*Viet Nam Red Cross Society*

*OCAC Findings Report*

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Jeanie Curiano OCAC Facilitator, Philippines

Gamini Pinnalawatte, OCAC Facilitator, Sri Lanka

John Gwynn, Asia Pacific OD Coordinator, IFRC Asia Pacific Zone



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**Introduction**

The Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) is a fulfilment of the commitment on behalf of the National Society made by its President Mr Nguyen Hai Duong during a visit to the Asia Pacific Zone Office in October 2012. Subsequent to the series of preliminary meetings held and the orientation conducted by IFRC’s Asia Pacific OD Coordinator in Viet Nam Red Cross in March 2014, the full Organizational Capacity Assessment & Certification (OCAC) exercise took place on 15 – 17 April 2014 at Bach Dang Hotel at Halong Bay city in Viet Nam.

Twenty participants from governance, management, staff and volunteers took part in the three day self-assessment OCAC exercise. These included Vice President of VNRC Madam Tran Thi Hoang An, 2 Directors, 3 Deputy Directors and 4 Officers from NHQ staff, 1 Chairman, 3 Vice Chairmen and 3 officers representing the Provincial Chapters, 1 Chairman and 2 officers representing the District Branches, and 1 officer and 1 volunteer representing the commune level. Out of the total group there were 10 males and 10 females, and throughout the exercise the group demonstrated their commitment and great enthusiasm towards OCAC together with their long standing experience in VNRC which led to many shared success stories and examples across all stakeholder groups represented.

The OCAC meeting was inaugurated by Vice President Madam Tran Thi Hoang An who welcomed on her personal behalf and also on behalf of the President of VNRC all the participants, the Head of IFRC’s Viet Nam Delegation, and the facilitators group. She thanked those, especially in the International Department of VNRC who had prepared translations and logistics for two months for such a meeting, and stated that the venue was carefully selected. The city was the first place in which President Ho Chi Minh, the father of the nation and the first President of the National Society, had given permission for his statue to be built on the request of the local population. In addition the location was chosen to allow participants to reflect without the distractions of daily work, in order to provide a conducive discussion environment. The Vice President requested all participants to be open and honest for the betterment of VNRC into the future.

The Head of Delegation of IFRC Mr Michael Annear appreciated VNRC for undertaking this important., strategic and appropriately timed OCAC exercise, as a result of which VNRC will be able to further identify its own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and improve further the National Society’s agreed gaps in order to face future challenges effectively.

Under the open and honest leadership of the Vice President it was noteworthy to observe the honesty and openness demonstrated by all participants to act in the same manner. On several occasions they were humble enough to go back from level “ B “ to level “ A “ having discussed and debated sufficiently those attributes which further proved their willingness and preparedness to fill up the existing gaps in a future plan of action. The highly interactive and participatory discussions lasted for two and a half days. Correct and clear interpretation also assisted participants to discuss many nuances of meaning in local language, and led to lengthy discussions in critical attributes, showing the serious concern of participants about defining the exact level of status that VNRC is in on each attribute.

After completing discussions on all attributes, the self-assessment team then agreed the texts to be inserted into the respective blank “A” level indicators identified as VNRC’s baseline in specific attribute areas. One of the participants presented these proposed texts for attributes which scored “ A “ and the rationale behind the wording in order to achieve the collective agreement of the whole self-assessment team.

The third day morning focussed on the prioritization process, with the Vice President Madam An chairing the session. It was wholly facilitated by the internal group and finally resulted in a group consensus having debated and discussed those attributes at length. Madam An undertook to present the status of each attribute with priority level to the Board for their discussion, approval and the further development of an appropriate VNRC plan of action.

At the closing session Madam An expressed her opinion that the OCAC workshop was very useful mainly due the fact that this opportunity has given the society opportunity to reflect on their weak areas where improvements are needed. She further said even re-prioritization could be considered by the Executive Board, and that the scorecard had already given VNRC the opportunity to initiate its actions internally even before IFRC’s report is received. She acknowledged the fact that a strong IFRC is made of strong members who have opportunities such as these to use collective tools to strengthen the collective Federation of national societies.

Thereafter participants were given a chance to express their opinion on the OCAC exercise. One volunteer said that “in fact I was quite nervous on the day before the meeting and had a sleepless night. But from the first day onwards I was so participatory because I found my ideas were highly respected”. A representative from a commune branch said that “ this is really an eye opener for us to improve ourselves in the future”. A district branch representative thanked everyone “for giving a chance to assess ourselves and pave the way for further development”. A provincial chapter representative said “I am very happy to be involved in a national level workshop of this nature and got the impression that all should contribute to develop the organization rather than concentrating on their own chapters”. Finally a representative from NHQ expressed her ideas and said that “Vice President Madam An was so open and honest that the OCAC process allowed us to think back and reflect on our own capacities. It also helped me personally to assess my own work and develop further”. Everyone left full of commitments and expectations in order to ensure VNRC looks forward to further strengthening steps in its future work and directions.

American RC’s *System for Transformation and Results* (STAR) and IFRC’s *Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification* (OCAC) methodologies are aligned in terms of methodology and a desire to provide National Societies with a way to reflect on their current capacities and develop plans to bolster their organizational strength. As a result of this, it is hoped that Viet Nam Red Cross, having undertaken this OCAC process with its close alignment to STAR processes and outcomes, will be able to benefit from the support also of the American RC in a manner which ensures that the needs of the STAR can be interpreted as appropriately addressed by the following process to avoid undue burdens on the National Society’s time and resources to undertake another similar process. It is clear that STAR’s main aims have been fully addressed in this OCAC process, namely those related to the following definitions of STAR:

* STAR is an integrated change management system and tool suite designed to help a National Society engage in facilitated discussions around six key areas related to a National Society’s capacity to engage in sustainable organizational development (OD), formulate an action plan based on the data generated from those discussions and implement that plan with support from the American Red Cross.
* The underlying philosophy for STAR is that National Societies which can engage in sustainable OD have a comparative advantage in addressing vulnerability when compared to organizations which are challenged to engage in sustainable OD.
* The American Red Cross believes that a National Society’s ability to maintain organizational agility – learning, analysing and adapting to changing circumstances – is crucial to maintaining relevancy in its country and, as a result, to a National Society’s overall sustainability.

All the above anticipated outcomes of the STAR process are fully addressed by Viet Nam Red Cross’s outcomes as a result of their OCAC process as set out in the rest of this report.

**Context**

***The country***

Lying on the eastern part of the Indochinese peninsula, Viet Nam borders China to the north, Lao PDR and Cambodia to the west, the Eastern Sea to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the east and south. Mountains and hills cover two-thirds of the mainland. Areas above 500m in altitude account for 70 per cent of the mainland with the highest mountain ranges in the west and northwest of the country. Viet Nam’s territorial waters cover around 1,000,000 km2, with over 3,200km long coastline lines. Its population of 88.78 million (2012) with an annual growth rate of 1.1% contains 12.6% (2011) of people living below the national poverty line.

In 2013 the Global Human Development report ‘The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World’ noted that Viet Nam was amongst the world’s forty high achieving countries which performed better than predicted between 1990 and 2012 based on previous trends, both in terms of the income and non-income dimensions of human development. In Viet Nam human development progress has been fast increasing from 0.4 to 0.6 between 1990 and 2012 – that is equivalent to an increase of 41 percent, or an average annual increase of about 1.6 percent. In 2012 Viet Nam ranked 127th out of 187 countries – which is in the ‘medium’ category of human development.

