Danish Red Cross

CHS Certification Initial Audit Report

DRC-CER-2018-002

2018-02-13

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1. General information

Organisation	Danish Red Cross			
Type	☐ National ☐ Membership/Network ☐ Direct assistance		☐ International ☒ Federated ☒ Through partners	
Mandate	☒ Humanitarian	☒ Development		☒ Advocacy
Verified Mandate(s)	☒ Humanitarian	☐ Development		☐ Advocacy
Size (Total number of programme sites/ members/partners – Number of staff at HO level)	In 2016 DRC contributed in humanitarian and development work in 49 countries.	Sampling Rate	Lebanon Madagascar	
Lead auditor	Johnny O'Regan	Second auditor	Camille Nussbaum	
		Others	n/a	
	Head Office		Programme Site(s)	
Location	Copenhagen (Denmark)		Lebanon and Madagascar	
Dates	26-27 September 2017		2-6 October 2017 and 15-18 January 2018	

2. Scope

☒ Initial audit   ☐ Mid-term Audit

☐ Maintenance audit   ☐ Final/Recertification audit

3. Schedule summary

3.2 Verification Schedule

Name of Programme sites/members/partners verified	Location	Mandate (Humanitarian, Development, Advocacy)	Number of projects visited	Type of projects
Lebanon	Tripoli	Humanitarian	3	Health, Outreach, CASH, Peer Support
Lebanon	Baalbeck	Humanitarian	2	Health & PSS,
Madagascar	Antananarivo	Humanitarian	3	Health, DRR, CASH
Madagascar	Itasy	Humanitarian	1	Health
Madagascar	Bongolava	Humanitarian	1	Health

3.2 Opening and closing meetings

3.2.1 At Head Office:

	Opening meeting	Closing meeting
Date	25/9/17	26/01/18
Location	Copenhagen	Copenhagen (Skype)
Number of participants	15	4
Any substantive issue arising	No	No

3.2.2 At Programme Sites:

	Opening meeting	Closing meeting
Date	02/10/17	06/10/17
Location	Beirut (Lebanon)	Beirut (Lebanon)
Number of participants	3	3
Any substantive issue arising	No	No

	Opening meeting	Closing meeting
Date	15/01/18	18/01/18
Location	Antananarivo (Madagascar)	Antananarivo (Madagascar)
Number of participants	3	4
Any substantive issue arising	No	No

4. Recommendation

In our opinion the Danish Red Cross conforms to the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard. We recommend certification.

Detailed findings are laid out in the rest of this report.

Lead Auditor's Johnny O'Regan

Date and Place: Dublin, February 13, 2018

5. Background information on the organisation

5.1 General

The Danish Red Cross (DRC), founded in 1876, is a member of the International Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement, which is the world's largest humanitarian network with 17 million volunteers in 190 countries. The Movement has three main components:

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) helps people affected by conflict and armed violence and promotes the laws that protect victims of war.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) works with National Societies in responding to disasters around the world coordinating and directing international assistance following natural and man-made disasters in non-conflict situations.
- 190 individual and autonomous National Societies dedicated to the Fundamental Principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality.

As per RCRC statutes "The components of the Movement, while maintaining their independence within the limits of the present Statutes, act at all times in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and cooperate with each other in carrying out their respective tasks in pursuance of their common mission."

In Denmark, 35,000 volunteers support the DRCs vision: "Through voluntary action, DRC prevents and alleviates human suffering, distress and discrimination." At an international level,

DRC strategy focuses on making a significant contribution towards a relevant, legitimate and effective movement through open, and where necessary, critical dialogue. It also pursues active partnerships, bilaterally with National Societies, and multilaterally with IFRC and ICRC.

5.2 Organisational structure and management system

The Danish Red Cross is a democratic membership organization, consisting of more than 200 local departments, each of which has its own board of directors. Every second year, representatives of the local departments meet at the General Assembly, the highest decision-making authority, which decides on amendments to the Articles of Association and elects a governing board for a term of four years. Between General Assembly meetings, this governing board has overall responsibility for the governance of DRC. It consists of 16 members- the General Assembly elects 15 members and DRC staff elect a staff representative.

