Meta evaluation of 2014 IFRC evaluations
8 June 2015
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The IFRC’s Planning and Evaluation Department is committed to upholding the IFRC Framework for Evaluation. The framework is designed to promote reliable, useful, ethical evaluations that contribute to organizational learning, accountability, and our mission to best serve those in need. It demonstrates the IFRC’s commitment to transparency, providing a publicly accessible document to all stakeholders so that they may better understand and participate in the evaluation function.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In line with the IFRC Evaluation Standard Operating Procedures, it was decided by the Planning and Evaluation department (PED) in 2015 that a meta-evaluation should be carried out to review the evaluations hosted in the IFRC Evaluation Databank.

This is the first time a meta-evaluation of all IFRC secretariat evaluations has been carried out. Using an internal evaluator, a desktop review was carried out of all 38 evaluation reports published in the databank in 2014. Ten criteria based on good evaluation practice as highlighted in Section 5 were used when reviewing the documents. Overall findings illustrated that in 2014, there were more reviews and case study/research posted, than actual evaluation reports. In terms of follow up to the evaluations, only 2 management responses were attached to published reports (1 impact evaluation, 1 real-time evaluation) in 2014. More detailed key findings have been outlined below.

Key findings:

- The majority (45%) of the reports focused on evaluations covering the Asia Pacific region. The rest covered: Americas (31%), Africa (16%), Global (5%) and Europe and Central Asia (3%).
- The meta-evaluation reviewed 38 evaluation reports. Out of these 38, the majority (10) focused on reviews, followed by final evaluations (9), case study/research (8), mid-term evaluation (3), baseline (3), impact evaluation (2), survey (2) and one real-time evaluation.
- Thirty-six (36) of the evaluation reports used both quantitative and qualitative methods together in its data collection and analysis (mixed methods). The two (2) report types that used quantitative methods only were surveys.
- Out of the 38 evaluation reports, the majority (30) used non-probability sampling (Voluntary Response, Judgment and Convenience Sampling etc). These 30 reports were as follows: Case Study/Research (7), Case Study/Research/Impact Evaluation (1), Final Evaluation (6), Impact Evaluation (2), Mid-Term Evaluation (3), Real-Time Evaluation (1), Review (9) and Survey (1). There were seven (7) reports which used probability sampling (Simple Random, Stratified Random, Multi-Stage etc) which consisted of 1 survey, 1 review, 3 final evaluations and 2 baselines. One (1) baseline used a mixed method, consisting of both probability and non-probability sampling.
- The majority of the evaluation reports (26) focused on sectors concerning disaster risk reduction (DRR), response, recovery. These evaluations covered mainly locations in Asia Pacific (13), Americas (8) and Africa (5).
- Out of the 38 evaluation reports, there were overall 330 individual recommendations made which highlighted areas for improvement. Two-hundred and thirty-nine (239) required follow up action. In regards to reports with recommendations which highlighted areas for improvement: Final Evaluation (6), Case Study/Research (4), Baseline (1), Review (1) and Survey (1). For reports with recommendations highlighting follow up action there were: Review (7), Baseline (1), Case Study/Research (1) and Mid-Term Evaluation (1). For reports with recommendations highlighting both, there were: Final Evaluation (2), Mid-Term Evaluation (2), Review (2), Baseline (1), Impact Evaluation (1) and Real-Time Evaluation (1). There were 6 reports which had no recommendations: Case Study/Research (3), Final Evaluation (1), Impact Evaluation (1) and Survey (1).

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1 At the time of this report, the IFRC Evaluation Standard Operating Procedures had not yet been officially approved.

2 For the purpose of this document, evaluation reports also include baseline, case study/research, final evaluation, mid-term evaluation, impact evaluation, real-time evaluation, review and survey.
Overall, the majority of these recommendations (258) were for targeted for National Society(ies). The rest were made at country level (144), Zone secretariat (85), Geneva secretariat (40), at the global level (30), at the regional level (12), and for donors (4).

Ten (10) criteria were used when reviewing the 38 reports. Results showed the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ToC</th>
<th>ES</th>
<th>Intro</th>
<th>Background</th>
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<th>ToR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>71%</td>
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</table>

Most of the reports scored 50% or more on 8 out of the 10 categories. The two categories where reports scored lower than 50% were on including a ToR in the report, and on attaching a Management Response with the published report.

