

**Power of humanity**

Council of Delegates of the International  
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

8 December 2019, Geneva



**COUNCIL OF DELEGATES  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS  
AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

Geneva, Switzerland  
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**Movement-wide Commitments for  
Community Engagement and Accountability**

**Draft zero resolution**

**Document prepared by**

**The International Committee of the Red Cross  
and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
in consultation with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

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## DRAFT ZERO RESOLUTION

### Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability

The Council of Delegates,

*reasserting* that as a global humanitarian network of 80 million people, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's *raison d'être* is to prevent and alleviate the suffering of people vulnerable to and affected by disasters, conflicts, and health and social problems,

*reaffirming* the Movement's accountability to vulnerable and affected people in its efforts to provide support and assistance impartially and without discrimination to address their needs, and to protect and preserve their dignity,

*recognizing* that vulnerable and crisis-affected people have direct knowledge and understanding of their situations, and have the right to participate in designing, implementing and making other decisions about the humanitarian activities that concern them,

*emphasizing* that community engagement and other forms of inclusive participation contribute to more timely, relevant, appropriate and effective humanitarian programmes; build trust and proximity with the people and communities we serve; and positively impact the safety and security of our staff and operations,

*reaffirming* the importance of systematically collecting and responding to vulnerable and affected people's views on their needs, priorities, vulnerabilities and capacities, and of using this to guide decision-making,

*acknowledging* the diversity of individuals who make up any community, its existing and evolving power dynamics and patterns of inclusion or exclusion, and the need to take measures to include all groups equitably in community engagement processes and to adapt programmes to different needs and vulnerabilities,

*highlighting* that effective community engagement enables different groups of people to share their insights or experiences; to ask questions or clarify expectations; to obtain accurate, relevant and potentially life-saving information; and to share feedback on the quality and effectiveness of programmes and operations,

*commending* the existing capacity, experience and efforts of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in adopting and applying community engagement and accountability more systematically in their programmes,

*acknowledging* the Movement's existing commitments to strengthening accountability to and engagement with vulnerable and affected people, such as the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and pledges made by the IFRC and the ICRC as part of the Grand Bargain to work together in a more coordinated manner to promote community engagement and accountability, including by setting up participation, feedback and response mechanisms alongside a strong data and information analysis system,

*recalling* that, at the 2017 Council of Delegates, the workshop "From words to action: Community engagement and accountability in practice" concluded with a call for a Movement-

wide approach to and scaling-up of shared commitments on community engagement and accountability,

*acknowledging* efforts to develop a set of commitments in consultation with the various components of the Movement that build on and complement existing or emerging initiatives intended to strengthen community engagement and accountability,

1. *adopts* the Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability, as annexed to this resolution;
2. *encourages* all Movement components to engage with and be accountable to the people they serve in a manner consistent with these Movement-wide commitments;
3. *invites* National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to work together to strengthen their individual and collective capacities to consistently engage with and be accountable to the people they serve;
4. *requests* National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to share knowledge gained and lessons learned from their efforts to adopt and apply these commitments with a view to continuously improving the Movement's engagement with and accountability to vulnerable and affected people and thereby improving the outcome of our humanitarian action;
5. *recommends* that the IFRC and the ICRC integrate the commitments into existing tools and processes for capacity assessment, organizational development, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination and cooperation;
6. *recommends* that National Societies providing support and assistance to other National Societies also integrate the commitments into their cooperation strategies, particularly when supporting emergency responses;
7. *calls upon* the Movement components to report back to the 2021 Council of Delegates on progress and achievements in engaging with and being accountable to the communities we serve, in accordance with the Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability.

## Annex: Movement-Wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability

### Introduction

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in consultation with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, have developed the following commitments and minimum actions as an annex to the 2019 Council of Delegates resolution “Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability”.