The Secretary General is the head of the national headquarters and currently manages 8 head of departments. Five main departments report directly to the Secretariat General: International, Fundraising and Marketing, Asylum, Recycling and the National Department. Three other departments: Communication and Advocacy, Finance and Shared Service primarily act as support services.
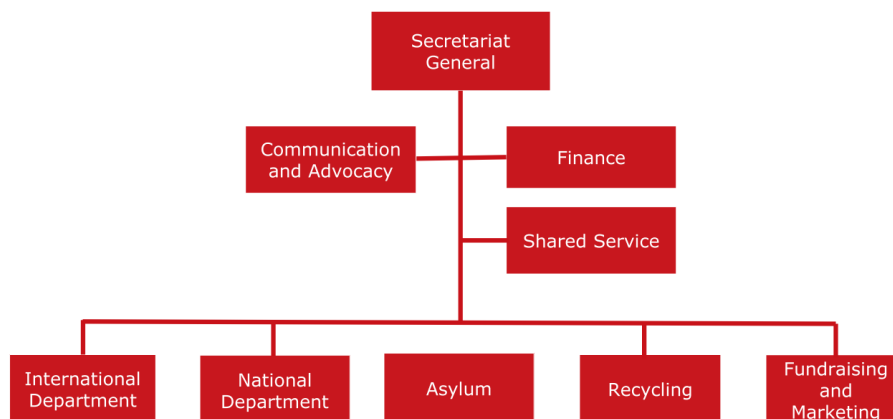
The International Department has recently been restructured; the International Director now manages three units:

- Partnership and Compliance includes donor management and liaison, monitoring and evaluation advice, and quality and compliance structures
- Programmes oversees programme portfolios and provides implementation support to four regions (Middle East and North Africa, Africa, Asia and Europe); and
- Disaster management is responsible for surge capacity, emergency response, innovation and security.

5.3 Work with Partners

DRC only works through National Societies of the RCRC movement and so only has one partner in each country- it currently works through 22 of these Host National Societies (HNS) in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. While this constrains choice of partners, DRC only engages in areas where its strategic plans align with those of the HNS. DRC's International Strategy 2015-20 focuses on fragile contexts, with resilience as an overarching goal. DRC engages with HNS based on three criteria:

•   Vulnerability of communities in the national context
•   Capacity and commitment of the HNS
•   Corresponding Strategic and programmatic priorities between HNS and DRC

DRCs ability to secure funding for an engagement is an underlying precondition.

HNS frequently have many partners – Partner National Societies (PNS) from across the RCRC movement. The Code for Good Partnership, in force throughout the Movement, enables PNS and HNS to strengthen their partnerships, and work together more efficiently and effectively. DRC also uses risk management tools to monitor challenges and potential risks of partnership. Capacity building is always an important component of the partnerships. DRC supports HNS to undertake Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) and Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA), which are self-assessments and peer assessments developed by the IFRC.

5.4 Certification or verification history

The DRC has not had any previous certifications against the CHS, HAP or People in Aid.

6. Sampling

6.1 Rationale for sampling

The auditors excluded a number of countries based on security grounds (e.g. Iraq, Syria, South Sudan). Other countries did not have sufficient programmatic range/scale (e.g. Georgia, Guinea).

Ultimately, Lebanon was selected because of the scale of the programme and level of expenditure.

The audit team selected Madagascar because Africa represents a significant part of DRCs portfolio and Madagascar had a high number of ongoing programmes during the audit.

Disclaimer:

It is important to note that the audit findings are based on the results of a sample of the organisation's documentation and systems as well as interviews and focus groups with a sample of staff, partners, communities and other relevant stakeholders. Findings are analysed to determine the organisation's systematic approach and application of all aspects of the CHS across its organisation and to its different contexts and ways of working.