Viet Nam’s economy in the renovation and open-door period started since 1986 when a market-oriented economy was promoted. Viet Nam has a remarkable record of reducing poverty since 1993. The poverty level dropped from 58.1% in 1993 to 14.5% in 2008. This means about 43 million people have risen out of poverty. The food poverty rate fell from 24% to 7% over the same period.

The poor account for large proportions of rural and ethnic minority populations and also have significantly lower average incomes than the poor in urban areas and among the ethnic majority. Most poor households are in rural and ethnic minority areas. In 2008, the poverty gap was 4.6% in rural areas and 15.1% among ethnic minorities, compared with 0.5% in urban areas and 1.7% among other majority communities. Ethnic minorities account for 47.1% of the chronic poor. Poverty also varies significantly across regions. In 2010, the poverty rate was 39.2% in the northwest mountains, 24.6% in the northeast mountains, 22.7% in the north central coast, and 22.5% in the central highlands, compared with 2.1% in the southeast, 8.3% in the Red River delta, 13.5% in the Mekong delta, and 17.3% in the south central coast.

While Viet Nam has made impressive progress in reducing poverty, regional disparities remain. The poor are vulnerable to environmental degradation and climate change. Adapting infrastructure and building climate resilience in coastal and low-lying areas will safeguard human and natural resources, and protect the poor.

Viet Nam has made good progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Three MDG targets concerning extreme poverty, hunger, and the incidence of malaria and other diseases have been achieved, and another four—boys’ and girls’ completion of primary schooling, gender equality in education, reduced under-5 mortality, and reduced maternal mortality—are likely to be achieved ahead of time. However, other targets concerning HIV/AIDs and environmental sustainability may not be achieved in time.

The maternal mortality rate stood at 69 per 100,000 live births in 2009, less than a third of the 233 recorded in 1990. However, progress has been uneven, with significant disparities between rural and urban areas (145 rural versus 79 urban) and the ethnic majority and ethnic minority groups. Only 45.8% of minority childbirths are attended by skilled birth attendants, or less than half of the 96.4% of ethnic majority births. Viet Nam has made impressive achievements in reducing the infant mortality rate to 15 per 1,000 live births in 2008 and the child mortality rate to 26. However, an estimated 243,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS in Viet Nam, of whom 25% are women, a number likely to increase.

Viet Nam has made considerable progress toward gender equality, especially by closing gender gaps in education, reducing maternal mortality, and expanding economic opportunity for both men and women. However, significant challenges remain because of limited women’s participation in public decision-making; a highly gender-segregated labour market; HIV/AIDS spreading among women; and rising male sex ratios at birth. Gender disparities are more marked in rural areas and among some ethnic minorities. Viet Nam’s gender development index ranks the country 58 out of 138, ahead of its neighbours Thailand, at 69, and the Philippines, at 78.

Female participation in the labour force stands at 72.3%, one of the highest rates in the region, but many female workers are unpaid family workers (53.5%).The Department of Statistics estimates that 81% of female workers are in the informal sector. The percentage of women employed as unskilled workers is 68%, compared with 57% for men. Gender segregation of the labour market concentrates women in low-skilled, low-paying, and flexible occupations.

In 2004, the Vietnamese government established a strategic framework that serves as legal base for the country in terms of sustainable development. This is also relevant to the international community in terms of economy, development, environment, agriculture and rural development. Social development aspects that have been prioritized include poverty reduction, reduced population growth, employment, education, health care and environmental safety and hygiene. The use of natural resources and environmental issues are also being addressed.

Key development targets for the country include increasing gross domestic product, increasing exports, boosting technological innovation, reducing the number of poor households and population growth, and increasing employment. This economy now enters its third year of macroeconomic stability with lower inflation, strong external trade and capital flows, and a firmer exchange rate. Growth in gross domestic product (GDP) edged up in 2013 and is expected to recover further over the next 2 years. Inflation is forecast to remain relatively subdued. A return to the faster economic growth of previous years is hampered by the cautious pace of reform to banks and state enterprises.

Economic growth picked up slightly to 5.4% in 2013, still well below the 7.0%-8.0% pace seen in 2004-2007. The improved services performance offset a slowdown in industry, which grew by 5.4%. Agriculture and fisheries maintained modest growth at 2.7%. Fisheries now contribute 20% of this sector’s output, about double their share 10 years ago. Public consumption rose by 7.3% in line with the government’s policy to grow recurrent expenditure. Net exports of goods and services also contributed to GDP growth.

| **Selected Economic Indicators (%) - Viet Nam** | **2014** | **2015** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GDP Growth | 5.6 | 5.8 |
| Inflation | 6.2 | 6.6 |
| Current Account Balance (share of GDP) | 4.1 | 3.0 |

*Source*: ADB estimates.

Vietnam ranks 17th amongst the 65 countries with most mobile phone use with 72 million phones with a ratio of 79/100 phones to citizens.

A rising contribution of foreign trade and economic integration has contributed to economic growth and human development progress in Viet Nam which has been actively involved in several global, regional and bilateral economic integration processes including the World Trade Organization, ASEAN and various Free Trade Agreements. The National Human Development Report for Vietnam (2011), however, showed that economic growth has been the single most important driver of human development in Viet Nam, but progress in health and education has been less rapid.

In Viet Nam, progress in human development at the national level masks large disparities lower down. Taken together with economic status and ethnicity, regional and geographic disparities are among the most important determinants of inequality in Viet Nam.

Slow global action in tackling the looming threat of climate change, however, has the potential to halt or even reverse the human development gains in the countries with the poorest people and the lowest capacity to adapt. Globally, Viet Nam is one of the countries most at risk of disasters, and has been identified as one of 30 countries at extreme risk due to climate change.

Climate change is already exacerbating chronic environmental threats and loss of ecosystems. Such losses limit livelihood opportunities, especially for the poorest people. The magnitude of such losses highlight the urgency of the need to take urgent action.

***The National Society***

The VNRC was founded by President Ho Chi Minh (the first President of the National Society) on 23 November 1946. The National Society was recognised by the ICRC on 1st November 1957 and admitted in the International Federation three days later, on 4 November 1957. Over more than 60 years in operation, VNRC has achieved much towards improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable people in both normal times and times of disaster. VNRC and became member of the IFRC on 4 November 1957. The Vietnam RC is a large organisation with 4,482,383 members, 3,583,080 youth members, 324,478 volunteers. Of the 21,134 paid staff, 120 are based in the Headquarters and the representative office in Ho Chi Minh City, 849 at the provincial level (an average of 13-14 staff per province/ city), 2,034 staff at the district level (at least 2-3 staff per district) and 18,126 staff at the community/commune level. Staff salaries in the provincial, district and commune branches are paid by the respective local governments. There are 16,945 grass root units throughout the country.

