**Digital Community Hubs (DCH)**

**After-Action Review: Terms of Reference**

# Background

The Digital Community Hub (DCH) approach, devised at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has quickly turned into the potential next phase of global humanitarian action—allowing for two-way communications to be opened between communities and humanitarian actors via mobile phones. From its early start in Mali and Afghanistan, the hubs have grown into opportunities for 25 different countries in the NRC network. Expansion has happened rapidly and with success.

The Digital Community Hub (DCH) provides the ability for NRC programmes to engage with the people and communities they serve using mobile phone communications. Through web-based interfaces (Twilio and Telerivet), NRC teams establish methods to contact, or be contacted by, communities via traditional and digital phone systems. The DCH then is the tool utilized to manage communications between NRC and communities and vice versa.

The DCH is a replicable and scalable platform that sets a high standard for communications and accountability in emergencies by becoming a gateway for integrated services (including referrals, capacity building or technical guidance).

The DCH is a solution that enables NRC to: (1) set a two-way dialogue with communities, (2) share relevant information with vulnerable people in an easy way, (3) collect real time data on needs to deliver better programs in an integrated way, (4) rapidly deploy and use it, and (5) plug into different communication channels.

The DCH project has morphed into a succinct and structured modality of programme delivery and expanding beyond to assist our global advocacy and communication efforts.

Unique to the DCH is its approach to engaging with the private sector, having been developed jointly with corporate technology partners. These types of relationships and approaches are relatively new to NRC and the sector as a whole and must be nurtured to create cost-effective solutions that address the needs of the people we serve, with the support of the technology experts, who sit outside the organization.

# Description of the assignment

## Scope, Purpose and Objective of the After-Action Review

The After-Action Review (AAR) will focus on reviewing the roll-out and implementation of the Digital Community Hubs since early 2020 in all countries that it has operated or been developed in.

## Purpose

The purpose of the AAR is to provide stakeholders with an external, independent and objective review of the DCH, its partners and its implementation across NRC country offices, and to identify recommendations that could guide further roll-out and implementation, improved development and programmatic integration.

## Overall Objective

The objective of the AAR is to document the life cycle of the DCH, at global, regional, national and area office levels, key findings and recommendations, as well as a summary of challenges faced during implementation at Head Office- and country-level.

*What was intended to happen?*

This will explore all the activities that the DCH attempted to contribute towards over the global strategy between 2020 and 2021 focusing on the core issues the initiative intended/s to solve or contribute towards changing.

*What happened?*

To answer this question a timeline spanning 2020-2022 will be developed covering key resources, support, activities, and events the DCH contributed to will be produced. This will help develop a timeline on the scope of activities but also a list of tools, resources, and support that was provided over the pilot period that can be explored in more depth through the subsequent questions. Reasons why there was a difference between what was intended and what happened will also be explored.

*Summary of Achievements*

Picking up on the specific tools, resources, and support identified through the questions above, the review will seek to identify important components of the DCH that are seen as useful and important to NRC over the course of the pilot at a CO and HO level. The reasons why these components or tools have been seen as important will be explored to gain an understanding of where and how the DCH is gaining most traction or has been mainstreamed successfully in programmes, strategies and country implementation plans. Lessons that can be taken into the next strategy period should be identified.

*Summary of Challenges and Improvements*

This will review elements of the DCH that have not been as successful as originally intended or have struggled to gain traction within NRC. The importance here will be on the why these components didn’t function as well as hoped/intended and what lessons can be generated for the next strategy period.

*Future Strategic Direction*

Once data collection has been completed, a phased consultation process (reflecting on the evidence collected and consolidated) will take place with key stakeholders on the strategic priorities for the DCH within the new strategy period. In total, two half-day consultations are expected to take place as part of this process. In particular, how DCH will fit in Strategic Objective S01 will be explored with a view of generating options for DCH within the new strategic period. This process will engage stakeholders from HO, ROs, and COs.

Once complete the review team will consolidate two to three options that will be to put forward to the steering committee who will have the responsibility of making a recommendation to the SMG on the direction of DCH within the new strategy period.

# Methodology

The After-Action Review will be undertaken through a mixed method approach blending key informant interviews and an online survey. The review will be undertaken remotely. The AAR will also include a thorough desk review of relevant documents including the DCH Toolbox, the DCH Playbook and any relevant contracting. The AAR will encompass evaluation criteria of appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency during process of conducting AAR.

