion with IRC and the submission deadline this report has received only a truncated quality review, rather than a full review by the QA expert.

Written by: John Cosgrave, Leif Danielsson, and Cathy Huser

22 June 2017



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## 1 Introduction

This is the inception report for the evaluation of Sida's humanitarian framework agreement support to the International Rescue Committee's (IRC's) humanitarian interventions in the period 2014-2016.

The evaluation team are focused on delivering an evaluation that will be used by both Sida and IRC. As a first step in promoting utilisation we have taken a cascaded approach to interviews:

- First, interviews with Sida, to set the parameters for the evaluation and to ensure that Sida's concerns are adequately addressed in the evaluation.
  - Second, interviews with IRC-UK to establish the key facts and to identify additional information sources.
    - Third, interviews with other IRC offices and fieldwork in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Turkey<sup>167</sup>.

The cascaded approach helps to ensure that the evaluation is properly framed with the concerns of Sida and IRC-UK and the evaluation findings are therefore more likely to be used by them. However, the downside of this cascaded approach is that, due to the short time between the interviews with Sida and the submission deadline, the document review has been limited to the document set originally supplied by Sida. This also has implications for the selection of the sites to be visited in CAR.

So far, a planning meeting has taken place with IRC-UK, and IRC have supplied a set of fifty documents relating to the subject of the evaluation. IRC has also proposed an initial list of persons to be interviewed, which the evaluation team regard as comprehensive.

## 2 Our understanding of the context

IRC-UK is one of SIDA's ten<sup>168</sup> humanitarian strategic partners with multi-year funding. IRC-UK was selected based on its ranking against a range of criteria in a capacity assessment conducted in 2013.

The evaluation is intended to inform Sida's decision-making on the future relationship with IRC-UK<sup>169</sup>. A new multi-year funding agreement is planned for 2018 to 2020. One aspect

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<sup>167</sup> While the IRC's operations base for support to the Syria operation is moving to Jordan, the key staff and partners will be available in Turkey at the time of the planned visit.

<sup>168</sup> MSF was the eleventh strategic partner, and was the first Partner to get programmatic framework funding from Sida, but on 16 June 2016, MSF announced that it would no longer take funding from the EU or member states in protest at the policies adopted to deter refugees and migrants from reaching Europe.

<sup>169</sup> It emerged during interviews in Sweden that Sida regards IRC as a good partner and the evaluation focus will be even more strongly on learning as a result.

of this future relationship is the question as to whether the relationship could move to the next level, with programmatic funding<sup>170</sup>.

This evaluation consists of two parts:

- **Part I** A review of collaboration under the Humanitarian Framework Agreement in 2014-2016 focused on the IRC-UK programme in the CAR and Syria. This evaluation will cover not only programme implementation but also the methods and tools used by IRC. The review of methods and tools will be informed by their use in CAR and Turkey, but will not be restricted geographically. IRC's use of the Rapid Response Mechanism will be included as part of this review. The team will also take IRC's 2020 Strategy.

The review of tools will focus on Protection, on the use of cash as a tool, on accountability, IRC's Outcomes and Evidence Framework<sup>171</sup>, and on IRC's Adaptive Management Approach (used in CAR), Context Adaptability, Client Responsiveness, and other tools. While the terms of reference refers to IRC's Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) tool, this tool was only rolled out in late 2016 and early 2017, so it may not be possible to see this in the field yet. IRC's innovative approaches appear impressive but the evaluation will also examine:

- The extent to which the innovative approaches have been applied in the field;
- The extent to which the application of innovative approaches has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of IRC operations.

The team will also consider the extent to which IRC might promote the adoption of innovative approaches by other community actors.

- **Part II** A review of the progress in IRC's organisational capacity when measured by the indicators used in the previous assessment by SIPU, including both reported changes and issues of concern from the last assessment.

It is not intended to repeat the SIPU evaluation of IRC-UK's organisational capacity, but to concentrate on:

- Criteria related to reported changes;
- Criteria related to specific issues raised in the ToR;
- Criteria where IRC-UK scored:
  - Below the top two categories for CSO criteria in general (6 in total).
  - Below the top category for humanitarian criteria (4 in total)
- Criteria related to findings in the evaluation that raise concerns about institutional capacity, or that illustrate particular strengths in IRC's approach.

The team will make an assessment of the criteria in the assessment phase and identify the specific organisational capacity criteria to be reviewed. The team expects that some may be excluded from review if the score related to structural reasons<sup>172</sup>.

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<sup>170</sup> Sida made clear that, although it sees, programmatic funding as a stronger form of partnership, IRC does not need to move to programmatic funding to maintain the current relationship.

<sup>171</sup> This tool was only introduced in 2015 and was used for only one year.

<sup>172</sup> Structural reasons for some poor scores stem from the nature of IRC-UK's relationship to its parent, IRC Inc. The IRC programmes in the field are managed by country teams answering to IRC Inc. in New York, and IRC-UK does not have direct control of them.

The activities to be evaluated are for 2014 and 2015, and 2016 to the extent possible with the available reports. The evaluation will not cover any activities in Syria covered under funding arrangements other than the 2014-2018 Humanitarian Framework Agreement.

We note the particular concerns about confidentiality regarding IRC's Turkey programme. We will take the measures necessary to ensure that these documents are handled with care.

### 3 Approach & Methodology

The overall approach for the team is to conduct the evaluation in such a way as to maximise the utilisation of the results for both Sida as well as IRC-UK.

#### 3.1 Reflection of Evaluation Questions

The team has agreed the rationalisation of the evaluation questions with Sida to form two overarching questions:

- *Considering the following sub-questions, what evidence is there of any comparative advantage that IRC offers Sida?*
  - How well has IRC performed, using the cases of CAR and Turkey, to deliver appropriate assistance effectively and efficiently to the affected population, taking into consideration gender and vulnerability?
  - What impact have the interventions in CAR and Turkey had, to the extent that it is possible to estimate this?
  - To what extent have the tools that IRC uses to support Protection, Cash, Accountability Outcome and Evidence, and Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) been applied in practice.
  - To what extent have IRC's innovative tools contributed to IRC's performance globally?
  - To what extent has IRC's use of the Rapid Response Mechanism contributed to Sida's ability to achieve its strategic objectives to reach people in acute distress.
  - To what extent is IRC poised to migrate to a programme approach for the framework with Sida.
- *How has IRC's institution capacity developed? Specifically:*
  - What impact has changes in IRC's management and organisation, financial management, anti-corruptions policy, and procurement guidelines had on IRC's effectiveness and efficiency?
  - To what extent has IRC addressed issues identified in the previous evaluation, namely systematic audit follow-up, quality assurance, sub-granting, administration fee, and risk management?

First, this restructuring of the questions does not mean that the questions in the ToR will go unanswered, as the team expects that they will only be able to answer these higher-level questions about IRC's performance and comparative advantage by answering all the detailed questions set out in the ToR. However, focusing on the higher-level questions means that the team will focus on the questions whose answers are likely to be used, and concentrate their effort on these rather than getting lost in the detailed questions, even though these will still be answered. In other words, the team will maintain a focus on the forest as a whole rather than getting lost in the trees.

The team expects that the answers to these two overarching questions will enable Sida to make a grounded decision on the future relationship with IRC-UK, and on the extent to which Sida should promote the tools and approaches used by IRC.

### **3.1.1 How has IRC performed?**

The determination of IRC's performance will be based in part on the cases of CAR and Syria, but will also examine the broader case of the introduction of innovative methods by IRC. The team will also consider the extent to which IRC is now poised to migrate to a programme approach with Sida.

The assessment of performance will be based on a review of project documents as well as through field visits to CAR and Turkey for (Syria), a visit to IRC London as well as interviews with staff based in the US and other locations. In accordance with both Sida and IRC security policies, the evaluation team will not travel to Syria.

The assessment of IRC's innovative tools will include:

- The extent to which these tools are based on lessons learned.
- The extent to which the tools have been translated into practice. The team will bear in mind the time taken to roll-out such tools in the field.
- How IRC is perceived by other humanitarian actors (in CAR and Jordan/Syria). Is it seen as innovative or a leader?
- The outcomes of the application of the tools in practice.

While Sida has not contributed to the cost of development of all of these tools<sup>173</sup>, the existence of the tools are potentially part of IRC's added value to Sida, and are therefore an appropriate topic for the evaluation.

### **3.1.2 How has IRC's institutional capacity developed?**

The assessment of the changes in the IRC's institutional capacity is not intended to repeat the SIPU evaluation but to concentrate on specific issues brought forth in the ToR and weaknesses identified in the 2013 assessment. Annex B presents a summary of the scores from the 2013 assessment. These issues of concern are:

#### **a) Reported changes that have taken place:**

- Management and organisation set-up: In this respect it is worth noting that the previous assessment viewed the IRC-UK to be well-staffed with the capacity to manage its operation while some systems were lacking to manage and control the growth of the programmes and considerable investments were taken to implement systems. Especially the need for more integration within the IT-infrastructure.
- The Financial Management: Though the financial systems at the time of the organisational assessment were deemed adequate and the Finance Manual is to be reviewed every two years it will be of significance to review how the system has developed over time, considering that there were some issues related to the multi-layer system between the US and UK.

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<sup>173</sup> Sida has funded Monitoring for Action (MfA) and COMET, part of the Measurement Initiative as well as ADAPT management.

- Anti-Corruption: The previous anti-corruption policy was primarily articulated in the IRC code of conduct and supported by the Transactional compliance policy. However, the SIPU assessment identified a number of areas for improvement and the new anti-corruption guideline will be reviewed and more importantly how it is being put into practice.
- Procurement: The procurement guidelines have been updated and though the previous assessment noted that IRC-UK has very limited procurements and that they are being done according to best practices it is noteworthy to review the procurement procedures and how the guidelines have evolved.

**b) Reassessment questions:**

- Audit: While the previous assessment noted that the presence of the Audit Committee and the Internal Audit Department at IRC-UK ensured follow-up of recommendations, a review of the procedures and practise will be included.
- Quality assurance, monitoring and learning: IRC-UK does not have funding agreement with local partners<sup>174</sup>. IRC-UK is in charge of planning, financing and reporting activities for humanitarian assistance. IRC Inc. takes care of the implementation, the financial management and the follow-up (monitoring and evaluation). Both organisations were assessed to have capacity to implement its role and responsibilities. There were some systemic inefficiency that result from having both IRC Inc. And IRC-UK review and quality assure all field documents. The current set-up in terms of QA and ME is to be assessed both in the IRC and the field offices.
- Forwarding of funds/ sub-granting: While the IRC-UK does not have funding agreement with local partners, the forwarding of funds and/or sub-granting was not assessed during the SIPU assessment. This issue is inherently connected with the general weaknesses in regards to partner management and achievement of results identified in the assessment. The relationship between IRC-UK and the partners need to be reassessed and if IRC-UK has a larger responsibility in partner management.
- Assessment of administration fee: The previous assessment concluded that the assessment was limited by what falls under administrative costs in addition to that the cost structure in the annual reports does not provide details of salaries and other administrative costs. However, IRC-UK aim for maximum indirect cost recovery in donor contracts in an overhead percentage. In a Sida appraisal 2016 this was reported as 7% in each project. This evaluation is to further break-down the assessment fee and put it in relation to other similar organisations.
- Risk management: The SIPU assessment revealed that IRC-UK has a risk matrix that identifies potential challenges and mitigation measures. This matrix is reviewed by the management team and the audit committee. The matrix has also inspired the IRC Inc. Model for risk assessment. Risks are classified according to six categories. However, there was no specific analysis of partners' risks or

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<sup>174</sup> The funding agreements are between IRC Inc and the local partners.

capacity building on this. The development and the use of the risk analysis and its inclusion of the partner context is to be assessed.

- Comparative advantage of IRC and its capacity to receive financing and implement programme support: The evaluation will assess the advantages and challenges for Sida to work with IRC-UK.

