



Business and corporate governance

Evaluation and Research Policy

We are committed to completing reliable, useful, ethical evaluations and research that contribute to organisational learning, accountability. This policy sets out how we will use evaluation and social research as we look to continuously improve and deliver on our mission to best serve those in need.

Policy owner	Executive Director, UK Operations
Policy lead	Evaluation Manager
Audience	All of our people
Legislation and regulation	N/A
Formally endorsed by	Executive Leadership Team
Endorsement date	November 2018
Next review	November 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy describes the principles for how we will evaluate our work and conduct research.
- 1.2 This policy is to be applied to social research and evaluation activities associated with our work internationally and in the UK, which are commissioned or conducted by the British Red Cross, either alone or in partnership with other organisations; and also those relating to projects delivering organisational change.
- 1.3 It is designed to ensure that our evaluation and social research ensure we use our resources well, contribute to organisational learning and accountability, to help us promote and celebrate our work and enable us to best serve people in crisis through achieving our mission and vision.
- 1.4 The guiding principles and working practices described in this policy are underpinned by our:
 - > Corporate strategy and organisational values.
 - > Fundamental Principles.
 - > Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief.
 - > The IFRC Framework for Evaluation (2011) and other internationally accepted practice.
- 1.5 Appendix 1 sets out the evaluation and research standards which we have committed to. These standards must be adhered to when delivering evaluation and

social research internationally and in the UK, which is commissioned or conducted by the British Red Cross, either alone or in partnership with other organisations; and also those relating to projects delivering organisational change.

2. Policy statement

Evaluation at the British Red Cross

- 2.1 We define evaluation as the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, policy or service and the large programmes that change how we deliver services to people in crisis. The aim is to assess its design, implementation and the extent to which its outcomes are relevant, have been achieved and are sustained, thereby contributing to our organisational learning.
- 2.2 Evaluations should be guided by a Theory of Change to outline the logical assumptions behind how our work is expected to make a difference to the people we serve. This then provides a framework for what needs to be evaluated and when.
- 2.3 A Theory of Change should be developed at the point of service design and used to help identify key outcomes and what we need to do to deliver these outcomes. Where policies or services are pre-existing and ongoing a Theory of Change should still be developed to support evaluation.

When we do evaluation: evaluation thresholds

- 2.4 Evaluation is an integral part of our work. We must prioritise evaluations that:
 - > Further our organisational learning.
 - > Contribute to our evidence base.
 - > Have or can have a strategic and/or corporate value.
 - > Are required for, or support, financial accountability and transparency.
 - > Further partnerships with other organisations.
- 2.5 There are situations in which carrying out evaluations will be mandatory. This may be the case in the presence of donor requirements. The following sections set out evaluation requirements for organisational change projects, in our international work and in UK Operations.

Organisational change programmes

- 2.6 Project completion reviews and post-implementation evaluations should be completed for all projects and programmes to a level that is appropriate to the size and scale of the project, programme or service. They are mandatory for 'large' organisational change programmes¹.
 - > **The programme completion review:** this looks at how the programme was managed, and ensures that the outputs are handed over to the business.

¹ For more information, see the [Project and Programme Management Toolkit on RedRoom](#).

- > **The post-implementation evaluation:** this is carried out a number of months after the programme outputs have been handed over and are considered business as usual. The evaluation measures the outcomes.

International work

2.7 Acknowledging the varied nature of the work we undertake internationally, this policy establishes different evaluation requirements for the following projects, noting that for the International sector the expectation would be that 5-10% of a project's budget would be spent on evaluation activities.

2.8 Bilateral projects

- > All projects of 12 months duration or more, and with a total British Red Cross contribution of greater than £500,000, must undergo an *independent external*² final evaluation. The Executive Director International must approve exceptions.
- > All projects of 12 months duration or more, and where the average annual contribution from the British Red Cross exceeds £50,000, must undergo a structured evaluation process at least once every 36 months. An experienced evaluator external to the team managing the project should carry this out. It is strongly recommended that all projects of 24 months duration or more should have a mid-term review, whether internally³ or externally conducted.
- > In the case of donor funded projects, the country/project manager should refer to this policy and that of the donor. The policy with the lowest evaluation threshold will apply.

