

Danish Refugee Council

Recertification Audit – Summary Report RC 2022/01/11

1. General information

1.1 Organisation

Type	Mandates	Verified	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Membership/Network <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct Assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Federated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	
Head office location	Copenhagen, Denmark		
Total number of country programmes	40	Total number of staff	8,885

1.2 Audit team

Lead auditor	Jorge Menéndez Martínez
Second auditor	Camille Guyot-Bender
Third auditor	--
Observer	--
Expert	--
Witness / other	--

1.3 Scope of the audit

CHS Verification Scheme	Certification
Audit cycle	Second Audit Cycle
Phase of the audit	Recertification
Extraordinary or other type of audit	--

1.4 Sampling*

Randomly sampled country programme sites	Included in final sample	Replaced by	Rationale for sampling and selection of sites	Onsite or remote
Jordan	Yes		Jordan represents a programme from the Middle East region, and provides geographical coverage.	Initial plan onsite, but due to COVID-19 disruptions, it was remotely assessed.
Central Africa Republic	No	Colombia	Colombia was included instead of Central Africa Republic to include a programme	On site, except

			from Latin America and the Caribbean Region, ensuring a better geographical coverage (including in consideration of selected countries over 4 years audit cycle). All seven regions where DRC operates are represented.	interviews with DRC staff, which were conducted online.
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Yes		Democratic Republic of the Congo represents a programme from the East Africa & Great Lakes region, ensuring geographical coverage.	Remote
South Sudan	No	Libya	Libya was included instead of South Sudan, as South Sudan was included as part of the Mid-Term Audit in 2019 and to include a programme from North Africa Region, ensuring a better geographical coverage.	Remote
Nigeria	Yes		Nigeria represents a programme from the West Africa region, providing geographical coverage.	Remote
Vietnam	No	Tanzania	Afghanistan was included instead of Vietnam in Stage 1 because the Vietnam programme was recently closed. Afghanistan was chosen at the time as it was one of the largest country operations from the Asia Region. However, given the sudden degradation of the situation in the country in September, and in order not to disrupt life-saving emergency operations, the audit team decided to operate a change and selected Tanzania.	Remote
Myanmar	No	Kosovo	Kosovo was included instead of Myanmar because Myanmar was visited at the Mid-Term Audit. This also allowed the inclusion of a programme from the Europe Region, ensuring a full geographical coverage.	Remote

Any other sampling performed for this audit:

The programme site visit to Jordan was cancelled in September 2021, due to COVID-19 travel risks at the time, and remote interviews with staff, partners and communities took place instead (see details in section 2 below). Challenges with communication through web-based platforms were experienced in some community consultations (e.g. lack of face-to-face communication when working with a translator). This represents a possible limitation to the findings as the audit team only visited one country, Colombia.

The remote assessment of Afghanistan was changed to Tanzania in September, due to the situation in Afghanistan at the time. The audit team decided to change to Tanzania to allow the DRC team in Afghanistan to focus on the security of their team and respond to the emergency.

We recommend that the next maintenance audit includes checks in Afghanistan.

Sampling risk:

DRC is at the beginning of its second four-year audit cycle with HQAI. Over the first cycle, 2017-2021, DRC worked steadily through each audit and demonstrated improving performance over time. DRC has internal quality assurance and control systems in place to address requirements of the CHS, and other strategic commitments. These give the auditors sufficient confidence to recommend that DRC be recertified despite the limitations detailed above.

**It is important to note that the audit findings are based on a sample of an organisation's country programmes, its documentation and observation. Findings are analysed to determine an organisation's systematic approach and application of all aspects of the CHS across different contexts and ways of working.*

2. Activities undertaken by the audit team

2.1 Locations Assessed

Locations	Dates	Onsite or remote
Head office	2021/05/26 – 2021/11/06	Remote
Colombia	2021/07/10 – 2021/19/10	Remote
Colombia	2021/26/10 – 2021/29/10	Onsite
Jordan	2021/09/03; 2021/10/13 – 2021/27/10	Remote
Nigeria	2021/10/18 – 2021/10/19	Remote
DR Congo	2021/10/18	Remote
Tanzania	2021/10/21	Remote
Kosovo	2021/10/20	Remote
Libya	2021/09/27 and 2021/10/27	Remote

2.2 Interviews

Position / level of interviewees	Number of interviewees		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Head Office			
Management	9	11	Remote
Staff	6	2	Remote
Country Programme (s)			
Management	13	13	Remote
Staff	13	18	Remote & Onsite
Partner staff	5	4	Remote
Other Stakeholders	1		Onsite
Ombudsman's office Riohacha in Colombia	1		Remote
Syrian Refugees Department Jordan		1	Remote
Total number of interviewees	48	49	

2.3 Consultations with communities

Type of group and location	Number of participants		Onsite or remote
	Female	Male	
Group discussion #1 - Protection Monitoring Riohacha (Colombia)	6		Onsite

