

Terms of Reference for External Contractor

Desk Review and Qualitative Research Study, Assessing Early Action Implementation by
Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies, Remote/Global
4/5/2023

Type of evaluation	<i>Qualitative research and desk review</i>
Expected evaluation methodologies	<i>Desk review/analysis and synthesis of implementation plans and evaluation reports with some additional qualitative interviews</i>
Number of evaluators	<i>1</i>
Expected start/end dates, number of work days	<i>Expected start date May 2023 for approximately 40 working days</i>
Deadline for receiving applications	<i>April 28, 2023</i>

1. Description of project/program to be evaluated

1.1. Background and objectives of project/program

The American Red Cross, in collaboration with the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) seeks a contractor to assess implementation results of 14 Early Action Protocol (EAP) activations and collect learnings/recommendations for improvements to the EAP as an anticipatory action mechanism. Anticipatory humanitarian action refers to a set of actions taken to prevent or mitigate potential disaster impacts prior to a shock or before acute impacts are felt. The actions are carried out in anticipation of a hazard impact and based on a prediction of how the event will unfold. By developing pre-agreed Early Action Protocol plans with agreed triggers for action (based on risk analysis and forecast) tied to pre-arranged financing, the approach enables action ahead of a disaster, at the right time, to reduce the impact of hazards on vulnerable people.

In 2018, IFRC launched the Forecast-based Action by the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (FbA by the DREF) to provide reliable and predictable financing for Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to implement anticipatory action. By 2023, 43 National Societies were engaged in anticipatory action planning and the Anticipatory Pillar of DREF had funded 33 anticipatory action plans or Early Action Protocols in 22 National Societies for different hazards around the world. Of those, 14 EAPs have been activated and early action plans implemented.

This review will assess the extent to which the 14 activations were implemented as planned, collect and synthesize key learnings and challenges to implementation and provide recommendations for improvements to the EAP mechanism.

1.2. Scope and reach of project/program

The scope of the intervention (Early Action Protocol development and activation) are global and the EAP activations assessed in this review will be from a variety of countries covering a mix of

different hazards/disasters. Each EAP activation to date (14) has a variety of accompanying evaluations, learning reviews and monitoring data that have been carried out previously between 2020 – 2023.

1.3. Project/program management

Early Action Protocols are developed and implemented by National Societies, sometimes with support from partner National Societies in the Red Cross Red Crescent network. The EAPs are approved by IFRC and an EAP Validation Committee, which includes members from various National Societies and the Red Cross Climate Centre.

1.4. Previous evaluation activities

There are available activation/implementation reports, evaluations, lessons learned reviews, findings from learning workshops, monitoring and evaluation data from most of the 14 EAP activations to date that will be provided to the consultant as the primary source of data for this review.

2. Evaluation Overview

2.1. Purpose of evaluation

This review will analyze planned versus actual implementation of Early Action Protocols. Early Action Protocols (EAPs) are anticipatory action plans that receive preapproved funding from the [IFRC's Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF](#) in advance to implement annual disaster readiness activities, to preposition stocks and materials and to implement early action activities, when the predefined trigger (for a disaster/hazard) is reached. Once approved, an EAP remains active for five years, unless the trigger is reached and the early actions are activated. To date, there have been 31 EAPs (plus three simplified EAPs) approved since the Fund was launched in 2018. Of these, 14 EAPs have been activated. This includes six in 2020, seven in 2022 and one in 2023.

The contractor will be provided reports, plans and data that contain implementation activities, challenges, learnings and monitoring data. These reports will be used as the primary source of data to analyze and synthesize. Additional interviews with implementers and stakeholders can be conducted after the desk review phase.

2.2. Objectives of evaluation

Objectives of the review include:

- Assess to what extent the activated EAPs have been implemented as initially designed (at the activity level with some basic budget analysis). If not, identify the challenges. If so, identify the enablers.
- Provide an individual overview of each EAP to determine if the early actions conducted achieved their intended objective and coverage. In addition, provide an analysis of aggregate achievements, challenges and learnings across all activations to understand if there are recurring trends.
- Provide an analysis of the effectiveness of the current methodology used to develop EAPs for the implementation of early actions (very detailed pre-approved plans), and provide recommendations for how that methodology could be strengthened.

2.3. Main audience and dissemination plan of evaluation

The primary audience for the findings of this review will be the IFRC DREF team, American Red Cross, and EAP Validation Committee. Findings may also be shared with the wider RCRC network.

3. Evaluation criteria and questions

These main evaluation questions are the key questions that we are seeking to answer through the evaluation.

Criteria	Main evaluation questions	Sub-questions
Relevance	1. To what extent were National Societies organizationally and operationally ready to activate EAPs?	1.1. Were the annual readiness activities done as planned, in advance of a trigger? 1.2. Was the stock required for the activation prepositioned in advance of the activation? 1.3. Did stock availability enable implementation of early actions? Source of verification: IFRC delegation annual reports and final activation reports.

