

Final Report

Mid-Term Review

DPRK Red Cross Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS)

October 2018.

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Glossary and abbreviations

APRO	Asia-Pacific Regional Office
CAS	Cooperation Agreement Strategy
CAS Affiliates	Non-signatory supporters of CAS
CEA	Community Engagement and Accountability
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
General Assembly	Statutory meeting of the National Society held every four years
KII	Key Informant Interview
IFRC	International Federation Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IP	Integrated Programming
CPMC	Community Project Management Committee
MTR	Mid Term Review
OA	Operational Alliance
RDRT	Regional Disaster Response Team
NDRT	National Disaster Response Team
Ri	An administrative unit for a village
SL	Shared leadership
SMCC	Strengthening Movement Cooperation and Coordination
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WASH	Water Sanitation Hygiene
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

1. Executive Summary

The key finding from this review is that CAS, in the DPRK context, is a highly regarded and valid cooperation mechanism. This consensus can be attributed to the investment of time and energy, of current and past CAS members, facilitators, affiliates and different stakeholders such as local community, particularly Community Project Management Committee (CPMC), volunteers, local authorities and members of the International community present in country. Quantifying the degree of effectiveness and efficiency of CAS has been challenging during this review, and this shortcoming can be addressed with further investment in CAS systems and process. The singular consistent theme across all the review stakeholder groups, including DPRK communities, is the **shared desire to achieve demonstrable impact over the long term by working together.**

Since 2006, CAS has enabled the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to come together to discuss and plan the shared goals and aspirations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Red Cross Society (DPRK RCS). CAS in this context has been described as the meeting house of an extended family where mutual trust and respect are one of many shared values. Like many families, there are differences including how the household business is understood and managed. CAS has also been described as a brand of its own. As in the commercial world, care should be taken when contemplating changes to an established brand, and this has also been strongly reflected in the views of review informants. An update and a refresh of CAS is required, as opposed to a wholesale change, which may have a negative impact on the ability to retain and attract partners.

The introduction and implementation of integrated programming in DPRK is broadly accepted as a key success attributed to CAS that has made a strong contribution to the strategic goals of the National Society. The shared CAS principles which have remained largely unchanged in the last 12 years have also been identified as a cornerstone of CAS success. These two achievements are a clear testament to the sustainability and validity of CAS. Obtaining and promoting solid evidence of impact along with clearly defining what good CAS partnership looks like needs attention and further investment.

The future challenges and opportunities facing the people of DPRK, its communities cannot be understated nor underestimated. Central to this is the need for ongoing investment in the capacity and capability of the National Society and its partners to deliver results on the ground. Whilst development is a core aspect of the CAS commitment, CAS is not fully delivering what is required for the National Society to grow according to the expectations that CAS places on it. It is timely that other institutional initiatives such as Strengthening Movement Cooperation and Coordination¹ (SMCC), the Shared Leadership initiative and localisation agenda² of the World Humanitarian Summit Grand Bargain are gaining momentum with Movement partners. These developments should be considered in conjunction with the findings of this review and CAS needs to ensure it has sufficient flexibility to evolve.

CAS has served its intended purpose well, but perhaps its full potential is yet to be realised. As a strategy, it has the potential to incorporate and represent more broadly both the aspirations of vulnerable DPRK communities but also the high-level diplomacy required to accompany the complex and unique operating environment. The technical CAS process itself, its history and relevance to DPRK, is not that clearly understood by all the CAS partners including potential future participants. Rectifying this gap is a responsibility that rests with all CAS participants. A more concerted effort to share knowledge and information of what good partnership and cooperation looks like would also pay dividends. CAS is not an old tool as some have described, it just needs to transition from a transactional process to a more holistic platform. The success of CAS in the DPRK context to date is unique and enduring and more needs to be done to promote this to the rest of the world.

¹ <http://smcctoolkit.org/>

² See http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/201605/Grand_Bargain_RCMov_Paper-vf.pdf

2. Background and Context

According to the original IFRC guidelines, Cooperation Agreement Strategy or CAS was originally developed as a “commitment to equitable, effective relationships that strengthen the capacity of Federation members to scale up quality and impact support to vulnerable people.” The original guidelines also stated that cooperation is central in every way to the core business of the Federation. CAS has been the formal mechanism for coordination and partnership for DPRK Red Cross since its formal introduction in 2006. That would make it the most enduring CAS partnership in the Federation and according to some, the only remaining formal CAS



Figure 1 from the IFRC CAS manual 2006

mechanism in action today. This is a remarkable feat and an indicator of success and sustainability that should be acknowledged. Whilst the central focus of CAS and the humanitarian mission of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has not changed over that time, the global humanitarian operating environment certainly has. It is important in this context that mechanisms for cooperation are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant and fit for purpose. This review is a stated requirement of the current CAS agreement, and the terms of reference³ are explicit in this regard. This undertaking is also the first full external review of the DPRK Red Cross CAS to be commissioned and therefore has the potential for broader significance. DPRK Red Cross Society is also a target case

study for the IFRC shared leadership initiative.⁴ Not unlike CAS when it was first launched, the shared leadership initiative also looks to address some of the more important coordination and cooperation issues. The DPRK Red Cross Society was formed in 1946 at the end of the World War II and therefore has significant history, experience, and expertise.

The National Society has formally received the in-country support of the International Federation since 1995. This relationship is recognised by the existence of a legal status agreement with the Government of DPRK which was formally signed in 2002. The roles and responsibilities of the IFRC and DPRK Red Cross are further clarified by an operational MOU, the latest of which is valid for 2017-2018. DPRK Red Cross has and continues to support sister National Societies via its International Department with deployments of personnel and resources including delegates and RDRT personnel. An international country assistance strategy was first developed in 2001, followed by formal CAS arrangements from 2006 until the present day. Each CAS period has built on the priorities of the previous one, and each iteration has been referred to as an extension as opposed to a new agreement. According to some informants, this approach has enabled the continuity of spirit that underpins this CAS arrangement.

