

Background note to the “One International Appeal” Protocol (June 2018)

Background

The Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) initiative was born out of the 2013 Council of Delegates Resolution 4 ([CD/13/R4](#)) which tasked the IFRC and the ICRC to work with National Societies in outlining the strategic direction for improving the Movement’s humanitarian action. The scope of the work was focused on improving coordination in the Movement’s collective *operational* preparedness and response to large-scale emergencies. One of four areas of focus included “exploring new Movement-wide resource-mobilization approaches.” A consultation process took place during 2014 and 2015 and a [progress report](#) was presented to the Council of Delegates in 2015 which put forward two (of 30) recommendations relating to resource mobilization: “*The Movement should aim to avoid launching separate competing international appeals for one crisis*”, and “*the proposed Movement Coordinated Emergency Appeal model should be further developed, fine-tuned and applied when relevant with the aim to explore the feasibility of fully joint appeals.*”

In early January 2015 already, the Secretary General of the IFRC and the Director General of the ICRC agreed that both institutions should strive to launch only one international appeal for any future large-scale emergency. This approach was tested in response to the April 2015 earthquake in Nepal where the ICRC response was integrated into the IFRC-launched appeal.

At the 2015 Council of Delegates, the Resolution *Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC): Optimizing the Movement’s humanitarian response* ([CD/15/R1](#)) was also presented and adopted. This Resolution comprised of ten elements, of which one was related directly to resource mobilization, specifically: “*A Movement-wide approach to resource mobilisation should be built on complementarity and non-competitiveness, meaning intra-Movement competition is avoided.*”

An annex to SMCC Resolution 1 was a *Plan of Action for 2016-2017* featuring one objective specifically relating to resource mobilization out of eight in total: “*The Movement pursues a coherent and complementary approach to resource mobilization in large-scale emergencies.*” Three activities were identified, to be undertaken by the IFRC and the ICRC in consultation with National Societies:

- ICRC and the IFRC further develop, test and fine-tune the “Movement Coordinated Emergency Appeal” model for future large-scale emergencies, including donor outreach and reporting (including tracking of coordinated bilateral assistance).
- ICRC and the IFRC, in consultation with National Societies, further explore the feasibility of launching one international appeal which includes the objectives, activities and budgets of the other components.
- ICRC and the IFRC, in consultation with National Societies, explore the move towards fully joint appeals, including challenges and opportunities to better align their respective systems.

The ICRC and the IFRC have developed a *Funding Modality Agreement* for use in large-scale emergencies, signed in September 2016 and operationalized since then in Haiti (Hurricane Matthew), Lake Chad (Nigeria), South Sudan, Yemen, Myanmar and DRC (Ebola June 2018). This framework agreement defines the terms and conditions governing the “one international appeal” concept which refers to a situation in which the ICRC and the IFRC agree:

- In the interest of optimizing impact and resource mobilization in relation to an emergency, only one international appeal shall be issued by either the ICRC or IFRC, whichever is assuming the coordination function in the context, and shall integrate the activities of the other organization in the appeal;

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- The organization launching the appeal shall manage the appeal and collect the funds raised in relation to the specific emergency, and allocate funding to the other organization based on the budget and activities integrated into the appeal as agreed by the IFRC and ICRC for each context.

Whilst the *Funding Modality Agreement* is one signed at Geneva-level between the two international components of the Movement, any discussions in the field on plans and responses should include first and foremost the host National Society and if pertinent any PNS, the latter who may also contribute financially or in-kind to the ‘One International Appeal’.

With the application of the *Funding Modality Agreement* in the five contexts listed above, a number of questions arose during the process which confirmed the need to develop a Protocol which teams can follow, and would require adaptations of both ICRC and IFRC internal systems and procedures.

How to use the Protocol?

The Protocol was built based on the recent experience of the six contexts mentioned above, and is meant to clarify on the one hand the main elements to take into consideration when looking into launching a “One International Appeal”, and indicate on the other the key decision-making times and minimum procedures to ensure.

This first version of the Protocol will be revisited following evaluations and when our teams provide feedback and are faced with new situations in the field.