The VNRC works as an auxiliary to the government of Viet Nam to deliver humanitarian services to the vulnerable people in the community. The activities of the Vietnam RC are supported by the communist party, government, and People’s Committees at all levels. The government and People’s Committees provide salary support to staff, offices, vehicles, as well as other favourable conditions. The IFRC welcomes the balanced relationship that has been established between the State and National Society within Viet Nam. The relationship is clearly aimed at preventing and alleviating human suffering, protecting life and health, ensuring respect for the human being and promoting mutual understanding, friendship, and cooperation. The partnership is based on dialogue, trust, cooperation, mutual understanding, and respect for each other’s complementary roles. Within this relationship, it is pleasing to see the recognition of the work of the VNRC by the State through the numerous high level representatives supporting the work of VNRC and assisting to creating an enabling environment allowing the best possible action from the National Society.

The Society operates nationwide under the Constitution and Law of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Statutes and the Fundamental Principles of the Movement. It encourages voluntary contributions without discrimination, building on a mandate of “humanity, peace, friendship” while supporting the national goals of its country. The National Society is also a member of the country’s Fatherland Front and remains governed by laws and regulations of local government in respective areas where it is active.

The Law on Red Cross activities was approved by the country’s National Assembly on 3 June 2008 and came into force on 1 January 2009. The Law regulates Red Cross activities; the emblem; the mobilization and use of resources; and international cooperation, as well as responsibilities of State agencies, organizations and individuals with respect to Red Cross activities.

The President of the National Society has over 14 years of Red Cross experience, and has recently returned with a vision to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and impact, having embarked on a substantial organisational change process with the aim of modernising the VNRC’s internal mechanisms, improving the National Society’s human resource and implementation capacity, as well as its image and auxiliary role. The President is committed to undertaking OCAC in support of the change process. He presided over an initial briefing of the assessment team in mid-March 2014 prior to this full self-assessment meeting in April.

The governance includes 135 members who meet once a year, the majority of whom are leaders of provincial chapters and local government agencies. The board elects the national Standing Board, including 33 members who meet twice a year.

The Executive Board, including the President, Vice Presidents, Vice President-cum-Secretary General, and Deputy Secretaries-General, also oversees the daily management tasks of the National Society, which therefore does not have the normal distinction between governance and management.

The VNRC’s Strategy 2020 outlines new and ambitious priorities to define the role of the National Society in the country’s changing socio-political environment. VNRC’s Strategy 2020 also builds on the previous strategic plan (VNRC Strategy 2010) by continuing its strong focus on improving organizational structure, processes and capacities. The three organizational development priorities are: 1) promoting humanitarian values; 2) mobilizing funds for Red Cross activities; and 3) strengthening the organizational structure. Consolidating and developing the communications units of the Society have been successful ventures.

Achievements include the regular and effective use of the internet and e-portals, social media, and ensuring that every unit at grassroots level of the Society has access to Humanity and Life newspaper, Humanity magazine and other Viet Nam Red Cross publications. Support and encouragement has also been given to guide provincial and city chapters to develop communications materials, newsletters and online information that have contributed to a strong public image.

In July 2012 the new VNRC President initiated a number of change management processes to improve the efficiency and quality of its performance. These included:

* The internal review of its organisational structure, resulting in the reduction of the number of departments from 16 to 10
* An internal review and proposal for administrative reform
* An internal review and proposal on staff compensation and benefits
* An external review of human resource and the management of humanitarian project practices.

From the above list, the last two points have been given priority by the VNRC leadership. A wide range of inter-related initiatives have subsequently been undertaken. For example, in support of VNRC’s change goals, IFRC commissioned Price Waterhouse Coopers to undertake a review focused on improving the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the VNRC HR and project management processes. The regional finance Development Delegate from South East Asia delegation in Bangkok continues to give regular finance development support through country based missions to VNRC as well.

The outcomes of these ongoing reviews have provided a number of recommendations which VNRC reflected upon. The reflection has led to the VNRC Leadership addressing a more comprehensive overview of VNRC’s existing baselines so that future capacity building targets can continue to be defined accurately and in an internally consultative manner.

Following his visit to the Asia Pacific Zone (APZ) Office soon after his appointment in 2012, the VNRC’s President confirmed to the APZ Director his interest to receive support from the Federation in six specific areas, one of which was the willingness to undertake the OCAC process to benefit from its organizational analysis.

The VNRC Leadership has expressed their interest and willingness to undertake the OCAC process in order to support and guide the overall change management processes of the VNRC towards a stronger, efficient and effective National Society.

To ensure its relevance to the external social and poverty related trends in the country as set out in the earlier “Country context” part of this report, apart from the organizational strengthening goals, the VNRC Strategy 2020 also outlines the following core areas as operational priorities:

***Disaster preparedness, response and recovery****:* strengthen the capacity of vulnerable communities to carry out activities to reduce risks and increase resilience in the context of climate change impacts; reduce the loss of life, injuries, economic costs, livelihoods impacts and other consequences of disasters; and enhance capacity for disaster response and post disaster recovery. The Society’s first priority to meet its mandated role of preparing for and responding to disasters.

***Donation of blood, tissues and organs***: there has been a change with regard to the cooperation with the Ministry of Health, where the focus of action is now on enhancing the supply of safe blood, primary through the promoting voluntary blood donation and advocate for the supply of safe blood and blood products.

***Community based healthcare and Social work:*** Improve people’s capacity to take care of their own health through promoting, mobilising and supporting community-based health care, environmental protection and improving basic living conditions as well as providing psychological and material support to the most vulnerable groups by strengthening relationships with other organisations and individuals in social and humanitarian activities. VNRC is focusing on updating and the expanding its First Aid teams and capacity. Other major work in recent times has been to support the Ministry of Health to address epidemic outbreaks in recent years. The activities have focused on reducing the impact of communicable disease including dengue, malaria and hand foot and mouth disease.

Even with the impressive economic development of the country and the large number of people raised above the poverty line. There still remains a substantial need for providing social welfare to a large population of urban and rural poor. In response to this, the Viet Nam RC has expanded its social action through its programs:

* The introduction of a new national campaign called the “Cow Bank”, a campaign to support livelihoods of the most vulnerable, through the provision of livestock.
* The traditional Tet for the Poor (Vietnamese New Year) contribution to elderly and disabled, which benefited 2.5 million families over the past two years. It is estimated that 1.7 million households in were supported in 2014 at an estimated value of USD 30 million.
* The campaign “each organisation, each individual supports one humanitarian need” which has brought together 1.2 million “people in need”, with those who have benefited from economic growth of Vietnam, by providing them housing, vocational training, loans and scholarships.

In 2013, the leadership of VNRC initiated a process to improve the efficiency and quality of its performance. A key component of this process was an internal review of the structure of the 16 headquarters departments, which was completed in August. The result of the restructuring has seen the consolidation of the headquarters structure into ten departments where the following departments were merged: communication with fundraising, human resources with volunteers and members, Agent Orange Victims with social care, and the steering committee for voluntary blood donor recruitment with voluntary blood donation department. The latest organogram is as follows:

The government support comes with wider obligations related to its understanding of auxiliary status. Tasks are given to the Viet Nam RC together with rules and funds, and the NS in turn reports to the government. The advantage of this arrangement is that the NS gets official support. However, the close proximity of the National Society to the government is perceived by RCRC Movement partners as bringing too much dependency on the government.