The key objectives for each CAS period have remained relatively unchanged since 2006 except for some terminology which has required updating. CAS membership has also remained relatively stable with a core group of about 10 National Societies contributing regularly with some leaving and returning to CAS. The ICRC and some National Societies attend CAS as observers and others contribute in other ways bilaterally with the National Society. The unique situation in DPRK and explicit mandate and legal status of the Federation also contribute to the success of CAS. This is a good thing according to some as it improves coordination and reduces duplication but is also where there is no other choice for partners according to others. The basis of each CAS agreement confirms a collective willingness to be responsive to community needs, build resilience, develop the National Society and to coordinate well and be good partners. This consistency is helpful when encouraging long-term engagement according to the DPRK Red Cross.

³ See appendix 1

⁴ See Shared leadership to strengthen humanitarian impact. Shared Leadership Initiative Phase 2 (Dec 2017)

2018 marks both the Singapore, Panmunjom declaration, joint Pyongyang declaration and the 70th anniversary of the founding of DPRK. With some easing of tensions on the Korean peninsula, there is increased interest in DPRK and that of the DPRK Red Cross Society from Red Cross Partners and affiliates. United Nations imposed sanctions, and the effects of meteorological and climate hazards, continue to affect DPRK and its vulnerable communities. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its annual needs and priorities report, estimates that from the total population of DPRK, 10.3 million (41%) people currently need humanitarian assistance. Conversely, over the last three years, income to support both the annual UNDP and Federation country plans has decreased at a rate of 25% each year. The DPRK Red Cross will soon begin preparations for their General Assembly, and the development of a new ten-year strategy to commence in 2020 is underway. Like many National Societies their current strategic plan is aligned with the Federations Strategy 2020, the One Billion Coalition for Resilience, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In relation to monitoring CAS performance, two CAS member questionnaires took place in 2008 and 2012. The results indicated that CAS at the time was producing progress and improvements due to its partner-centered approach. A mid-term review of CAS planned for 2016 did not take place. The purpose of this Mid-Term Review (MTR) is to research, analyse and review the validity and relevance of the current Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS) as a coordination and cooperation mechanism between the DPRK Red Cross Society, its partners, and affiliates.

As defined in the review TOR, the primary goal and objectives for this review are to:

- a) Verify and determine that the CAS process remains a valid partnership mechanism in the current context.
- b) Review the CAS structure, clauses, and intent if it reflects alignment with current practices, policies, procedures, standards, and meets the expectations of the CAS partners.
- c) Review the alignment between the CAS process and the DPRK RCS Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020.
- d) Review the capacity of the DPRK Red Cross Society to attract additional partners to support and sustain its programmes.
- e) Review, assess and identify mechanisms to strengthen, improve and deepen the partnership considering past partner experience.

This review has been conducted, and this report has been structured specifically against these objectives.

3. Methodology

Document review

Forty-eight documents were reviewed which included DPRK Red Cross plans and reports, IFRC annual reports, CAS documents, agreements and action plans, and some Partner evaluations and reports. A literature review was conducted on existing movement partnership models, and current partnership and cooperation research and any relevant findings have been incorporated into this report. All documents have been archived and are available for review from the Federation APRO.

Key informant interviews

The information and data which have informed much of this report were obtained mostly from structured and semi-structured interviews and discussions with key informants. Interviews and meetings were held face to face during a 7-day visit to DPRK which included a 3-day field trip to South Hamgyong Province. Other interviews were held via the internet with past and present members of CAS, Federation staff and delegates associated with DPRK. The summary of this activity is as below.

Informant	M	F	Total	Organisation
DPRK RC HQ	4	2	6	Senior Management
DPRK Branch	3	1	4	South Hamgyong Provincial Branch Keumya County Branch
IFRC	8		8	Past and present representatives
Communities	5	2	7	Unpo Ri, Unha Ri, Pungsong Ri
Community Officials	4	2	6	Unpo Ri, Unha Ri, Pungsong Ri
RC Branch focus group		3	3	
Partner/Sister NS	8	2	10	A mix of past, present and potential future CAS participants. 4 NS did not respond to invite
DPRK Govt Ministries	2		2	Health and DM Ministry Directors
DPRK Diplomatic/Humanitarian	3	1	4	British Embassy, ICRC, UNDP, WFP
Total	37	13	50	

Field visits – direct observation

During the 3-day field trip to South Hamgyong, a comparative visit of three communities (farming collectives) was undertaken. Community one had received no Red Cross initiated assistance. Community two was about to commence a Red Cross programme of assistance and community three had recently completed a 3-year Red Cross programme of assistance. The purpose of these visits was not to conduct a programmatic evaluation but to observe the differences that integrated programming has made to the resilience of these communities and talk to branch staff, volunteers, and community members about what integrated programming and internationally sourced support means to them.

4. Case Study - Integrated Programming in DPRK: A case study in resilience building by partnership.⁵

During this review, integrated programming has consistently been identified as not only a success story for communities and DPRK Red Cross but also a success story for CAS. Before 2014, community programming in DPRK was siloed according to thematic priorities, and in some cases a result of partner National Societies and the interests of their back donors. The DPRK Red Cross strategy 2020 advocated for a more holistic community centred goal to improve resilience and reduce existing vulnerabilities. Key to this approach was for communities to be self-supporting and the programme outcomes to be sustainable over the long term. Communities were identified through consultation with local authorities and Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA). The characteristics of integrated community programs were that they were demand driven, people-centred, comprehensive, locally owned, and led through Community Project Management Committees⁶ (CPMC) in partnership with DPRK Red Cross and Partners.