Group discussion #2 – Legal Aid project in Riohacha (Colombia)	4	2	Onsite
Group discussion #3 - Protection Monitoring Riohacha (Colombia)	4		Onsite
Group discussion #4 - Legal Aid project in Riohacha (Colombia)	3	1	Onsite
Group discussion #5 – GBV project in Riohacha (Colombia)	6		Onsite
Group discussion #6 – Male - Integrated Assistance Centre in Maicao (Colombia)		5	Onsite
Group discussion #7 – Female - Integrated Assistance Centre in Maicao (Colombia)	6		Onsite
Group discussion #8 – Wayuu Female - Integrated Assistance Centre in Maicao (Colombia)	3		Onsite
Group discussion #9 – People with disabilities Integrated Assistance Centre in Maicao (Colombia)	2		Onsite
Group discussion #10 – Short term residents' area - Integrated Assistance Centre in Maicao (Colombia)	3	3	Onsite
Group discussion #11 – Male - Economic Recovery and Protection Project in East Amman (Jordan)		6	Remote
Group discussion #12 – Female - Economic Recovery and Protection Project in East Amman (Jordan)	5		Remote
Group discussion #13 – Male – Livelihoods Project in Azraq Camp (Jordan)		8	Remote
Group discussion #14 Community Participation Committee	2	1	Remote
Total number of participants	44	26	

2.4 Opening meeting

Date	2021/05/19
Location	Remote
Number of participants	28
Any substantive issues arising	None

2.5 Closing meeting

Date	2021/11/25
Location	Remote
Number of participants	37
Any substantive issues arising	None

2.6 Programme sites

Briefing

Date	2021/08/19
Location	Remote (Colombia)
Number of participants	4
Any substantive issues arising	None

Briefing

Date	2021/08/23
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De-briefing

Date	2021/10/29
Location	Bogota (Colombia)
Number of participants	5
Any substantive issues arising	None

De-briefing

Date	2021/11/09
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Location	Remote (Jordan)
Number of participants	4
Any substantive issues arising	None

Location	Remote (Jordan)
Number of participants	3
Any substantive issues arising	None

3. Background information on the organisation

3.1 General information

Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is a humanitarian, non-governmental, non-profit organisation founded in 1956 by Danish organisations to integrate Hungarian refugees in Denmark. DRC is an umbrella organisation, that includes 25 member organisations and volunteer groups. National or humanitarian organisations are eligible to be part of the Danish Refugee Council. All member organisations must be non-political. In 1991, DRC started its first international programme assisting displaced persons in countries of former Yugoslavia.

Danish Demining Group (DDG), a separate organisation, was established in 1997 to provide efficient community-oriented solutions to human security problems caused by mines and other explosive remnants of war. DRC and DDG united as one DRC in 2020; DDG was integrated within DRC and officially became known as the Humanitarian Peace and Disarmament (HPD) sector.

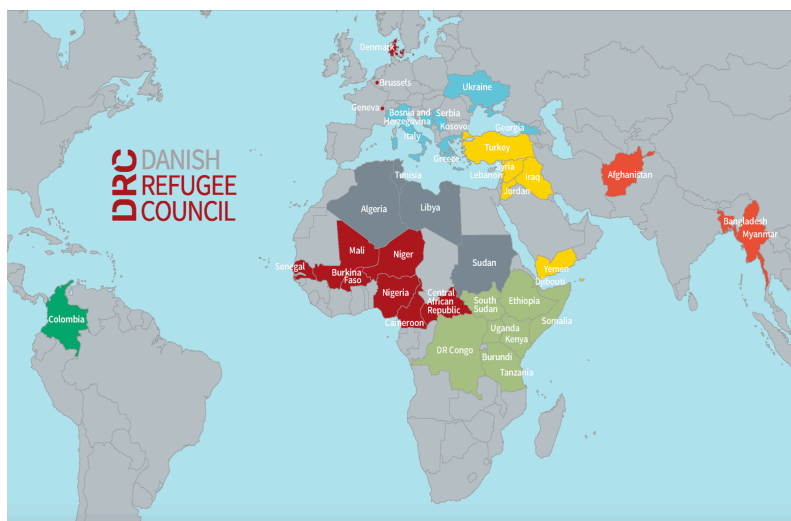
In 2020, DRC was operational in 40 countries in Europe, America, Africa, and Asia, with 8,885 employees. Of these employees, 7,424 were national employees in country operations, 569 were expatriate staff, 672 were employed in Denmark, and 41% of employees were women. Its five largest country operations were: Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Greece, and Afghanistan. According to the 2020 financial statements, the total income reached was 3.2 billion Danish Krone (DKK). Profit reached 1 million DKK, which was an improvement compared to 2019's loss of 30 million DKK.

DRC, in its Strategy 2021-2025, has identified three foundational strategic priorities to deliver on the breakthroughs of increased protection and enhanced inclusion. They are:

- Impactful advocacy based on more evidence
- Stronger partnerships and alliances
- Better value for money and more sustainable financing

Along with these priorities, DRC has identified the following organisational principles: go local, go green, go digital, be accountable, and include.

DRC Offices in the World



3.2 Governance and management structure

DRC's governance and management structure is detailed in the DRC's Statutes, which were revised in November 2019 and published in several languages on its website (Spanish, English, French, Arabic and Danish).

The Council is the DRC's highest authority. The Council includes the following: up to three representatives from each member organisation (25 organisations), six representatives from volunteer groups, counselling entities cooperating with the DRC as well as the DRC's Council. Under the Council sits the Executive Committee, which has overall responsibility for the management of the DRC. The Executive Committee consists of a President, a Vice President and six members elected by the Council; neither the President nor the members are remunerated. The Executive Committee is responsible for appointing the Secretary General.