6.2 Recommended sample size for the mid-term audit

One country programme should be sampled at the mid-term audit based on the number of programmes at the time of selection. This sample should be reconsidered at the first maintenance audit and in the eventuality of a change in the total number of programmes at the mid-term audit,

6.3 Interviews:

6.3.1 Semi-structured interviews (individual interviews or with a small group <6

Type of people interviewed	Number of people interviewed
Head Office	
Management and staff	24
Programme sites	
DRC staff	7
Community members and volunteers	16
Partner staff	19
Total number of interviews	65

6.3.2 Focus Group Discussions (interviews with a group >6

Type of Group	Number of participants	
	Female	Male
Tripoli (Lebanon)		
Outreach Health	19	1
Baalbeck (Lebanon)		
Medical Mobile Unit	17	
Medical Mobile Unit volunteers	10	2
Antananarivo (Madagascar)		
Volunteers- DRR and plague projects	3	6
Communities- Plague project	8	
Communities (Children from 8 to 12 y.o.)		10
Communities (Children from 8 to 12 y.o.)	12	1
Itasy (Madagascar)		
Partner staff	6	1
Bongolava (Madagascar)		
Community volunteers	6	1
Community members	2	4
Total number of participants	83	26

7. Report

7.1 Overall organisational performance

DRC is a mature organisation whose membership of the RCRC movement links it to a well-established network of local RCRC organisations, whose role as auxiliary to government frequently provides access to sites that other international organisations cannot reach. RCRC organisations are accepted in conflict zones and other inaccessible/ challenging operational settings because of their reputation for independence and their community-based volunteer network. This volunteer-based structure provides a significant operational platform that also enhances efficiency of operations. However, membership of the movement also presents challenges. DRC must engage with national RC societies or other movement members if it wants to operate in a particular country. This presents DRC with dilemmas where partners are underperforming, are not sufficiently tackling corruption or have too close a relationship with governments. DRC has generally demonstrated that it is willing to take a stance and withdraw from partnerships where there is insufficient will to tackle such issues.

DRCs commitment to quality and accountability is evident; it supports partners to improve quality of delivery and understands that some specific commitments to accountability will require enhanced effort, particularly around complaints handling. DRC was transparent in identifying those issues that need improvement.

7.2 Summary of Corrective Action Requests

Corrective Action Requests	Type (Minor/Major)	Time for resolution
2018-3.6 DRC has limited formal procedures in place for identifying unintended negative effects.	Minor	12 months
2018-3.8 DRC does not systematically safeguard personal information collected from communities or work with partners to ensure the safeguarding of information collected by them.	Minor	12 months
2018-5.1 DRC does not support partners to ensure community participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of complaints handling processes.	Minor	12 months
2018-5.4 DRC does not systematically work with partners to develop complaints mechanisms and does not have a global analysis of the extent to which partners have documented complaints mechanisms.	Minor	12 months
2018-5.6 DRC is not systematically working with its partners to develop information sharing plans that describe expected staff behaviour and communities are not sufficiently aware of expected staff behaviour.	Minor	12 months
TOTAL Number	**5**	

7.3 Strong points and areas for improvement:

Commitment 1: Humanitarian assistance is appropriate and relevant

Score: 2.33

DRCs commits to impartial assistance and generally disaggregates data by sex and age. It systematically analyses context and stakeholders although processes sometimes lack depth– primarily because of weaknesses in triangulation with secondary data. More than 70% of programmes have formal needs assessments though quality varies according to HNS' ability/ willingness to commission good quality consultants. DRC changes programmes based on evidence of changes in needs/ capacities/ circumstances.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 1

DRCs assistance is appropriate to vulnerabilities and capacities and it is willing to adapt programmes when needs or circumstances change. DRC is impartial in delivery of assistance.

Commitment 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely

Score: 2.5

DRCs programmes are realistic and safe, address constraints and systematically analyse risks to communities. Flexible funding, standard operating procedures and access to partners that are auxiliary to government make responses timely. DRC has sufficient technical resources though sometimes the linkages between HQ and field are not sufficiently well developed- this is being addressed through the recent organizational restructuring. DRC and partners identify and refer unmet needs, primarily through participation in coordination mechanisms- though this is somewhat person dependent. DRCs monitoring system and feedback mechanisms primarily monitor outputs and intermediate outcomes; monitoring outcomes is more variable. DRCs resource base means that it can meet organisational commitments.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 2:

DRCs interventions are realistic and safe and services delivered are timely and effective.