Criteria	Main evaluation questions	Sub-questions
Outcomes/Effectiveness	2. To what extent did the activation and implementation of early actions go as planned?	<p>2.1. The coordination, flow of information, activation process</p> <p>2.2. The forecast and the trigger. Was the trigger met as stated in the plan? Were there changes made to the triggers?</p> <p>2.3. The early actions, activities planned vs activities delivered. Effectiveness (actions implemented and targets reached)?</p> <p>2.4. Timeliness of activation (If information is available): how long did it take to from the trigger being reached, to the decision to activate, to submission of notification documentation, to transfer of funds and how did this timeliness impact on the next point, timeliness of implementation?</p> <p>2.5. Timeliness of implementation (use of the window between forecast and extreme weather event): to what extent were early actions implemented within the lead time, or after the hazard/disaster materialized?</p> <p>2.6. As much as possible, investigate the reasons for success or failure of the activation and outline any contributing or hindering factor, trends in learnings. Identify further areas to investigate/evaluate.</p> <p>2.7. Basic financial analysis: budget vs actual spent.</p>
Process/Quality	3. Was the MEAL plan implemented as planned?	<p>3.1. Were indicators reported on as planned?</p> <p>3.2. Synthesize trends in barriers to achieving planned indicators.</p> <p>3.3. Identify areas for improvement in MEAL or how learnings and evaluations are being used in EAP planning.</p>

Other evaluation criteria

- Partnership/collaboration with partner National Societies, IFRC, implementing partners, government, etc.
- National Society Development and Preparedness for Effective Response framework: did the National Society have sufficient human resources (including volunteers) and effective governance and accountability structures in place?

4. Scope of work and Evaluation design

4.1. Scope of work

The contractor will be responsible for the following:

1. Desk review of activation plans, evaluation reports, lessons learned reports from National Societies and IFRC, annual operational reports, and Validation Committee feedback forms. To date, there have been 14 EAP activations and accompanying reports that need to be analyzed as part of this review. This will be considered the first phase of the research with a draft report of these findings to be shared before primary data collection (interviews, focus groups) take place. Findings from the desk review can further inform research questions and survey tools for primary data collection.
2. Key Stakeholder Interviews (may include National Societies, the partners that support them, IFRC staff and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, as necessary)

The contractor will not be responsible for the following:

The review/research should not focus on whether the intervention was successful in preventing or mitigating the impacts of a hazard. We assume that if the plan were implemented as designed, it would achieve its objective as per the Theory of Change detailed in each EAP.

4.2. Methodologies

The methods could include, but would not necessarily be limited to, the following:

1. Desk review of key documents including activation reports, prior evaluation reports, M&E data, learning reviews and other documents judged relevant.
2. Literature review of material on anticipatory action in disaster response (where relevant, depending on consultant's background and experience, to familiarize consultant with key concepts and AA approaches)
3. After the initial desk review, the contractor is expected to meet with the steering committee to discuss trends and initial findings. Recommendations and guidance from the steering committee (based on findings from the review) will inform the next phase of data collection which will include interviews with implementing National Societies, implementing partners, and/or IFRC representatives. It is anticipated that a maximum of 20 key informants will participate in interviews. Interviews can be conducted remotely/virtually.

4.3. Discussion of inception report

A kickoff call will be arranged with the contractor where details of the review and a workplan will be established.

4.4. Logistic and Administrative Support

The steering committee can support the contractor in identifying and providing contact information for key informant interviews. The contractor is responsible for scheduling interviews (they can be conducted virtually).

There is potential opportunity for contractor to travel to present findings at conferences/workshops. Logistics/travel support and associated costs will be provided by American Red Cross in the event contractor is asked to travel to conferences/workshops.

4.5. Reporting relationship

The contractor will report to **Jeanne Crump, DMERL Lead, International Services Department**, who is the designated evaluation manager.

4.6. Beneficiary participation

Community-level beneficiary participation where EAPs have been activated and implemented are not likely to be included in this review; however, in the case the evaluation team or contractor decides to engage communities in interviews or focus groups, the Host National Society will take lead on selecting and arranging data collection with the community.

4.7. International standards & Presentation of evidence

Standard evaluation and survey methodologies and good practices utilized in the international humanitarian community should be applied. Such resources should include but are not limited to those promulgated by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

In particular, all findings and conclusions should be based on evidence which is presented in the final report. For sample surveys, detailed information should be presented on the sample design (including sample size calculation, stratification, clustering, allocation, selection, departures from equal selection probability and weighting), the respondent selection methodology, nonresponse rates, and coefficient of variation, design effect and intra-class correlation for all variables. For case studies, the criteria and processes for selecting those cases should be presented.

4.8. Ethical Guidelines

It is expected that the evaluation will adhere to ethical guidelines as outlined in the American Evaluation Association's Guiding Principles for Evaluators. A summary of these guidelines is provided below, and a more detailed description can be found at www.eval.org/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesPrintable.asp.