Figure 3 Spring Vegetables in community greenhouse.
Photo DPRK RC 2018

Sambong Ri in Pyongwon County, South Phyongan Province is one such community. With a population of 7,270 people, this county lies between the mountains and the sea to the West of South Phyongan Province. As a result, it suffers from intermittent floods from rising sea levels, tides, and heavy rain. Floods and periodic droughts also have a severe impact on agricultural production, nutrition, and livelihoods. During one event over 50 households lost their water supply due to the pipelines being destroyed in flooding and landslides. Flooding also contaminated the water supply, leading to increases in diarrhoea and water-borne diseases. In 2016 after community consultation and assessments, a decision was made to focus on supplying potable water to dwellings that were most affected by diarrhoea which was prevalent at the time. A total of 894 households consisting of 3,557 people were selected. The DPRK Red Cross gave technical assistance for the formation and training of the Community

Project Management Committee (CPMC), and a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) was then carried out which indicated vulnerabilities associated with Disaster Risk Reduction, livelihoods, health, and WASH. As a result of this programme, 900 households are now connected to a safe and reliable water supply system, and 300 soak pits and 150 household latrines have been constructed. Two 500m² greenhouses have been constructed and are producing a variety of vegetables including tomatoes, cucumber, mushrooms, peppers, and carrots. Six sets of solar water heating systems have been provided to the Ri Clinics⁷ and the kindergarten/nursery providing hot water for handwashing. Technical support has been provided on Community Based Early Warning, and Evacuation Systems (CBEWES) and early warning and rescue materials have been provided. Tree seedlings have been provided and planted to protect water sources and prevent hillside erosion. Training in First Aid and Epidemic Control has been carried out and First Aid kits provided.

⁵ IFRC Country Office -DPRK, May 2018. Integrated programming in DPRK: A case study in resilience building by partnership

⁶ Community Project Management Committee (CPMC)- refers to a composition of members of the community members drawn from different sectors of the community including local authority representatives

⁷ Community based health institution or Red Cross First Aid Post

During this review, community members and Red Cross volunteers told us that working together for a common goal was hard work, and many times they felt like giving up. They also said that the foreigners, especially the tall males were regarded as intimidating at first but after many visits a trust and dialogue developed, and that fear went away. One community member said that it was reassuring and welcome to know that other people from other countries were willing to support them. An IFRC delegate said that the integrated approach to addressing vulnerability was the best and most effective example he had seen in is many years working in the sector. The integrated programming approach (which combines OD (PMER), WASH, Health, Livelihoods, and DRR) was due to the ability of the community to self-organise supported by the National Society. This would not have been possible without the collective wisdom, decision making and resources, assembled through the CAS mechanism. It should also be noted that the CPMCs plans are usually ten years and that Red Cross initiates and supports the first three years. For example, communities have self-mobilised to reinforce water dams to prevent flooding. They also lacked the technical knowledge to progress some infrastructure projects and so initiated partnerships with the DPRK Institute of Design and State Academy of Science.



5. Key findings

5.1 Is the CAS process a valid partnership mechanism in the current context?

Overwhelmingly review informants consider CAS to be a valid partnership mechanism and this was a consistent finding across all the informant groups. Informants also identified areas where the efficiency and effectiveness of CAS could be improved. Strengthening the annual CAS action plan follow-up was an example. This weakness was regarded by the review team as being symptomatic of the administration of CAS as opposed to a failure of CAS as a partnership mechanism itself. It was also noted by the review team that there were different interpretations and understandings of what CAS is. It is also acknowledged that whilst the community representatives did not have a clear understanding of CAS and its validity, they did express solidarity with international assistance and more importantly were able to demonstrate significant ownership of their development and local grassroots cooperation, partnership methods and its challenges.

CAS was originally designed as a strategic cooperation tool to assist in aligning a National Society's strategic plan with the support of its partners. According to several informants, CAS in the DPRK context serves to focus more like an annual planning and problem-solving tool as opposed to making the most of more strategic opportunities for dialogue. As a result, programmatic detail and finances still tend to dominate the conversation at CAS meetings. However, this may also be a result of limited contact with the National Society. Some felt a lot of time is spent on unnecessary discussions, the earmarking of funds and onerous reporting, while this is contrary to the spirit and principles of CAS according to others.

Whilst acknowledging the need for transparency and accountability for donors, it was also felt that these operational detail and prescriptive requirements in the CAS document should not be necessary under a CAS framework which should be more strategic in nature. It was also reported that heavy compliance and transactional requirements in CAS distract the National Society and the Federation from their core roles and support and capacity building is delayed or reprioritised as a result. It was also felt by some Partners that the capacity development needs of the National Society are not well understood nor supported despite this being

a core requirement of CAS membership. Partners and Federation informants also mentioned that annual CAS action plans also lack shared accountability, consistent follow-up and collective support, and this can lead to a loss of momentum between CAS meetings and members. It should also be acknowledged that without CAS, would these points of difference be more entrenched? One informant suggested that there is no doubt in his mind that there would be, and this should be regarded as one measure of CAS success.

Determining validity, and by association the impact of CAS, is not without its challenges. The current CAS agreement stipulates in clause six that an annual CAS performance report is produced to be presented to the CAS meeting. What is not stipulated is how this annual measurement is undertaken, by whom and what necessary resources must be made available. The original developers of the CAS mechanism acknowledged this at the time and set about framing the impact of CAS on two clear indicators: *a) the quality of relationships and b) the effectiveness of its programmes and services*. In relation to measuring impact The Overseas Development Institute recommends to hold explicit conversations with stakeholders about *how impact is used and understood, to come to a shared understanding*⁸. CAS brings the priorities of partners together in one place, there will always be differences, and this should be further acknowledged and accepted.