Organizational mechanisms and staff of Red Cross have clearly been strengthened over the recent years. Red Cross structures at all levels have focused on setting up Statutes and working regulations aiming at achieving sustainable humanitarian activities. From national headquarters to chapters, VNRC has been active in attracting internal and external donation sources, financial and technical support to carry out programmes and projects in remote, rural and mountainous areas. VNRC services and activities have increased in both quality and quantity, which help meet the demands of the most vulnerable people in the community, but there are challenges that need to be addressed to enable the Society to achieve its next goals of scaling up this humanitarian work further with strengthened organizational characteristics, which is where the OCAC offers many clear proposed solutions and priorities for capacity enhancement.

**The results**

Below is the result of the two and a half day OCAC exercise with assessment ratings of each attribute as A, B, C, D, and E - with C serving as benchmark, A being the lowest and E, the highest. It must be noted that the rating of each attribute was made after lengthy discussion and exchanges of opinions among all participants. As part of the process and based on the group consensus, the attributes that were rated A or B were further prioritized as: **1** not relevant in the actual situation; **2**: relevant but not a priority; **3** both relevant and a priority and; **4**: critical.

All participants agreed that attributes that were classified as priority numbers **3** or **4** should be immediately addressed and acted upon as they can compromise the reputation of VNRC as a responsive humanitarian organisation as well as the status and safety of its staff and volunteers.

Chart 1 shows that of the 90 organisational attributes spread across the capacities **to exist, to organize, to relate and mobilize, to perform, to adapt and grow**, none were deemed not-applicable to the National Society. Of these, **23** attributes were rated at A (lowest) level, **40** at B level, **16** at C level, **10** at D level and **1** at E level.

***Strengths***

The VNRC has reached 30% of the benchmark (meaning C, D and E) of the attributes, and 12% as being beyond the benchmark (meaning D and E). The self-assessed strengths are in the areas of Red Cross Law, Statutes, autonomy, geographical coverage, staffing structure, buildings, fleet, contract management, financial reporting, constituency empowerment, delegation of management responsibilities, auxiliary role, public image, humanitarian diplomacy, reporting, business continuity, resource mobilisation capacities, and investment in innovative action.

VNRC is a resilient organisation. Despite the challenges identified by the self-assessment team, it continues its journey towards becoming a well-functioning National Society through its wide current network provincial, district, commune and grassroots chapters, branches and units.

***Recommendations***

We looked closely at the attributes that were rated “A” and “B.” Within these “A” and “B” rated attributes, we further looked at those which were rated “2” (relevant but not urgent), “3” (relevant and urgent) as well as “4” (critical). Of the 63 attributes rated A and B, 44 were prioritized by VNRC as relevant but not urgent, 7 as relevant and urgent, and 1 as critical (Graph 2).

Those which were rated critical were usually gaps/weaknesses that, if not addressed, may compromise the health and wellbeing of their staff. Hence they were insistent in raising these issues very high in their agenda.

We also looked at the priorities set by the assessment team within those attributes rated. Looking more closely at the attributes that scored at “A” or “B” level, further analysis of identified capacity deficits allows us to offer our conclusions and recommendations under the four following key issues:

1. **STRENGTHENING ORGANISATIONAL PLANNING AND MONITORING SYSTEMS**
2. **SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY**
3. **COMMUNITY LEVEL PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION**
4. **LOCAL CHAPTER AND BRANCH GOVERNANCE ENHANCEMENT**
5. **Strengthening organisational planning and monitoring systems**

*Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER)*

Although only 14 attributes directly link to PMER, however **PMER cuts across a large number of other attributes**, particularly across many attributes under the criteria “to perform”, “to grow” and “to organize”.

**Monitoring** is essential for keeping track of the progress in project implementation and must be conducted by the *implementers (VNRC NHQ and the chapters and branches).* Activity monitoring and evaluation must be a shared responsibility of funding agencies, VNRC chapters, district and commune branches and units, and the community, each of whom play an integral and essential part in monitoring and evaluation. Ideally, the overall monitoring is under the supervision of **an internal *Planning,* *Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) Unit***to ensure an adequate quality assurance mechanism that links reports from community level up through branches and chapters to the national level programme coordinators. These should create a further **systematic feedback mechanism** to the Movement partners, other stakeholders and finally back into the community. Information that is generated through such mechanisms would then be **used to improve decision-making and adaptation** for the overall betterment of projects and programmes.

The self-assessment team confirmed that VNRC has no dedicated PMER unit or PMER focal person, nor the required skills needed in data management, to provide consistent up to date PMER processes across the organisation. Project and programme planning, documentation of what was delivered in a programme, as well as any reports on the overall accomplishments and impacts of activities, are confined to reports at the district branch or chapter level. Thus no “real” data arrives at the HQ that summarises or represents the whole plan, activities and impact of the operations of the VNRC.

Chapters regularly and directly report to their local government counterparts due to funds being received from them, but not to the HQ. Although sharing of learning and knowledge amongst the chapters and branches can be extracted on their individual website or maybe linked to the local government site, it is **essential to develop one over-all picture of all initiatives** done by VNRC from the community up to the HQ. The assessment team agreed that there was a **need to identify a point person for PMER** and to develop the skills needed in such a person to initiate a more **organization-wide scaling up of PMER skills** in a wide range of internal stakeholders at NHQ, chapter and branch levels. However, when it came to the prioritization exercise, the team had a consensus that most of the PMER attributes were “relevant but not urgent”. The role of PMER should be seen as something which **needs more urgent attention** in the organization. The reports generated will be a good mechanism for resource mobilization, sustainability of the projects and programmes, promoting success stories, and will immediately strengthen stakeholders’ satisfaction and trust in the organization.

*Strategic Plan*

There are 2 Guiding Principles in Strategic Plan of Vietnam Red Cross 2020, *1) to focus on activities in areas where the Society has sufficient capacity or can mobilize resources and 2) to focus on activities in areas where the Society has a comparative advantage and can implement better than other organizations*. With the above-mentioned principles to continue deliver its humanitarian services to the people, **activities must be sustainable**. Although VNRC has a strong capacity in operational planning, the processes must be reviewed to include **monitoring and reporting of targets, and the impact of what has been achieved in a timely manner.** This will also track how far the VNRC has achieved its strategic goals and /or if the key programmes are still aligned to its overall strategic directions. This must be regularly reviewed.

In addition its planning process should **consider the inclusion of volunteers in the planning processes,** as well astheir welfare as they are the ones who will implement the project. A data dissemination plan should also be considered to include how to package and highlight its core operational areas. Since the VNRC has a strong public image arising from its role as an auxiliary to the government, a stronger PMER system at all levels which provides a local as well as coordinated national picture of impact will be an opportunity to market its services and accomplishments to the stakeholders and to the public.

The **role of communication** is very important in reaching the right audiences, with the right information, at the right time, by the right means, through an appropriate strategy. In order to include messages based on facts and evidence, **communications will depend on the PMER reporting analysis skills**, while communications personnel will convert that into a story that will attract and motivate the right target audiences.

*Financial Reporting*

The VNRC self-assessment team marked itself as strong in financial reporting, noting however that this is mainly to local government in formats and templates provided by local government. However, there is a need to further **strengthen its overall financial information system** so that it uses appropriate templates that can **report on financial income and expenditure from all sources and at all levels and consolidate and present these** to external partners as well. As with the programmatic reporting, there is no standard financial reporting structure and mechanism so that financial information flows from units to branches to chapters to HQ. Reporting is project-based or to the local government. The HQ does have its own structured financial information system to record financial transactions, but the system does not roll-out to the chapters nor branches to capture the whole financial picture of the organization.