Most of the reports (24) were commissioned by the IFRC secretariat only. The others were commissioned by IFRC Secretariat/NS (5), IFRC Secretariat/Donor (3), Donor (3), National Societies (2) and Movement (1).

Most of the reports mentioned IFRC Secretariat/NS (25) as the target audience. The remaining reports highlighted National Society(ies)-(6), IFRC Secretariat (3), Donor/IFRC Secretariat/NS (3), and Movement (1).

Recommendations

IFRC secretariat

1. Out of the 38 reports, 42% are evaluation reports, as per the Evaluation Type in the IFRC Evaluation Databank.

1.1 In line with Strategy 2020’s Enabling Action 3, it is recommended that IFRC secretariat senior management give priority to the IFRC Evaluation Databank as an important tool in promoting “…a culture of transparent accountability to our stakeholders.” Even though the IFRC Evaluation Framework was accepted in February 2011, less than 50% of the reports posted are evaluations according to the findings.

1.2 Programme/project managers should inform their respective Geneva (PED/departmental) and/or zonal evaluation focal point(s) of all evaluation reports which have not yet been included in the IFRC Evaluation Databank. As part of good evaluation practice, programme/project managers should always keep their evaluation focal points informed of all evaluations planned, in process or already completed.

1.3 PMER should promote the Evaluation Standard Operating Procedures once it is approved, as it will be helpful in promoting the use and the importance of the steps which are expected to take place in an IFRC secretariat evaluation process and the IFRC Evaluation Databank.

2. The value of an evaluation is heavily dependent on the use of its recommendations. A management response is an important tool as it allows senior management to respond to specific evaluation recommendations and follow up with an action plan. This meta-evaluation highlighted that there were only 2 management responses attached to evaluation reports in 2014.

2.1 More importance needs to be given by the IFRC secretariat senior management to the role of management responses in an evaluation, especially as it is an indicator in our IFRC secretariat global results matrix.

2.2 If a management response is available, it should be published with the evaluation report in a winzip folder on the IFRC Evaluation Databank.
3. Good evaluation practice highlights the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches for a more coherent, reliable, and useful conclusion than the use of just one method. A total of 95% of the IFRC secretariat evaluation reports highlighted the use of mixed methods in its methodology section.

3.1 The IFRC secretariat should continue this growing positive trend of using mixed methods when feasible in evaluations.

4. Good evaluation reporting practice highlights that key aspects (Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Introduction, Background, Methodology, Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations, ToR and Management Response) should be included in an evaluation report. Most of the reports scored 50% or more on 8 out of the 10 categories. The two categories where reports scored lower than 50% were on attaching a ToR to the report, and on including a Management Response with a published report.

4.1 It is recommended that a ToR be attached to every published evaluation report.

4.2 See point 2 for recommendations on the Management Response.

2. INTRODUCTION

The IFRC Evaluation databank was officially launched in early 2012 by PED in coordination with the PMER zones. This databank was created to provide a central mechanism to add, modify and access IFRC Secretariat evaluation reports. Before the creation of this platform, evaluations managed or carried out by the IFRC secretariat were manually entered and administered through an excel databank managed by one of the zones, and the evaluation reports shared with target stakeholders through individuals/units/departments in each zone.

In 2011, PED and the PMER zones came to an agreement that an evaluation databank could prove useful to the IFRC in that it would serve to:

- Transparently share completed evaluations to uphold accountability and enhance organizational learning and knowledge sharing.
- Provide an online, centralized location for all IFRC secretariat evaluations.
- Create an institutional memory for all the IFRC secretariat evaluations through the storing of all of the documents on an online platform called EpiServer.3

3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

3.1 Purpose

Provides an independent assessment of all evaluations managed, carried out or commissioned by the IFRC secretariat in 2014.

Contributes to organizational knowledge and learning.

3 In 2011, all the evaluation reports were initially stored on EpiServer. Evaluation reports were transferred to APPLE in 2013, once functionality allowed for the posting of evaluation reports directly onto the public website.
3.2 Scope of the evaluation
This meta-evaluation reviewed all evaluation reports published on the IFRC Evaluation Databank from 1 January to 31 December 2014.

4. METHODOLOGY

☑ Desktop Review: Reviewed 38 evaluation reports posted in the IFRC Evaluation databank from 1 January to 31 December 2014 using ten (10) specific criteria which included geographical location, evaluation type, evaluation method, level of evidence, sector area, recommendation type, recommendation by target audience, recommended evaluation reporting practice, evaluation driver and target audience.