Many review informants suggested that it is the spirit of CAS that is most important, and this is what makes CAS valid. An example comes from an informant who described CAS as "*an enduring brand all on its own.*" The reasons for the longevity of CAS, according to some informants, can be attributed to the following:

- an enduring commitment to a spirit of cooperation or closeness;
- the uniqueness and special nature of DPRK, its people, culture and its history;
- that the auxiliary role of the National Society is clear to all as is the status of the Federation in country;
- the ability of the Federation to truly undertake its mandated role;
- the commitment especially those of long-term partners;
- based on mutual trust and respect.

There were differences expressed in this review on what a CAS is and what constitutes partnership and cooperation, terms that are used interchangeably. Whilst full consensus amongst partners is not always possible, nor healthy, the review team felt that an improved shared understanding of what cooperation and impact look like and how this can be measured will be important in ensuring CAS remains sustainable and valid.

5.2 Does the CAS structure, clauses, and intent reflect alignment with current practices, policies, procedures, standards, and meet the expectations of the CAS partners?

It would be fair to say that knowledge of the CAS document itself and its contents was lacking amongst many informants. This lack of knowledge is probably a finding as it did make it difficult to draw any conclusions for the research question. Many were unsure of the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of CAS and were not able to cite examples of where the CAS document is utilised to inform their work on a regular basis. Some respondents suggested that CAS lived in our minds and hearts and not on paper. Despite this, it was acknowledged that CAS formalities, process and a document are important and that an explanatory appendix could be added to provide agreed definitions.

Some informants expressed different interpretations of what CAS is or means to them. Some viewed CAS as an all-encompassing process or platform whilst others were more focused on the compliance aspects of the agreement or the importance of the annual meeting. There was also a mix of those who considered CAS as its name suggests, is a strategic cooperation entity whilst others preferred the focus to be on the programmatic or technical aspects of the work being undertaken.

⁸ <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10352.pdf>

Despite the differences in views, there is a consensus that the CAS document and process itself needs a makeover. Some described the structure and content as clunky and too long, and others described it as inconsistent in its approach and trying too hard to cover everything. Also, on a positive note there was a strong consensus in the importance of shared principles and values, but not so much in the prescriptive and detailed roles and responsibilities. One respondent commented that with such a high value placed in mutual trust, why was there a strong need for compliance in a CAS which read more like a contract than a commitment.

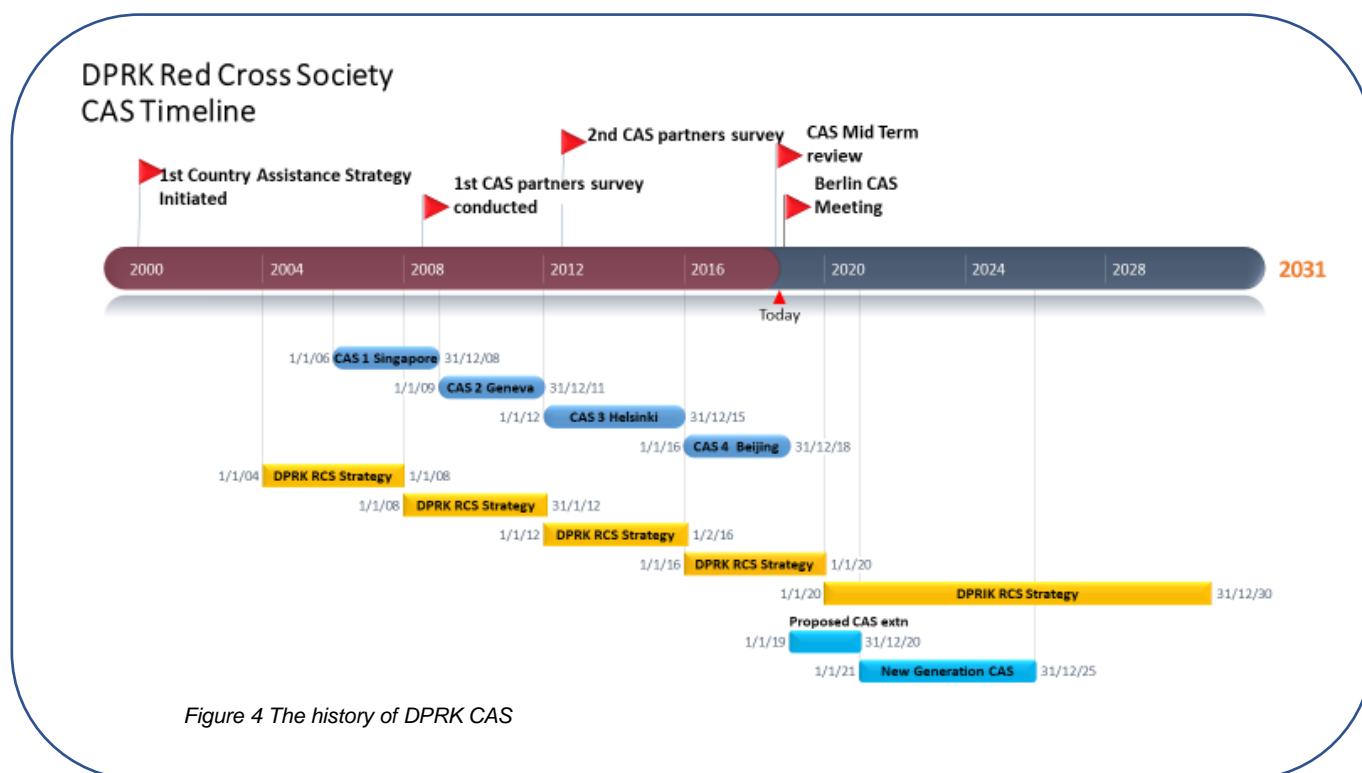
Some respondents were unsure what the “rules” of CAS were or if they are needed or should be incorporated into the document. Continuity when there is a high turnover of staff, and institutional knowledge is lost, was also singled out as an issue for CAS, and this should be considered in any CAS update. Several CAS members were not sure who the current signatories of CAS are and what signatory membership means or entails. As a non-binding agreement, how is non-compliance managed? How are shared accountabilities established? These are some questions that were raised and will need to be addressed.