Commitment 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects

Score: 2.75

DRC has a strong focus on avoiding negative effects in relation to safety, security and social and political relationships but it does not systematically identify potential or actual unintended negative effects of its programmes. DRCs way of working (through community-based volunteers) develops resilience and helps strengthen local capacities and its programmes promote early recovery and support the local economy. DRC supports communities to develop preparedness plans and it develops local authorities' capacity as first responders. DRC does not systematically develop exit strategies although interventions have sustainability inbuilt through capacitation of community volunteers.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 3:

DRCs programmes result in resilient communities and support the local economy; no negative effects were identified as a result of its interventions.

Commitment 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback

Score: 2.1

DRC projects ensure community participation and ownership by implementing projects through HNS volunteers. However, the level of participation tends to be higher during design and implementation than during monitoring and evaluation, which are primarily consultative exercises. DRC and HNS systematically share information with communities about the Red Cross and its principles and project deliverables in appropriate media. HNS staff do not systematically share information on their expected behaviours with communities and people affected by crisis, and do not specifically reference their Codes of Conduct. HNS staff generally encourage programme participants to provide feedback but DRC does not systematically work with HNS to ensure that programmes pay particular attention to the gender, age and diversity of those giving feedback.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 4:

Communities are generally satisfied with the level and format of information provided by DRCs partner staff around principles and values. They are satisfied with opportunities for participation and feel that they are generally meaningful.

Commitment 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed

Score: 1,4

DRCs organizational culture values complaints and policies and processes increasingly reference the importance of complaints mechanisms. However, DRC is at the early stages in systematizing its approach to helping partners develop complaints mechanisms. As a result, complaints mechanisms are not in place in many projects and those that are in place are rarely based on consultations with communities. DRC has undertaken limited formal work with partners to help them manage complaints or refer out-of-scope complaints to relevant parties.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 5:

Communities have limited understanding of DRCs partners' expected staff behaviour or access to and scope of complaints mechanisms. However, they are satisfied with the behaviour and commitment of those staff.

Commitment 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary

Score: 3

DRC policies and strategies, in line with RCRC Movement general guidance, have a strong commitment to coordination with all relevant stakeholders. Coordination within RCRC Movement actors is generally strong and DRC also attempts to coordinate with other relevant actors such as UN agencies or local authorities.

The efficiency and consistency of coordination varies according to the capacities and/or interest of key actors such as the HNS and IFRC. Nevertheless, DRC demonstrates a strong interest for coordination and information sharing and works with HNS to improve coordination efforts.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 6:

Communities are generally aware of DRCs collaborative efforts with other organizations and local government authorities.

Commitment 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve

Score: 2.33

DRCs evaluation policy outlines its overall approach to evaluation but does not incorporate humanitarian-specific criteria. DRC designs programmes based on contextual analysis and experience from prior interventions and uses monitoring and evaluation exercises to learn and implement change although DRC acknowledges that its overall approach to learning needs to be strengthened. For example, lessons learnt and recommendations (particularly for internal reviews) do not systematically generate action plans and DRC does not use complaints to make changes.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 7:

DRC shares knowledge and experience with volunteers, which promotes onward sharing of learning with the rest of communities; otherwise there were limited examples of sharing learning within communities.

Commitment 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably

Score: 2.5

DRC has strong policies and mechanisms in place to ensure that staff and volunteers are competent and well-managed and performance reviews are generally undertaken systematically. DRC staff feel supported in their work through feedback and training opportunities. They have an understanding of relevant standards and procedures and work according to their mandate. In some contexts, staff feel stretched due to workload.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 8

Communities were satisfied with the behaviour, competency and commitment of DRC partner's staff and volunteers. No communities mentioned a breach of the code of conduct.