The Secretary General and the Executive Management Team are responsible for running the daily business. The current Secretary General was appointed in 2019 and since then has implemented a number of changes to the management structure. To begin with, DRC's national operations are no longer separated from the international ones – they are considered one entity. This merger has also motivated a reorganisation of its departments. DRC now has six departments: Finance, Supply Chain and Risk; People and Organisation; Operations in Africa and Americas; Operations in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe; Programme, Policy and External Relations; and Communication and Private Fundraising. The Executive Management Team is comprised of the Executive Directors of these six departments. DRC's key sectors now include protection, economic recovery, humanitarian disarmament and peacebuilding, shelter and settlements, and camp coordination and management. This was due to an internal organisational sector review process during 2019 and 2020.

DRC Organigram



3.3 Internal quality assurance mechanisms and risk management

The second Maintenance Audit (MA2) in 2020 noted that DRC had strengthened its internal quality assurance mechanisms by upgrading the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) team to a division named Effectiveness, Knowledge and Learning, and by increasing its staff, including assigning a new manager. This new structure has reinforced autonomous evaluation and learning processes, with reporting line directly to the Executive Director of Programme, Policy and External relations. The team operates at full capacity in all technical areas, and has put in place the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, Minimum Operational Procedures (MELMOPS), which provide guidance and support to DRC operations. MELMOPS is currently being reviewed to also include accountability functions – and will be revamped and renamed as DRC's global MEAL-Model.

In 2019, DRC started implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system called Dynamics, which enables integrated business management that supports functional areas and operations. In 2020, DRC performed a learning exercise to identify existing gaps in Dynamics.

According to the results, an action plan was developed to address the areas of the ERP that need improvements. As of June 2021, Dynamics was fully functional in all the Country Offices (COs).

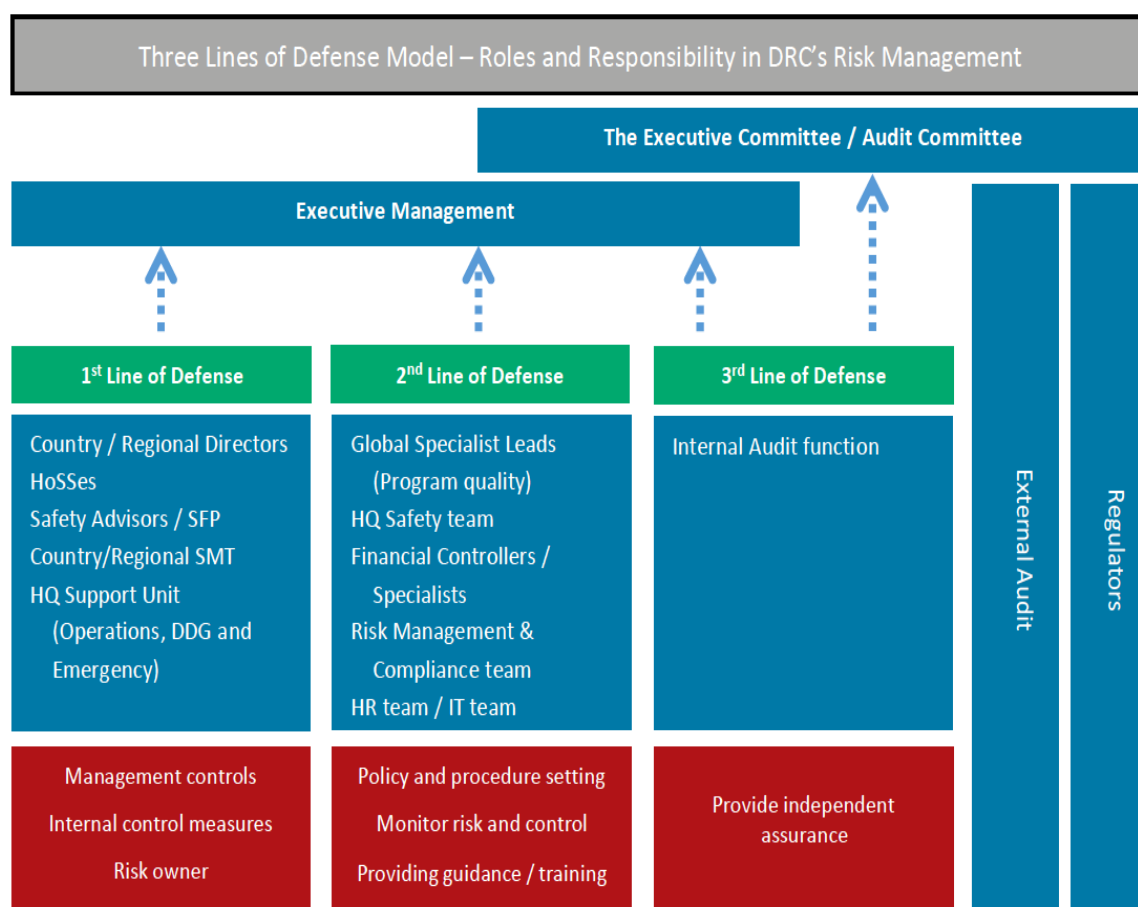
In 2021, DRC has performed a staff survey called DRC Voices (see also 4.5) that measures the best practices for understanding staff engagement, features, and broader organisational health indicators.

The DRC's Risk Management Framework describes the process and methods that DRC uses to manage its risks. DRC considers three types of risks:

- Contextual risks: the range of potential adverse outcomes that could arise in a certain context.
- Programmatic risks: including the potential for an aid programme failing to achieve its objective, and the potential for the programme to cause harm in the external environment.
- Institutional risks: the internal risks that DRC has as an organisation.