5.3 How well is strategic planning aligned between the CAS process and the DPRK RCS Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020?

The response to questions on this topic was mixed with differing views on the importance and relevance of strategic plan alignment. Some felt plan and planning alignment amongst partners was not crucial or even relevant to the success or not of CAS and that aligning the strategic intent of many partners was an impossible task. Conversely, others thought that it had some relevance and importance whereas a third small group thought it was of the most important aspect of CAS and needed to be improved. It was acknowledged that the National Society is the driving force of any CAS, therefore any alignment should be determined by the planning processes of the National Society. The National Society is informed by the needs and aspirations of the communities they support. It goes without saying then that communities should drive and inform all strategy including CAS, and this is the consensus.

Integrated resilience programmes supported under the Federation country plan are usually three years long. As described earlier in this report, communities via CPMC plan their development in ten-year blocks. The DPRK National Society strategic plan has been in 5-yearly cycles with an aspiration to develop a ten-year plan to match the Federation strategy 2030. Sister National Societies’ financial cycles of commitment vary from a one-off to 3-5 years depending on the back donor. All previous CAS cycles of commitment have been three and four years. It is not known what the rationale for the CAS timeframes have been in the past and there is insufficient evidence to suggest what timeframe or alignment is most effective or efficient. Some respondents have suggested the true spirit of partnership should not be determined or restrained by timeframes especially when CAS is a non-binding agreement. Should CAS be an open tenure? or is some degree of commitment and timeframe required?

Some informants did challenge the relevance of long-term strategy in an increasing VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world. VUCA is a term coined by the military in the 80s which have become common in the public and private sector. The antidote for VUCA is purported to be vision, understanding, clarity, and agility but also a new kind of adaptive leadership. It has been suggested that the alignment of strategic priorities and financing from Partners is not so important as the way in which those same priorities are jointly led or shared. This is a question that requires further exploration with the National Society in line also with the shared leadership research. One thing that is clear from this review is that if impact and sustainability are key themes of CAS, then a long-term commitment by all partners should continue to be a prerequisite.



5.4 What is the capacity of the DPRK Red Cross to attract additional partners to support and sustain its programme?

DPRK Red Cross Society has said indicated they wish to scale up their activities despite a challenging resource mobilisation and geopolitical environment. This aspiration will be formalised in its pending 10-year strategy in 2020 when a goal to support up to 200 communities will be included. This commitment is nothing new according to the National Society where it has undertaken similar commitments in the past. Crucial to this will be the ability of DPRK Red Cross to both attract old and new partners and donors and retain or grow the commitment of existing ones through its CAS mechanism. By doing this means that they will not be alone rather this will be a collective and shared objective should the capacity of the national Society be weak. This highlights the importance of CAS not only being fit for purpose to maximise growth opportunities but also its ability to sustain it over the long term. The current CAS mechanism and process is not really geared for growth according to some informants, rather it is geared towards the maintenance of the status quo and as such does not aspire or inspire to the level that it is required or that it is capable.

According to Red Cross Partners, CAS is used by them as an example to highlight good partnership practice to back donors and supporters, and this approach and its results could be shared more. Partners could also do more to advocate for more CAS participation and peer to peer support. DPRK Red Cross by its own admission is light on human resources and technical capacity in some areas and more activity and advocacy in marketing DPRK Red Cross is also required. A review of annual CAS action plans suggests there have previously been initiatives to build capacity some of which are repetitive. What is not known is how effective these initiatives have been and due to the absence of measurement, how CAS has contributed. Support for Organisational Development (OD) remains unpopular, and this is a global trend. Development sits at the heart of both the Federation's priorities and CAS, but the National Society does not enjoy any consistent commitment that is equitable and shared amongst all CAS partners, and this should be acknowledged and strengthened.

5.5 What mechanisms are there to strengthen, improve and deepen the partnership considering past partner experience?

This review objective also elicited a variety of views and observations from informants. One criticism of the DPRK context has been the challenge in engaging directly with the National Society between CAS meetings. A review of the CAS action plans supports this view by revealing some repetition of issues and an inability to make some progress on some action points year to year. It has been documented that designated resources are required to share information with partners, and quarterly skype calls would be of benefit for sectoral and thematic programming issues, but this has not happened. This undertaking could free up time at the annual CAS meeting, allowing more space for big picture dialogue and diplomacy, which is sought by some CAS members. The number and frequency of field visits from Partners and visitors have been highlighted as a drain on resources and a significant cost, both to PNS but primarily for IFRC and the National Society. Whilst this may not adversely impact partnerships and partner experience directly it is being reported as an ongoing distraction that needs a resolution. One suggestion is that visits to DPRK must be criteria-based and directly related to achieving a high level shared CAS objective.

CAS has been an iterative process over 12 years, and many respondents felt that building on previous success has been important. It was also felt that responsibility for the partnership aspect of CAS is dependent on a few committed persons including the Federation representative who is nominally responsible. It has been suggested that partnership leadership and management for CAS should be shared more via a designated focal point or a more clearly defined active leadership or working group. CAS is a relatively well-known mechanism, and it comes with a manual and comprehensive toolbox. It was surprising that there was limited knowledge amongst informants of the original toolbox and tools which may be still relevant in dealing with some of the administrative challenges of CAS. Despite some of the terminology being dated, and the narrative being a bit lengthy, there is still validity in the guidance notes that could be useful. It should also be noted that the annual report on CAS required under the current agreement has not been completed for some years and indicators to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of CAS are not included in the current CAS design and document. The guidelines on monitoring and evaluating CAS effectiveness from the original CAS toolkit could also prove useful.