**c) Criteria where IRC-UK scored less favourably:**

Generally, a score below the top two categories has been selected except for the strict HUM criteria where a score below the top category has been selected. This selection targets 10 of the 60 criteria and concerns the areas shown below:<sup>175</sup>

- Diverse donor funding (21)
- Guidelines for selecting implementing partners and assessing partners implementing capacity (23)
- Systems for responsible withdrawal when funding ceases including the ability to develop exit strategies (25)
- Ability to provide predictable, rapid and flexible financing of partners humanitarian work (31)
- Carry out safety assessment for its own activities, for possible partners, as well as for those concerned by the interventions. (33)
- Have the capacity and skills to work with capacity building of organisation and authorities in partner countries. (37)
- Contribute to greater respect for international humanitarian law and principles. (46)
- Contribute to enhanced humanitarian coordination in the field. (47)
- Contribute to enhanced national and local capacity to meet humanitarian needs. (49)
- Apply the partnership principles of equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity between humanitarian organisations. (59)

Of these 10 criteria seven relates to the criteria used strictly for the humanitarian organisations while the other three were general for all organisations. The conclusion of this selection is that the majority concerns the work with partners and in the field and is as such inherently linked with the structural reasons from the nature of IRC-UKs relationship to IRC Inc. The ability of IRC-UK to influence and to develop the partner management appears to be limited. Nevertheless, the evaluation will try to assess in what respect constructive changes have taken place in those areas.

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<sup>175</sup> For easy reference to the assessment framework the criteria number is shown in parenthesis.



The team had originally planned not to consider criteria where IRC had scored low due to such structural reasons, however, we note that IRC has adhered to the Grand Bargain. The Grand Bargain includes the commitment to empower national and local humanitarian action by increasing the share of financing available to them. This would suggest that IRC will change the way it works and that it is appropriate to examine these criteria.

### 3.2 Selection and Application of Evaluation Criteria

Because the revised evaluations are high-level questions, it is expected that each of them will touch on several of the OECD/DAC criteria. See table below:

<b>Evaluation Criterion</b>	<b>Question from the ToR</b>
Efficiency	<p>How well has IRC performed, using the cases of CAR and Turkey, to deliver appropriate assistance effectively and efficiently to the affected population, taking into consideration gender and vulnerability?</p> <p>To what extent have the tools that IRC uses to support Protection, Cash, Accountability Outcome and Evidence, and Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) contributed to IRC's performance globally?</p> <p>What impact has changes in IRC's management and organisation, financial management, anti-corruptions policy, and procurement guidelines had on IRC's effectiveness and efficiency?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>How well has IRC performed, using the cases of CAR and Turkey, to deliver appropriate assistance effectively and efficiently to the affected population, taking into consideration gender and vulnerability?</p> <p>To what extent have the tools developed by IRC been built on lessons learned in the field?</p> <p>To what extent have the tools that IRC uses to support Protection, Cash, Accountability Outcome and Evidence, and Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) been applied in practice<sup>176</sup>.</p> <p>To what extent have IRC's innovative tools contributed to IRC's performance globally?</p> <p>To what extent has IRC's use of the Rapid Response Mechanism contributed to Sida's ability to achieve its strategic objectives to reach people in acute distress.</p> <p>What impact has changes in IRC's management and organisation, financial management, anti-corruptions policy, and procurement guidelines had on IRC's effectiveness and efficiency?</p>

<sup>176</sup> The evaluation team note that only some of these tools may have been applied in the countries selected in the period covered by the evaluation.

<b>Evaluation Criterion</b>	<b>Question from the ToR</b>
Relevance	<p>How well has IRC performed, using the cases of CAR and Turkey, to deliver appropriate assistance effectively and efficiently to the affected population, taking into consideration gender and vulnerability?</p> <p>To what extent have the tools that IRC uses to support Protection, Cash, Accountability Outcome and Evidence, and Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) been applied in practice.</p> <p>To what extent has IRC's use of the Rapid Response Mechanism contributed to Sida's ability to achieve its strategic objectives to reach people in acute distress.</p> <p>To what extent have IRC's innovative tools contributed to IRC's performance globally?</p>
Impact	<p>What impact have the interventions in CAR and Turkey had, to the extent that it is possible to estimate this?</p> <p>To what extent has IRC's use of the Rapid Response Mechanism contributed to Sida's ability to achieve its strategic objectives to reach people in acute distress.</p> <p>To what extent have the tools that IRC uses to support Protection, Cash, Accountability Outcome and Evidence, and Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) contributed to IRC's performance globally?</p>
Sustainability	<p>Considering both the specific performance in CAR and Turkey, and the global impact of IRC's approach and tools, what evidence is there of any comparative advantage that IRC offers Sida?</p> <p>To what extent is IRC poised to migrate to a programme approach for the framework with Sida.</p> <p>To what extent has IRC addressed issues identified in the previous evaluation, namely systematic audit follow-up, quality assurance, sub-granting, administration fee, and risk management?</p>

### **3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Methods**

#### **3.3.1 Sampling strategy**

The sampling strategy is purposive, with interviewees selected as those in the best position to provide information on the particular topics. IRC-UK has agreed to provide an initial list of interview targets to meet these criteria. This will include IRC staff in New York and elsewhere who have been involved in the development and testing of IRC's innovative tools.

Further interviews will be selected by the evaluation team once the initial interviews are carried out. The broad categories of interviewees are identified in the evaluation matrix.

Similarly, the team have made an initial request for documentation to IRC, but IRC have also agreed to indicate the most relevant documents. After perusal of these the team will request additional documents as needed through the focal point appointed by IRC.

#### **3.3.2 Mixed method approach**

The team will take a mixed-method approach using both **quantitative** and **qualitative** methods. Quantitative methods will be limited to analysis of budget data and of data produced by SCAN.

Depending on the final document set available, we may also conduct some content analysis of key terms and themes in IRC documents.

**Key-informant interviews** will predominate in the qualitative data collection methods. The team has developed a draft interview guide for these to ensure coherence within the data collection done by the different team members. All the qualitative data collected will be coded with a coding structure developed during the inception phase. This structure will reflect the key evaluation questions and themes. The coding will help to ensure that the analysis of qualitative data is structured and that findings drawn are based on the evidence. The initial coding structure will be developed further as new themes emerge during the evaluation.

An initial interview guide is presented in Annex A. This will be further developed during the fieldwork.

### 3.3.3 Data analysis

The approach to analysis for the assessment of capacity will be the same used in the original capacity assessment as described in that report <sup>177</sup>, except that there will not be any field visit other than to the London office.

Quantitative data will be subject to numerical analysis, and to statistical testing for significance where appropriate.

The analysis of other qualitative data will be through coding of the data with the following codes:

Code	Related question or theme
Advantage	What evidence is there of IRC's comparative advantage?
Cap Change	In what way has IRC's capacity changed
Cap Follow-up	To what extent has IRC addressed issues identified in the previous cap assmt
Cap Impact	To what extent have capacity changes impact influenced effectiveness and efficiency
CAR	Performance in CAR
Cash App	To what extent has Cash approach been applied in the field
Cash Result	To what extent has Cash approach contributed to results
CB Funding	Why does IRC make so little use of Capacity Building funding
CF Impact	Impact in CAR
Flex mech	To what extent is Flexibility Mechanism deployable
Gender	Attention to Gender

<sup>177</sup> *Organisational Assessments of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in view of possible qualification as Sida's framework and/or strategic partner organisations: International Rescue Committee: Final Report (2013)* SIPU, Stockholm. Written by Olivia Lazard and Delphine Thizy. Chapter three of the report details the methodology used.

Code	Related question or theme
Grand B	How does IRC plan to address Grand Bargain
HRP constrains	To what extent do HRPs constrain IRC
Innov App	To what extent has IRC implemented other innovative approaches in the field
Innov Result	To what extent have other innovative approaches contributed to results
Multi HRP	To what extent is the requirement for a multi-year HRP reasonable
Other Innov	To what extent has IRC developed innovative approaches
Programme	To what extent is IRC ready to take a programmatic approach
Prot App	To what extent has Protection approach been applied in the field
Prot result	To what extent has Protection approach contributed to results
SCAN App	To what extent has SCAN approach been applied in the field
SCAN Result	To what extent has SCAN approach contributed to results <sup>178</sup>
SY Impact	Impact in Syria
Syria	Performance in Syria
Vulnerability	Attention to vulnerability

Codes will be attached to snippets of evidence. This will facilitate:

- An indication of the overall strength of the body of evidence on any theme.
- The writing of the final report so that it accurately reflects the evidence base.

### 3.3.4 Triangulation

As with all qualitative and mixed-method research, **triangulation** will be a key element to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. We expect to use:

- Researcher triangulation, comparing the results from different researchers.
- Source triangulation, comparing the results from different sources.
- Method triangulation, comparing the results from different methods.
- Analytical triangulation, comparing the results from different means of analysis (e.g. between analysis of codes from qualitative data, and from content analysis, if conducted).

### 3.3.5 Guiding principles for data collection and analysis

The team will use the following **guiding principles**:

- Findings will only be made from triangulated data. No piece of evidence, no matter how interesting, will appear in a finding unless it is triangulated by other evidence.
- Interviews will be conducted on a variation of the Chatham house rule, in that no comments will be directly or indirectly ascribed to any individual without their full informed consent.
- No interviewee will be placed in danger by the data gathering. Similarly the team will not be placed in danger by the data gathering, beyond the risks inherent in travelling to countries undergoing humanitarian crises.

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<sup>178</sup> SCAN was only rolled out in the field at the end of 2016 and early 2017, so no results may yet be visible. However, it is an interactive management tools, so it may be possible to identify prospective results from any actions taken.

- We will ensure a participatory and gender-sensitive approach in our dealings with all stakeholders.

### 3.4 Evaluation matrix

The following matrix has been modified following interviews with Sida and preliminary review of the documents.

Question	Judgement criteria	Sources and methods
What evidence is there of any comparative advantage that IRC offers Sida?	Based on triangulated evidence drawn from the results of the three following questions.	Based on an analysis of the sub-questions
How well has IRC performed, using the cases of CAR and Turkey, to deliver appropriate assistance effectively and efficiently to the affected population, taking into consideration gender and vulnerability?	Triangulated evidence of IRC's performance in CAR and Turkey.	Review of documents and reports. Interviews with Sida humanitarian department and IRC-UK staff. Interviews with humanitarian staff (not just IRC) and beneficiaries in CAR and Turkey. Observation of operations (to the extent possible) and of interactions with other players
What impact have the interventions in CAR and Syria had, to the extent that it is possible to estimate this?	Triangulated evidence of impact in CAR and Syria	Review of documents and reports. Interviews with Sida humanitarian department and IRC-UK staff. Interviews with humanitarian staff (not just IRC) in CAR and Turkey Observation of operations (to the extent possible) and of interactions with other players.
To what extent have the tools developed by IRC been built on lessons learned in the field?	Triangulated evidence that the tools were developed on the basis of learning from monitoring and evaluation.	Review of documents and reports. Interviews with IRC staff, in the UK, in HQ and in the field.

Question	Judgement criteria	Sources and methods
To what extent have the tools that IRC uses to support Protection, Cash, Accountability Outcome and Evidence, and Systematic Cost Analysis (SCAN) been applied in practice.	Triangulated evidence that IRC staff are familiar with the tools and have applied them. Triangulated evidence that IRC is regarded as an innovator by other humanitarian actors	Review of documents and reports. Interviews with Sida humanitarian department and IRC-UK and IRC HQ staff. Interviews with humanitarian staff in CAR and Turkey
To what extent have IRC's innovative tools contributed to IRC's performance globally?	Triangulated evidence that tools and methods are contributing to better performance.	Review of documents and reports. Interviews with Sida humanitarian department and IRC-UK and IRC HQ staff. Interviews with IRC staff in CAR and Turkey.
To what extent is IRC poised to migrate to a programme approach for the framework with Sida?	Triangulated evidence that IRC has the necessary procedures and interest to move to a programme approach.	Review of documents and reports. Interviews with Sida humanitarian department and IRC-UK staff.
What impact have changes in IRC's management and organisation, financial management, anti-corruptions policy, and procurement guidelines had on IRC's effectiveness and efficiency?	Triangulated evidence of impact on effectiveness and efficiency as a result of changes.	Review of documents and reports. Interviews with Sida humanitarian department IRC-UK and IRC HQ staff.
To what extent has IRC addressed issues identified in the previous evaluation, namely systematic audit follow-up, quality assurance, sub-granting, administration fee, and risk management?	Triangulated evidence of the extent to which IRC has addressed issues.	Review of documents and reports. Interviews with Sida humanitarian department, IRC-UK and IRC HQ staff.