DRC risk management is based on the following principles: a) it is essential to the organisational process and for decision making; b) it facilitates, rather than hinders, the achievement of objectives; c) it is coordinated between responsible entities to avoid gaps and silo thinking; d) it is transparent and inclusive; e) it is an ongoing and dynamic process, and f) It allows for decision making based on a balance between control and effect.

To ensure a holistic view is taken to managing risk, a Risk Management Committee is established within the Executive Management of DRC. DRC also applies "the Three Lines of Defence" model, illustrated below, to ensure clarity on the structure.



Before starting a new country operation, DRC performs a risk assessment to ensure that all the risks that DRC might face are identified, and that opening in a new country is based on an informed decision.

Country Directors and Regional Directors are primarily responsible for ensuring that the risk management process is functioning effectively within respective country and regional programmes and operations. This includes facilitating an open culture about risk identification and risk-taking. For all the risks identified, there has to be an identified risk owner, who is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the actions to ensure the effective management of the risk. Country Offices are also required to report risks to Head Office at three points during the annual Risk Management Cycle.

DRC's internal audit division conducts onsite and remote audits of the Country Offices. The selection of Country Offices to be audited each year is determined by the main risks identified and their level of priority.

3.4 Work with partner organisations

DRC recognises partnerships as one of four strategic priorities within DRC's new strategy (see also 2.1). Its focus is on seeking partnerships to foster local capacities and strengthen the abilities of institutions and people to deliver and safeguard the rights of people affected by conflict and displacement. The DRC Policy Statement on Partnerships indicates DRC's commitment to operating in different operational modalities: through direct assistance, in partnership with other organisations, or through a combination of both, depending on the context. DRC distinguishes between three dimensions of partnerships: states (authorities), civil society, and the private sector. DRC can partner with actors from all three dimensions of society and at local, national, and international levels.

Regarding implementing partners, the Implementing Partner Policy is an integral part of the DRC Operations Handbook. It outlines central DRC positions and principles related to collaboration with implementing partners and sets out nine quality standards and related minimum operational requirements, which apply to all implementing partnerships in DRC's international operations. The quality standard #8: Accountability and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) includes an obligation for DRC to explain and extend, as much as is feasibly possible, its commitment to the CHS to implementing partners. This means seeking an understanding of how its partners will approach the CHS nine commitments and identifying ways that DRC can work with the partners to implement the commitments. DRC partnerships are usually with local and national civil society organisations, are guided by the humanitarian imperative, and have a strong commitment to accountability. DRC's Country Directors are primarily responsible for the selection of, and the relations with partner organisations. DRC identifies potential partner organisations through the Partner Relevance Tools. When the partner is identified, the partners' capacities and risks are assessed through the Partner Capacity Tool. Based on these results, capacity building plans are implemented to increase the partners' capacities and mitigate their main risks. The Country Director has to appoint a Partnership Coordinator who will be in charge of leading the partnership process, including coordination requirements from the supporting sector and engaging directly with the partner. As noted in the previous audit, DRC still implements less than 10% of its programmes through partners.

The new strategy puts special emphasis on engagement with national and local partners to allow DRC to be as responsive as possible to the priorities and needs of affected populations and to ensure capacity development at the local level.

4. Overall performance of the organisation

4.1 Effectiveness of the governance, internal quality assurance and risk management of the organisation

DRC's overall internal quality assurance and risk management score, based on average weighted findings across select CHS indicators, is 2.8 out of 4, which shows an improvement since the Mid-term Audit (MTA) in 2019, when DRC scored 2.6.

DRC has a strong commitment to internal quality assurance and risk management systems and is dedicated to finding improved and long-lasting ways to reach and strengthen communities and people affected by crisis's resilience to stresses and crises. DRC systematically revises old or develops new policies and procedures to strengthen coherence and standard operating processes across country offices.

This dedication is either demonstrated or described in policies such as its Risk Management Policy, Data Protection Policy, Strategy 2025, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Minimum Operational Procedures (MELMOPS), Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) Global Guidance, among many others, where high quality programming as well as protecting the dignity, independence, and safety of beneficiaries is a central theme.

Accurate context analyses, appropriate project design, trackable indicators, and timely decision-making, to name a few, are implications of the thoughtfulness and clarity in the processes and procedures in place. There are internal systems and compliance checks that exist as part of the Operational Handbook and Programme Handbook to help staff hold themselves accountable. These exist as soliciting and responding to feedback and complaints from communities or measuring programme progress through review meetings and learning events. Although to note, that since the roll-out of Dynamics, and with the pandemic, many of the accountability systems have been difficult to continue. Despite remaining inconsistencies found, for example, on the monitoring tools used by Country Offices or in the management of community members' personal information, DRC's commitment to quality improvement is evident and confirmed by community members' interviews.

4.2 How the organisation applies the CHS across its work

DRC has a very high level of performance in the application of CHS commitments. DRC has demonstrated that humanitarian responses are appropriate and relevant, coordinated, and complimentary. The organisation consistently puts emphasis and resources in ensuring local capacities are strengthened, and assistance is based on communication, participation, and feedback. At the global level, efforts such as putting in place a global CHS Steering Committee, a newly defined Terms of Reference, frequently updated membership list and structured quarterly meetings in advance, further exemplifies the organisation's commitment to quality and accountability standards as well as to communities and people affected by crisis.