2.9 Multilateral emergency response

- > When the British Red Cross contributes funds, goods, and/or delegates for a total value above £250,000 to an IFRC led emergency response exceeding 1,000,000 CHF, such response must be assessed through a final evaluation commissioned by the IFRC and in line with IFRC Framework for Evaluation.
- > Where the British Red Cross contributes in excess of £5,000,000, we will endeavour to review how the recipient organisation has managed our contribution through an appropriate evaluation.

2.10 Multilateral and consortium-based projects

- > The British Red Cross commits to advocate for and support quality evaluations of consortium or multilateral projects, in line with this policy.

2.11 Impact evaluations

- > In addition, where appropriate we will consider conducting impact evaluations to examine the broader positive and negative consequences of our activities.

² By someone independent from the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement commissioned to conduct an evaluation either by the British Red Cross, a partner organisation, or by a donor.

³ By someone already working for the Red Cross as paid staff or volunteer for a National Society, the IFRC or the ICRC.

UK Operations

- 2.12 This policy establishes the different evaluation requirements for UK Operations. It is recommended that at least 7-10% of project, programme or the service budget is explicitly allocated to evaluation to ensure that an evaluation commensurate to the scale of delivery can be undertaken.

Funded/Commissioned projects

- > Evaluations are mandatory when required by or agreed with a commissioner or funder, with their terms regarding the evaluation detailed within the funding application and contract.

New/pilot projects

- > Evaluations are mandatory for all pilot projects, programmes or services and/or new areas of work we, as an organisation, are contemplating moving into.

Large projects

- > Projects, programmes or services worth £500,000 or more must be evaluated. The evaluation could be conducted internally or externally.

- 2.13 For UK Operations, where there is conflict between the funder/commissioner policy regarding evaluation and this policy, resolution must be sought through discussion with the Evaluation Manager in UK Operations.

- 2.14 Evaluation requirements should be considered at the point of project, programme or service design to ensure they can be integrated into operational delivery, and baseline data can be gathered for the outputs and outcomes identified in the Theory of Change. The expected evaluation tasks/outputs to be completed during the different stages of development and delivery are as follows:

- > **Bid writing and project/service design:** A Theory of Change must be developed.
- > **Programme/ service initiation:** A data framework to evidence the Theory of Change must be agreed. This should include relevant service or corporate key performance indicators (KPIs) as outlined in the Indicator Framework found on the UK Operations Data Hub. An Invitation to Tender must be written, advertised and a contractor commissioned where there is a requirement for an external evaluation. An inception document outlining the evaluation plan must be submitted within one month of commissioning. Collection of baseline data should start as soon as possible upon commissioning.
- > **Programme / service delivery:** For organisational change projects an assessment of progress against plans should be completed at the end of each stage of the programme⁴. For service evaluations an interim evaluation report(s) is required to provide formative feedback on the early and/or mid stages of delivery. Where evaluation projects are planned to cover delivery across more

⁴ For more information, see the [Project and Programme Management Toolkit on RedRoom](#).

than one operational year, end of year evaluation reports should be delivered and short interim update reports produced every six months.

- > **Project closure:** A final evaluation report is required at the end of the evaluation project to synthesise findings from all sources of evidence, make a conclusive statement about the value of the project, programme or service and provide a set of evidence based recommendations for how it can be developed or improved in the future.

- 2.15 All evaluations of UK Operations should align to the evaluation frameworks for services where these are available; these can be found on the [RedRoom Evaluation Team Site](#).
- 2.16 Evaluations of UK Operations must be commissioned externally in accordance with the thresholds in the [Procurement and Purchasing Policy](#).

Social Research at the British Red Cross

- 2.17 We define social research as the systematic investigation of issues or behaviour relevant to our work in order to collect evidence that contributes to:
- > Generating new ideas.
 - > Identifying the need for services.
 - > Informing the design and delivery of projects, programmes and services.
 - > Informing strategy design and development.
 - > Providing evidence to support policy and advocacy activity and all external messaging and communication.
- 2.18 All social research must have a clear rationale for why the knowledge is required, the aim of the research, how it will be undertaken and how the findings will be used.
- 2.19 The following outputs are expected at different stages of social research projects:
- > **Project initiation:** An inception document outlining the research plan including key tasks and timescales must be finalised after the initial inception meeting.
 - > **Project delivery:** An interim update on activities and findings in an agreed format to be delivered a one or more midway points through all projects with a planned duration of more than six months.
 - > **Project closure:** A final report is required at the end of the research project detailing findings from all research activities.