Although the assessment team classified this under level B category, in terms of prioritization they did not find this as relevant at all, which may be a sign that they are satisfied with reporting only to government. If VNRC does not make progress in other forms of internal and external financial planning and reporting beyond the government system, it is at risk of losing donor confidence and opportunities to mobilise more external funds to expand its humanitarian work. Improvement of the financial system will create a ripple effect in the whole financial aspect and will surely affect positively its large number of other linked attributes such as communications, public positioning, and expansion of programmes with newly mobilized resources.

1. **Sustainability strategy**

A large number of at least 45 attributes in categories “A” and “B” were related to organizational characteristics that need to be addressed to strengthen the long term sustainability of the National Society. These include resource mobilisation, human resource development, business continuity, training and development, the progression of youth to adult volunteers, financial planning, project and programme sustainability and exit strategies, and a challenge to balance the existing benefits that VNRC’s strong auxiliary role brings with the need to proactively seek other non-government sources of sustainable support to scale up VNRC’s longer term humanitarian activities.

Although the above 45 attributes can be clustered into the further specific categories below, there are many inter-linkages between the categories which also need to be recognized and managed if the National Society is to build an organization-wide approach to sustainability of its services as well as structures. The specific categories identified by the self-assessment team can be clustered as follows:

* **Resource mobilization** - 12 attributes covering budgeting to develop long term financial projections that can then be linked to resource mobilization targets and plans, diversifying the number of sources of unrestricted and restricted funds, building unrestricted reserves, analyzing and setting targets for the ratio of unrestricted funds against core costs, donor mobilization, developing resource mobilization policy for all levels, ensuring integrity management to build public confidence, consolidating budgets at all levels to gain an organizational overview of financial status, analyzing and setting targets for working capital, strengthening branding, and improving communications in emergencies to mobilise more resources
* **Human resource development** – 13 attributes which identified the need for VNRC to further strengthen its working conditions, recruitment procedures, surge capacity to fill newly vacant positions, staff development, investing in skills, succession planning, safety and security training and culture, strengthening staff/member/volunteer composition, assessing job satisfaction and addressing measures to improve this, staff compensation to remain competitive, violence and abuse prevention, and improving internal communications
* **Strengthening volunteer support and participation** in order to mobilise and retain more volunteers (covered in a specific section below).
* **Financial assessment mechanisms related to sustainability** – 12 attributes covered the areas such as the need for consolidated budgeting and financial reporting linking all levels of the Society into one financial assessment of its short, medium and long term strengths and challenges, the lack of insurance, the need for strengthened procurement and warehousing with appropriate financial controls, the lack of an internal audit function, the requirement for independent financial oversight, the need to invest in the number and training of finance staff, improved expenditure authorization guidance at all levels, strengthened approaches to documented processes, treasury management, and financial consolidation of accounts.

The self-assessment team marked VNRC high in category “C” on the attributes related to programme planning and design which include assessments of programme sustainability before programmes are launched. However, the above lists of 45 attributes in categories “A” and “B”, if they are not addressed with some urgency, may lead to the weakening the longer term sustainability of programmes, services and structures at all levels.

Many of the self-assessment team’s perspectives on sustainable organizational characteristics arose from confidence in the existing government support which the auxiliary role brings with it. It was explained by the self-assessment team on many occasions that the higher scores given to some areas such as financial reporting, sustainability of services, and staffing structures were because these existing activities are funded by local government and they using familiar internal government reporting standards. It was also stated that both narrative and financial reporting on government funded activities is carried out within existing government guidelines and made directly to local government counterparts at provincial, district and commune levels. This results in the challenge to VNRC over the medium term to attempt to strengthen its internal information systems so that **narrative and financial reports flow not just from each chapter or branch to local government counterparts, but also upwards into one consolidated organizational report** that enables national leadership to assess the overall sustainability of the total organization.

The current ***law and statutes*** of VNRC were indeed developed with reference to standards of the ***Model Law*** and the ***Guidance for NS Statutes***. However, the nature of the auxiliary role in the Viet Nam context has resulted in chapter and branch leadership being more concerned to report to local government to account for local activities and funds given to them than to follow in a consistent manner the scaling up objectives of VNRC’s Strategy 2020. This may have implications for sustainability as the programmes set out in the VNRC Strategy 2020 could be expanded to have greater humanitarian reach and impact, except that chapters and branches are reliant on the constraints of limited government funding to achieve their aims. There seems to have been **little encouragement to chapters and branches to mobilise resources for community based programmes identified by more active members and volunteers**.

With the strong projected GDP growth in Viet Nam of over 5% per year for the next 2 years, VNRC needs to formulate policies and implementing guidelines on specific issues providing mechanisms and tools for a **more systematic and effective donor mobilization and fund-raising beyond its government contributions**, as well as providing regular communication to various stakeholders. Training of staff and volunteers can also boost communication and fund generation efforts. Such innovative approaches are clearly already available in some chapters and branches and, if gathered and internally disseminated in a consistent manner supported by an **organization-wide VNRC Resource Mobilisation Policy**. This would need to be followed by training in how to mobilise more efficiently in a consistent manner from non-governmental and corporate and public fundraising sources to achieve Strategy 2020’s goals.

There are several other sustainability strategies available to VNRC based on strengthening some of the capacity areas identified by the self-assessment team as follows:

For **fund-raising**, the facilitators team recommend to look closely on how it can better organise and maximize VNRC’s membership drive. The current membership of over **4 million members offers VNRC a unique country-wide network of humanitarian ambassadors and champions** **who could be mobilized not only to raise local funds, but to also give their ideas to their respective chapters and branches on services that would meet local vulnerable peoples’ needs,** this encouraging them further to raise even more funds. Envisioning the membership funds to significantly contribute to the general funds of the National Society needs a systematic change on how members are recruited, oriented, involved, and renewed.

As **planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting** (PMER) is an important component that cut across all issues to show the final impact of VNRC’s work at community level in improving the lives of the vulnerable, the VNRC has likewise recognized the need to train staff from each programme or department on PMER to ensure regular monitoring, evaluation and documentation of all activities. Stronger planning, monitoring and reporting will lead to stronger communications materials and stronger resource mobilization opportunities that will bring higher income from a more diversified base of potential external supporters.

The VNRC OCAC exercise strongly points to the need to continue the **comprehensive HR Reforms** already initiated in the National Society in order to effectively and efficiently serve the most vulnerable people of Viet Nam. The assessment team highlighted the lack of appropriate and efficient HR systems. There is a need to **strengthen the capacity of the HR department** to do its role. Immediately needed is the development of an **HR policy and its corresponding implementation guideline**. As recruitment is always an ongoing process, improving on the recruitment procedures is much needed to make it proper, fair, and get the right people for the right job.

According to the participants there is no **staff performance review system**, which provide clear objective setting at an individual or team level, which therefore affects the overall performance review and overall management of the NS, as well as the practice around the delegation of management responsibilities. The lack of **job descriptions** for key positions further complicates the recruitment process as the knowledge, skills and competencies required per position is not clear making recruitment and performance management extremely challenging.