The commitments and minimum actions aim to **harmonize and align existing practices in the Movement** and ensure that there is a consistent approach to how we engage with and are accountable to vulnerable and crisis-affected people and communities, while recognizing and respecting the specific mandates, roles, responsibilities and capacities of National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC. The commitments include a proposed measurement framework setting out outcomes, indicators and benchmarks to monitor and report on implementation progress within the Movement.<sup>1</sup>

## SECTION ONE: Scope, definitions and rationale

### Scope

The commitments are intended to be relevant and applicable for all Movement organizations, whether they work on short-term emergency responses or longer-term programmes or provide other services and assistance involving direct engagement with people and communities. The accompanying actions are measures to strengthen and improve accountability at all levels:

- National Society branches and headquarters
- IFRC and ICRC national, regional and global programmes and operations
- other situations where one or more Movement organizations and/or external partners work together with similar objectives and assist similar communities.

### Definitions

While many National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC have developed their own policies around community engagement and accountability to affected people, **the Movement still lacks a common definition and shared understanding** of these concepts and of how to integrate them into programmes and operations. Uncoordinated and diverse approaches undermine the potential of working together as a Movement to fully and effectively incorporate the needs, concerns, priorities and inputs of people and communities into policies, plans and decision-making processes, whether at the branch or community level, or in large-scale programmes and operations involving several Movement organizations.

In an effort to address this, the following proposed definitions draw on existing terms used within the Movement, as well as externally used and agreed concepts. The definitions will help ensure **a more consistent and common understanding** of community engagement and accountability. This is especially important when developing and implementing programmes and operations with people and communities, as well as for Movement cooperation and coordination, advocacy, capacity-building and organizational development processes.

**Accountability to affected people** refers to the mutual responsibility of all components of the Movement to use their power and resources ethically and responsibly to **put the interests of people and communities at the centre of decision-making** and ensure that humanitarian actions lead to the best possible **outcomes and results** for them, while protecting and preserving their **rights and dignity** and increasing their **resilience** to face future crises.

<sup>1</sup> This draft document builds on *A Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)*, a 2019 Council of Delegates background paper supporting this resolution, and extensive consultations with and input from National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC. They are invited to continue to comment on this draft in order to ensure that the final Council of Delegates resolution reflects the Movement’s priorities and ambitions around improving and strengthening community engagement and accountability.

**Community engagement** refers to the **processes used to systematically engage and communicate with people and communities** to better understand their diverse needs, vulnerabilities and capacities; to gather, respond to and act on feedback and input about their priorities and preferences; and to provide safe and equitable access and opportunities to actively participate in decisions that affect them, with the goal of ensuring that Red Cross and Red Crescent actions are effective, inclusive and accountable **from the perspective of the people and communities themselves.**

**People and communities** refer to any group of vulnerable, at-risk or crisis-affected people that the Movement aims to serve, without discrimination and according to need, in line with our Fundamental Principles. This requires recognizing and understanding the role that gender, age, diversity and social, economic and power dynamics play in increasing the risks, vulnerabilities and marginalization of some groups of people within a community, and implies a responsibility to take measures to deliver safe, inclusive and equitable access to support and assistance.

While the main focus is improving accountability to the most vulnerable and worst affected people and communities who are directly reached by programmes and operations, the commitments can also be applied to other people who are indirectly reached through the Movement's actions and advocacy.

### Rationale

The Fundamental Principles oblige us to work to prevent and alleviate human suffering in situations of crisis, and to provide assistance without discrimination and according to need. This is the foundation of our **individual and collective accountability to the people and communities we seek to assist.**

The [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and other policy statements reinforce this duty. They call on the Movement to **put vulnerable people and communities at the centre of humanitarian actions and advocacy.** This means working in ways that respect local culture, preferences and diversity and promote people's **right to be informed about, participate in and share their input on** the decisions that affect them. It also means ensuring that programmes and operations generate results and outcomes that are **meaningful for them.**

**Community engagement** – the way we relate to the people we serve – is critical to meeting our accountability commitments. Regularly engaging with people and communities and incorporating their feedback and input into the assessment, design, implementation and monitoring phases of programmes and operations is key to ensuring that our action is effective and accountable.

