

Multilateral Aid Review: Assessment of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Summary	
Organisation: IFRC	Date: February 2011
Description of Organisation	
<p>Note on ICRC, IFRC and National Societies: <i>The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the largest humanitarian network in the world, and is composed of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and 186 individual National Societies. ICRC has an exclusively humanitarian mission to protect and assist victims of armed conflict and others forms of violence and directs and coordinates the Movement's international relief activities during armed conflicts. IFRC inspires, facilitates and promotes all humanitarian activities carried out by National Societies - directing and coordinating National Societies actions to assist the victims of natural and technological disasters, refugees and those affected by health emergencies. National Societies act as auxiliaries to their national authorities in the humanitarian field. They provide a range of services including disaster relief, and health and social programmes.</i></p> <p>IFRC is the most far reaching global humanitarian network comprised of 186 National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and draws on some 90 million volunteers worldwide to support operations to deliver assistance to vulnerable people (over 150 million people every year). Distinguished by one of the most recognisable emblems in the world, with a solid legal base in statutes, IFRC is recognised worldwide as auxiliary to the public authorities through international treaties, and has formal associations with governments, the UN, the NGO community and the private sector.</p> <p>The role of the Secretariat in Geneva is to coordinate and mobilise relief assistance for international emergencies, promote cooperation between National Societies (NSs) and represent these National Societies in the international field. The role of the field delegations is to assist and advise National Societies with relief operations and development programmes, and encourage regional cooperation.</p> <p>IFRC carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters, and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of its National Societies. IFRC's work focuses on four core areas: promoting humanitarian values; disaster response; disaster preparedness; and health and community care.</p>	
Contribution to UK Development Objectives	
<p>1a. Critical Role in Meeting International Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Scale and reach of the organisation means that it is a critical humanitarian actor. + It is often the first to respond to humanitarian 	<p>Score (1-4) Strong (4)</p>

<p>emergencies on the ground as its National Societies are already present in country and in communities and they have unique access to areas that other humanitarian organisations may not, due to the trust developed from their auxiliary status to the government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Societies vary in their capacities. = IFRC scores a 4 in this area due to its unique role within the humanitarian architecture – the biggest humanitarian organisation in the world with the greatest network of volunteers. 	
<p>1b. Critical Role in Meeting UK Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Contributes significantly to the MDGs through disaster preparedness and response as part of humanitarian assistance. Also significantly to health at a community level. + Climate change adaptation is well mainstreamed throughout the organisation through disaster risk reduction strategies. = Plays an important role in achieving MDGs on humanitarian action and health and ensuring climate change adaptation strategies at community level. However, contributes less to wealth creation and governance and security. 	<p>Strong (4)</p>
<p>2. Attention to Cross-Cutting Issues:</p> <p>2a. Fragile Contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + IFRC’s presence in 150 countries means it has experience working in fragile contexts, with some National Societies based in these areas. + IFRC’s work in fragile contexts is governed by a set of principles and guidelines - The Seville Agreement states that ICRC has the lead in conflict situations, and the Federation takes the lead when the situation has moved to ‘reconstruction and rehabilitation’ - We could not find much evidence that IFRC provides monitoring reports on working in fragile states. = Although not mandated to work in conflict situations this does not preclude IFRC working in fragile states which it inevitably does as a humanitarian organisation and due to the fact that some of its National Societies are based in fragile states. <p>2b. Gender Equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Clear gender policy and promotion of gender policies within National Societies. + Disaggregates information by sex and some country examples of programming. 	<p style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Satisfactory (3)</p> <p style="text-align: center; vertical-align: bottom;">Weak (2)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenges remain with integrating gender into shelter cluster activities and programmes. - Impact of gender policies not clear. = Although IFRC has a gender policy and promotes gender policies within National Societies, gender is not fully integrated into shelter cluster activities and programmes and the impact of policies is not clear. <p>2c. Climate Change & Environmental Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Tools exist and programmes provide evidence of how IFRC are seeking to mainstream climate change adaptability and environmental sustainability into National Societies. - No specific climate change policy available although other publications do exist. = The organisation is doing much to mainstream work on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and guidelines and programmes show evidence of National Societies working specifically to integrate climate change adaptability into their programmes. 	<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>
<p>3. Focus on Poor Countries¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + IFRC represents the largest humanitarian response network in the world and its National Societies are well-placed to understand local needs in the event of a humanitarian emergency. - IFRC has limited reserves to control fund management at field level and to ensure allocation is strictly according to need. = Although IFRC allocation processes follow clear principles based on needs and vulnerability, its central funding mechanisms need further strengthening to ensure more equitable distribution of assistance in reality, particularly to “forgotten crises” and to National Societies in highly vulnerable contexts. 	<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>
<p>4. Contribution to Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + IFRC contribute significantly to humanitarian results particularly as one of the initial responders following disasters and are able to quickly and effectively mobilise to reinforce country capacity. - IFRC faces a big challenge in maintaining capacity on the ground and building the capacity of weak National Societies. Restructuring has been a challenge for the organisation which, in the short-term, has had some impact on delivery. 	<p>Satisfactory (3)</p>