- It is possible that there were more evaluations completed than those reviewed in this meta-evaluation of 2014 evaluation reports. Only those evaluation reports published from 1 January to 31 December 2014 on the IFRC Evaluation Databank were reviewed.
- The IFRC Evaluation databank hosts not only evaluation reports, but also baseline, case study/research, review and surveys. In this report, when we refer to “evaluation reports” it will also be inclusive of these additional categories.
- At times, information was not always available for all criteria outlined in Section 5.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Reports by Geographical Location

The majority (45%) of the reports focused on evaluations covering the Asia Pacific region. The rest covered: Americas (31%), Africa (16%), Global (5%) and Europe and Central Asia (3%).
5.2 Reports by Evaluation Type

The meta-evaluation reviewed 38 evaluation reports. Out of these 38, the majority (10) focused on reviews, followed by final evaluations (9), case study/research (8), mid-term evaluation (3), baseline (3), impact evaluation (2), survey (2) and one real-time evaluation.

5.3 Reports by Evaluation Method

Thirty-six (36) of the evaluation reports used both quantitative and qualitative methods together in its data collection and analysis (mixed methods). The two (2) report types that used quantitative methods only were surveys.
5.4 Reports by Level of Evidence

Out of the 38 evaluation reports, the majority (30) used non-probability sampling (Voluntary Response, Judgment and Convenience Sampling etc). These 30 reports were as follows: Case Study/Research (7), Case Study/Research/Impact Evaluation (1), Final Evaluation (6), Impact Evaluation (2), Mid-Term Evaluation (3), Real-Time Evaluation (1), Review (9) and Survey (1). There were seven (7) reports which used probability sampling (Simple Random, Stratified Random, Multi-Stage etc) which consisted of 1 survey, 1 review, 3 final evaluations and 2 baselines. One (1) baseline used a mixed method, consisting of both probability and non-probability sampling.

5.5 Reports by Sector Area

The majority of the evaluation reports (26) focused on sectors concerning disaster risk reduction (DRR), response, recovery. These evaluations covered mainly locations in Asia Pacific (13), Americas (8) and Africa (5).
5.6 Reports by Recommendation Type

Out of the 38 evaluation reports, there were overall 330 individual recommendations made which highlighted areas for improvement. Two-hundred and thirty-nine (239) required follow up action. In regards to reports with recommendations which highlighted areas for improvement: Final Evaluation (6), Case Study/Research (4), Baseline (1), Review (1) and Survey (1). For reports with recommendations highlighting follow up action there were: Review (7), Baseline (1), Case Study/Research (1) and Mid-Term Evaluation (1). For reports with recommendations highlighting both, there were: Final Evaluation (2), Mid-Term Evaluation (2), Review (2), Baseline (1), Impact Evaluation (1) and Real-Time Evaluation (1). There were 6 reports which had no recommendations: Case Study/Research (3), Final Evaluation (1), Impact Evaluation (1) and Survey (1).

5.7 Recommendations by Target Audience

Overall, the majority of these recommendations (258) were for targeted for National Society(ies). The rest were made at country level (144), Zone secretariat (85), Geneva secretariat (40), at the global level (30), at the regional level (12), and for donors (4).
5.8 Recommended Evaluation Reporting Practice

Ten (10) criteria were used when reviewing the 38 reports. Results showed the following:

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Most of the reports scored 50% or more on 8 out of the 10 categories. The two categories where reports scored lower than 50% were on including a ToR in the report, and on attaching a Management Response with the published report.

5.9 Reports by Evaluation Driver

Most of the reports (24) were commissioned by the IFRC secretariat only. The others were commissioned by IFRC Secretariat/NS (5), IFRC Secretariat/Donor (3), Donor (3), National Societies (2) and Movement (1).

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4 In view of the different type of reports present in the IFRC Evaluation databank, it may be possible that not all of the reports follow recommended evaluation reporting practices.

5 These ten criteria of recommended evaluation reporting practices have also been highlighted in the IFRC Evaluation Standard Operating Procedures.

5.10 Reports by Target Audience

Most of the reports mentioned IFRC Secretariat/NS (25) as the target audience. The remaining reports highlighted National Society(ies) (6), IFRC Secretariat (3), Donor/IFRC Secretariat/NS (3), and Movement (1).