Systematically incorporating community engagement and accountability into the decision-making processes for programmes and operations and measuring results can help the Movement to:

- understand and address communities' assistance **needs, priorities and preferences**, and address issues around power dynamics, gender, diversity and inclusion and how they influence vulnerability
- provide more fair and equitable access to appropriate and relevant assistance and services
- identify, mitigate and **manage risks**, including communities' **security and protection** concerns
- **empower** people and communities to more actively engage with and participate in decision-making processes
- reduce **vulnerability** and increase **capacity and resilience**
- **increase people and communities' satisfaction** with the way programmes and operations are designed and implemented
- improve the **quality, effectiveness and sustainability** of programme and operation outcomes **from the perspectives of people and communities themselves**
- reinforce **trust, transparency and respect** in relationships with people and communities.

**These commitments and minimum actions will help consolidate and replicate good practices and ensure continuous learning and improvements in the way the Movement engages with and is accountable to the people and communities we serve.**

## **SECTION TWO: Commitments and minimum actions**

This section sets out **seven commitments** and recommended minimum actions aimed at strengthening and improving community engagement and accountability across the Movement by 2023. Systematically adopting and implementing these commitments and actions will strengthen our individual and collective accountability to the people and communities we serve. It will help to ensure that our programmes and operations lead to better quality and more effective results for them, while preserving and protecting their rights and dignity.

### **Commitment 1:**

***All Movement organizations commit to prioritizing and integrating community engagement and accountability in their strategies, policies and procedures.***

#### **By 2023 all Movement organizations will:**

- adopt a specific policy commitment (or integrate it into existing policy frameworks) to put people and communities at the centre of their actions and advocacy and integrate community engagement and accountability in their programmes and operations
- reference and integrate the Movement-wide Community Engagement and Accountability Commitments in other relevant policies, strategies and procedures, such as on disaster management, health care, protection, communications and human resources
- ensure all planning documents include an explicit explanation of how community engagement and accountability actions, outcomes and indicators will be integrated into all phases of programmes and operations that involve working with people and communities.

### **Commitment 2:**

***All Movement organizations commit to regularly conducting a context analysis to understand and address the diversity of needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the people and communities they seek to serve and assist.***

#### **By 2023 all Movement organizations will:**

- design all programmes and operations based on a situation and context analysis to identify the social, economic, political and/or cultural factors and power dynamics that increase risks and vulnerabilities for different groups of people in the community, paying special attention to integrating gender, protection, inclusion and “do no harm” approaches into each phase of programmes and operations
- take measures to protect and safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of personal data, including obtaining informed consent for participating in programmes and operations whenever possible
- regularly collect and analyse data disaggregated by sex, age and other diversity parameters, and monitor and assess protection risks in all programme and operation phases to inform decision-making processes.

### **Commitment 3:**

***All Movement organizations commit to facilitating greater participation of local people and communities, including Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, and use of their knowledge, skills and capacities in branch activities, programmes and operations.***

#### **By 2023 all Movement organizations will:**

- take measures to regularly consult people and communities to identify their priorities and preferences around the design and implementation of programmes and operations and integrate this information into planning and decision-making processes
- integrate mechanisms to facilitate safe, accessible and equitable engagement with and participation of people and communities in all phases of programmes and operations

- prioritize the use of local knowledge, skills, capacities and resources when implementing programmes and operations, including adopting measures to allocate funding and resources and transfer decision-making responsibilities to local communities (including Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and branch structures) whenever possible and appropriate.

#### **Commitment 4:**

***All Movement organizations commit to systematically listening and responding to and acting on feedback from the people and communities we aim to serve.***

##### **By 2023 all Movement organizations will:**

- take measures to regularly consult people and communities on their trusted and preferred means of providing feedback and other input and making complaints about programmes and operations, which should be a regular part of preparedness activities
- integrate context-appropriate, safe, accessible and equitable measures in all phases of programmes and operations to collect, analyse and act on people and communities' feedback about how satisfied they are with the quality and effectiveness of the Movement and their interaction with us
- ensure people and communities' feedback and input are regularly documented, analysed and channelled to the appropriate decision-making level, track any actions taken or not taken as result and report back to people and communities, with specific procedures in place to deal with issues of sexual exploitation and abuse or other sensitive issues.