While there are improvements that could still be made to ensure practices are aligned with CHS and consistent across all country programmes, this audit found that the CHS is generally well applied. Strengths identified since the previous audit in DRC's alignment with the CHS include but are not limited to:

- Consistently ensuring that communities have access to information that is easily understood and in a variety of formats such as video, brochures, discussion which are translated and/or interpreted when necessary;
- Expected behaviour of staff, including organisational commitments made on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse are effectively communicated to communities - which confirmed this is indeed the case;
- The development of the Community Feedback Mechanism Guidance and Toolkit (CFM), which has been finalised in 2021 and provides information and best practices to support COs in implementing and strengthening CFMs;

Some weaknesses remain in specific areas, such as consistent practice in feedback and complaints mechanisms, and in ensuring the same quality of monitoring tools in all country offices.

4.3 PSEA

DRC has a middle-level score on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) (2.6 out of 4) and Do No Harm (2.4 out of 4), which shows an improvement since the MTA, which scored 2.3 on PSEA and 2.1 on Do No Harm.

The DRC is committed to the PSEA and Do No Harm. One of the principles of the new strategy is "Be accountable! And put people at the centre of everything we do". This principle commits DRC to improve governance structures which can ensure that the voices, interests, and capacities of the people affected by displacement and conflict are more recognised and respected in DRC and in the world.

The organisation has several policies, tools and mechanisms that contribute to ensuring its programmes and projects follow a do not harm approach and contribute to prevention from SEA. For example, DRC protection monitoring activities include the assessment of the risk of SEA in specific contexts and for all demographic groups within a community. DRC has a zero-tolerance policy on sexual misconduct. Since the previous audit, DRC has updated its Safeguarding policy and Child Safeguarding Policy and has developed the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Training; however, this training is new and there are not yet measures in place to ensure it is mandatory, consistently adapted and implemented. DRC is also in the process of seeking to recruit a dedicated PSEA specialist to address organisational gaps and provide support to CO's globally in line with a survivor-centred approach.

DRC has procedures available that outline the specific processes required to handle complaints about programmes or project activities, sexual exploitation, and abuse (SEA) and other abuses of power. DRC has developed visual information, written information, and videos explaining how complaints can be made, what they cover, and expected behaviour of DRC staff, including zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). The Code of Conduct Unit in HQ is in charge of receiving and handling all PSEAH allegations. The Code of Conduct Unit in HQ can always be reached directly via an online form and an email address. The Code of Conduct Unit in HQ monitors the implementation of the Code of Conduct Reporting Mechanism in all countries on a monthly basis. The Code of Conduct Reporting Mechanism is in place in most countries, however not in all.

This said, DRC also has areas of weakness linked to how it can ensure all its services are safely accessible to people with disabilities and older adults, and that all the country offices have functioning systems to safeguard any personal information collected from communities and people affected by crisis.

4.4 Localisation

DRC scores strongly on localisation (3 out of 4) and has shown a great improvement since the MTA, which scored 2.5.

DRC's new Strategy 2025 recognises Go Local as one of the five organisational principles. DRC aims to become as local as possible by supporting local actors and initiatives in programming, making sure that DRC's operational and support functions embed local resources, and strengthening leadership via advocacy and evidence. DRC promotes the leadership of communities and people affected by conflict and displacement in situation and response analyses, strategic planning, programme design, implementation, and monitoring. Also, since the MTA, there has been increased emphasis on empowering community members, especially minorities and marginalised groups, to be leaders and be equipped to make decisions for their own lives, as stated by DRC staff interviewed.

DRC recognises that first responders to humanitarian crises are almost invariably local actors who have in-depth knowledge of local contexts. DRC also commits to supporting communities and people affected by crisis by building sustainable local capacities and sustainable local development into their programming and operations. DRC considers that the relevance,

sustainability, and impact of interventions are maximised by working with local actors and organisations. However, as mentioned above (see also 3.4), the DRC does not always implement projects and programmes with local partners.

The audit shows that DRC's cooperation with local structures has increased since previous audits. DRC is in the process of developing tools and guidelines to support staff in strengthening local capacities. DRC now trains the entire community with which it works, and not only community leaders.

Also, wherever possible, the organisation recruits and promotes national and local staff. All the sampled countries in this audit have significantly reduced the number of international staff compared to the previous years.

In terms of the environmental impact aspects, the audit shows that DRC considered them in the selection of suppliers and has taken several actions at country level to reduce the impact on the environment, for example:

- Reducing the organisation's carbon footprint by planting trees
- Minimising the use of paper and the printing of documents
- Encouraging recycling, among others

4.5 Gender and diversity

DRC scores strongly on gender and diversity (2.9 out of 4), and as with localisation (see 4.4), has shown a great improvement since the MTA, which scored 2.4.

DRC's Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Policy (2011, ed. 2020) outlines DRC's commitment to ensure that people are at the centre of all that they do, reach those most at risk and leave no one behind as they work to ensure that displacement and conflict-affected people enjoy their rights on an equal footing. DRC systematically applies an age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) approach to all aspects of its work. AGDM is the approach through which DRC sets out to ensure that its mission to "assist refugees and the displaced, protect their rights and empower them towards a better future" is fulfilled to the benefit of all displaced and conflict-affected persons. The AGDM Policy outlines 12 minimum standards for mainstreaming of AGD considerations across DRC's organisation and programmes. DRC has set a target for 2025 that all operations complete AGDM capacity self-assessments, and implement action plans for improvement.