6. MAIN CONCLUSIONS

7.1 In 2014, the IFRC Evaluation Databank held other types of documents, more than it did evaluation reports. As highlighted in the findings, out of 38 reports, 42% were evaluation reports, as per the Evaluation Type in the IFRC Evaluation Databank. It is not clear whether this is because of the limited number of evaluations carried out by the IFRC secretariat in 2014, the turnover or lack of evaluation focal points for the databank during the year, or a lower priority given to publishing evaluation reports on this databank by technical departments and zone offices.

7.2 If we use the management response as an indicator for usefulness of evaluations to an organization, findings show that there were only 2 management responses attached to evaluation reports in 2014. Guidance and templates are available for management responses in the IFRC Evaluation Framework, public website and FedNet. It will be important for the organization to further analyze where the gap lies when it comes to the limited number of published management responses.

7.3 In regards to the methodology section, 95% of the reports referred to a mixed methods approach. This should be seen as a positive development, as experience in evaluations has shown that no single evaluation methodology can fully capture and measure the multiple processes and outcomes of development or emergency programmes.

7.4 Most of the reports scored 50% or more on 8 out of the 10 categories highlighted for good evaluation reporting practice. Overall, it seems that evaluators (internal and/or external) are following good reporting practices when it comes to evaluations.

7.5 With support from senior management and an increased use of the IFRC Evaluation databank/register by Evaluation focal points, the IFRC Evaluation databank could serve as more than a central mechanism for evaluations, but rather as a monitoring tool for evaluations.
7. RECOMMENDATIONS

IFRC secretariat

6.1 Out of the 38 reports, 42% are evaluation reports, as per the Evaluation Type in the IFRC Evaluation Databank.

6.1.1 In line with Strategy 2020’s Enabling Action 3, it is recommended that IFRC secretariat senior management give priority to the IFRC Evaluation Databank as an important tool in promoting “…a culture of transparent accountability to our stakeholders.” Even though the IFRC Evaluation Framework was accepted by senior management in February 2011, less than 50% of the reports posted are evaluations according to the findings.

6.1.2 Programme/project managers should inform their respective Geneva (PED/departmental) and/or zonal evaluation focal point(s) of all evaluation reports which have not yet been included in the IFRC Evaluation Databank. As part of good evaluation practice, programme/project managers should always keep their evaluation focal points informed of all evaluations planned, in process or already completed.

6.1.3 PMER should promote the Evaluation Standard Operating Procedures once it is approved, as it will be helpful in promoting the use and the importance of the steps which are expected to take place in an IFRC secretariat evaluation process and the IFRC Evaluation Databank.

6.2 The value of an evaluation is heavily dependent on the use of its recommendations. A management response is an important tool as it allows senior management to respond to specific evaluation recommendations and follow up with an action plan. This meta-evaluation highlighted that there were only 2 management responses attached to evaluation reports in 2014.

6.2.1 More importance needs to be given by the IFRC secretariat senior management to the role of management responses in an evaluation, especially as it is an indicator in our IFRC secretariat global results matrix.

6.2.2 If a management response is available, it should be published with the evaluation report in a winzip folder on the IFRC Evaluation Databank.

6.3 Good evaluation practice highlights the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches for a more coherent, reliable, and useful conclusion than the use of just one method. A total of 95% of the IFRC secretariat evaluation reports highlighted the use of mixed methods in its methodology section.

6.3.1 The IFRC secretariat should continue this growing positive trend of using mixed methods when feasible in evaluations.

6.4 Good evaluation reporting practice highlights that key aspects (Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Introduction, Background, Methodology, Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations, ToR and Management Response) should be included in an evaluation report. Most of the reports scored 50% or more on 8 out of the 10 categories. The two categories where reports scored lower than 50% were on attaching a ToR to the report, and on including a Management Response with a published report.

6.4.1 It is recommended that a ToR be attached to every published evaluation report.

6.4.2 See 6.2 for recommendations on the Management Response.
Annex 1: ToR for Meta-Evaluation of IFRC Evaluations

Terms of Reference (TOR) for:
Meta-Evaluation of IFRC Evaluations

1. Summary

1.1. Purpose: This meta-evaluation will:

✓ Provide an independent assessment of all evaluations managed, carried out or commissioned by the IFRC secretariat in 2014.
✓ Contribute to organizational knowledge and learning.