### 3.5 Limitations

The evaluation is subject to the following limitations:

Limitation	Mitigation
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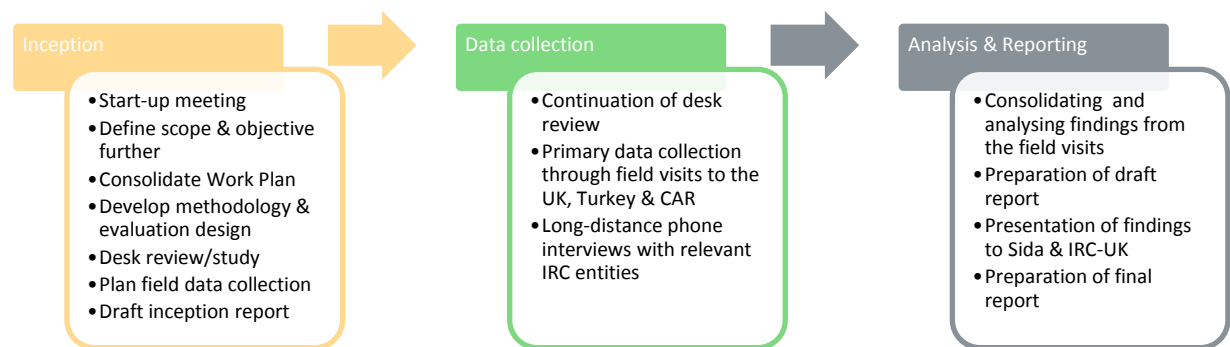
<p>First, the team is asked to update the institutional capacity assessment, but with far fewer resources than were originally used for the capacity assessment. We therefore agree with the ToR, that the second part of the evaluation, the organisational assessment, is like stocktaking where the team focuses on certain aspects of the organisation.</p>	<p>The team plans to address the first of these limitations by focusing only on the institutional capacity indicators that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are flagged up in the ToR.</li> <li>• Were previously rated less in less than the top two categories (or in the top category for humanitarian-specific criteria), but which are not structural in nature (stemming from IRC-UK's role as a funder for IRC Inc.)</li> <li>• Are flagged up as being of concern during the fieldwork.</li> </ul> <p>The risk inherent in this approach is that the team may miss changes in IRC institution capacity where IRC previously fulfilled the criterion but no longer does so, unless such changes are identified as concerns during the fieldwork.</p>
<p>Second, the review of the tools and methods is global, but fieldwork will only be done in two of the countries where Sida supported IRC operations. The team is thus acknowledging that the two field cases will not necessarily be representative of all global operations.</p>	<p>For the second of these limitations, the team will base the review of tools and methods on a limited global review, supported by their use in CAR and Turkey. One would expect that the situation in CAR and Syria would normally require the use of the most advanced tools and methods IRC has in it's toolbox.</p>
<p>Third, some of the tools the team has been asked to examine, such as SCAN, have only recently been rolled out. Other tools are also relatively new or were used for only short periods.</p>	<p>The team will bear this limitation in mind. They are also bear in mind the load that contexts such as CAR and Syria place on staff on the ground and on the organisation issues involved in rolling out new tools.</p>
<p>We would also like to note that the fieldwork in Turkey will cover the Syrian operation from distance as this cannot be assessed directly.</p>	<p>This is a limitation that the team will try to address by meeting with IRC Syrian partners outside of Syria.</p>
<p>Lastly, the inception report phase has been somewhat truncated, with the result that IRC had very little time to comment on the draft inception report.</p>	<p>The team will send a revised draft inception report to IRC on 22 June and accept comment up to the end of 28 June. The should allow IRC sufficient time to circulate the report to the field for comments.</p>

## 4 Evaluation Phases

The evaluation will be conducted in three distinct phases. The first is the inception phase, of which this report is the main output; the second is the data collection phase; the third is the analysis and reporting phase. The following describes the activities that will be undertaken in each of these phases and the methodologies that will be employed. In chapter 6, we present the work plan.



**Figure 1: Evaluation Phases**



## 4.1 Inception Phase

The broad objective of the inception phase is to consolidate the work-plan and establish agreement between the contractor and consultant on that plan. In order to achieve this, the phase includes the more substantive efforts of document identification, collection and review, which will inform some of the preliminary decisions that have to be made in this phase. Firstly, it will inform the finalisation of evaluation questions, which will then inform the development of the data collection tools. Based on this, field sites to visit can be prioritised, as can the weighting of data collection across the three levels (macro, meso, and micro).

Closely following is the need for stakeholder mapping and establishment of a contact list. This will enable the initiation of the administrative & logistical planning for field visits, while telephone contact with some of the stakeholders can also be initiated. The concrete output of this phase will be the inception report, which articulates the findings of the desk study and the decisions drawn from that. It will present the data collection tools as well as a relatively finalised plan of action for the evaluation period.

The inception phase was kicked-off with a meeting with Sida in Stockholm. This

The field visits to CAR and to Turkey (for Syria) will take place in Week 29 (the week beginning on July 17<sup>th</sup>).

The team will visit IRC London on June 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> for a series of initial interviews.

## 4.2 Data Collection

Data will be collected for the final report from the three primary sources including: the document review; the narrative data collected directly from respondents; and data gleaned through direct observation and the evaluator's experience. The so-called semi-structured interviews, for both individual and focus group interviews, will be structured around the core evaluation questions as well as the sub-questions defined in the inception period.

The assessment will also provide a frame for the analysis process; the prioritisation of findings to be extracted; and the articulation of recommendations. The data collected will be organised into themes reflecting both the questions as well as emergent themes. As alluded to above, the data collected will also be disaggregated along the vertical lines of macro, meso, and micro; and according to geographic sites in order to enable comparisons across these various dimensions.

The team will attempt to interview as broad a range of informants as possible, including consulting key humanitarian partners in the field such as UNICEF, OCHA, ECHO and UNHCR. The team would appreciate any assistance by the IRC Country Teams in setting up such meetings.

The evaluation team will split up to ensure maximum coverage in the allocated time. The team leader will attend all meetings in Stockholm and will in addition go to London and Turkey. The other humanitarian expert will conduct field visit in CAR. The organisational assessment expert will attend the final presentation in Stockholm and will conduct a field visit to IRC-UK in London. In addition, the team will conduct long-distance phone interviews with IRC Inc. (New York) and other IRC offices and partners as needed.

While in the field, the consultants will remain in close communication to monitor evolution, ensure coherence, and agree on adaptations as required. Briefing and validation meetings can be carried out during the field visits with the relevant stakeholders.

### **4.3 Analysis & Reporting Phase**

After the fieldwork, the team will develop a draft report in English. The draft report will be submitted prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> of August. The team will use the draft report as the basis for a presentation to be made at the reporting meeting in Sweden no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of September (preliminary agreement on the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> of September), as indicated in the terms of reference. The meeting will be held in Sweden to allow different departments of Sida to join in in-depth discussions.

IRC will participate in the reporting meeting either directly or by Skype. This report will not be final at this stage, as this meeting is intended to validate the findings and to give both Sida and IRC an opportunity to correct errors of fact or understanding by the evaluation team, as well as to raise any issues of concern.

After the reporting meeting Sida and IRC-UK will have until the 14<sup>th</sup> of September to submit comments to the draft report.

The team will then complete its report and submit to Sida on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September. The report will not exceed 40 pages, excluding annexes. Upon approval of the final report, the report will be inserted in the Sida template and submitted to Sitrus.

## 5 Quality Assurance and Management

### 5.1 Quality Assurance policy and principles

Provision of consistently high quality consulting services in accordance with professional standards and international good practice, on time and to budget, to the satisfaction of both client and donor; application of ethical standards and integrity procedures that preserve the objectivity, honesty and impartiality of our advice and actions are all important quality objectives, and integral to our core values, vision and reputation. Our Quality Assurance System, Code of Ethics and Business Integrity Management System are the main tools to ensure and strengthen these, in all projects and at all times.

Our Quality Assurance Policy and System follows the ISO 9001 2000 standards in its most relevant parts. The main focus is:

- a) to ensure that contracts and assignments are carried out to the full satisfaction of the client, in accordance with the terms of reference;
- b) that necessary feedback in real time is maintained, in order to correct any deficiencies in good time;
- c) that lessons learned and other useful experiences from assignments are taken up and disseminated as appropriate;
- d) that such lessons – positive and negative – are taken into account to improve subsequent performance.

For evaluation assignments, quality control of the process and the deliverables in this assignment will be ensured through the application of our guiding principles (see figure) and the *OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards*<sup>179</sup> and the OECD/DAC Guidance for evaluating humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies<sup>180</sup>

#### INDEPENDENCE

Our evaluation approach is based on the core principles of independent and objective stance.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

may be applied in order to protect individual informants if necessary to ensure anonymity.

#### TRANSPARENCY

The methodology will be transparent and consistently applied.

#### PARTICIPATION

All relevant stakeholders shall be provided opportunity to share their knowledge and views on the issues under review.

#### OBJECTIVITY

Findings will be based on observations and information from reliable sources. Different sources of information will be used and triangulation applied.

#### FAIR AND BALANCED REPORTING

The assessment should provide a fair description of the evaluation object and shall consider both strengths and particular challenges.

#### COMMUNICATION

will be upheld throughout the evaluation through continuous dialogue with Sida and with other stakeholders.

### 5.2 Quality Assurance Process

For this assignment, we propose the following division of responsibilities:

<sup>179</sup> OECD DAC (2010): Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

<sup>180</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/2667294.pdf>

**THE TEAM LEADER (John Cosgrave)** has the responsibility for quality assurance of the product and will be committed to meeting the deadlines through close monitoring of the team. The TL is responsible for submitting all agreed deliverables to the appointed Quality Assurance (QA) Expert for quality review and is required to take action on all matters raised by the QA Expert.

**THE LEAD PARTNER (Tana Copenhagen) PROJECT MANAGER (Nadia Masri-Pedersen)** will coordinate the QA procedure and ensure that deadlines are kept. The Project Manager will also ensure that the TL responds to all matters raised by the QA Expert.

**THE QUALITY ASSURANCE EXPERT (Erik Toft)** will provide advice and comments throughout the evaluation process. Erik will review the draft of the inception report and the draft final report, making sure that the documents correspond to Sida's standards. In particular, the Quality Assurance Expert will review the following:

- **The inception report:** Before submission to Sida, the draft inception report will be reviewed to ensure that it complies with the OECD/DAC standards. Through this, any potential gaps or high risk areas that might jeopardise the quality of the final product will be identified. The QA Expert submits their quality assessment to the Team Leader who is expected to take action on all matters raised in this.
- **The draft final evaluation report:** Similarly, the draft final report will be reviewed to ensure that it complies with the OECD/DAC standards. The QA expert will also highlight other areas of improvement required related to the more technical subject matter of the evaluation. The Team Leader is expected to take action on all matters raised by the QA Expert.

This two-step quality control builds on a process of inputs to quality thinking and planning as well providing experienced support in areas relevant to the particular assignment in question. This means that a structured input is provided at a stage where it is still possible to correct errors and assures the delivery of a high quality evaluation report.

Moreover, our consortium continuously strives to improve the quality of evaluation services that we deliver. As such, we pro-actively encourage systematic feedback from experts and clients, indicating lessons identified and recommendations related to all aspects of the assignment.

### **5.3 Management**

As contract holder, FCG Sweden will be the formal contact point for the Sida and its sole interlocutor for all contractual and financial matters. For this assignment, Johanna Lindström from FCG Sweden will be the formal point of contact with Sida.