#### **Commitment 5:**

***All Movement organizations commit to greater transparency in our communications with people and communities we aim to serve.***

##### **By 2023 all Movement organizations will:**

- take measures to regularly engage with people and communities to inform them of and validate the aims and objectives; planned activities; selection criteria for receiving assistance; and mechanisms to obtain more information or submit feedback and complaints on programmes and operations
- regularly consult with people and communities on their trusted and preferred information sources and communication channels and identify their priority information needs, paying particular attention to diversity issues, and based on this, design and implement relevant, inclusive, accessible and appropriate information-sharing and two-way communication activities
- regularly consult with people and communities to test and validate any information, education and communication messages, including advocacy and behaviour-change campaigns, to ensure they are culturally appropriate and relevant and understood by all groups.

#### **Commitment 6:**

***All Movement organizations commit to strengthening knowledge, skills and competencies in community engagement and accountability at all levels, and to systematically incorporating community engagement and accountability in their work.***

##### **By 2023 all Movement organizations will:**

- allocate adequate human, financial and technical resources to systematically integrate community engagement and accountability tools and processes into all phases of programmes and operations
- prioritize ongoing technical assistance, capacity-building and knowledge-sharing measures for IFRC, ICRC and National Society staff and volunteers, particularly at the branch and community level, as part of overall organizational and human resources development strategies
- designate a focal point in their senior management team to monitor and oversee community engagement and accountability initiatives in programmes and operations

- ensure that relevant staff's job descriptions include their community engagement and accountability responsibilities and set out realistic and achievable performance benchmarks and indicators
- encourage and facilitate knowledge-sharing, peer-to-peer learning and a community of practice within and between National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC, and with external partners
- ensure programme and operation evaluations include measures to consult people and communities on their perceptions of and satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the activities and their engagement and influence throughout the programme life cycle, as well as measures to share and validate findings with them.

#### **Commitment 7:**

***All Movement organizations commit to coordinating their approaches to community engagement and accountability when working in the same contexts or with external partners in order to increase coherence and consistency, avoid duplication and improve effectiveness and efficiency.***

#### **By 2023 all Movement organizations will:**

- jointly develop and implement common approaches to community engagement and accountability in programmes and operations, in line with the host National Society's own strategy and vision and based on local communities' priorities and preferences
- whenever appropriate and possible, establish and use common platforms and mechanisms for community engagement and accountability, such as common feedback mechanisms or methods to foster people and communities' engagement with and participation in decision-making processes
- transparently share relevant information, input, feedback, data and analyses from people and communities with partners in order to identify and address issues, with due regard for confidentiality, security and protection issues.

## **SECTION THREE: Measuring implementation progress**

### **Expected outcomes**

The success of this resolution depends on how well each component of the Movement reflects and applies these commitments in their own policies and procedures. Movement components will be asked to monitor their progress and report back to the next Council of Delegates.

Accordingly, the resolution proposes a **performance measurement framework** to assess how community engagement and accountability commitments and actions contribute to the quality, effectiveness and accountability of Movement programmes and operations. The framework sets out **three related outcomes** and **process and outcome indicators** that together will allow the Movement to benchmark, assess and report on individual and collective progress in applying good community engagement and accountability practices in programmes and operations.

While Movement organizations are encouraged to adapt these outcomes and indicators to their own systems and processes, a degree of harmonization is recommended in order to collectively track and benchmark how well community engagement and accountability is being implemented across the Movement.



### Proposed community engagement and accountability outcomes and indicators

#### Outcome 1:

- Movement organizations consistently use community engagement tools and people and communities' feedback to design, implement and adapt programmes and operations in line with their needs, priorities and preferences, paying special attention to gender, age and diversity issues.