While salaries are released without delay, the assessment team members are unanimous in their view that VNRC needs a **review of the compensation system** to make it more effective is also necessary. For the VNRC to grow, it will have to build on a realistic number of well-committed and professional staff. **Appropriate training for appropriate staff** has been identified as one of key areas for improvement. As a start, a **training needs analysis of the core staff** could be made by the HR department. The assessment team members likewise themselves recommended that the Society should initiate a stronger process than the current annual meeting to know the **job satisfaction** of the staff. The HR department may benefit from further **training and coaching** in order support them in taking ownership of all HR related matters in VNRC. The HR department should develop a mechanism of **tracking the staff skills** and likewise develop a training calendar for staff to train specific staff on specific capacities. This will support the development of a management succession plan and career development planning for all staff which are currently not in place.

In the next few months, quick steps that could be taken include the **development of the HR policy and manual, ongoing development of job descriptions, and drafting of a performance appraisal system**. There is an HR delegate available at the IFRC’s Asia Pacific Zone office who is dedicated to supporting national societies in their human resource development work. The National Society should be able to take full advantage of the support that she could provide in the HR reform process of the VNRC.

*Human resource: Youth and Volunteers*

All the activities of the VNRC are carried out by the volunteers, youth and adults alike, at field level. This is a fact unanimously agreed by the assessment team. However, the team rated themselves in categories “A” and “B” when it comes to VNRC’s needs to strengthen volunteering development. The new organizational restructuring gives VNRC an opportunity to focus both on youth development and also to urgently provide leadership in **volunteering development**.

**Strengthening volunteer support and participation** in order to mobilise and retain more volunteers (covered in a specific section below) – 8 attributes covered priorities such as developing more volunteer specific programmes, initiating a volunteer database for the whole Society, volunteer safety and security training, mobilizing new volunteer profiles, developing volunteer recruitment and retention strategies, strengthening more regular and systematic volunteer recognition, developing a Volunteering Policy for consistent approaches all levels, and increasing volunteer participation in contributing ideas for the betterment of VNRC’s services and decision making

A quick action that could be taken is the finalization of the long awaited **volunteering policy**, and an accompanying **implementation guide** must be developed as well. During the OCAC exercise, even amongst the assessment team, there was confusion in some participants as to who are the VNRC members, how are they differentiated from the volunteers, and even needing to clarify whether youth are volunteers. The fundamental policy must be in place and widely disseminated as soon as possible.

In the development of the volunteer management manual, special attention must be given on volunteer recognition considering that there is currently no **standard recognition system** for outstanding volunteers. This is done on an ad hoc basis and at best left to the chapters, branches and units to implement. Practical mechanisms to **involve volunteers in planning and decision making** should likewise be developed. All issues related to volunteering should likewise be monitored at all levels. But who are the volunteers and where are they? A quick resolution of this question is the full implementation of the **Resource Management System** (RMS) which was already designed for VNRC just waiting for full implementation. Some NS staff have been trained how to use the system so it is just a matter of accessing and utilizing RMS to the full. A refresher training will enable the immediate implementation of the volunteer/youth and member database modules already made available by their own VNRC RMS.

Measures needs to be developed to **promote representation of various underrepresented groups** at staff, volunteers and members. For the members, the only opportunity for them is sometimes practically the General Assembly which is held once every five years. The Red Cross Youth (RCY) are very active in some chapters and branches in community level activities such as Club 25. There is a mechanism in some branches where youth are accepted as observers in the Managing Board. The next step would be to accord the youth a vote and not just an observer status in all of the Society’s branches. It is important to have a **diversified group of volunteers** to ensure representation of all groups for more effective service delivery in all communities.

The development of **staff, volunteer and member Codes of Conduct,**  which will include violence prevention, must also be given top priority to ensure that all staff and volunteers abide by the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and work within the framework of the National Society. The Code of Conduct should have clear reporting lines. This will protect the volunteers, members and staff as well as the image of the NS. All staff, members and volunteers must be required to read, understand, agree and sign the Code of Conduct before joining the NS, and especially before deployment or mobilization in the case of volunteers and members.

*Administration: Files and archives*

The VNRC should improve its **filing and archiving** for easy reference. The NS should develop a filing procedure for paper or electronic files that applies to all departments. The procedure includes filing categories that cover the needs of both individual departments and of the NS as a whole. The proper filing system can support smooth management function of the Society and all its branches. VNRC risks losing its institutional memory if filing and archiving will not be improved. If lack of space is a major issue, scanning essential documents and filing them electronically may be considered. VNRC is one of the few national societies participating in the **Digital Divide Initiative** (DDI). It is suggested that this challenge be reviewed by the DDI team and appropriate measures be implemented.

*Logistics*

Participants agreed that there is lack of **proper procedures for procurement and mobilization** of goods. Pointed out also is the lack of proper **management and maintenance of vehicles and equipment**. This can adversely affect NS overall performance, especially on timely and effective service delivery. The poor maintenance of vehicles can also affect the safety of the staff and volunteers. To address the issue, **VNRC must have a clear policy and implementing guidelines** in a number of areas such as fleet management, procurement, storage and mobilization of goods, monitoring, inventory and recording. **Warehousing management** as well must also be improved and strengthened for safe and proper storage of supplies. Staff must also be provided training on logistics. The **VNRC could mobilise the further services of the Asia Pacific Zone’s Logistics Capacity Building Delegate** to undertake quick improvements in its logistics and procurement systems, while these are also linked to new DDI, HR and finance development attributes, all of which together will lead to integrated support to improve overall logistics capacity.

*Safety, Security, Health and Welfare*

The facilitators strongly support the assessment team in their very valid concerns about **safety and security of its staff and volunteers, and also of its key assets**. Ensuring the health, welfare, safety and security has therefore become a critical concern and the assessment team are in consensus that there is no such system currently in place. Amongst the recommendation is for the National Society to “**ensure safety and welfare of volunteers** when they are mobilized especially in high risk activities by providing them with identification cards, proper personal protective equipment and insurance.

Most of the **vehicles** of the National Society are inadequately maintained. Capital assets of the VNRC are not insured. Neither are the relief goods. There is no sufficient reserves to cover losses.

1. **Community level presence and participation**

Several attributes in categories “A” and “B” were related to the challenges to VNRC to further **strengthen the participation of a range of stakeholders** in its work at community level, from beneficiaries to members, volunteers, youth, and external organisations.

It is clear that VNRC enjoys nearly total country-wide presence in its organisational structure. However, the manner in which chapters, branches and units engage their internal and external stakeholders remains inconsistent.

It was clear to the self-assessment team that VNRC could **do more to strengthen the participation of volunteers, members and youth in volunteer specific programmes**. It is also clear that volunteers and members are the “bridge” between communities and the VNRC, and as such they are the “knowledge brokers” who offer an insight into the needs and priorities of vulnerable individuals and groups in their local communities. The lack of volunteer and member participation in decision making will, if continued, result in volunteers and members leaving to join other organisations where their views and ideas are better sought, recognized and respected.

VNRC has an incredible number 4,482,383 members, 3,583,080 youth members, 324,478 volunteers, which amounts to almost 10% of the total population of the country. Although other national organisations, and even National Societies in other countries, would be extremely envious of this total number of human resources at community level and their potential geographical reach, VNRC appears to have **no consistent organization-wide mechanisms to ask for the opinions, ideas and suggestions of members, volunteers and youth for the betterment of the National Society**, its services, and what they could contribute more of.

Without active engagement, these volunteers, members and youth will seek opportunities with the other fast growing number of NGOs and organisations in the country.