Commitment 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose

Score: 2.33

DRC has generally strong policies and processes governing the use and management of resources, with the exception of the environment, which has not been an organisational focus. Its systems and procedures for designing and implementing programmes balance quality, cost and timeliness and its resource base of volunteers combined with processes (including finance, procurement and prepositioning) drive efficiency. The recent organisational restructuring was partly driven by a recognition of the need to further increase efficiencies by reducing the number of regional offices. DRC systematically monitors and reports on budget, and financial audits are undertaken annually by internationally recognised auditors. DRC always takes action when corruption is detected, but sometimes struggles to take strong action in light of suspicion of corruption in partners because of the nature of relationships in the Red Cross.

Feedback from people affected by crisis and communities on Commitment 9:

Communities were satisfied how projects were implemented and no communities described any requests by HNS staff for bribes.
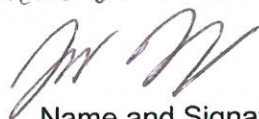
8. Organisation's report approval

Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings

For Organisation representative – please cross where appropriate

I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit	☒
I accept the findings of the audit	☒
I do not accept some/all of the findings of the audit	☐

Please list the requirements whose findings you do not accept

JAKOB HARBO
HEAD OF PARTNERSHIP & COMPLIANCE

Name and Signature
23/4 - 18

Date and Place
COPENHAGEN

Date of document: 2018-02-13

9. HQAI's decision

Quality Control by	Elissa Goucem
Follow up	
First Draft	2018-02-15
Final Draft	2018-02-21

Certification Decision

Certification	Intermediate audit
☒ Certified	☐ Maintenance of certificate
☐ Preconditioned (Major CARs)	☐ Suspension of Certificate (Major CARs)

Next audits

First Maintenance Audit before: 2019-04-26

Mid-term Audit before: 2020-04-26

Second Maintenance Audit before: 2021-04-26

Recertification Audit before: 2022-04-26

Pierre Hauselmann Executive Director Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative	Date: 2018-04-27

Appeal

In case of disagreement with the conclusions of the report and/or decision on certification, the organisation can appeal to HQAI within 30 days after the final report has been transmitted to the organisation.

HQAI will investigate the content of the appeal and propose a solution within 15 days after receiving the appeal.

If the solution is deemed not to be satisfactory, the organisation can inform in writing HQAI within 15 days after being informed of the proposed solution of their intention to maintain the appeal.

HQAI will take action immediately, and identify two Board members to proceed with the appeal. These will have 30 day to address it. . Their decision will be final.

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

Annex 1: Explanation of the scoring scale

In line with the CHS's emphasis on continuous learning and improvement, rather than assessing a pass/fail compliance with the CHS requirements, the CHS Verification Scheme uses a scoring system. It is graduated from 0 to 5 to determine the degree to which organisations apply the CHS and to measure progress in this application.

Be it in the framework of a self-assessment or in a third-party assessment process, it is key to have detailed criteria to evaluate (score) the degree of application of each requirement and commitment of the CHS. A coherent, systematic approach is important to ensure:
•   Transparency and objectivity in the scoring criteria;
•   Consistency and reliability between one verification cycle and another, or between the different verification options;
•   Comparability of data generated by different organisations.

This document outlines a set of criteria to orient the assessment process and help communicate how the respective scores have been attributed and what they mean.

While verification needs to be rigorous, it needs also to be flexible in its interpretation of the CHS requirements to be applicable fairly to a wide range of organisations working in very different contexts. For example, smaller organisations may not have formal management systems in place, but show that an Organisational Responsibility is constantly reflected in practices. In a similar situation, the person undertaking the assessment needs to understand and document why the application is adequate in the apparent absence of supporting process. It is frequent that the procedures actually exist informally, but are "hidden" in other documents. Similarly, it is not the text of a requirement that is important, but whether its intent is delivered and that there are processes that ensure this will continue to be delivered under normal circumstances. The driving principle behind the scoring is that the scores should reflect the normal ("systematic") working practices of the participating organisation.