#### Indicators:

- # of programmes/operations that have formally integrated community engagement and accountability mechanisms into plans, budgets, management and decision-making and monitoring processes (*process*)
- # of programmes/operations with objectives and/or activities that are designed/changed/adapted in line with feedback and input from people and communities (*process*)
- # of programmes/operations using coordinated approaches (including common mechanisms) to integrate community engagement and accountability in situations where multiple Movement members and/or other partners are working in the same context (*process*)

#### Outcome 2:

- People and communities are satisfied with their opportunities to influence decision-making in all phases of Red Cross or Red Crescent programmes/operations (assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).

#### Indicators:

- # and % of programmes/operations that have adequate and appropriate mechanisms for consultation with and participation of people and communities throughout the programme/operation life cycle (*process*)
- # and % of people and communities that are satisfied with their ability to influence decision-making in all phases of the programme/operation (*outcome*)

#### Outcome 3:

- People and communities are satisfied that Red Cross or Red Crescent programmes/operations have adequately addressed their priority needs and preferences for services or assistance.

#### Indicators:

- # and % of programmes/operations that regularly assess people and communities' satisfaction in all phases of the programme/operation life cycle (*process*)
- # and % of people and communities that are satisfied with the quality and effectiveness of services and assistance provided in all phases of the programme/operation (*outcome*)

The primary purpose of the **outcome indicators** is to generate data and evidence **from the perspective of affected people themselves** on how Red Cross or Red Crescent actions are meeting their priority needs and whether they feel they have influence over decisions that affect them. This includes indicators on people and communities' perceptions of their ability to shape and influence decisions on the design and implementation of programmes/operations and their satisfaction with the quality of the assistance provided.

Each outcome also includes **process indicators** to assess whether Movement organizations have the required systems and processes in place to systematically integrate community engagement and accountability measures into their programmes and operations, and whether those measures are delivering on people and communities' expectations and desired outcomes. The IFRC and ICRC will

continue to consult National Societies on the most appropriate ways to incorporate these outcomes and indicators into existing monitoring and evaluation processes.

## Targets and benchmarks

Finally, this performance measurement framework sets out community engagement and accountability **targets and benchmarks** for continuous improvement over time (when the context permits). These benchmarks offer examples of how community engagement and accountability can be applied throughout a programme or operation life cycle. The benchmarks establish three levels of performance:

- Level 1 (Minimum): The programme/operation has achieved the minimum benchmarks for community engagement and accountability, such as **notifying people and communities** of key information and decisions about the programme and of the channels for submitting feedback and complaints.
- Level 2 (Intermediate): The programme/operation has achieved the minimum benchmarks and has adopted additional community engagement and accountability measures, such as mechanisms to **collect and respond to feedback and complaints**, and **validate** plans with people and communities.
- Level 3 (Advanced): The programme/operation has achieved the minimum and intermediate benchmarks for community engagement and accountability and has adopted additional measures, such as mechanisms for people and communities to **participate directly** in programme/operation decision-making.

The three benchmark levels allow National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to **work progressively towards achieving the advanced level benchmarks over time**. Programme and operation teams or branches with limited experience and capacity in implementing community engagement and accountability approaches could start integrating the benchmarks from the minimum level and work towards meeting intermediate and advanced benchmarks when conditions permit. Other teams or branches with more capacity and experience can and should go beyond the minimum level and work towards meeting intermediate and advanced performance benchmarks.

The range of levels recognizes that there are many crisis contexts where implementing community engagement and accountability measures is difficult (for example, because of a lack of access and security or limited capacity and experience in community engagement and accountability). Achieving intermediate or advanced levels may not be possible there, though if the context changes and conditions permit, programmes and operations can set more ambitious community engagement and accountability targets and pursue continuous improvement over time.

The benchmarks also provide decision-makers with the key information needed to support internal **quality assurance processes** focusing on how well community engagement and accountability measures are integrated into all phases of programmes/operations. This is useful for both internal management decision-making and learning and external reporting to donors and other stakeholders.