In addition, Nadia Masri-Pedersen at Tana Copenhagen (implementation partner) will be managing the assignment's implementation. Nadia will ensure effective and efficient implementation of the assignment, ensure that the quality assurance process is conducted according to plan and providing back stopping and support to the team as required.

## 6 Revised Work Plan

The following table presents a work plan stretched over the 19-week period allocated for the evaluation period. It indicates the allocation of the total of 56 workdays per each of the three evaluation phases.

Work plan as of 20170622	Total Workdays	Team				June					July					Aug					Sep			
		John	Cathy	Leif	Erik	W21	W22	W23	W24	W25	W26	W27	W28	W29	W30	W31	W32	W33	W34	W35	W36	W37	W38	W39
<b>Inception Phase</b>																								
Signing of contract																								
Start-up Meeting with Sida in Stockholm + IRC-UK	2.00	2					29/5																	
Desk Study of documentation	7.00	2	2	3																				
Preparing Inception Report	3.50	2	0.5	1																				
Submission of draft Inception Report										14/6														
Feedback on Inception Report										16/6														
Submission of Final Inception Report										23/6														
Approval of Inception Report																								
Field work planning & logistics	1.00	0.5	0.5																					
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis Phase</b>																								
Field visit Central African Republic	7.00		7																					
Field visit Turkey	6.00	6																						
Field visit UK	5.50	2	1.5	2							28-29/6													
Long-distance Interviews	1.00	0.5		0.5																				
<b>Reporting Phase</b>																								
Draft Report Writing	15.00	6	4	5																				
Draft Report Submission	0.00																	25/8						
Presentation of Evaluation Findings in Stockholm	3.00	2		1																	8/9			
Feedback from Sida and IRC-UK on draft report																						14/9		
Final Report writing	5.00	2	0.5	0.5	2																			
Final Report Submission																							20/9	
<b>Total number of work days</b>	<b>56.00</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>																			

The team had decided to only conduct long-distance interviews after the IRC-UK visit to ensure that the interviews are as well targeted as possible.

## Annex A: Draft Interview Guide

As with all such qualitative interviews, the intent is to capture learning by the interviewees to allow the evaluation team to develop a rapid understanding of the context. The questions actually asked will:

- Vary with the interviewee type
- Change over time as the evaluation team develop a better understanding of IRC's use of Sida funds
- Change in response to the answers to earlier questions.

The questions are broad as they are not normally about capturing facts, so much as gaining an understanding of the insights that staff have gained through their work.

### Opening

Introduce the evaluation and the ground rules. The ground rules include: 1) participation is voluntary, and interviewees can decline to answer any question or end the interview at any time; 2) nothing said will be attributed to the interviewee either directly or indirectly (i.e. reported in such a way as would allow them to be identified), without their express consent.

What has your engagement with IRC/Sida been?

What changes have you seen in IRC since the start of the framework agreement?  
In what ways is IRC different from other humanitarian actors.

### Performance

How has IRC performance in CAR/Syria, in comparison to others? (or in contrast to other NGOs more generally for those unable to comment on the specific cases)

What evidence is there of the impact of IRC's work in in CAR/Syria?

Which is more important for IRC, attention to vulnerability or attention to Gender? How did you form your judgement? There is no right answer to this question – it is meant to demonstrate how these concepts have been internalised by the interviewee and in large, how they are regarded in IRC.

### Tools

Can you name any innovations implemented by IRC in the last five years?

Are you familiar with SCAN/Cash approach/IRC's protection approach/ Outcome measurement/ IRC's AAP approach? What can you tell me about them (for each). (This question will be updated when we have a list of the initiatives used in CAR and Syria).

What difficulties have you faced with rolling out the innovations?

Which humanitarian actor to you regards as the most innovative? If IRC, Why? If not IRC, How does IRC compare with them?

What has the impact of these innovations been?

Are you familiar with the flexibility mechanism? If so, what are the biggest obstacles to its wider use?

## Funding modalities

To what extent are you familiar with the Sida RRM?

Have you used RRM Funds? To what extent have RRM funds enabled you to do things you would not have otherwise been able to do, or as quickly, or at the same scale?

How does RRM funding compare with other sources of emergency funds (USAID, DFID, ECHO, CHF, Others?)

What do you understand by the term "Programme approach"? How compatible is this with the way in which IRC works?

Sida only provided humanitarian funding for projects which are in a HRP. What impact, if any does this have on IRC?

Sida may be willing to provide some multi-annual funding in contexts where there is a multi-annual HRP. How many of your working contexts does this apply to?

IRC decided to use the multi-annual funding under the HFA for CAR rather than for Capacity Building, Methods work, or the Rapid Response Mechanism as other HFA Partners did. What was the reasoning?

To what extent did having multi-annual funding for CAR make a difference to the operation there?

## Partnership in the field

Are you familiar with the Grand Bargain? (briefly explain if not)

One of the commitments of the Grand Bargain is that a large portion of funds should flow through local and national actors. How is IRC going to address this? Does IRC have the necessary procedures and resources to do so?

## Closing

What do you plan to do differently in the next phase?

In retrospect, what has most surprised you about IRC/Sida?

Are there any questions that you are surprised we have not asked?

Whom else should we talk to?



## Annex B: 2013 Organisational assessment criteria

*Note: CSO categories not rated as IRC only applied for Strategic Partner).*

In the following table, rating 4 is the best indicating that the Criterion of assessment for the element is met. The full range of ratings is as follows:

Rating	Description
1	The Criterion is not fulfilled
2	The Criterion is fulfilled to some extent
3	The Criterion is fulfilled to a great extent
4	The Criterion is fulfilled
N/A	The Criterion is not applicable to IRC

Cat.	Criteria	Rating
<b>The foundation of the CSO</b>		
	1. Be democratically structured, and work in line with democratic values that are not detrimental to the achievement of the objectives of the Strategies. (1)	4
	2. Be characterised by independence and openness towards stakeholders and the general public, and show respect for different target groups. (2)	3
	3. Have operations that are guided by visions and values upon which the purpose of such operations is based. (4)	4
	4. Have documented and current ethical principles for the own operations, or have adopted an internationally accepted regulatory framework (code of conduct <sup>8</sup> ) and committed itself to follow it in all its activities. (5)	4
CSO	5. Show anchorage in Sweden and internationally, and demonstrate that partners have local presence in developing countries. (7)	N/A
CSO	6. Have competence on specific issues of interest for Swedish development cooperation. (8)	N/A
CSO	7. Have a wide representativeness if your organisation is responsible for the communication to other Swedish organisations. (9)	N/A
HUM	8. Demonstrate that it is well anchored in Sweden and/or internationally, and that potential local partners similarly are well anchored in the developing countries. (10)	4
HUM	9. Demonstrate that its' operations are of impartial and neutral character. Organisations with affiliation must especially demonstrate such impartiality and neutrality. (11)	4
<b>System for internal management and control</b>		
<b>Operational management</b>		
	10. Follow routines for purposive governance and management, as well as	4

<b>Cat.</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>
	have established mechanisms for control within the organisation. (13)	
	11. Have a reliable staff and organisational structure, as well as a demonstrable logistical capacity. (20)	3
	12. Be able to demonstrate a clear added value and good quality within its operations, i.e. that it contributes effectively to the fulfilment of relevant development goals. (30)	4
	13. Ensure that good quality within its operation is also reflected in the organisation's policy documents and reports. (31)	4
	14. Be able to specialise or prioritise geographically or thematically. (34)	4
	15. Have the ability to raise funds or in other ways obtain resources in support for its activities. (3)	4
<b>Financial management</b>		
	16. Have reliable operational and financial systems for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating its operations. (14)	3
	17. Ensure that costs for salaries, premises and other administrative costs are kept at an acceptable level for organisations of this kind. (24)	3
	18. Where appropriate, follow FRIL's guidelines for ethical fund-raising and accounting. For international organisations follow corresponding guidelines. (6)	4
	19. Within its reporting, have assured compliance to Sida requirements (in case of previous direct funding from Sida), or to other donors' requirements (in case of no previous funding from Sida). (18)	4
	20. Have knowledge of and access to the systems of procurement. (21)	4
HUM	21. Demonstrate that it obtains diversified donor funding. (12)	2
<b>Partner management</b>		
	22. Have reliable systems for assessing applications, for verification of incoming reports and for monitoring funded interventions in case the organisation handles applications from other partners (particularly important for organisations with a sub-granting assignment). (15)	N/A
	23. Have documented, and within the organisation, well-anchored guidelines for selecting implementing partners, and have systems for assessing partners' implementing capacity as well as capacity to achieve results. (22)	2
	24. Have the ability to carry out risk analyses as well as to manage risks, including risks of corruption. (23)	3
	25. Have systems that ensure a responsible withdrawal when funding ceases, including the ability to develop exit strategies already during the planning stage of development or humanitarian operations. (16)	1

<b>Cat.</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>
	26. Have the ability to ensure reliable quality assurance i.e. ability to comply and apply its systems and ensure the existence of clear agreements at all levels within the funding chain. (17)	3
	27. Have a system in place that allows for following up results; where the goal hierarchy is logic and feasible to follow up and where the indicators for goal attainment are based on baseline. (19)	4
	28. Where applicable, ensure that the portion of funds transferred to local partner organisations through contractual agreements is made clear. (25)	4
	29. Where applicable, ensure that Swedish recipient organisations have reliable systems for internal management and control. (26)	N/A
HUM	30. Have the capacity to plan and allocate resources on the basis of humanitarian needs (A1). (42)	4
HUM	31. Have the ability to provide predictable, rapid and flexible financing of partners' humanitarian work (B5). (46)	3
HUM	32. Ensure increased involvement of the affected population (C7). (48)	4
HUM	33. Have the ability to carry out safety assessment for its own activities, for possible partners, as well as for those concerned by the interventions. (27)	3
<b>Capacity to achieve and report results against the strategies</b>		
<b>Internal capacity</b>		
	34. Have essential capacity (for example a sufficient number of Full-Time-Equivalents, FTEs) to finance, plan, implement, follow up and report, as well as quality assure activities within its humanitarian assistance and/or within its development cooperation work. (28)	3
	35. Have essential capacity to support advocacy work in South, as well as conduct methodological and policy work, for example, in cooperation with international actors. (29)	3
	36. Have demonstrable communication skills in development cooperation vis-à-vis different relevant stakeholders. (32)	3
	37. Have the capacity and skills to work with capacity building of organisations (and/or national and local authorities within the humanitarian appropriation) in partner countries. (53)	2
CSO	38. When so is relevant, have demonstrable skills for the sub-granting assignment and for monitoring other organisations Sida-funded activities. (41)	N/A
<b>Potential to achievement of results</b>		
	39. Have a proven ability to produce and present relevant results at different levels in relation to the goals of the Strategies as well as in relation to the goals the organisation has set up for itself (in case of previous funding from Sida) or in relation to the goals the organisations has set up for itself	4

<b>Cat.</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>
	(in case of no previous funding from Sida). (33)	
CSO	40. Contribute to capacity development. (35)	N/A
CSO	41. Contribute to democratisation and human rights. (36)	N/A
CSO	42. Contribute in supporting civil society's roles of voice bearers and organisers of services. (37)	N/A
CSO	43. Contribute to an increased dialogue with other donors and promote coordination in Sweden, internationally and locally in partner countries. (38)	N/A
CSO	44. Be able to demonstrate that it is local initiatives in the partner country that constitute the point of departure for the development interventions. (39)	N/A
CSO	45. Contribute to the strengthening of local organisations' capacity for coordination. (40)	N/A
HUM	46. Contribute to greater respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles (A2). (43)	3
HUM	47. Contribute to enhanced humanitarian coordination in the field (B3). (44)	3
HUM	48. Contribute to enhanced professionalisation of humanitarian actors (B4). (45)	4
HUM	49. Contribute to enhanced national and local capacity to meet humanitarian needs (B6). (47)	2
HUM	50. Contribute to enhanced quality, learning and innovation in humanitarian assistance (C8). (49)	4
<b>Capacity to adapt and self-renew</b>		
	51. Have the ability to design and redirect the organisation's operations based on own needs and different contexts. (52)	3
	52. Have the capacity and competence to evaluate activities and use evaluations for their own learning within areas of interest. (50)	3
	53. Have capacity to carry out methodological work within own operational areas, within organisational development, as well as active participation in cooperation concerning methodological development where new relevant and innovative working practices are intercepted and integrated in the organisation's activities. (51)	4
	54. Have the ability to develop and maintain policies, instructions and guidelines updated and of good quality for the organisation's internal and external operations, and have the ability to ensure that these documents have an effect on its operations and, in the case of organisations with a sub-granting assignment ensure that compliance occurs at all levels within the funding chain. (54)	4