The International Partnership Brokers Association⁹ advocates and promotes ten key attributes that underpin successful partnerships, and these could also be a useful reference for a future CAS design and measurement. Some of these attributes resonate with existing CAS principles, and two of them do stand out in respect of improving and deepening the CAS partnership. There are two areas which have been identified as a weakness in the current CAS arrangement:

- a) Defining a clear understanding between the partners of the word ‘partnership’ and what it means.
- b) Paying attention to the partnering process as well as the partnership’s projects.

In the actual CAS document, communities and their vulnerabilities are one of the shared aims and objectives. In the DPRK context, it is challenging for these communities to have a consistent voice to inform global CAS proceedings. Partners only have an opportunity to establish links with communities and the impact of their work through the IFRC and during field visits, which can be restrictive and needs to be addressed. CAS action plans state that support to establish community engagement and accountability (CEA) mechanisms was provided in 2016 but has not progressed due to insufficient resources. One suggestion is for the National Society to have a national or local partnership strategy which links to or incorporates CPMC and other national stakeholders to the CAS.

When meeting with communities, the review team discussed cooperation and partnership in local terms and whilst CAS itself was not well known, the shared desire for sustained impact expressed by the community certainly matched those of the CAS partners.

⁹ <http://partnershipbrokers.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Brokering-Better-Partnerships-Executive-Summary.pdf>

It is important that this shared concept of impact through sustained partnerships is used somehow to leverage connectivity with communities and Partners bridging this gap. Perhaps a redefining of CAS with a stronger CEA component might go some way to achieving this. Either way, the consensus remains that resilient communities need to remain the central focus of CAS regardless of the CAS process itself.

6. Conclusions

CAS is the right mechanism or platform for cooperation and partnership in DPRK context. The enduring and consistent CAS theme across all informant groups and especially from the communities during this review is the shared and common desire for demonstrable impact over the long term by working together. This is CAS in a nutshell and should continue to be the core approach for CAS for the future. CAS was originally designed to be a strategic mechanism for cooperation, and this approach is still relevant and should be strengthened. Measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of CAS and its contribution to the strategic intentions of the National Society has been challenging in this review. This is a result of a poor understanding of CAS as a mechanism, its strengths and weaknesses, and its inability to demonstrate or quantify its achievements or impact. As a result, more investment and improvement are required in this area.

Vulnerable communities form the central tenant or building blocks of CAS through the National Society, and this also needs to be reflected more in the overall CAS process. The priorities of the National Societies require a deeper acknowledgment through a strengthened annual CAS action plan. With the odd exception, it has been difficult to quantify the added value of CAS to the future strategic aspirations of the National Society, and this needs to be rectified for CAS to remain relevant. Improved evidence of impact, understanding, monitoring, analysis, and marketing of CAS activity and the DPRK context will help.

Cooperation and partnerships take many forms, and this also needs to be acknowledged, mapped and incorporated into a future CAS. A new generation CAS will have a broader appeal as a platform and framework rather than a single transactional commitment, or contract. Some flexibility to accommodate different approaches and relationships from the diverse membership, affiliates, and non-traditional supporters is also required. It should also be acknowledged that core committed partners should have some special recognition in CAS and access to joint decision making and the sharing of responsibilities, accountabilities, and leadership.

Some commentators suggest that the Korean Peninsula is currently at a crossroad. Any changes perceived or actual in the geopolitical climate, and any impact on the CAS partners are unlikely to be realised for some years. Despite this, humanitarian demands continue to grow as should investment in the National Society. There is an opportunity for CAS to be the central enabling mechanism for this, but a new generation of CAS will be required; one that can evolve with demands. The following recommendations are a summary of the key strategic drivers required to initiate and maintain the change required.

7. Key Recommendations

1. A new generation CAS platform and partnership agreement are developed to align with the objectives of the DPRK Red Cross Society 10-year strategic plan with both to commence in 2020.
2. The existing CAS agreement (2016 – 2018) is rolled over (in reduced form) for 2019.¹⁰
3. A CAS working group comprising CAS partner focal points is established and resourced to develop and maintain the new generation CAS platform and agreement to commence in 2020 to be valid for five years.
4. The new generation CAS platform will be designed to incorporate and reflect all partnership and engagement models with the DPRK Red Cross Society including affiliates, supporters, and bilateral arrangements as well as special recognition for committed and long-term partners.
5. The CAS objectives are revised to strengthen the focus on building resilient communities, joint advocacy, humanitarian diplomacy for the DPRK context, and organisational development priorities.
6. The roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities as defined in the current CAS document are reviewed and combined as a shared commitment.
7. CAS performance objectives and indicators are developed to monitor, measure and report annually on CAS efficiency and effectiveness.
8. A quarterly communication and knowledge exchange mechanism for CAS partners is established by the IFRC to strengthen the continuity and quality of programme coordination and implementation.
9. The DPRK Red Cross Society develops a partnership strategy to maximise its engagement with national stakeholders and local communities and to strengthen the linkage with the CAS framework and platform.
10. The voices of communities continue to be heard through the CAS mechanisms via the establishment of a formalised engagement and accountability mechanism integrated into the Community Project Management Committee mechanism.
11. New communications material to market the success of Community Project Management Committees in delivering integrated programming in DPRK is developed by the IFRC/DPRK RCS in 2019.
12. Any relevant findings and recommendations of the DPRK RCS shared leadership case study are considered and incorporated with the next generation 2020 CAS platform and agreement.
13. A CAS orientation and refresher session is to be conducted at each CAS meeting by the CAS working group.