The roles of existing members, volunteers and youth could be expanded to meet some of the other identified deficit areas such as **local needs assessments** at community level. They could play a role, as in other National Societies, in **strengthening the PMER system** by being asked to **gather baseline data at community level** on vulnerable families and beneficiaries benefiting from VNRC programmes and services, or undertake social care visiting programmes, and raise local funds for local services that are developed in line with VNRC’s Strategy 2020.

The self-assessment team identified the **need for more consistent orientation and induction systems for members, volunteers, youth and staff** which could focus on clarity of roles for each of these stakeholder groups to help them feel involved and participating in the life of the National Society at their local level. **VNRC could visit and discuss the concept of “active members” which has been developed in many other Asia Pacific National Societies** to see how such approaches have led to membership mobilization, fundraising income from membership fees, and wider local public appreciation and visibility for a National Society’s local work and active presence.

The self-assessment team also identified the need to **strengthen beneficiary communications** as a means of demonstrating VNRC’s commitment to inform beneficiaries of their rights and also of receiving feedback on the quality of VNRC’s services which could then be adapted and strengthened as a result. Such visible local level accountability mechanisms will enhance public appreciation and support for VNRC, particularly where VNRC links the messages from beneficiaries to its **humanitarian diplomacy agenda** to be a voice piece for this beneficiaries who are calling for more kinds of assistance.

1. **Local chapter and branch governance enhancement**

*Governance*

The NS has a duly elected Executive Board which is highly accepted by the government and its people in the country and it is a very high positive factor towards the future development of the VNRC. The NS key office bearers understand the future vision of the organization and have positioned the NS currently in a very strong place in Viet Nam. There is a Red Cross Law as a result of which the NS enjoys autonomy in identifying its own leadership at national and branch level and in selecting geographical areas and programmes interventions. Furthermore VNRC receives enormous support from the government for maintaining staff structures at chapter, branch and commune level which is a unique feature of VNRC.

The Executive Board is fully in compliance with its statutes and most Board members regularly and actively participate in Board meetings. However, participants were open and honest to put this attribute under level “A” having discussed it at length, as they felt that they **need further improvement in active participation and compliance of some members of the Board** who are too busy with other obligations to attend meetings, both at Headquarter and branch level. The Governing Board is the supreme body of any organization and members of the Board therefore should be thoroughly aware of its statutes, decision making processes and procedures, and policy formulation at appropriate times. Furthermore they should have the accessibility to all the information that is needed in their roles and responsibilities for taking correct and appropriate decisions for the betterment of the organization and vulnerable people at large.

The OCAC self-assessment team benefitted deeply by having the presence of the Vice President on behalf of the President of VNRC, as well as higher level representatives of chapters, districts and commune level branches. Over all two and a half days they were given an opportunity to revisit many attributes again and reflect on themselves further. Further they can be **the internal catalyst and be a strong voice for a positive change**. This willingness and readiness was clearly seen in throughout the OCAC discussions and one of the final comments of one of the branch chairpersons was “this is an eye opener for us”. This statement will be an endorsement for the NS’s future change process.

**More training and orientation for governance** **at all levels** was identified as necessary to enable them to play a more informed and vital role in decision making processes, resulting in Board members being in a better position to take appropriate decisions on behalf of their full membership and volunteers too by involving them more actively. This will also assist them to further concentrate on their roles of **strengthening the capacity of staff and community participatory structures to achieve chapter, district and commune branch development**. In the process they will automatically involve staff more actively in constructive decision making processes and demonstrate more highly active participatory leadership styles.

As the process of governance enhancement strengthens at all levels, the **Boards can set performance and accountability standards**. They will be in a better position to monitor their management , as well as the performance of staff as a whole, and **provide regular feedback and strategic direction to the NS by ensuring that all relevant policies are in place** and implemented in all key areas of activity of the NS. Furthermore with this new consistent and strategic orientation into the roles of Board leaders, they will fulfil their obligation and mandate by engaging even more consistently and actively in image building and stakeholder consultations which will immediately actively support strengthened resource mobilization of the NS.

Being a National Society with an incredible number of 4,482,383 members , 3,583,080 youth members and 324,478 volunteers at chapter, district and commune levels fully demonstrates VNRC’s presence all over the country, and its ability to reach out to vulnerable people in the country. In this context it has a great opportunity and huge potential in future for having more and more vulnerable people oriented programmes, while at the same time using this ever expanding human resource base with more active roles that will lead to new resources leading towards financial and programme sustainability. Although continuing strong government support will further complement these aspects, the **need for governance enhancement to encourage chapter, district and commune level governance to take up new initiatives outside of government support** is therefore highly recommended for the longer term diversified sources of support and sustainability of the National Society.

The IFRC’s regional delegation in Bangkok and the Asia Pacific Zone’s OD, Volunteering and Youth Unit in Kuala Lumpur could play a vital role in facilitating the **active sharing of similar governance training and enhancement processes with other National Societies best practices** in these areas for VNRC to consider, customise and adapt if appropriate. Policy formulation and strategic direction identification can be decided by the highly motivated, well dedicated and committed members of the VNRC Board.

*Membership and constituency empowerment*

It was very interesting to observe that the attribute on constituency empowerment has scored level “D“ which is above the benchmark. As far as the General Assembly is concerned all proceedings are conducted in accordance with the Statutes, all participants receive the agenda well in advance with all supporting documents for them to allow meaningful participation in discussions. Further, the self-assessment team felt that VNRC promotes and facilitates discussions of all agenda points at branch level prior to every GA to ensure information sharing and the indirect participation of all local level members in the GA process.

However, the self-assessment team challenged themselves by asking whether all 4.5 million members are reachable in information sharing and indirect participation in GA process? What does this mean really to maximise the participation and active interest of the strong membership base of VNRC and keep it motivated and retained for the future? The honest answer to above question threw them a challenge and provided them to rethink the level they agreed upon previously. Furthermore this attribute provided the self-assessment team with a clear message that **each member has the right to participate the GA either direct or indirect way irrespective of large number of membership**.

With its strong structure of 21,134 staff members, 324,478 volunteers and 3,583,080 youth members, **members also should be given active roles and therefore the opportunity to feel the pride in their National Society**. VNRC’s people oriented programmes such as disaster preparedness, response and recovery, donation of blood tissues and organs, community based health care and social work, elderly and disabled care, livelihood support etc could all be further supported at the local community level by **members being asked to contribute their time and resources for the achievement of these programmes** as well. Members in turn also feel their obligations and try to do better for their own society. Furthermore, feeling the pride as a member of the largest humanitarian organization in the world will also be another driving force for them to turn them into a more active network of humanitarian champions across the whole country and therefore improve VNRC’s local visibility everywhere too.

Having understood that the membership is the heart of any NS, appropriate strategies, guidelines , policies and procedures, and programmes interventions can be designed in order to reach out all members to share their thoughts before any GAs and **empower the membership base**. This will **build strong leadership cadres into the future** where those members who have enjoyed active humanitarian roles can then go on and offer themselves as leaders to enhance VNRC with their ideas and experiences for stronger humanitarian work across the country.

Membership fee contribution represents a large percentage of the total annual income of NS and it is therefore in turn members should be highly recognized as one of the main stakeholder groups who can be further used productively. Further they can be used effectively and efficiently to increase the income and **they can be active partners in resource mobilization**.