<b>Cat.</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>
	55. Have an anti-corruption policy and be able to ensure compliance with it. (55)	3
	56. Have established systems for increasing aid effectiveness. (58)	4
CSO	57. Have the ability to apply an integrated way of working using a poverty reduction and rights based approach, including for example perspectives such as gender, conflict sensitivity, children's rights, the environment and the rights of the LGBT10 community, as well as ensure that the work does not contravene the intentions within the Swedish Government's policies or thematic priorities. (56)	N/A
CSO	58. Have a proven ability to work rights-based. (57)	N/A
HUM	59. Apply the partnership principles of equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity between humanitarian organisations. (59)	2
HUM	60. Have the ability to integrate the two perspectives of disaster prevention and early recovery within its operations and ensure that the work does not contravene the intentions within the Swedish Government's policies or thematic priorities. (60)	4

## Annex 3: List of Interviewees

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sanjayan Srikanthan	Deputy Executive Director and Vice President Europe and Director of Policy & Practice.	IRC-UK	28 June
Sigrun Danielsson	Head of Human Resources, Europe	IRC-UK	28 June
Vanessa Vesnaver	Acting Head of Programme Development	IRC-UK	28 June
Chloe Whitley	Senior Coordinator, Client Responsiveness	IRC-UK	28 June
Henrik Boejen	Director of Pre Award	IRC-UK	28 June
Jane Waterman	Senior Vice President, Europe and Executive Director IRC-UK, Europe	IRC-UK	28 June
Jon Beloe	Director of Adaptive Programmes	IRC-UK	28 June
Liam Bailey-Morgan	Middle East Regional Grants Officer	IRC-UK	28 June
Lynette Opiyo	Finance Manager, Europe	IRC-UK	28 June
Mick Dyson	Director of Finance and Operations, Europe	IRC-UK	28 June
Laia Blanch	Grants Manager - Frameworks	IRC-UK	28/29 June
Anne Godard	West Africa Regional Programme Manager	IRC-UK	29 June
Daphne Jayasinghe	Senior Policy & Advocacy Adviser - Economic Programmes, P&P	IRC-UK	29 June
Emma Bolton	Director of Fundraising	IRC-UK	29 June
Katherine Youtz	West Africa Regional Grants Assistant	IRC-UK	29 June

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Date</b>
Khusbu Patel	Head of European Strategic Partnerships Team	IRC-UK	29 June
Mark Montague	West Africa Regional Measurement Action Co-ordinator	IRC-UK	29 June
Martha Williams	Grants Officer - Frameworks	IRC-UK	29 June
Melanie Ward	Associate Director Policy and Advocacy	IRC-UK	29 June
Alberta Santini	External Protection Expert, experience in CAR	Independent Consultant	Skype
Alice Hawkes	Senior Coordinator – Protection in Practice	IRC	Skype
Emma Child	M&E Regional Coordinator Middle East	IRC	Skype
Gergey Pasztor	Technical Advisor, Protection Mainstreaming	IRC	Skype
Gregory Matthews	Deputy Director, Cash Initiatives, P&P - Economic Recovery & Development	IRC	Skype
Kate Moger	Deputy Regional Director of Programs, West Africa	IRC	Skype
Salma Ben Aissa	Deputy Director of Programs, CAR	IRC	Skype
Shane Scanlon	Partnership and Capacity Strengthening Director	IRC	Skype
Bob Kitchen	Director Emergency Unit	IRC Inc.	Skype
Chris Honsberger	Chief Global Supply Chain Officer	IRC Inc.	Skype
Ernest Ostro	Director, Software Systems, O&S - Information Technology	IRC Inc.	Skype
Jennifer Sime	Senior Vice President, US Programs and AMU	IRC Inc.	Skype
Nick Bannister	Director, Donor Relations and Analytics	IRC Inc.	Skype
Lisa Thomas	Deputy Director Programs	IRC Turkey	Skype



<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Date</b>
Diana Trimino	Women's Protection & Empowerment Policy Adviser	IRC-UK	Skype
David Murphy	OCHA-Geneva Protection Mainstreaming	OCHA	Skype
Yasmine Elbehery	UNHCR-Geneva on protection Mainstreaming	UNHCR	Skype
Caitlin Tulloch	Technical Advisor, Best Use of Resources	IRC	skype
Davide Stephani	Representative	Europe Aid CAR	July 25
Mohamed Mechmache	Rapid Response Coordinator	ECHO	July 25
Benjamin White	Mercy Corps	Mercy Corps	July 25
Barbara Bautiste	Inter-Cluster Coordinator	UNOCHA	July 25
Gelase Amoure	Protection Coordinator	DRC	July 25

# Annex 4: References

## **EVALUATION DOCUMENTS**

FCG Final Inception Report - Sida evaluation of IRC  
Organisational Assessment of IRC 2013 Summary scores  
Organisational Assessment of IRC-UK 2013  
Terms of Reference Evaluation of IRC 2017

## **INTERNAL DOCUMENTS FROM IRC**

Client-Responsive Programming Framework\_Dec 2016  
ADAPT Frame Overview  
Adapting Aid report with Case Studies  
Conflict Sensitivity Analysis Overview  
AMU presentation  
Global AMU Org Chart\_current + future state  
IRC-Inc\_Annual Report 2016  
IRC-UK\_Annual Report 2015  
IRC-UK\_Annual Report 2016  
Anticorruption Policy Enforcement Steps  
IRC Global Reporting Guidelines  
Policy for Fiscal Integrity -- 2017  
Transactional Compliance Policy  
Audit & Governance ToR updated 20 Jun 2017  
ToR for Board Policy and Advocacy Committee  
TRUSTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - Final  
International Finance Manual -2016  
IRC Listing of Procurement SOPS  
Procurement Bid Analysis SOP 2017  
Procurement Code of Conduct Statement 2016  
Procurement Manual for International Programs 2016  
2015 IRC Watchlist  
HFA III - Framework budget combined 2016  
HFA III Yr3 Budget FINAL corrected

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 IRC HFA III Yr3 Full Application  
 IRC HFA Year 2 Application-2015-16  
 IRC-UK - Sida HFA III application, additional information 2016  
 IRC-UK - Sida HFA III application, revised 2016  
 IRC Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines  
 IRC Evaluation Guidelines  
 Monitoring Procedures Manual  
 IRC Senior Leaders Group Org Structure  
 IRC-UK Organisational Chart June 2017  
 IRC Partner Vetting Process and Report  
 IRC Pre-Award Assessment Tool (including Instructions for Use)  
 IRC SPMS - Part 1 System Overview  
 IRC SPMS - Part 10 Sub-Award Closure Policy  
 IRC SPMS - Part 5 Due Diligence Policy  
 IRC SPMS - Part 6 Sub-Award Funding Instruments Policy  
 IRC SPMS - Part 7 Sub-Award Agreement Development Policy  
 IRC SPMS - Part 8 Management Monitoring and Accountability Policy  
 Pre-Award Assessment Organisation A July 2017  
 Program\_Quality\_Unit\_Plan\_FINAL\_2013 - 2017  
 Technical Assistant Model Function\_Final  
 Protection Mainstreaming - Safe Programming Factsheet (Updated June 2016)  
 Protection Mainstreaming Initiatives Briefing Note (June 2016)  
 IRC-UK Risk Management Approach  
 IRC-UK Risk Management Group TOR  
 IRC-UK Risk Matrix FY2017 updated 200617  
 2017 Scorecard Q2 review  
 IRC Europe strategy 2020  
 IRC Private Sector Funding Strategy Feb 2016  
 IRC Strategy 2015-2020 Executive Summary\_EN  
 IRC Strategy 2015-2020 Part I Mission, Vision, Objectives and Supporting Infrastructure  
 IRC Strategy 2015-2020 Part II Action Planning  
 Disaster Risk Reduction - Theory and Practice - July 2010  
 Framework Agreement IRC Inc and IRC-UK

Risk Management Policy - From Intl Finance Manual

IRC-UK Risk management Group: IRC-UK Approach to Risk, 7th March 2017

The IRC Way - Standards for Professional Conduct - (English)

## **DOCUMENTS FROM SIDA**

Sida-IRC HFA III Yr2 - CONSOLIDATED FINAL AUDIT MEMORANDUM

Sida-IRC HFA III Yr2 - CONSOLIDATED FINAL AUDIT REPORT

Sida-IRC HFA III Yr2 - CONSOLIDATED FINAL POST AUDIT REPORT

Sida-IRC HFAIII - Year 2 IRC Management Response

2016 Sida-IRC HFAIII Yr2 Financial Report

2016 Sida-IRC HFAIII Yr2 Narrative Report

Beslut om avtalsändring 2016, IRC HUM 2014-2016

Beslut om insats 2014, IRC HUM 2014-2016

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Decision on Agreement amendment 2014, IRC HUM 2014-2016

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IRC Humanitarian Framework Agreement, Fragile or Forgotten 2014

Minutes -Annual Review meeting 2015

Procurement Manual for International Programs 2016

RRM Application -FINAL (24 nov.)

Sida Appraisal IRC procurement procedure

Sida CSO Guidelines 2015

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Strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid through Sida 2011-2014

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'Fragile or Forgotten – Saving lives in complex emergencies', prepared and submitted IRC-UK, March 2014

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Organisational Assessments of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in view of possible qualification as Sida's framework and/or strategic partner organisations, International Rescue Committee, Final Report, 27 September 2013, SIPU International.

Guidelines for Sida support for humanitarian action through civil society organisations, 2015

Strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid provided through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) 2011-2014

Strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid provided through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) 2017-2020

## EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS

'GBV Responders Network' that provides access to research, policy pieces, best practices, tools and so on, available at: <http://gbvresponders.org/>

'Lifesaving, Not Optional: Protecting women and girls from violence in emergencies' (IRC 2013). Available at: <http://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/LifesavingNotOptional-Discussion-Paper-ENG.pdf>

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'The Impact of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies' (June 2017) Available at: <http://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Impact-of-the-CTA-on-protection-from-GBV-in-emergencies-FULL-WEB.pdf>

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The IRC Syria Crisis Briefing. See [here](#)  
The IRC Turkey Crisis Briefing. See [here](#)

## Annex 5: A summary of Sida's humanitarian strategies

Sida's 2011-2014 humanitarian strategy<sup>181</sup> aimed to achieve the objective of saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity for people affected by crises, by committing to:

- Needs-based, principled and coordinated humanitarian response in order to enhance:
  - Capacity to plan and allocate resources on the basis of humanitarian need
  - Increased respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) and humanitarian principles
  - Humanitarian coordination and humanitarian leadership in the field
- Partnerships, professional and flexible financing to support
  - Increased professionalisation of humanitarian actors
  - Predictable, rapid and flexible financing of partner organisations' humanitarian work
  - Strengthened national and local capacity to meet humanitarian needs
- Accountability, learning, quality and innovation to support increased:
  - Participation of the affected population
  - Quality, learning and innovation in humanitarian assistance

With the same broad objective, the 2017-20 strategy<sup>182</sup> equally commits Sida to contributing to:

- Needs-based, fast and effective humanitarian response in a similar sense as described above
  - with a specific emphasis on vulnerability; global assessments of needs; and means of planning for and financing of protracted and/or recurrent crises;
- Increased protection for people affected by crises and increased respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles

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<sup>181</sup> See: Strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid provided through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) 2011-2014, which was extended into 2016.