¹⁰ See draft CAS document to be presented at the 2018 CAS meeting Berlin Oct 2018.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix 1.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid-term Review of Cooperation Agreement Strategy
(CAS) 2016-2018 for

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

○ 1. SUMMARY

Purpose: The purpose of the Mid-term Review (MTR) is to review the validity and relevance of the Cooperation Agreement Strategy's (CAS) as a coordination and cooperation mechanism between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Red Cross Society (DPRK RCS), its partners (Partner National Societies - PNS) and affiliates. It is expected that key findings and recommendations will help to address the gaps needs of all partners by refining the CAS Agreement documents for the next phase and considering the long-term impact and sustainability of their relationships.

Audience: DPRK RCS, IFRC, and Movement partners

Commissioners: Deputy Director, IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO)

Reporting to: Evaluation Management Team

Duration: 21 days

Timeframe: July 2018

Location: DPRK: Pyongyang, North and South Pyongan, and South Hamgyong Provinces

○ 2. BACKGROUND

The Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS) is an important strategy established by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Red Cross Society (DPRK RCS), its partners (Partner National Societies(PNS)) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to coordinate efforts and mobilise resources to support the DPRK RCS through IFRC Country Office (CO) to effectively and efficiently deliver its humanitarian programme, as well as providing a mechanism for Partner National Societies (PNS) to support the capacity development of the DPRK RCS. The CAS provides clear principles for cooperation by defining the roles and responsibilities of the various parties to the agreement as well as specifying relevant processes, mechanisms, and standards for this cooperation. The CAS has established a solid platform for cooperation and contributing to strong, respectful relationships between the DPRK RCS and its partners. In recent years, 16 partners have supported the DPRK RCS in its humanitarian efforts.

Since 1995, the DPRK RCS has been supported by the Federation's Partner National Societies (PNS), governments and international agencies.

The first Cooperation Agreement Strategy was formulated in 2001. The strategy outlined the following priorities for the activities of the Red Cross in DPRK:

- To strengthen the capacity of the DPRK RCS at national and branch levels;
- To improve the quality of life of people affected by disasters and help prepare them for disasters;
- To increase the self-reliance and sustainability of the DPRK RCS;
- To promote health and care services among the most vulnerable; and
- To strengthen internal, national and international relations and strengthen the profile of the National Society.

In November 2006, the IFRC and ten Partner National Societies signed a second Cooperation Agreement Strategy. The CAS was considered the joint strategy to guide the effective and efficient cooperation between the DPRK RCS and its partners for a three-year period (2006- 2009). Since then, the CAS has been renewed on three-year cycles. An annual meeting has been into the strategy as it provides a platform to share information, evaluate annual performance and incorporate new partners.

DPRK CAS

The current CAS (2016-2018) builds on several generations of previous CAS and partnership agreements. Clause 6.2 of the agreement stipulates that *'A mid-term review of the CAS will be carried out in 2017 with the involvement and support from CAS partners.'*

The CAS is not a legally binding document; rather it is an expression of solidarity and mutual support between the various partners. The stated objectives of the current CAS are:

1. Coordinate efforts and resources to supporting DPRK RCS implement its National Society Development Plan, ensuring a tailored and coherent approach to sustainable capacity building and development.
2. Develop and implement programmes that ensure optimal preparedness, readiness, response and recovery capacities; and that build resilience, thereby improving the lives of vulnerable people and communities in DPRK.
3. Promote and build effective partnerships and close cooperation between the CAS partners

3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

3.1 Purpose

The mid-term review seeks to evaluate and determine the validity and relevance of the CAS as a coordination and cooperation mechanism between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Red Cross Society, partners (PNSs) and its affiliates. This includes the degree to which the CAS has facilitated and contributed to the achievement of the DPRK RCS's Strategic Plan 2016- 2020 objectives.

3.2 Scope

The focus of the MTR is to evaluate the CAS (2016-2018) as a partnership mechanism between DPRK RCS and all of its partners and affiliates. The MTR also will specifically

look at the structure, clauses, intent, validity, relevance and sustainability of the Cooperation Agreement Strategy. It is expected that key findings and recommendations will help to address the gaps needs of all partners by refining CAS documents for the next phase and considering long-term impact and sustainability of their relationships.

The scope is on the CAS' documents with partners and their affiliates and DPRK RCS programme interventions in North and South Pyongan and South Hamgyong Provinces of DPR Korea.

4. REVIEW OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA

4.1

Objectives

The MTR

aims to:

1. Strategic review

- a) Verify and determine that the CAS process remains a valid partnership mechanism in the current context.
- b) Review the CAS structure, clauses and intent if it reflects alignment with current practices, policies, procedures, standards, and meets the expectations of the CAS partners.

2. Operational review

- c) Review the alignment between the CAS process and the DPRK RCS Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020.
- d) Review the capacity of the DPRK RCS to attract additional partners to support and sustain its programmes.
- e) Review, assess and identify mechanisms to strengthen, improve and deepen the partnership in light of past partner experience.

The review should highlight good practice, lesson learnt and areas for improvement to inform future CAS, together with recommendations on how the CAS partners should proceed.

4.2 Criteria

This review should focus on the following

criteria: a) Relevance

b) Effectiveness

c) Efficiency

d) Sustainability

4.3 Review Questions

The consultant and support review team will create specific questions linked to the above objectives.

5. METHODOLOGY

The methodology will be a mixture of desk reviews of available documentation and interviews with stakeholders and informants. The methodology will adhere to the [IFRC Framework for Evaluation](#) with attention to the processes of upholding the standards of how evaluations and reviews should be planned, managed, conducted, and utilized.

The methodology will be further detailed with the assistance of the external consultant once identified, e.g. with an inception document. The inception document will contain a realistic work plan for the review, interpret the key questions from this ToR and explain how the data collected will be used to answer questions and propose methodologies (sampling, data collection and analysis). This document will contain a plan and schedule that identifies deliverables, timeframe for delivery of outputs, and required travel and logistical arrangements.