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Community engagement and accountability benchmarks in programme/operation management phases

Outcome 1:

- Movement organizations consistently use community engagement tools and people and communities' feedback to design, implement and adapt programmes and operations in line with their needs, priorities and preferences, paying special attention to gender, age and diversity issues.

Assessment & planning	Monitoring & implementation	Evaluation & learning
L.1. Programme/operation plans include an explanation of intended measures to support community engagement and accountability (minimum).	L.1. Programme/operation teams regularly review people and communities' feedback as part of management processes (minimum).	L.1. Programme/operation teams conduct an analysis of overall feedback trends and management responses during the programme/operation to orient the design of future programmes /operations (minimum).
L.2. Programme/operation teams consult people and communities about their priorities and preferences for assistance, communications, and feedback and participation mechanisms (intermediate).	L.2. Programme/operation teams respond to and act on feedback within agreed timelines and channels, and adapt activities accordingly (intermediate).	L.2. Programme/operation teams share and validate the results of their analyses with people and communities (intermediate).
L.3. Programme/operation teams involve people and communities in co-designing the programme/operation and feedback and response mechanisms (advanced).	L.3. Programme/operation teams regularly report back to people and communities on how feedback has been considered or addressed and validate project adjustments with them (advanced).	L.3. Programme/operation teams consult people and communities to develop recommendations on how to improve feedback mechanisms and address unresolved issues to orient future programmes/operations (advanced).

Outcome 2:

- People and communities are satisfied with their opportunities to influence decision-making in all phases of Red Cross or Red Crescent programmes/operations (assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).

Assessment & planning	Monitoring & implementation	Evaluation & learning
L.1. Programme/operation teams inform people and communities of planned project objectives and activities (minimum).	L.1. Programme/operation teams regularly inform people and communities of planned activities and available feedback channels (minimum).	L.1. Programme/operation teams inform people and communities of close-out and transition activities in a timely manner (minimum).
L.2. Programme/operation teams consult people and communities about their priority needs and preferences for delivery of assistance (intermediate).	L.2. Programme/operation teams act upon feedback and consult people and communities about the design of activities and delivery mechanisms (intermediate).	L.2. Programme/operation teams consult people and communities on planned close-out and transition activities and validate the plans with them (intermediate).
L.3. People and communities and programme/operation teams jointly establish programme/operation objectives and activities and	L.3. People and communities directly participate in the management and monitoring of programme/operation activities with	L.3. People and communities and project teams jointly define programme/operation close-out and transition activities (advanced).

mechanisms for participation in decision-making (advanced).

programme/operation teams (advanced).

Outcome 3:

- People and communities are satisfied that Red Cross or Red Crescent programmes/operations have adequately addressed their priority needs and preferences for services or assistance.

Assessment & planning	Monitoring & implementation	Evaluation & learning
L.1. Programme/operation teams inform people and communities of planned mechanisms to collect satisfaction data (minimum).	L.1. Programme/operation teams regularly monitor and analyse people and communities' satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of programme/operation activities (minimum).	L.1. Programme/operation teams conduct an end-of-project analysis of people and communities' overall satisfaction trends regarding the quality and effectiveness of responses over the course of the programme/operation (minimum).
L.2. Programme/operation teams consult people and communities on the design of satisfaction monitoring mechanisms and validate the plans with them (intermediate).	L.2. Programme/operation teams consult people and communities on the findings from satisfaction monitoring data and validate the findings with them (intermediate).	L.2. Programme/operation teams share and validate the results of their analysis with communities (intermediate).
L.3. People and communities and project teams jointly define satisfaction monitoring mechanisms and quality criteria for assessing satisfaction (advanced).	L.3. People and communities and project teams jointly analyse and interpret satisfaction data (advanced).	L.3. Programme/operation teams consult people and communities to identify lessons learned and recommendations to improve the quality and effectiveness of programmes/operations, and document this to orient future programmes/operations (advanced).