¹ Humanitarian agencies have been assessed according to their focus on countries with the greatest humanitarian need

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> = Overall IFRC's ability to respond quickly and effectively immediately after a disaster is widely recognised. Building capacity of weak National Societies remains a challenge and considering the contexts in which some of them work will remain so. 	
Organisational Strengths	
Score (1-4)	
<p>5. Strategic and Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + IFRC has a clear mandate and strategy and an effective governing body. Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting are increasingly being systematised throughout the organisation. - Despite some improvements, performance management is not yet sufficiently embedded at country-level. = Greater emphasis needed on this area at country-level despite recent improvements. Implementation is patchy. 	Weak (2)
<p>6. Financial Resources Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a flexible and predictable source of country-level funding for disaster appeals. + Strong financial management procedures and reporting in place. - IFRC finds it difficult to reallocate funds from poorly performing projects due to heavily restricted and earmarked funds. - Difficult to show evidence of sound financial resources management at country-level. = Strong financial reporting and systems in place at secretariat level. However the degree to which the secretariat can impose good financial resources management at country-level is limited. 	Weak (2)
<p>7. Cost and Value Consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Good logistics system which has driven down procurement costs and is used by other humanitarian organisations. Value for money demonstrated by the scale of IFRC's volunteer network and number of people who are already on the ground when a disaster strikes. - Very difficult to ascertain cost control at a country level as National Society capacity for monitoring and reporting costs is limited. = Cost effectiveness of IFRC is clear and it is striving for cost control in its logistics and decentralising process. However, country-level monitoring systems for cost control are weak. 	Weak (2)
<p>8. Partnership Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Clear focus on partnership within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Positive lead in the Shelter cluster. 	Satisfactory (3)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Good focus on beneficiary voice. - Not very good at working in partnership outside the Movement. Although lead in Shelter Cluster is to be welcomed there is still some way to go before IFRC's leadership is fully effective. = Effective at working in partnership within the Movement and as shelter cluster lead. More work to be done in establishing partnerships outside of the Red Cross/Crescent Movement 	
<p>9. Transparency and Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Adheres to standards for providing disaster relief to the most vulnerable. - There is no formal mechanism integrated into the governance structure that allows donors and partner governments to collectively hold IFRC to account, such as a Donor Support Group (which ICRC have). - Secretariat influence over National Societies to effect change is limited. = Mechanisms are not in place for donors/partners to collectively hold IFRC to account and secretariat influence limited to effect change in National Societies. 	Weak (2)
Likelihood of Positive Change	Score (1-4)
<p>10. Likelihood of Positive Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + IFRC have improved following DFID strategic funding in areas of identified importance to DFID such as performance management although there is still some way to go. - The nature of the organisation as a federation of independent National Societies means that the secretariat can influence and promote, but not require continual improvement over the organisation as a whole. - There are limited opportunities inside the governance structures for donors/governments to influence change. = Some improvements have been made, however potential for continual improvement limited by both governance and independence of National Societies. 	Uncertain (2)