DRC's AGDM commitments are both programmatic and organisational. DRC is committed to being an inclusive workplace for a diverse workforce, and to ensure that staff possess the necessary competencies to uphold the principle of non-discrimination and respect for equal rights. DRC Voices (see also 3.3) measures Diversity and Inclusion drivers and produces data to inform senior management decisions on organisational inclusion measures. Also, DRC has created a committee to ensure a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Staff interviewed state they have not faced discrimination based on age, gender, or diversity.

DRC recognises that it is important to consider and adequately represent vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalised populations and consider gender, age, disability, minorities, or ethnic groups, amongst others. DRC targets the most vulnerable people and households through community consultations, with a strong focus on gender equity and inclusion.

DRC has an AGDM Training Kit that offers quality, standardised and DRC-tailored AGDM learning opportunities for DRC Staff. DRC regularly conducts trainings of trainers, in order to build and expand a pool of AGDM trainers within the global workforce.

4.6 Organisational performance against each CHS Commitment

Commitment	Strong points and areas for improvement	Feedback from communities	Average score*
Commitment 1: Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant	<p>DRC analyses the broader and specific context and stakeholders before developing its activities. Feedback is requested from communities at the start of a project in some COs (i.e. through tools such as pre-assessments) as well as throughout the project to identify whether adjustments need to be made to better meet needs. However, broader needs assessments are not systematically conducted unless they are meant to inform a specific project design. DRC has clear monitoring mechanisms in most of the countries, and programmes are adapted based on the monitoring and the information collected; however, this does not occur in a systematic way in all the COs.</p> <p>DRC's assessments to identify vulnerabilities of communities are impartial. DRC ensures impartiality by relying on multiple sources of data which include from other INGOs and stakeholders (i.e. UNHCR) to cross check and ensure accurate vulnerabilities assessments. DRC also follows a rights-based approach and incorporates age, gender, and diversity concerns in its operations. It is committed to non-biased and non-discriminatory practices paying particular attention when identifying and addressing vulnerable groups and unmet needs of individuals. DRC is committed to and practices disaggregated data collection.</p>	Communities shared a deep appreciation for the assistance provided by DRC stating that they feel satisfied with the support and that it is appropriate to their needs and capacities. They confirmed that DRC makes an effort to adapt projects, if necessary, to their changing circumstances. They also describe the support as fair and impartial.	2.7
Commitment 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely	<p>DRC is committed to ensuring communities affected by crisis receive timely and effective assistance. DRC staff predict project delays and identify responsibilities to ensure cross-collaboration and coordination. Needs and risk assessments make special efforts to include minority or marginalised populations. However, at the field level, DRC does not always ensure that services are safely accessible to people with disabilities or older adults.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation workplans are integrated systematically across Country Offices and are developed based on agreed-upon indicators. Monthly, weekly, and in some cases, daily review meetings are held to measure progress. Monitoring tools used by HO and COs include grants management systems,</p>	Community members shared that generally there were no disadvantages or risks in the use of the assistance provided and that programmes were realistic and safe. There were cases identified, however, where services were not always safely accessible to people with disabilities and older adults. Community members reported that they know of almost no one who is excluded from the projects and there was a general feeling of satisfaction with the coverage of the project.	2.9

	<p>or Power BI. Some monitoring tools were translated into other languages.</p> <p>Across the board, DRC has strong relationships with local partners, leaders, and stakeholders.</p> <p>DRC implement relevant international technical standards such as Sphere.</p>	<p>Most community members interviewed stated that the needs expressed are met either by DRC or another organisation.</p>	
<p>Commitment 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects</p>	<p>DRC is equipped with processes and tools that can contribute to avoiding negative effects and ensure people are more prepared, resilient, and less at-risk. The Data Protection Policy guides staff in their handling of data, although it does not specifically address people of concern. Informed consent forms are shared in all cases where photos are taken, or information is used for case studies or the like.</p> <p>DRC is committed to identifying sustainable and long-term solutions and includes exit strategies in programme design when and wherever possible. However, DRC does not systematically ensure that the timing of a project is communicated to communities.</p> <p>Partnerships with other NGOs are strong – there is an openness to provide support and capacity building. In some countries organisational capacity assessment tools are used to map partners. Stakeholder mapping also occurs collaboratively with other organisations through partners assessments to identify which areas of concern are covered and where there are gaps that need to be addressed.</p> <p>Before COVID-19, there were efforts to identify local partners and help build their capacity (i.e. implementation, outreach, report writing etc). Since COVID-19, DRC adjusted, and capacity building efforts were moved to remote settings.</p>	<p>Community members interviewed expressed satisfaction with capacity building support provided by DRC. They shared that their skills had improved, that there were stronger feelings of connection with their community, and family relationships had strengthened.</p>	2.9
<p>Commitment 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback</p>	<p>The level of effort DRC makes to include communities and people affected by crisis at all stages of a project and in making sure they are equal participants in decisions that affect them has improved over the last four years.</p> <p>All staff interviewed stated that there is extra emphasis given to sharing information about DRC and implementing projects with communities, so they have adequate knowledge about the support available to them. Language barriers have mostly been addressed where forms of communication are either translated into local languages or translators are brought on board for support.</p>	<p>Communities interviewed confirmed that they were briefed on DRC and project activities and that there were never any language barriers - they either understood the language or there was an interpreter for them (messages were provided through posters, videos, leaflets etc). However, some communities do not remember all the information</p>	2.9