1.2. Audience: IFRC secretariat
1.3. Commissioners: This evaluation is being commissioned by the IFRC Planning and Evaluation Department.
1.4. Timeframe: From 1 March to 30 April 2015.
1.5. Location: Geneva, Switzerland

2. Background

The IFRC Evaluation databank was officially launched in early 2012 by PED in coordination with the PMER zones. This databank was created to provide a central mechanism to add, modify and access IFRC Secretariat evaluation reports. Before the creation of this platform, evaluations managed or carried out by the IFRC secretariat were manually entered and administered through an excel database managed by one of the zones, and the evaluation reports shared with target stakeholders through individuals/units/departments in each zone.

In 2011, PED and the PMER zones came to an agreement that an evaluation databank could prove useful to the IFRC in that it would serve to:

- Transparently share completed evaluations to uphold accountability and enhance organizational learning and knowledge sharing.
- Provide an online, centralized location for all IFRC secretariat evaluations.
- Create an institutional memory for all the IFRC secretariat evaluations through the storing of all of the documents on an online platform called EpiServer.

3. Evaluation Purpose & Scope

3.1 Purpose: This meta-evaluation will:

✓ Provide an independent assessment of all evaluations managed, carried out or commissioned by the IFRC secretariat in 2014.
✓ Contribute to organizational knowledge and learning.
3.2 Scope of the evaluation

This meta-evaluation reviewed all evaluation reports published on the IFRC Evaluation Databank from 1 January to 31 December 2014.

5. Evaluation Methodology

Desk Review: An internal evaluator will carry out a desk review of all of the evaluation reports published on the IFRC Evaluation Databank from 1 January to 31 December 2014.

6. Deliverables

- 1 Draft/Final report in English. The main body of the report will be no longer than 20 pages, and it will include a Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Background, Methodology, Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations, ToR and relevant annexes.

7. Proposed Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Time Schedule</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Desktop study</td>
<td>Data collection analysis plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Collected data from the evaluation reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Collected data from the evaluation reports.</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Prepare draft Evaluation Report</td>
<td>Draft Evaluation Report</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Review by relevant IFRC Stakeholders</td>
<td>Reviewed Draft Evaluation report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Review by relevant IFRC Stakeholders</td>
<td>Collected feedback received on draft report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Prepare final Evaluation Report</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Share final Evaluation Report for approval with</td>
<td>Approved Final Evaluation report</td>
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<td>relevant stakeholders</td>
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8. Evaluation Quality & Ethical Standards

The following wording is recommended to uphold IFRC Framework for Evaluation standards:

The evaluators should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the evaluation is designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of people and the communities of which they are members, and to ensure that the evaluation is technically accurate, reliable, and legitimate, conducted in a transparent and impartial manner, and contributes to organizational learning and accountability. Therefore, the evaluation team should adhere to the evaluation standards and specific, applicable process outlined in the IFRC Framework for Evaluation. The IFRC Evaluation Standards are:

1. **Utility**: Evaluations must be useful and used.
2. **Feasibility**: Evaluations must be realistic, diplomatic, and managed in a sensible, cost effective manner.
3. **Ethics & Legality**: Evaluations must be conducted in an ethical and legal manner, with particular regard for the welfare of those involved in and affected by the evaluation.
4. **Impartiality & Independence**: Evaluations should be impartial, providing a comprehensive and unbiased assessment that takes into account the views of all stakeholders.
5. **Transparency**: Evaluation activities should reflect an attitude of openness and transparency.
6. **Accuracy**: Evaluations should be technical accurate, providing sufficient information about the data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods so that its worth or merit can be determined.
7. **Participation**: Stakeholders should be consulted and meaningfully involved in the evaluation process when feasible and appropriate.
8. **Collaboration**: Collaboration between key operating partners in the evaluation process improves the legitimacy and utility of the evaluation.

It is also expected that the evaluation will respect the seven **Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent**: 1) humanity, 2) impartiality, 3) neutrality, 4) independence, 5) voluntary service, 6) unity, and 7) universality. Further information can be obtained about these principles at:

www.ifrc.org/what/values/principles/index.asp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Location</th>
<th>Evaluation Report title</th>
<th>Type of Evaluation</th>
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<td>Africa</td>
<td>DREF Review and Lessons learnt</td>
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<td>Malawi Floods DREF Review and Lessons Learnt Report</td>
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