<sup>182</sup> See: Strategy for Sweden's humanitarian aid provided through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) 2017-2020



- Which includes reducing risk and vulnerability of especially those who are most vulnerable in crisis contexts; better protecting dignity and physical safety; reducing the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); enhancing safe humanitarian access; and promoting awareness of IHL and humanitarian principles
- Increased influence for people affected by crises which is concerned with increasing/improving:
  - the conditions and feasibility for people affected by crises to exercise influence and accountability in all stages of the humanitarian action; as well as enhancing the capacity of partner organisations to better understand the needs of the people they serve, enabling their participation in the humanitarian effort, and to be more responsive to them
- Greater capacity and efficiency in the humanitarian system including:
  - Improved field-level humanitarian coordination and joint capacity for analysis, planning and long-term response formulation; integration of local capacity enhancement into on-going humanitarian action; improved cooperation of international actors with local actors; enhancing local and national actors' participation in humanitarian coordination; linking and building synergies between humanitarian response plans and UN/national development plans (among other things).

# Annex 6: A summary of the Questions explored

Programme Support 014-2016

*1) Relevance:*

- i) Is IRC responding in the appropriate locations
- ii) Does the IRC response address the priority needs of the most vulnerable populations
- iii) How relevant are the various tools and initiatives being developed (e.g.: ADAPT, monitoring for action; Client Responsiveness; Protection Mainstreaming; etc)

*2) Effectiveness:*

- i) Does the IRC team have the capacity to realise the operational vision and stated objectives
- ii) Does the IRC response cover the breadth of priority needs for the most vulnerable people (especially in terms of gender, age and diversity)
- iii) Has IRC learned from operational lessons
- iv) To what extent have the IRC tools and initiatives been applied
  - Has IRC managed to adapt according to changing contexts and needs (i.e.: have they managed to apply ADAPT; conflict sensitive analysis tool; etc
  - How is accountability to affected population achieved (i.e.: Client Responsiveness)

*3) Efficiency:*

- i) How well has IRC applied the various tools designed to monitor and enhance operational efficiency (e.g: Systematic Cost Analysis -SCAN; Outcome and Evidence Framework (OEF)

*4) Impact:*

- i) How has the IRC response affected the lives of people at risk
- ii) To what extent has the RRM been applied; and to what effect
- iii) How has the IRC affected humanitarian policy & practice
  - Via protection mainstreaming
  - Via policy advocacy

*5) Sustainability:*

- i) How has IRC engaged with the Grand Bargain and the localisation agenda locally
- ii) How has multi-year funding impacted IRC programming
- iii) Is IRC ready to migrate to Sida's Programme Approach



# Annex 8: Further Programme Impact Observations

Although judging impact based on a two-day visit to the field site has its limitations, the following provides some further observations of programme impact in CAR.

- **CASH Programming**

During the conflict (2012-2015), the EDR team tried to do cash distributions, but there were people within the community who pointed out the households who had received this support and the armed actors then went and stole it from them. As such, during that time ‘cash was converted into the food that the beneficiaries asked for’. Now cash is again given, but it is done in a more confidential manner. It is especially given to newly arriving IDPs. With the follow-up, the beneficiaries report spending this money on food and medicine. Cash for work is seen as a particularly valuable means for injecting cash into the community as well as promoting social cohesion. It was also designed to promote social responsibility as well. However, IRC left the tools with the Mayor, suggesting that he could continue to organise the community to cut brush and clean the community, fix the roads, etc. But these tools for the most part have been used for the personal interests of these power brokers themselves. The idea for the next programme cycle is to distribute the tools at the level of the Arrondissement, on the assumption that leaders at this level have more commitment to the well-being of their own community.

- **Integrated programming – Protection and IGAs**

There are some very positive examples of impact that are quickly visible in the sense of economic development (e.g.: in relation to IGA support). For example, a mixed Muslim/Christina group of women based in Dékoa report having organised themselves, and with support from IRC have been able to diversify the activities they undertake. They explained having developed a mini economy in which part of the group grows produce, some is sold raw, some is cooked for sale. All of this generates enough profit for them to ensure they can continue to support their most vulnerable members through revolving loans. When asked if they would continue to function if IRC left, they were very positive that they would, arguing that because of this diversification they can keep themselves moving forward. At the same time, while they appreciated the business training they had received to this point, they said that even more would be useful.

A single woman, having been selected for IRC support based on vulnerability criteria, received materials and training to produce soap and palm oil. She now produces this

and sells it to people in Dékoa. As a result, both her son and husband have been able to purchase grinding machines and provide this as a service in two different communities. This woman is confident that her family will continue to be stable even if IRC was to leave the area. Moreover, she reports providing credit to women in difficulties, as well as donating small amounts of soap and oil. From a potential risk perspective (i.e.: requiring proactive management according to the do not harm principle), she reported that some individuals within her community who have not received IRC support are jealous of her success and have verbally harassed her. She says she tells them that ‘I did not select myself’, but they don’t really accept this. The IRC team had not tried to address this problem.

- **CYPD – Demobilised Child Soldiers Skills Training**

Both male and female youth are receiving training (in soldering, tailoring, carpentry, mechanics) as a result of having been selected according to a UNICEF DDR programme. On the completion of three months of training, these ‘graduates’ will receive equipment to establish independent IGAs. While the impact on the youth are reported in terms of ‘calming’ and ‘socializing’, them and creating some real potential for IGAs among these individuals, the project also has some significant do no harm weaknesses. For example, without managing this, one of the key the messages these young participants could be extracting from the experience is that they are being rewarded for their previous behaviour with guns. Similarly, other youth who had not been selected to receive such support ‘because they did not pick up arms’ indicate being jealous of the fact that they do not have the same level of access to such support. In the future, they could be motivated to pick-up arms because they see this as criteria for being selected for NGO support. There is also a need for those participating in the training to receive some form of psychosocial support, and even more importantly be supported to engage with the notion of social responsibility. This aspect of the programming was not yet planned. Without this, these same youth may well be encouraged to pick-up arms in the next crisis because of what they could perceive as a reward this time around. Managing this risk must be an integrated aspect of the activity (i.e.: education on social responsibility, behaviour change, social cohesion, etc.).

Indeed, the activities in general tended to be implemented according to planned activities with limited critical analysis accompanying the action. These teams reported that they do not really see critical analysis of their actions as their responsibility. These teams do not currently engage with the nuances of power dynamics or social change processes. For example, when asked why some of the messages passed to the community have not been taken up, the response was: ‘we have informed them; we have passed the message’, making no distinction between the processes of hearing, understanding, or accepting these messages. There was no real analysis of why such messages are not being implemented by the community. There are also some limitations in terms of problem analysis. Rather than seeking to address the causative factors, a large emphasis is placed on addressing their

symptoms. For example, while support of survivors of SGBV are a large focus of the Women's Protection and Empowerment (WPE) programme (ie: refers to the Listening centre), awareness building in terms of prevention is aimed primarily at women and their capacity to avoid the problem (e.g.: keep your children with you so they don't get sexually abused), rather than prompting the perpetrators to stop causing the problem.

- **Building resilience at a community level**

The sector programmes are well integrated, being somehow driven by a protection intent. For example, people at risk are referred both to medical services as well as to economic recovery activities. However, economic recovery activities, are largely concerned with building one's independent capacity (e.g.: IGA), even when done through associations. There is less consideration given to the notion of 'social contribution'. The intent is rather to address one's self-interests. Inadequate emphasis is put on the idea that a healthy community looks after those who are worst off within their community. This social ethic is not being consciously promoted. As such a critical dimension of resilience is not being addressed.<sup>183</sup> Closely associated, although there is some discussion of rights (especially the rights of the child), there was no discussion of the accompanying notion of 'responsibilities'.

- **Monitoring for action (as opposed to monitoring of action)**

This idea has not reached the deep field level. For example, the M&E team explained that they monitor results of the activities with the population and compare these to the proposal objectives. If the objectives are not met, they make recommendations for changes in activities. One example that people described was in ERD in which they had given cash grants to the most vulnerable to start small IGAs. However, they realised that these most vulnerable individuals usually used the money for food.

Therefore, they team together decided to shift the target of this programme to beneficiaries who had previous commerce experience. However, while this helped them to achieve better IGA results, they were no longer working with the most vulnerable individuals. Thus, although they now appear to have better results vis-à-vis the proposal objectives, the priority of working with the *most* vulnerable is lost.

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<sup>183</sup> Resilience is impacted by the state of social cohesion of the concerned community. At this point, here is also a fairly simplistic understanding of social cohesion among the team at the deep field level, with the simple fact that people can tolerate to be together currently counting as such. The element of positive bonding is not necessarily seen as essential.

- **Learning from Mistakes**

There is a strong intent to give the impression that everything is good as opposed to being transparent with the challenges they face. For example, we had a long discussion about social exclusion and the challenges this poses in terms of identifying the *most vulnerable*. They were adamant that their system was infallible. However, as predictable, within one day I found individuals within the community complaining about the selection process and power grabs by especially one Chief.

# Annex 9: HFA Financial Summary

Sida HFA III Year 1-4 Rapid Response Mechanism Projects							
No.	T1 Codes	Project Title	Budget			Project Dates	
			Location	SEK	USD	Start date	End date
YEAR 1							
1	ES041	Emergency Assistance for Conflict Affected Iraqis	Iraq	3 163 136	464 000	15-jul-14	14-nov-15
2	ES043	Response to North Waziristan Displacement in Pakistan and Afghanistan	Pakistan and Afghanistan	3 067 694	450 000	02-aug-14	30-apr-15
3	ES044	Stopping the Chain of Transmission of Ebola	Sierra Leone	1 363 419	200 000	11-aug-14	10-nov-14
4	ES045	Stopping the Chain of Transmission of Ebola	Liberia	2 178 062	319 500	25-aug-14	24-dec-14
5	ES046	Ebola Prevention Project in Mali	Mali	1 524 768	205 112	06-nov-14	05-feb-15
6	ES047	Response to Ebola Outbreak in Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	3 595 000	483 599	01-nov-14	30-jun-15
7	ES048	Stopping the Chain of Transmission of Ebola Viral Disease	Liberia	4 188 129	563 390	01-dec-14	31-maj-15
8	ES049	Assistance for urban and rural IDPs in Adamawa state, North East Nigeria	Nigeria	2 974 993	400 196	01-dec-14	30-jun-15
9	ES050	Emergency Life-saving Assistance for Conflict Affected Iraqis (Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region)	Iraq	3 345 228	450 000	01-feb-15	30-apr-15
10	ES051	Emergency Response in Ukraine	Ukraine	2 631 165	360 000	09-mar-15	15-jun-15
				28 031 593	3 895 798		
YEAR 2							
11	ES057	Rapid Response Mechanism-- responding to urgent humanitarian needs in Diffa, Niger	Niger	3 639 690	450 000	15-maj-15	20-dec-15
12	ES059	Emergency Response to Burundi Elections Crisis Influx to North-western Tanzania	Tanzania	3 639 690	450 000	19-maj-15	18-nov-15
13	ES060	Protection and risk-mitigation services for vulnerable women, children and persons with disabilities among Burundian refugees in North-western Tanzania	Tanzania	2 992 634	370 000	27-jul-15	26-jan-15
14	ES061	Assisting the flood-affected population of Rajanpur, South Punjab	Pakistan	3 000 000	370 911	22-jul-15	21-okt-15
15	ES064	Partnerships for Protection in Serbia	Serbia	2 877 543	350 000	01-feb-16	30-apr-16
16	ES065	Drought Emergency Response in Zimbabwe - extended lean season cash transfer assistance	Zimbabwe	3 000 000	359 071	15-apr-16	31-aug-16
17	ES066	Emergency Basic Needs support for IDPs in Cameroon	Cameroon	2 800 746	335 222	15-apr-16	31-aug-16
				21 950 303	2 685 204		
YEAR 3							
18	ES076	Emergency Response to the WASH, Shelter, NFI & Nutrition Needs of Newly Freed IDPs in Borno State, Nigeria	Nigeria	3 500 000	411 522	08-jul-16	31-jul-17
19	ES078	Cash-based response to new drought-induced food insecurity in Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	3 000 000	352 734	05-sep-16	04-mar-17
20	ES077	Emergency Health Support to IDPS and Local Communities in Msrata Governorate	Libya	3 000 000	352 734	15-sep-16	15-maj-17
21	ES079	Emergency assistance to Afghan returnee/ IDPs and host families in Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan	Afghanistan	2 997 779	352 473	01-okt-16	20-maj-17
22	ES081	Emergency Cash and Mobile Health Assistance in Response to the 2016 Raqqa Offensive	Syria	2 551 500	300 000	21-dec-16	31-maj-17
23	ES082	Emergency health and protection response to Iraqi refugees and Dyrian IDPs in Al Hol camp	Syria	2 976 750	350 000	01-jan-17	31-aug-17
24	ES084	Emergency Integrated Health Response in Siti Zone of Somali Region	Ethiopia	3 000 000	352 734	02-mar-17	01-sep-17
25	ES085	Provision of Emergency Cash Support to Persons with Specific Needs in Imvepi Refugee Settlement	Uganda	3 096 916	383 773	27-mar-17	27-okt-17
				24 122 945	2 855 969		
YEAR 4							
26	tbc	Emergency Response to provide lifesaving support to refugees arriving from South Sudan in Ethiopia	Ethiopia	2 999 569	329 623	01-maj-17	31-okt-17