1. *Informed Consent*: All participants are expected to provide informed consent following standard and pre-agreed upon consent protocols.
2. *Systematic Inquiry*: Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries.
3. *Competence*: Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.
4. *Integrity/Honesty*: Evaluators display honesty and integrity in their own behavior, and attempt to ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.
5. *Respect for People*: Evaluators respect the security, dignity and self-worth of respondents, program participants, clients, and other evaluation stakeholders. It is expected that the evaluator will obtain the informed consent of participants to ensure that they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate.

6. *Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:* Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of general and public interests and values that may be related to the evaluation.

4.9. Future use of data

All collected data will be the sole property of the American Red Cross. The contractor may not use the data for their own research purposes, nor license the data to be used by others, without the written consent of the American Red Cross.

5. Expected activities and Deliverables

5.1. Expected activities

Activities	Number of days	Expected timeline
1. Orientation to research scope/existing materials to analyze and kickoff call with Evaluation/Research Team	2	May 2023
2. Conduct desk review: analysis of existing material assessing 14 EAP activations (evaluation reports, learning reviews, indicator data)	10	May 2023
3. Draft report of findings from desk review analysis	5	May 2023
4. Pause and reflect meeting with Steering Committee to share desk review findings and design next phase of research (develop additional research questions/key areas of inquiry for further investigation to inform interviews or focus groups)	1	June 2023
5. Develop data collection tools	2	June 2023
6. Data collection (maximum 20 key informant interviews)	10	June 2023
7. Incorporate additional data from interviews into desk review report; consolidate findings and recommendations for final draft report submission	5	June - July 2023
8. Steering committee provides feedback then approval on final report; contractor gives presentation on findings to Steering Committee/key stakeholders	5	July 2023
Total expected work days:	40	

5.2. Deliverables

The following is an example of details on deliverables and deadlines. Indicate the language required for all deliverables and whether they need to be translated, and what role, if any, the evaluators are expected to play in such translations or reviews of the translated text. Also state

any page limitations, perhaps allowing for annexes of unlimited length, and indicate whether raw data or any special tabulations are to be provided and in what form.

Deliverables	Expected deadline
1. Orientation to research, materials/kickoff call	May 5, 2023
2. Desk Review draft report	May 26, 2023
3. Finalized data collection tools	June 2, 2023
4. Draft final report	June 23, 2023
5. Final report & presentation	June 30, 2023

6. Obligations of key participants in the evaluation

6.1. Obligations of the Contractor(s)

- a. Inform the evaluation manager in a timely fashion of progress made and of any problems encountered.
- b. Implement the activities as expected, and if modifications are necessary, bring to the attention of the Evaluation Manager before enacting any changes.
- c. Report on a timely basis any possible conflicts of interest.

6.2. Obligations of the Evaluation Manager

- a. Make sure that the contractor(s) are provided with the specified human resources and logistical support, and answer any day-to-day enquiries.
- b. Facilitate the work of the contractor(s) with beneficiaries and other local stakeholders.
- c. Monitor the daily work of the contractor(s) and flag any concerns.
- d. Receive and signoff on deliverables and authorize payment

6.3. Obligations of the Steering Committee (composed of representatives from IFRC and American Red Cross)

- a. Review and approve the proposed methodology.
- b. Provide feedback/comments in the review of research questions and data collection tools
- c. Provide timely comments on the draft report and final products

7. Required qualifications

1. Demonstrated experience in qualitative research methods and analysis required, experience leading research in humanitarian/disaster relief programs strongly preferred
2. Demonstrated experience conducting interviews/collecting data with diverse stakeholder groups required
3. Experience evaluating/researching disaster-related anticipatory action or early action/early warning interventions strongly preferred
4. Fluency (written and spoken) in English required

5. Experience conducting remote/virtual interviews using Microsoft Teams, Zoom and/or Google Meet required
6. Strong ability to synthesize learnings in a clear and participatory way strongly preferred
7. Excellent written communication skills with ability to deliver a cohesive and well structured report and visual presentation required

8. Application and selection details

8.1. Application materials

The proposal should include the following five items. Please note that any proposal which does not contain all items will be rejected.

1. **One-page Summary of relevant experience that relates to the required qualifications**
2. **Detailed CVs** of all professionals who will work on the research. If there is more than one consultant on the proposed research team, please attach a table describing the level of effort (in number of days) of each team member in each of the evaluation activities.
3. **Professional references:** please provide two or three references from your previous clients.
4. **Daily rate:** please mention the proposed daily rate for each consultant in USD.
5. **Examples of previous evaluation/research reports or similar products in which you were the primary or sole author/researcher.**

8.2. Application procedures

Please submit application materials in one combined PDF or Word file via email to DMERL@redcross.org. Incomplete applications and applications sent after the deadline will not be accepted.

Deadline for applications

April 28th, 2023 11:59pm EST

8.3. Selection criteria

- *Experience designing and conducting qualitative research projects, particularly desk reviews, meta-analyses or literature reviews that require synthesis of existing evaluations/learning/M&E data*
- *Experience interviewing diverse stakeholder groups*
- *Experience in disaster/humanitarian context or anticipatory action approaches*
- *Cost*

8.4. Questions from bidders

The research team will accept questions from bidders and will make every effort to respond to questions. Questions should be sent to DMERL@redcross.org.