Typical complementarity to consider for a “One International Appeal”

Cooperation and complementarity can’t be forced through, it is therefore critical that “One International Appeal” is the result of good coordination at country level and not the driver of it. Ideally, it should be built on solid coordination mechanisms put in place before the onset of the crisis.

While avoiding duplication and overlap of activities is valid in all situations and not only when launching “One International Appeal”, a main consideration when preparing for “One International Appeal” is to clearly articulate the complementarity between the ICRC and the IFRC.

Experience shows that complementarity is mostly built around:

- Geographical sharing: for example, when there are areas differently affected by natural disaster, armed conflict, violence or insecurity in one country, and gaps in response to humanitarian needs which the Movement can help cover;
- Type of activities: for example, ICRC support to health facilities and IFRC support to NS for community outreach related to health (Community-Based Health and First Aid, sanitation and hygiene promotion etc);
- Lead roles/specific expertise: for example, IFRC for NS capacity enhancement/OD, IFRC support to NS for disaster risk reduction in a context affected by both conflict and chronic disasters; ICRC for RFL or Dead Body Management in natural disaster, ICRC work in detention in a disease outbreak situation with overall IFRC/NS response.

Background rationale on differences in approaches and systems

It is acknowledged by both the ICRC and the IFRC that differences in systems and approaches do not always support improving working practices and streamlining. This is an area to be explored further in the next phase of the SMCC. In the meantime, in order to facilitate understanding between Movement colleagues in the field, below are a few examples of the key differences:

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- The ICRC budgets its operations for the most part on an annual basis (calendar year), based on what the organisation can deliver. It issues “budget extensions” in the course of the year only when a situation is deteriorating beyond what was planned and the additional response would financially represent more than 110% of the foreseen expenditure based on the initial budget. With its financial reserves, the ICRC frontloads the needed funds to immediately kick start its planned operations. The ICRC average implementation rate against budget is between 90-92%.
- The IFRC issues Emergency Appeals to support National Societies for any new significant operation. The timeframe can vary depending on the situation and is not limited to the calendar year. Immediate preparedness and early response can be supported through a loan allocation from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The operation will be dependent upon funding received for the Emergency Appeal. For small to medium scale emergencies, National Societies can receive funding from the IFRC through the DREF as a grant allocation (fully covered from the pool funds).
- IFRC annual ‘Operational Plans’ cover one or more countries and support mostly longer term programmes with National Societies. IFRC regular budget covers for core IFRC staff and structures, while programmes receive dedicated funding from donors. Operational plans are subject to quarterly budget revisions.
- IFRC is present on ground through the membership of the host National Society, and the IFRC Secretariat supports and enhances the capabilities of its members. The IFRC Secretariat seeks to avoid creating double structures, and ensures local presence when required to provide technical advice, monitor progress, and assess quality, or in times of an emergency which overwhelms the capacity of the host National Society. When new emergencies occur, IFRC is surging staff from within the Secretariat and the Movement to initiate the cooperation, conduct assessments, and frame the appropriate response with the host National Society. The IFRC can rapidly mobilise a wide variety of staff and equipment thanks to its surge network.
- The ICRC is often present on the ground in countries where emergencies in an on-going or new crisis relevant to its mandate will occur, and will have the capacity to assess the situation early through its field teams and the NS and to rapidly scale-up, often together with the National Society.
- While IFRC has a decentralised structure with regional offices (Kuala Lumpur for Asia Pacific, Beirut for Middle East and North Africa, Nairobi for Africa, Panama for the Americas and Budapest for Europe) overseeing country offices (CO) and country-cluster teams (CCST), the ICRC has a “bottom-up” culture with country/multi-country (“regional”) delegations reporting to Geneva-based regional teams. Also, IFRC Regional Directors report directly to the IFRC SG, while ICRC Regional Directors report to the Director of Operations. The differences in organisational structures (including the geographical mismatch with North Africa covered by IFRC MENA and by ICRC Africa) imply a need to link up at multiple levels concurrently.

While the implementation of the One International Appeal modality in six contexts so far can be considered an achievement, it is important to realise that both organisations and their staff are “learning by doing”, and that embarking in a new approach has high initial transaction costs. Openness, patience and stamina is required from all to bring to fruition this important component of the SMCC process, and in doing so improve both our collective impact and answer expectations from our donors.