Planning and commissioning social research

- 2.20 The UK Operations Evaluation Manager and the Policy Research Manager should be informed when research projects involving our UK Operations, or people directly supported by our UK Operations, are being developed or commissioned. This is to identify any opportunities for efficiencies, avoid duplication and reduce any burdens of evaluation and research for our workforce or the people we support.
- 2.21 Social research must also be commissioned externally in accordance with the thresholds as stated in the [Procurement and Purchasing Policy](#).

Other types of reviews

- 2.22 In addition to evaluation and social research, we distinguish other ways of collecting and analysing evidence, such as monitoring, audits and reviews, and by being involved in external networks and evidence gathering processes. All of these methods should be used as part of our commitment to continuous improvement in how we serve people in crisis but are not within the scope of this policy.

3. Training and support

UK Operations

- 3.1 The Innovation and Insight Evaluation Team provide support and advice for evaluation of UK Operations.
- 3.2 A toolkit of evaluation guidance and best practice in UK Operations is available on RedRoom through the [Evaluation Team Site](#).
- 3.3 Face to face support and training can also be provided as necessary or by signposting to external providers where appropriate.

International

- 3.4 The Performance and Accountability Team provide support and advice for evaluation in International.
- 3.5 A toolkit of guidance and best practice in our International work is also available.

Organisational Change

- 3.6 Support and advice for Programme and Change management is provided by the Project Management Office.
- 3.7 A [Project and Programme Management Toolkit](#) Project and Programme Management Toolkit containing guidance and templates can be found on RedRoom.

4. Publishing, sharing and using evaluations and research

- 4.1 In line with our commitment to effectiveness, accountability and learning, evaluations and research will be shared internally through the [Insight Directory](#). Innovation and Insight will act as administrators of the Insight Directory. Directorates or teams have nominated contributors responsible for uploading reports. A list of nominated contributors can be found on the Evaluation Team Site.
- 4.2 All evaluation and research reports should be published externally in line with the:
- > [Information Classification Policy](#).
 - > [Transparency and Accountability Policy](#).
- 4.3 Plans to publish evaluations and research externally should be considered at project initiation, including the potential to publish our work in academic publications in order to grow our credibility and the evidence base of our operations. Consideration should

be given to whether the report can be published in full or whether a summary report(s) should be developed tailored to the needs of the intended audience.

- 4.4 When published externally, evaluation and research reports should be distributed to relevant external stakeholders. This includes all those people who have helped inform the work, contributed to it, and other researchers and practitioners in the sector which share our commitment to contribute to wider learning. The findings should be communicated through the most accessible and meaningful ways.
- 4.5 We are committed to ensuring that evaluation and research findings feed into decision making that can inform development and enable change across the organisation. This will be done via a number of channels, including directly with relevant stakeholders, through the Better and Better in UK Services Group, with the UK Management Team as part of the quarterly Innovation and Insight session; and the International Management Team during its quarterly evaluation review and through other established networks of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 The **Executive Director UK Operations** is the policy owner and is responsible for championing this policy at leadership level and within the wider leadership team.
- 5.2 **Executive Directors** are responsible for fostering a culture which encourages the capturing and sharing of all learning in the form of evaluations and research within their areas of responsibility.
- 5.3 **All staff** are responsible for complying with this policy; undertaking any relevant training around evaluations and research as necessary for their role; and supporting a responsible and open culture which encourages the capturing and sharing of all learning in the form of evaluations and research.

6. Review and maintenance

- 6.1 This policy was approved by ELT on November 2018. The policy is next due for review in November 2021.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1: related documents
- 7.2 Appendix 2: document provenance

Appendix 1: related documents

Document title	Relationship to this policy
Evaluation and research standards	Related procedures and practice
Conflicts of interest policy; and managing conflicts of interest procedure	Related policy and procedure
Transparency and Accountability Policy	Related policy
Information Classification Policy	Related policy
Data Protection Policy	Related policy
Procurement and Purchasing Policy	Related policy

Appendix 2: document provenance

Date endorsed	Category	Summarise changes made	Reason for changes	Consulted	Changes endorsed by
April 2012	Review		Scheduled review	All directorates	SMT
January 2017	Scheduled Review	Substantive review of previous policy led by the Head of Research. UK Operations to be brought into the policy following organisational change within the directorate, by March 2018.	Scheduled review	Governance, UK Operations, International, PMO, Communications and Engagement	ELT
November 2018	Scheduled review	UK Operations added to the policy.	Scheduled review	UK Operations, International, Governance	ELT