	Adaptations are considered and applied when possible when communities request them.	<p>provided by DRC staff as it was done verbally.</p> <p>Communities shared that they were satisfied with the feedback mechanisms and felt listened to by staff.</p>	
Commitment 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed	<p>DRC has a strong organisational commitment towards accountability to affected populations and communities, which is reflected in its complaints' procedures and mechanisms throughout its programmes and project management. Its commitments to complaint handling are made public, and all information is available on DRC's website. DRC's Code of Conduct Reporting Mechanism (CoCRM) Annual Report and an online Dashboard of the Complaints received are also available on DRC's website.</p> <p>The Code of Conduct Complaints Mechanism covers complaints or concerns about safeguarding, child protection, the conduct or behaviour of staff, and fraud or corruption. DRC manages complaints in a timely, fair, and appropriate manner that prioritises the complainant's safety and those affected at all stages; however, the mechanism is not in place in all the Country Offices and not all the Country Offices communicate how the complaints mechanism can be accessed and the scope of issues it can address. DRC consults communities on the design and implementation of the complaints handling processes.</p> <p>DRC staff interviewed stated that DRC encourages them to report any wrongdoing and that they feel safe to report, including about their superiors.</p> <p>DRC requests its partners to have a complaints mechanism and to manage complaints in a timely, fair, and appropriate manner.</p> <p>DRC and its partners ensure that communities are aware of their commitment on PSEA.</p>	<p>Communities reported good behaviour from DRC staff. Communities are knowledgeable about how they can complain through different means, e.g. phone calls, QR-code, suggestion box, email, or at community meetings or face to face to DRC staff.</p> <p>Communities stated that DRC staff welcome complaints and always consult with them about the design and implementation of the complaints-handling processes. However, they do not recall whether they have been consulted on their preferences on how complaints are managed within their communities.</p> <p>Communities stated that DRC communicates with them about issues of SEA.</p> <p>Communities interviewed stated that DRC encourages them to report any wrongdoing and that they feel safe to report.</p> <p>Communities interviewed do not recall having been informed about how and when complaints out of DRC scope are referred to other organisations.</p>	2.3
Commitment 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary	DRC identifies the roles, capacities, and interests of different stakeholders. The organisation is committed to the coordination and complementarity of its activities, and ensures that activities create no duplication and	Communities interviewed explained that there is no duplication of activities and that DRC coordinates well with local authorities and other organisations.	3.2

	<p>are coordinated with national and local authorities, and other organisations.</p> <p>Partnerships with local organisations are one of the principles of the Strategy 2025. DRC has built transparent and equal relationships with its implementing partners, respecting each partner's mandate, obligations, and independence, and recognising their respective constraints commitments.</p>	<p>They stated that DRC coordinates with them to plan the activities at times when they are available, and the project activities do not interfere with their other activities.</p>	
<p>Commitment 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve</p>	<p>DRC draws from lessons learnt and experiences when designing programmes or planning; however, DRC country-level staff do not systematically take into account lessons learned and experiences from other Country Offices.</p> <p>DRC learns, innovates, and implements changes on the basis of monitoring and evaluation, and feedback and complaints; however, not systematically in all COs.</p> <p>DRC shares experiences and innovations internally and externally, through the organisation, with its partners, with communities and other stakeholders. However, this is mainly at country level, and there is a weakness in sharing the information between countries.</p> <p>DRC is an active contributor to learning and innovation among peers through different means: DRC has the DRC e-Learning website, the organisation participates or leads in numerous forums at an international and national level and publishes in ALNAP and on Reliefweb.</p> <p>MELMOP webpage provides specific information and resources regarding monitoring, evaluation and learning; however, it is not regularly updated</p>	<p>Communities interviewed said they identified changes to activities in line with the feedback they provided to DRC.</p> <p>They stated that DRC sometimes shares with them the main learnings from the project and innovations, but not in a systematic way.</p>	2.3
<p>Commitment 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably</p>	<p>DRC staff work according to the mandate and values of the organisation and to agreed objectives and performance standards. The organisation's staff policies and procedures are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and compliant with local employment law. DRC staff have up-to-date job descriptions, receive performances appraisals once a year and receive training to improve their skills and competencies. DRC staff interviewed are all aware of and sign the Code of Conduct; however, Head Office staff sign the Code of</p>	<p>Communities interviewed stated that DRC staff are competent and skilled to implement the activities. They were satisfied with the behaviour of the staff and expressed that they were being treated with respect and dignity.</p>	2.8

	<p>Behaviours, which does not meet all CHS requirements.</p> <p>DRC assesses the capacity of its partners and ensures that they have relevant policies in place through the Implementing Partner Capacity Assessment Tool and the Implementing Partner Vetting Tool from which a capacity development plan is developed for each partner based on the main gaps identified. Partners confirmed that they have a Code of Conduct in place, and staff are aware of it.</p> <p>DRC Country Offices have safety and security plans in place, and in the case of breaches, sanctions are imposed, ranging from verbal warnings to contract termination.</p>		
<p>Commitment 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose</p>	<p>DRC policies and processes governing the use and management of resources are in place, including monitoring and reporting on expenditures. DRC manages the risk of corruption through several processes and activities, including e-learning, guidelines, training, separation of duties in the procurement procedure, and internal audits. All staff are aware of DRC's commitment to zero tolerance and know how to report cases if necessary.</p> <p>The new Strategy 2025 aims to ensure that DRC dedicates some of its attention to its Go Green initiative, which focuses on: Climate Adaptation, Mitigation, and Advocacy. Also, the Procurement Management Handbook indicates that environmental and social responsibility aspects must be considered in the selection of suppliers to DRC.</p> <p>Fundraising in DRC's international operations requires that the acceptance of resources does not compromise its independence. Before accepting a donation, a review of the donor will be carried out to ensure that it does not compromise DRC's principles.</p> <p>DRC has ensured that all resources are used to achieve their intended purpose through ERP Dynamics. Also, all the projects and programmes report expenditure against budget monthly through Dynamics.</p>	<p>Communities stated that from their understanding and observations, the resources for the activities are used wisely by DRC. They had no specific complaints regarding misuse of resources.</p> <p>They all stated that they are aware of DRC's commitment to anti-fraud and anti-corruption and that they know how to report if a case is detected.</p>	3.0