## Summary of Sida Financial Commitments to the HFA



	Grant Agreement		Amendments				
(SEK)	2014-06-30	2014-10-17	2015-04-20	2015-06-30	2016-10-21	2016-11-01	Total
CAR	4 799 806		5 656 500		6 831 995		17 288 301
Sahel - Chad / Mali / Niger	12 373 979		7 542 000		11 711 992		31 627 971
Iraq / Lebanon	9 768 930		11 313 000		11 711 992		32 793 922
Liberia		3 595 000					3 595 000
Sierra Leone		3 595 000					3 595 000
Jemen			3 500 000		6 831 995		10 331 995
Syria/Turkey			10 000 000		9 759 995		19 759 995
Nigeria			4 713 750		4 879 997		9 593 747
Kamerun						5 000 000	5 000 000
Global Protection Mainstreaming	1 250 000		5 000 000		1 268 800		7 518 800
Rapid Response Mechanism	10 249 998	10 000 000	14 141 250		20 000 000		54 391 248
Result-based Protection Programming			1 319 850				1 319 850
Coordination, Contractual, Learning	1 918 099		2 713 650		1 320 036		5 951 785
Unallocated					683 198		683 198
Total	40 360 812	17 190 000	57 400 000	8 500 000	75 000 000	5 000 000	203 450 812
Year 1, 2, 3		57 550 812		65 900 000		80 000 000	203 450 812

# Annex 10: Country Context Summaries

## Central African Republic

Since gaining independence from France in 1960, Central African Republic (CAR) has struggled. Poor governance has meant that the reach of the government barely goes beyond the capital city of Bangui. Despite its significant [mineral](#) deposits and other resources include significant [arable land](#), poor infrastructural development, minimal economic opportunities, and poor access to essential services especially in the rural areas has rendered CAR one of the poorest countries in the world.<sup>184</sup> Instead of providing protection, the national security apparatus has long been identified as one of the primary sources of threat to especially rural populations across the country.<sup>185</sup>

CAR also has a long history of politics by violence based on a ‘winner takes all’ approach. Since independence, the vast majority of the many changes of power have been achieved through coup, assassination and other violent means. However, in the past, this political violence has tended to be relatively contained and short-lived. The current crisis, erupting in late 2012, has persisted over the past five years, with the population being confronted with repeated cycles of violence.

With the armed group known as the Séléka eventually overthrew the then-government in March 2013, already weak state institutions were pushed into utter collapse. The absence of a national security apparatus, saw the emergence of so-called ‘auto-defense forces’ which comprised local groups defending their own communities. These groups eventually merged haphazardly to form the so-called ‘Anti-Balaka’ forces that emerged as the counter force against the Séléka. Simultaneously, animosity grew between the Muslim and non-Muslim civilian populations, each being associated with the armed groups. Indeed, the ensuing violence, allegedly between these two armed groups, was largely targeted at civilian populations assumed to be aligned with the opposite armed group (i.e.: Muslim civilians were assumed to be aligned with the Séléka; and the non-Muslims with the

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<sup>184</sup> In 2011 (i.e.: prior to the current crisis), CAR was ranked 179 (of then 186 countries evaluated) in the Human Development Index. By 2013, CAR was tied with Niger for bottom spot. By 2016, CAR held the bottom ranking on its own.

<sup>185</sup> See for example a 2010 OHCHR Report on CAR available at: <http://newsarchive.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=9831&LangID=E>

‘Anti-Balaka’). This resulted in a ‘tit-for-tat’ kind of revenge-based cycle of violence, often including civilian-on-civilian violence that consolidated a deadly social fracture that emerged between the Muslim and non-Muslim populations.<sup>186</sup>

Unfolding over the past five years, these repeated cycles of largely civilian-targeted violence have generated profound consequences for the affected population including mass killings and large-scale displacements which have included the mass exodus of large portions of the Muslim population throughout much of CAR. As much as half of the 4.6 million people of CAR have been forcibly displaced at different times, with some facing this many times over. The total peak of forced displacement was seen in January 2014, with UNHCR reporting some 922,000 IDPs; with this dropping to 602,000 by March 2014; and 367,000 by June 2015; raising again to 447,500 in November 2015, showing a steady increase to some 600,000 IDPs registered across CAR as of July 2017.<sup>187</sup> UNHCR has also reported an increasing number of refugees fleeing CAR, with some 137,600 being registered as of December 2013; with this number increasing to 289,400 in July 2014; and then to 423,000 by April 2015; and 478,200 by August 2014; and 481,600 by July 2017.<sup>188</sup>

With national elections and the inauguration of President Faustin Archange Touadéra in March 2016 marking the end of a three-year political transition, optimists have claimed that political stability is being restored. However, the above statistics on population movements indicate that the civilian population themselves have little confidence in such claims. Peace and security continues to be extremely fragile in many parts of the country outside of the capital. The government still has little control in most rural areas. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission for CAR (MINUSCA) has been present since 2015, being preceded by African Union peace-keeping forces. However, they have struggled to fulfill their ‘protection of civilians’ mandate. The two former armed groups (i.e.: Seleka and Anti-Balaka) have splintered into many localised armed factions, with the dynamics of violence now being driven at the micro level by multiple factors and interests. Deep social fractures remain and sectarian tensions are still rife, being easily provoked readily reversing any progress gained in terms of stabilisation. With small arms now being widely available throughout the country, violence is quickly deadly. The persistent violence with periodic escalations has had cumulatively devastating implication for the affected populations. Independent livelihoods, food security and coping mechanisms have been eroded and/or utterly destroyed. The original 2017-

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<sup>186</sup> The Muslim population comprised some 15% of the total population of CAR prior to this crisis.

<sup>187</sup> Please see UNHCR data available at:

[http://data.unhcr.org/car/regional.php#\\_ga=2.43100069.1805717754.1503079854-719340071.1481101602](http://data.unhcr.org/car/regional.php#_ga=2.43100069.1805717754.1503079854-719340071.1481101602)

<sup>188</sup> See UNHCR data as above.

2019 Humanitarian Response Plan for CAR<sup>189</sup> reported that some 2.2 million people are in need; some 2 million people were at risk of food insecurity; and some 1.4 million people are ‘vulnerable’ with some 50% of these reportedly being under 18 years of age).<sup>190</sup> In fact, due to the various re-emerging crisis spots evident in early 2017, the Humanitarian Coordinator has recently warned of crisis circumstances that may well exceed the worst that was experienced in 2013-14.<sup>191</sup> As such, the humanitarian response plan was revised in August 2017, with the population in need of humanitarian assistance being increased to some 2.4 million people.

### ***IRC in CAR***

IRC has been in CAR since 2006. More recently, during the crisis, they have been concentrating on their ‘signature programming’ which aims at supporting the health, safety and economic well-being of at-risk populations. In line with the 2020 strategy which commits IRC to work in so-called “crisis places”, IRC is very well situated in CAR, being active in some of the most volatile areas, including Nana Gribizi (Kaga Banderu), Ouham Pendé (Bocaranga) and La Kémo (Dékoa) prefectures. These north-west and central zones have long been hot spots, and are again so.<sup>192</sup>

Unsurprisingly, this amplifies the complexities of the operational challenges. For example, September-October 2016 saw violence erupt in Kaga Banderu (central region) placing significant strain on the humanitarian space in the area. IRC was again forced to evacuate from the same location in July 2017 (at the time of this evaluation). Equally, civilian populations and IRC operational staff in Bocaranga (North West) have confronted on-going security challenges, with individuals being targeted for harassment and looting.<sup>193</sup> Indeed, both Kaga Banderu and Bocaranga have been described as emblematic of the current degradation of the security situation in CAR,<sup>194</sup> with the following map showing the ‘hot spots’ in the country as of July 2017.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Plan de Réponse Humanitaire 2017-2019 République Centrafricaine. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/r-publique-centrafricaine-plan-de-r-ponse-humanitaire-2017-2019-nov>

<sup>190</sup> Besoins Aperçu des Humanitaire (2016, p.6). Available at: [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rca\\_ocha\\_2017\\_hno.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rca_ocha_2017_hno.pdf)

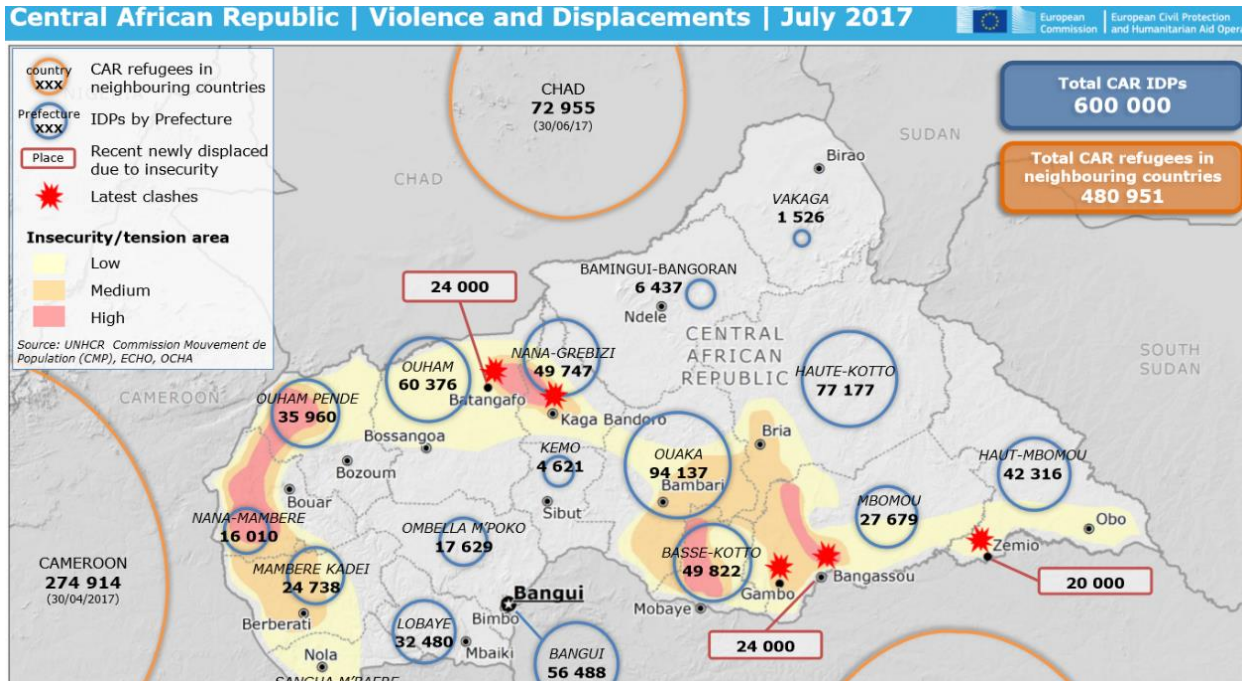
<sup>191</sup> See The Joint Statement of the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Minister of Social Affairs and National Reconciliation on the Humanitarian Situation in the Central African Republic, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Press%20statement%20-%20Humanitarian%20Situation%20in%20CAR%20-%202025052017.pdf>

<sup>192</sup> Even some donor respondents noted that IRC is located in two of the most highly volatile locations, with some appreciating the inherent challenges this imposes.