When we look at the future trends in the country context in respect of disasters due to climate changes it is highly apparent that the livelihood of poor people are at a great risk. Children, elderly and disabled people will most likely also be the first victims of those future disasters. Therefore there is a great **need for members to be recruited from these vulnerable groups so that their views and suggestions can strengthen the VNRC’s understanding of their lives and lead to appropriate and relevant policies and programmes to meet the community needs which they represent and communicate**. Members from these communities can also be humanitarian champions in their own communities and play an active role in resource mobilization, programme planning and implementation at grass root level. It is good to prepare themselves now itself to take up future challenges and get involved quite actively in reaching out to vulnerable people in the country and so that VNRC becomes the most recognised and appreciated humanitarian force for change in the country.

However, the above vision is at risk if such a large number of members are not monitored professionally in order to keep them updated on information and keep their interest alive. **Membership record systems and databases will need to be upgraded** so that members are encouraged and want to stay and encourage others to join to establish the “Power of Humanity”.

*Membership mobilization and development*

Membership involvement in planning and decision making is low as far as attributes 58 and 59 are concerned. Volunteers and youth involvement in decision making is quite low at all levels and they are not much consulted in such processes. However, they are backbone and mass human resource base of any NS in programme implementation especially in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement is built on its volunteer base and it is the power of the organization. Volunteers who are not members could easily be encouraged to become members to strengthen the leadership level of VNRC, as well and continue their active voluntary contributions at the same time.

Members are also volunteers and volunteers can also be members in the Movement. Members and the volunteers are the better known people at the grass root level as they are the people who know better their communities’ needs and feelings. They are the closest to vulnerable people and feel their pulse better. Therefore **programme planning should be based on the needs, and members and volunteers should have active roles in community needs assessment processes that identify opportunities for humanitarian programmes**. As such they also need access to decision making processes. Mechanisms to get them involved in decision making processes are vital in any NS to serve vulnerable people better. This in turn it will give back better dividends to NS in its future resource mobilization initiatives and relevant and locally sensitive programme implementation.

This kind of practical approach which really benefits the beneficiaries at grass root level directly will immediately attract government support and also the other stakeholders in resource mobilization. As VNRC needs more sustainable sources of income and relationship with government and other stakeholders, involvement of members and volunteers specially youths should be increased to showcase and demonstrate its primary assets in terms of the widely spread and active human supporter base across the country.

Community based planning and implementation processes are always highly accepted by any community as well as by donor and even corporate sector CSR programmes.

*Governance role in resource mobilization*

Despite having dedicated staff for RM and accessibility in some training and development opportunities for its volunteers, members and staff in some but not all branches, the **governance role to strengthen external resource mobilization is not seen well, and some of this is the result of close proximity with local government which leads to complacency about extra funds not being necessary as the government is already providing some funds to support some local services**. It is true that the government provides resources for the chapters, districts and commune structures well. But can NS depend only on one major source? It is highly appreciated VNRC as one of the few National Societies in the world who receive this kind of support from government to maintain structures at chapters, district and commune level which therefore has at the moment nearly 21,134 staff members.

Participants were given enough time to rethink and reflect the risk factors in this aspect and also to think about more sustainable ways to diversify restricted as well as unrestricted income in future in order to maintain and indeed expand and grow those structures. In order to maintain and coordinate such a high membership base VNRC is liable to maintain such structures through additional locally mobilised funds, otherwise the total membership base is at a great risk.

Therefore it was identified by the self-assessment team that **VNRC needs to engage in a research function on resource mobilisation and share best practices**. The NS should be aware of its competitors and engage in analysis of market trends, donor research etc . Further, the **NS needs to formulate policies and strategies and set up accountability standards and transparency mechanisms to build donor confidence that funds are properly mobilised, accounted for, spent and audited**. Strengthened dissemination also very important at all levels. Only then will all volunteers, members and governance at chapter, district and commune level be aware of the specific positioning of VNRC. This includes the need to stress the Fundamental Principles in all their programme and RM work. In turn they can contribute better in those initiatives.

**Governance and members will therefore also need further training, skill development, new methodologies, and skill sharing opportunities to play their strengthened local roles in resource mobilisation** in such a dynamic economic environment externally.

**Next steps**

This report and the detailed findings are addressed to the Viet Nam Red Cross Society’s President and shared with the Director of Asia Pacific Zone only. It will be up to the National Society to decide whether and what it wants to share with its partners in order to obtain support.

It is up to the National Society how, and in what order, it wishes to address the deficits identified through this exercise. If it does address the deficits, it may wish to proceed to Phase 2 of OCAC, the peer assessment phase. This exercise involves representatives of National Societies carrying out an assessment of the National Society’s impact and internal cohesion.

In order to proceed to this phase, Viet Nam Red Cross Society will be requested to repeat the Phase 1 exercise. Please contact your Zone for advice on this process.

The facilitators congratulate the Vice President and participants in the exercise for their willingness to critically discuss the many attributes that are assessed through the self-assessment.

Quite a number of opportunities for further organizational development were identified through the process. The President of VNRC will need to further discuss the report and the self-assessment team’s findings and agree an appropriate final prioritisation of tasks, responsible lead persons to fulfil them, and timelines within which the agreed actions should have been concluded.

As per the OCAC approach, the IFRC’s Organisational Development department in the Geneva Secretariat ends herewith its direct involvement in supporting the Viet Nam Red Cross Society’s development. The Director of Zone will discuss the next appropriate steps with the senior leadership of VNRC and will then, as agreed with the leadership, discuss with his representative on how to use the report, if agreed by the VNRC leadership, as the starting point for a discussion with the leadership of the Society on the way forward. It is suggested that, based on that discussion, a customised National Society development action-plan be developed, which could identify what types of appropriate support VNRC may wish to draw from in the form of any required technical assistance from personnel in the IFRC’s country, regional and Zone offices who are relevant to specific areas of work prioritised by VNRC for further attention. It may also be that VNRC wishes to share some or all of its findings with other appropriate Movement and non-Movement partners to address the various key capacity related requirements that were identified through the OCAC process. Such a plan could also support future resource mobilisation efforts.

**Closing remarks**

The OCAC facilitators express their deep gratitude to VNRC’s President, Vice President and Executive Board, and also all its management, staff and volunteers who participated in the two and a half day exercise for their commitment to transform VNRC into an even more dynamic and self-sustained National Society.

The OCAC facilitators and the IFRC Secretariat’s National Society and Knowledge Development Department sincerely thank the National Society, its leadership, management and all staff and volunteers that participated in the exercise for their commitment to positive change and for their constructive participation in the process. The facilitators are very grateful for the hospitality extended to them by the team of the NS, and would like to particularly congratulate the entire OCAC self-assessment team for their open and transparent discussion and reflection of the organisational characteristics for the future betterment of the National Society, and also to thank all the VNRC’s International Relations Department staff for the outstanding work done in preparing, running and following up on this OCAC assessment.

On behalf of the Organisational Development department,

Roger BRACKE,

Head of department

**The Fundamental Principles** of the International
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

**Organisational Development department**

P.O. Box 372

CH-1211 Geneva 19

Switzerland

Telephone: +41 22 730 4222

Telefax: +41 22 733 0395

E-mail: secretariat@ifrc.org

**www.ifrc.org**