* *Note: Average scores are a sum of the scores per commitment divided by the number of indicators in each Commitment, except when one of the indicators of a commitment scores 0 or if several scores 1 on the indicators of a Commitment lead to the issuance of a major non-conformity/ weakness at the level of the Commitment. In these two cases the overall score for the Commitment is 0.*

5. Summary of non-conformities

Corrective Action Requests (CAR)	Type	Resolution due date	Date closed out
2019-4.1 DRC does not provide information to communities about the principles it adheres to and the expected behaviours of its staff.	Minor	2021-06-20	2021-12-02
2019-4.2 DRC does not consistently ensure communities have access to information that is easily understood and in a variety of formats.	Minor	2021-06-20	2021-12-02
2019-5.2 Information on how to access, and the scope of the CoCRM and FCRM is not systematically provided to communities and stakeholders.	Minor	2021-06-20	2021-12-02
2019-5.4 DRC does not ensure that all country offices have a fully documented complaints handling system, which covers programming, sexual exploitation and abuse, or other abuses of power.	Minor	2021-06-20	Extended: 2023-12-02
2019-5.6 DRC does not systematically implement existing CoCRM policies, practices and tools to ensure that communities are fully aware of DRC organisational commitments on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.	Minor	2021-06-20	2021-12-02
2021-8.7 DRC does not have a code of conduct in place for Head Office Staff that meet all CHS requirements	Minor	2023-12-02	
Total Number	2		

6. Sampling recommendation for next audit

Sampling rate	Based on the standard sampling rate, it is recommended that 5 country programmes are included in the Maintenance Audit (MA) for remote assessment.
Specific recommendation for selection of sites	Given the crisis in Afghanistan (see section 1.4), this recertification audit did not assess this country. It is therefore recommended that Afghanistan be selected for remote assessment in the next Maintenance Audit.

7. Lead auditor recommendation

In our opinion, DRC has demonstrated that it continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

Based on the evidence obtained, we confirm that we have received reasonable assurance that the organisation is implementing the necessary actions to close the minor CARs identified in the previous audit and continues to meet the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard.

We recommend maintenance of certification.

Name and signature of lead auditor:



Jorge Menéndez Martínez

Date and place:

Buenos Aires, 2nd December 2021

8. HQAI decision

Certificate:

☒ Certification maintained
☐ Certificate suspended

☐ Certificate reinstated
☐ Certificate withdrawn

Next audit: Surveillance audit before 2022/12/02

Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director:



Pierre Hauselmann

Date and place:

Châteline, 11 January, 2022

9. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

Space reserved for the organisation

Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please give details:

Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:

I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit

I accept the findings of the audit

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name and signature of the organisation's representative:



Date and place:

Copenhagen, 17/1-2020

Appeal

In case of disagreement with the decision on certification, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 14 days after being informed of the decision. HQAI will investigate the content of the appeal and propose a solution within 10 days after receiving the appeal.

If the solution is deemed not to be satisfactory, the organisation can inform HQAI in writing within 30 days after being informed of the proposed solution, of their intention to maintain the appeal.

HQAI will transmit the case to the Chair of the Advisory and Complaint Board who will constitute a panel made of at least two experts who have no conflict of interest in the case in question. These will strive to come to a decision within 30 days.

The details of the Appeals Procedure can be found in document PRO049 – Appeal Procedure.

Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale*

Scores	Meaning: for all verification scheme options	Technical meaning for all independent verification and certification audits
0	Your organisation does not work towards applying the CHS commitment.	<p>Score 0: indicates a weakness that is so significant that the organisation is unable to meet the commitment. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification: major weakness; • Certification: major non-conformity, leading to a major corrective action request (CAR) – No certificate can be issued or immediate suspension of certificate.
1	Your organisation is making efforts towards applying this requirement, but these are not systematic.	<p>Score 1: indicates a weakness that does not immediately compromise the integrity of the commitment but requires to be corrected to ensure the organisation can continuously deliver against it. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification: minor weakness • Certification: minor non-conformity, leading to a minor corrective action request (CAR).
2	Your organisation is making systematic efforts towards applying this requirement, but certain key points are still not addressed.	<p>Score 2: indicates an issue that deserves attention but does not currently compromise the conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification and certification: observation.
3	Your organisation conforms to this requirement, and organisational systems ensure that it is met throughout the organisation and over time – the requirement is fulfilled.	<p>Score 3: indicates full conformity with the requirement. This leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent verification and certification: conformity.
4	Your organisation's work goes beyond the intent of this requirement and demonstrates innovation. It is applied in an exemplary way across the organisation and organisational systems ensure high quality is maintained across the organisation and over time.	<p>Score 4: indicates an exemplary performance in the application of the requirement.</p>

* Scoring Scale from the CHSA Verification Scheme 2020