1. A desk-based review will be conducted on documentation currently available and in place in relation to:
 - 2016-2018 CAS agreements with partners.
 - 2016-2020 DPRK RCS strategic plan. • Operational/annual plan, annual progress and evaluation reports.
2. Interviewees will include representatives of CAS partners and affiliates, DPRK RCS (e.g. programme directors, managers, field officers, direct implementers and volunteers), IFRC (in DPRK and abroad), beneficiaries and stakeholders that will be identified by DPRK RCS and IFRC CO.

Interviews and questionnaires will be administered through email, Skype and in person during the field travel to DPRK.

6. OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

The review team will deliver the following outputs:

- a. Inception document and detailed work plan for the mid-term review.
- b. Draft report to be submitted one week after the conclusion of the review.
- c. Final report of no more than 15 pages (excluding executive summary and annexes) that highlights key conclusions and recommendations.
- d. A new or updated draft of CAS document aligned with the recommendations.
- e. PowerPoint presentation presented during the 2018 CAS meeting (23 October 2018) and in electronic format.

Suggested final report outline

No.	Content	Description
01.	Executive Summary	Summarizes the overall findings of the review with key conclusions and not more than ten key recommendations. Executive Summary must be specific to the review and clearly outline the specific context of the CAS.
02.	Background	A general section that outlines the overall CAS objectives, aims, DPRK RCS 2016- 2020 Strategy intervention, policy frameworks, targets, main stakeholders, financial frameworks, institutional arrangements.
03	Methodology	Outlines the overall approach used, the tools applied and the key assumptions. This should focus on consideration for validity, impact, and sustainability of the CAS.
04.	Findings	Outlines the findings of the review.

05.	Conclusions	Outlines the main conclusions that have emerged from the findings
06.	Lessons learned and recommendations	General recommendations,

7. SCHEDULE

The entire duration to complete the MTR is expected to be no longer than 27 days in duration in August to October 2018. This will include, among others, the preparation of the final report, presentation of findings and recommendations at a one-day workshop during the 2018 CAS meeting and a draft of the proposed CAS document for 2019-2021 cycle.

The consultant is expected to work closely during consultancy period, which includes fieldwork, with one or two PNS members that will be identified by the 2017 CAS management members. The PNS members are encouraged to travel with the team leader but if the situation does not allow, they may offer home-based support during the process. The PNS members will be expected to participate in the one-day presentation at the 2018 CAS meeting.

The following schedule has been proposed for this MTR:

Activity	Location	Days	Tentative dates
Inception Report – prepared by consultant to establish actual method of delivering the project and approved by the MTR Management Team prior to the project commencing	Consultant's home base	1	9 August
Literature Review, bibliography and research summary	Consultant's home base	3	10, 13-14 August
Survey design	Consultant's home base	2	15-16 August
Field interviews in DPRK: Interview stakeholders in Pyongyang	Pyongyang	5	20-24 August
Engagement with stakeholders outside DPRK	Consultant's home base	3	27-29 August
Data analysis and Report drafting	Consultant's home base	5	30-31 August; 3-5 September
Draft Report feedback, analysis and preparation of Final report and draft CAS Document	Consultant's home base	7	24-28 September; 1-2 October
Face to Face seminar to present findings and recommendations at CAS meeting	Berlin	1	23 October
Total days		27	

**Note: The schedule and delivery dates above are calculated based on the number of paid working days excluding weekends and travel to/fro DPRK/Berlin*

8. REVIEW MANAGEMENT TEAM

A review management team will be appointed to manage and oversee the review, and ensure that it upholds the IFRC Framework for Evaluation. The management team will consist of two people from the IFRC DPRK country office (Mr Joseph Muyambo) and DPRK RCS (Mrs Ri Un Hye).

9. REVIEW TEAM AND QUALIFICATIONS

The external consultant team leader must have experience or significant knowledge of humanitarian mechanisms and systems, specifically smart partnerships, and have previous experience in development and conducting reviews and evaluations of strategies, policies and programmes. The review team consists of:

- a) 1 team leader – external consultant.
- b) 2 PNS – preferably CAS members (encouraged to travel with team leader).
- c) 1 DPRK RCS representative for field work in DPRK.
- d) 1 or 2 IFRC representatives

The consultant will coordinate directly with the management team and IFRC DPRK Country Office.

The consultant should have the following characteristics:

- Previous experience in coordination, design, implementation, reviews and evaluation of development strategies, policies and humanitarian programmes.
- A demonstrated ability (through previous similar assignments) to analyse, compile and synthesize information in coherent and succinct formats.
- Demonstrable experience in leading reviews and evaluations of humanitarian partnership agreements and programmes.
- Understanding of DPRK country context and cultural sensibility.
- Field experience in the midterm reviews of humanitarian or development programmes, with prior experience of evaluating Red Cross programmes desirable.
- Ability to work within tight deadlines and manage with available resources.
- Good understanding of the RC/RC Movement.
- Excellent written and spoken English skills; Korean language skills a plus.

10. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Interested candidates/teams should submit their expression of interest to joseph.muyambo@ifrc.org and pmer.apzo@ifrc.org by **5 June 2018**. In the subject line, please state the position you are applying for, your surname and first name. (SUBJECT: Mid-term Review of Cooperation Agreement Strategy DPRK - Last Name, First Name).

The application should include:

1. **Cover letter** clearly summarizing experience of the consultant team leader as it pertains to this assignment, daily rate, and contact details for three professional referees
2. Curricula Vitae
3. At least one and up to three **samples of previous written work** similar to that described in this Term of Reference (previous evaluations and reviews completed).

Application materials are non-returnable. We thank you in advance for understanding that only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

11. APPENDICES (TO BE PRESENTED AFTER APPOINTMENT)

1. Package of reference documents for Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS) and DPRK RCS programmes.
2. DPRK RCS Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020.
3. Stakeholders list.