

**PMER
AND
HUMAN RESOURCE**

AN EVALUATION POLICY FOR PROJECT/PROGRAM

1. Introduction

MRCS currently runs its projects/programs and activities covering the areas of disaster management, health and community, ambulance services and hot spot programs commonly supported by the government, donors and partners. MRCS has also been involved in many international project/program such as recovery programs for tsunamis in Japan and Aceh, Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and the Nepal earthquake. Currently, the flood-related activities in the east coast states are in full swing.

The development of the evaluation policy is in direct response to one of the recommendations of the Organizational Capacity Assessment Certification (OCAC) exercise in October 2015. The policy was drafted (zero draft) for the purpose of discussion during the Policy Development Workshop from 6-7 April 2016 (hereafter referred to as "the workshop"). The zero draft has since been revised, taking into consideration valuable inputs of the workshop participants, and further fine-tuning based on the context and organizational needs of MRCS. It is also developed with reference to the Evaluation Framework of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

This policy is meant to guide evaluation at a macro level, where it outlines the policy statement, purpose, scope, definition, basic principles, objectives and finally, the conclusion. In addition, a Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) Policy is to be developed in stages in the future, with support of the PMER unit in the IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur.

2. Policy Statement

This policy seeks to measure the impact of all projects/programs, implemented by MRCS with the aim of continual learning and improvement in our provision of services to the most vulnerable. In order to do so, we strive to achieve optimum results through the efficient use of resources, leading to a strengthened public image and reputation of the MRCS with the ultimate aim of being accountable to all relevant stakeholders.

3. Purpose

- To ensure MRCS has a sustainable and sound project/programme management capacity and accountability through the application of this policy.
- To guide how MRCS evaluations are planned, managed, conducted and utilized by the Secretariat of the MRCS.
- To ensure MRCS evaluations are conducted in an open and participatory manner, with involvement from all relevant stakeholders.

4. Scope

This policy serves as a reference to all staff, members and volunteers at the national headquarters (NHQ), Branches and Chapters, and is applicable to all MRCS projects/programs.

5. Definition

The MRCS adopts the OECD/DAC definition of evaluation as “an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an on-going or completed project, program or policy, in its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of a project/program. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into future decision-making processes of both recipients and donors”. Evaluation findings should allow learning from experiences in order to improve future interventions.

PMER has strong links with community engagement and accountability (CEA), and shall be mainstreamed in all MRCS projects/programs and activities. CEA is a process and commitment to provide timely, relevant and practical information, encourage two-way communication and dialogue, and support an environment of accountability to beneficiaries. This will ensure that affected communities can influence and guide our programs and approaches, increasing the impact and sustainability of our work.

6. Basic Principles

This policy is guided by the seven Fundamental Principles of Red Cross Red Crescent - humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. It is also guided by the Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, and the Strategy 2020 of the MRCS.

7. Objectives

- To measure the progress (and where possible, impact) of a project/program using relevant evaluation methodologies and utilizing databanks/systems (such as resource management system)
- Uphold accountability and transparency to relevant stakeholders of MRCS, particularly downward accountability to the beneficiaries/communities and upward accountability to our donors
- To measure the relevance of a project/program
- To capture lessons learned for organizational learning purposes
- To ensure that projects/programs have established approaches to incorporate beneficiary communication, participation and feedback, as part of CEA
- To capture management response and action plan after completion of an evaluation

8. Strategy

These are some of the criteria and standards to be considered/incorporated when carrying out an evaluation (including but not limited to the below).

8.1. Criteria to be considered in an evaluation

- **Efficiency**

Efficiency measures the extent to which results of a project/program have been delivered in the least costly manner possible (cost-effectiveness).

- **Effectiveness**

Effectiveness measures the extent to which a project/program has or is likely to achieve its intended results. This is measured against the initially set objectives/targets of a project/programme.

- **Relevance and appropriateness**

Relevance focuses on the extent to which an evaluation is suited to the priorities of the target group. It is also important to consider other approaches that may have been better suited to address the identified needs. Appropriateness focuses on the extent to which an intervention is tailored to local needs and context, and compliments other interventions from other actors. It should be able to support communities in making well-informed decisions to address their local needs.

- **Impact**

Impact examines the positive and negative changes from a project/program, measuring how much difference we make. In order to be able to measure impact, MRCS will need to look into its data collection (and data analysis) before, during and after a project/program.

- **Sustainability**

Sustainability focuses on whether the benefits of an intervention are likely to continue once donor support has been withdrawn. This is particularly appropriate for longer-term interventions that seek to build local capacity and ownership so management can continue without donor funding and/or support.

8.2. Standards to be considered in an evaluation

- **Usefulness**

- Evaluations must be useful and used by all levels of MRCS. It has to be objective-driven and be able to provide specific information of the intended users. It focuses on identifying the needs of stakeholders during the planning stage and addressing them throughout the evaluation.

- **Feasibility**

- Evaluations must be realistic (taking into consideration the available resources of the MRCS) and managed in a cost effective manner. The Secretariat commits to allocating adequate resources for evaluations.

- **Impartiality and independence**

- Evaluations should be impartial and unbiased, free from political influence and organizational pressure. The evaluation team should be given full access to the project/programme areas to be evaluated. Evaluators should not be involved or have vested interest in the intervention being evaluated.

- **Transparency**

- Evaluations should be conducted in an open and transparent manner. Specific procedures and protocol should be developed to ensure a transparent evaluation.

- **Participatory**

- Evaluation exercises should provide an enabling platform to encourage meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries/communities. This includes any marginalised or vulnerable groups. Stakeholder participation in data collection, analysis and reporting increases legitimacy of evaluations and ownership for the process.

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8.3 Evaluation process

The timing/frequency of evaluations and the evaluators are dependent on each project/programme. This should be further discussed and agreed upon by the management of MRCS, to be then presented to and approved by the NEB and/or Secretary General.

9. Conclusion

By having this policy approved and implemented at all levels, this provides an enabling environment for the MRCS to further enhance the public perception and visibility of MRCS as a voluntary organization in providing services to vulnerable communities, and as an auxiliary to the government. It is hoped that through the institutionalization of the practice of evaluation, MRCS will be able to not only attract more donors and sustainable funding but more importantly, build trust and acceptance among communities/beneficiaries.

10. Revision/Amendments/Implementation of the Policy

This evaluation policy will be presented to the MRCS National Executive Board (NEB), where upon approval, it will be further refined and rolled out at NHQ, Branches and Chapters. It shall be revised at the discretion of the NEB, as and when deemed necessary. Upon approval of this policy, the long-term goal is to develop a PMER policy.

As this policy (and subsequent documents such as the PMER policy and other relevant guidelines) are to be disseminated to all MRCS staff and volunteers, and to be implemented at all levels, all efforts will be made to ensure that these documents are as user-friendly and practical as possible.