<sup>193</sup> OCHA reports that, by the end of 2016, some 458 humanitarian workers had been victims of violence during the CAR crisis, with some 20 individuals having been killed (OCHA 2016, p.07). So far, in 2017, some 194 incidents were already recorded in CAR, which accounts for more than half of all violent incidents against aid workers in the world (see: <http://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/record-violence-targeting-aid-workers-and-civilians-west-and-central>).

<sup>194</sup> OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin for CAR, Issue 17, November 2016, see:

According to IRC's internal security analysis, the security situation is 'hot' with



armed groups showing signs of re-grouping and moving in a progressively more organised manner, primarily with self-interested objectives such as gaining control of resource rich areas and forcing access to positions within the government.

### Turkey (as per the Syrian Crisis)

It has been over six years since small anti-government protests, inspired by the Arab Spring, escalated into a violent civil war in Syria. Since 2011, Syria's civil war has turned rapidly into one of the largest global humanitarian crisis of our time. It has impacted and devastated the lives of more than half of Syria's pre-war population, forcing more than 13.5 million people into urgent need of humanitarian assistance by July 2017<sup>196</sup>. This number is believed to grow significantly in the near future, driving even more Syrians out of their homes to seek protection and refuge, internally in Syria as well as externally, mainly to neighbouring countries but also beyond.

[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/humanitarian\\_bulletin\\_17en.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/humanitarian_bulletin_17en.pdf)

<sup>195</sup> See: [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ECDM\\_20170811\\_CAR\\_Violence\\_Displacements\\_July\\_2017.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ECDM_20170811_CAR_Violence_Displacements_July_2017.pdf)

<sup>196</sup> UNHCR Syria Factsheet 2017. See here

The conflict in Syria started in March 2011, with pro-democracy protests against President Bashar al-Assad's government<sup>197</sup>. The government responded with violence, which gave the protesters even more reason to push for democratic reforms. By the summer of 2011, the conflict had drawn in the involvement of Syria's regional neighbours as well as global powers from beyond the Middle East. International involvement, interventions and divisions between the different stakeholders have made the conflict even more complex to tackle.

Syria was a lower-middle-income country prior to the war, but six years of conflict has resulted in cumulative losses in the Syrian GDP, estimated at \$226 billion, according to the World Bank<sup>198</sup>. Besides economic losses, 6.3 million Syrians are forced into internal displacement and roughly 4.8 million have fled their homeland as a result of the ongoing civil war in Syria<sup>199</sup>. Refugees have fled across the borders to the neighbouring countries, like Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. As these four host countries were economically struggling already before the displacement crisis, they are now deeply affected by the massive influx of refugees, causing concerns in a number of areas (social, political, security etc.). The growing numbers of IDPs and refugees continue to create new challenges for the humanitarian operations in the Middle East.

In severest cases, forced migration has resulted in loss of lives. In other cases, people have lost homes and their access to essentials, like clean water, food, sanitation and health care. UNHCR's Syria End of Year Report 2016 estimated that by the end of 2016, 4.3 million Syrians were in need of shelter interventions and 7 million were food insecure<sup>200</sup>. These unstable conditions affect general feelings of safety and protection.

Besides essential needs, IDP and refugee communities are deprived of proper livelihood opportunities. According to the Forced Migration Review (2014) on the Syrian crisis, the displaced population prioritises the need for a job and an education for their children<sup>201</sup>. The most vulnerable, when it comes to livelihood vulnerabilities, are children and adolescents. Roughly 6.1 million Syrians under the age of 18 are in need of education assistance and nearly third of them are out of school<sup>202</sup>. Furthermore, women and girls should be in special focus among the vulnerable communities. They are often exposed to risk of violence, disempowerment and

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<sup>197</sup> Introduction to Syrian Civil War by Encyclopedia Britannica, revised in 2017. See [here](#)

<sup>198</sup> "The Toll of War" by the World Bank Group, Executive Summary (pp. iii-x). See [here](#)

<sup>199</sup> UNHCR Syria Factsheet 2017

<sup>200</sup> UNHCR Syria End of Year Report 2016, Humanitarian Snapshot (pp. 4-5). See [here](#)

<sup>201</sup> Forced Migration Review, Issue 47, "Development and Protection Challenges of the Syrian Refugee Crisis" (pp. 6-10). See [here](#)

<sup>202</sup> UNHCR Syria End of Year Report 2016



abuse<sup>203</sup>. As the crisis is protracted, the different humanitarian actors need to consider more durable long-term solutions for equal livelihood opportunities.

Several plans and strategies have been guiding humanitarian aid in the conflict-affected region. Amongst them are the “Lebanon Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilisation from the Syrian Conflict”<sup>204</sup> (2013), Jordan’s “National Resilience Plan”<sup>205</sup> (2014/2016), “IRC Syria Strategy Action Plan”<sup>206</sup> (2016), the UNHCR’s “3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan”<sup>207</sup> (2016-2017) and the UN’s “2016 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan”<sup>208</sup> (2016). The different humanitarian actors set up these plans and strategies to mitigate and assess the effects of the displacement crisis. In addition, the World Bank Group conducted a study of the economic and social consequences of the Syrian conflict<sup>209</sup>.

### *IRC in Syria*

Since 2012, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has been supporting crisis-affected Syrians within Syria and in its neighbouring countries. The IRC teams in Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Jordan currently reach some around 1.3 million Syrians in need of assistance<sup>210</sup>. They intend to reach people in all locations, including hard-to-access areas. Their areas of focus are: safety, health and economic well-being, again with a special focus are women and children. They seek to ensure access to essential medicines and supplies; to provide emergency cash to displaced families to address their immediate needs; to operate clinics (including mental health care); to run classes and counselling for children; to create safe places for women and girls; and to rebuild households’ economic stability through job trainings and small business support. In 2013, the IRC started offering support to the Syrian refugees in Turkey, mainly in the Hatay Province on the Syrian border. Among other assistance, the program has provided help by: launching education services for Syrian youth; providing psychological support and counselling services; and improving income opportunities<sup>211</sup>. They also work extensively with Syrian youth struggling to adapt in Turkey. As of the summer 2017, IRC has been in the process of shifting their offices from Turkey to Jordan. The original goal of the Syrian response within the HFA III was to ensure that Syrian refugee women and girls in Lebanon and Iraq have access

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<sup>203</sup> UNFPA Response to Women and Girls in the Syria Crisis. See [here](#)

<sup>204</sup> Lebanon Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilisation from the Syrian Conflict. See [here](#)

<sup>205</sup> National Resilience Plan 2014-2016. See [here](#)

<sup>206</sup> The IRC Syria: Strategy Action Plan 2016-2020. See [here](#)

<sup>207</sup> 3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2016-2017 in Response to the Syria Crisis. See [here](#)

<sup>208</sup> 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan: Syrian Arab Republic. See [here](#)

<sup>209</sup> “The Toll of War” by the World Bank Group, Executive Summary (pp. iii-x). See [here](#)

<sup>210</sup> The IRC Syria Crisis Briefing. See [here](#)

<sup>211</sup> The IRC Turkey Crisis Briefing. See [here](#)

to services, are protected from further harm, and are supported to recover and thrive. The objective was to respond to and reduce protection risks faced by Syrian refugee women and girls, including survivors of gender-based violence, in urban and peri-urban settings in Lebanon and Iraq.



# Annex 11: Anti-Corruption Policy Enforcement Steps

*(This description has been supplied by IRC and the procedures and steps follow generally what the evaluation has concluded.)*

IRC ensures that anti-corruption policy and guidelines are implemented in practice by ensuring all staff is trained on The IRC Way as part of the induction for new staff. Finance and Supply Chain staff receives specific training on the policies and procedures in the Finance and Supply Chain Manuals respectively to ensure that they are aware of IRC's anti-corruption measures in this area. Knowledge of the code is refreshed each year on IRC Way Day, a mandatory event held in each office around the globe.

The IRC Way includes details on how to raise concerns and emphasizes that it is all employees' duty to report knowledge or suspicion of engagement in illegal or unethical activity in connection with the IRC's work. The IRC Way has recently been revised and strengthened, and will be reissued in the fall of 2017. From that point on all staff will be required to re-read the document each year and re-acknowledge their understanding with a signature.

The IRC Way is supplemented by the Global Reporting Guidelines. This document adds specificity to the requirement to report misconduct. Staffs have multiple ways in which to make reports.

The Ethics and Compliance Unit receives, reviews, and investigates allegations of misconduct and uses a central case management system (EthicsPoint). EthicsPoint is also IRC's hotline provider for employees and others to report concerns via telephone and web. ECU works with HR and local management where it is appropriate to refer the matter for review. Cases requiring investigation are handled by the team of professional, trained investigators.

IRC Inc has an Internal Audit department, staffed with five qualified accountants, reporting to the Board. The objective of internal audits is to assess the operating effectiveness of the procedures and controls implemented by management to provide reasonable assurance that operational, reporting and compliance objectives will be achieved. The scope of internal audits includes Propose-to-Close (grant life cycle), Sub-awards, Procure-to-Pay (supply chain processes), Hire-to-Retire (HR processes), and Record-to-Report (including cash management, program expenses and inventory/warehousing) business processes. They look at risks and control

weaknesses that could increase the likelihood of corruption in each of these business processes.

No matter their origin, all reports are channelled to and registered in EthicsPoint case management software. They are then evaluated by an investigator. The investigation team verifies the details of initial reports and supplements them with additional fact gathering. With this information, an investigator will make a determination, in consultation with the local office (when appropriate), about how to handle the issue. Some are closed immediately due to lack of information, some are investigated further.

For those that are investigated further, most will be handled by local office personnel supervised by a NY-based investigator. In high-priority or highly sensitive cases, NY-based investigators will travel to the area and handle the investigation themselves. As cases are handled, they are documented in the case management software.

Investigators will issue interim and final reports, and work with the local office to determine what actions must be taken to rectify any problems that are found.

The procedure for reporting and investigations described above is in supplemental to the standard internal audit process. The internal audit unit conducts regular audits of country programs and US offices. The unit draws up each year's schedule according to a set of pre-determined risk factors, and conducts 7 -10 audits each year. Any suspicions of fraud or corruption turned up in the audit process will be channeled to the investigation unit.

Recommendations for corrective action coming from ECU investigations are shared with the Director of Controls Integration in the International Programmes Department and if appropriate with Country Directors and as relevant with other functional areas – eg; Supply Chain. Recommendations for corrective action coming from internal audits are reported on every 90 days by the country office through a Corrective Action Plan, until implemented. Recommendations that have wider organisational impact are referred to the IRC Risk Committee.



## Evaluation of IRC's Humanitarian Programme 2014–2016

This evaluation provided information for Sida in terms of developing a further multi-year agreement with IRC for the period of 2018–2020. Given that this is the third HFA between Sida and IRC, it is also meant to provide recommendations on how the IRC/Sida collaboration could be further strengthened. In this broader sense, the evaluation explored the comparative advantage that IRC provides in terms of helping Sida to realise its humanitarian strategy.

The evaluation recommends among others that Sida continue to collaborate with IRC through the multi-annual arrangements through the four operational components of the HFA and incorporate both a Programme & Project Approach to funding of the next multi-year HFA as well as seek to more proactively capitalise on the synergies with IRC by engaging in dialogue with a wider multi-disciplinary team of stakeholders. It also recommends IRC to among others take the lead and testing the boundaries of their collaboration with Sida and continue to improve the efforts to spotlight critical humanitarian crises and to improve the efforts to tackle these most difficult operating contexts to both make an impact and to develop the evidence-basis for influencing how these contexts are addressed.

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