This review should follow an adaption of a standard After Action Review process. The following seven step methodology is proposed:

**Step 1:** Generate an overview of *what was intended to happen* through desk review. Using available documentation, the AAR will produce a brief overview of the scope and ambition of the DCH. A small amount of consultation with the DCH Global Project Manager and other key stakeholders can take place to verify gaps in documentation and check accuracy. (Estimated *LOE: 2 days)*

**Step 2**: Develop a timeline of *what happened* by mapping key tools, support, and activities on a 2020to 2021 timeline. This will provide a platform on which specific components/facets of the DCH can be explored. Any variations in what was intended to happen and what happened will be explored during the workshop. *(Estimated LOE: 3 days)*

**Step 3:** Begin to explore what has worked well and what hasn’t worked well through a survey. It is suggested a selection of roughly 50 key stakeholders will be surveyed to identify which components/tools/resources/support was most useful and were they see the most potential for DCH moving forward. The same survey will also explore what components were less successful or perceived to not be as important. A small number of open-ended responses will be included in the survey to allow for reasons why to be explored. *(Estimated LOE: 4 days)*.

**Step 4:** Simultaneously to the survey, a small amount (10 to 15) of key informant interviews will take place to explore what has worked well and hasn’t - focusing on specific components of the DCH. Interviewees will include a cross section of HO, RO, and CO. A limited number of Focus Group Discussions will also be considered. (Estimated LOE: 4 days the list of people to interviewed will be provided and administrative support with scheduling the interviews will be provided. If it is more efficient and will not influence findings, people will be interviewed in groups to save time)

**Step 5:** A short report 5-page report on findings from step 1 to 4 will be produced. It will document any findings that will be useful to help inform the strategic direction of the DCH going forwards. This document will form the basis for a consultation process with a selection of key stakeholders from HO, RO, and CO*. (Estimated LOE: 4 days)*

**Step 6:** A series of consultations workshops on the findings from step 1 to 4 will be held with colleagues from HO, RO, and COs. The reason for breaking the sessions up is to allow participation from across the regions/countries and carefully consider the mix of seniority and areas of expertise across the different sessions. *(LOE: 4 days).* If the practicality of holding a single session outweighs the benefits of separate sessions this process can be adapted accordingly and in discussion with the steering committee. (Administrative support will be provided for organising and delivering the workshop/s).

**Step 7:** To conclude, a short 10-to-15-page report will be produced detailing key the findings from step 1 to 4 and the strategic options for the DCH identified through step 5 and 6. These will be validated by the DCH steering committee who will have the responsibility for recommending next steps for DCH to the senior management group. *(Estimated LOE: 4 days)*

The minimum expected deliverables are:

1. A brief inception report outlining methodology.
2. A desk review of key reference materials, service delivery data to inform step 1 and 2. This can include a small number of consultations to verify gaps in documentation.
3. A short survey for HoPs on what has worked and what hasn’t worked well
4. A small amount of KIIs with colleagues from HO, RO, and CO.
5. A brief summary of findings to inform the consultation workshops.
6. A series of short workshops at the global seminar to unpack some of the key findings of the review and develop recommendations for moving forward.
7. A short, succinct final written report consolidating findings from the desk review, KII, and workshop.

# Management

A review committee of key stakeholders in the programme will advise on issues associated with the learning and reflection process. This includes reviewing the draft and final reports and finalizing plans for dissemination of the findings. The review committee will be led by the Global Programme Director, supported by the Global Evaluation and Research Manager and include representatives from HO, RO, and CO**.**

Key informants will be selected in coordination with the Review Committee, to provide a cross-section of thematic, regional and other factors that will assist NRC to explore opportunities to scale promising initiatives.

# Timeline

The learning and reflection process is expected to take place over a period of 2 months between June to July 2022. Final products to be delivered by July 31st. The AAR will be for approximately 25 days across this period. This will need to be customised to match the availability.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # | Description | W1 | W 2 | W3 | W4 | W 5 | W6 | W7 | W8 | W9 |
| 1 | Review of project documents  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Submit inception report |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | KII and survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Workshops  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | AAR report drafting |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | AAR report finalization and submission |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

In addition to the above, the following skills and qualifications are required:

* Prior experience with organisational design and change processes;
* Strong written and verbal presentation skills in English;
* Ability to articulate technical complexities to senior decision makers;
* Experience reviewing complex institutional arrangements and understanding avenues for strategy and systems change;
* Comfortable operating in the initial phases of a project, where objectives and deliverables are iterative;
* Experience working remotely with minimal supervision, but with strong personal drive and communication skills needed for coordinating multiple moving pieces of work;
* Strong understanding of the digital connectivity platforms. Prior knowledge of the humanitarian sector is desirable but not required;

**6. Expression of Interest**

Expressions of interest are requested with the following information:

* Cover letter elaborating competency against expected qualifications and scope of work. Where multiple team members, please elaborate on who will be working on or leading on each component;
* Background of individual(s) proposed for project;
* Proposed number of days worked and daily rate.

**Expressions of interest should be e-mailed to tariq.riebl@nrc.no and** **giovanna.federici@nrc.no** **by Sunday, June 12th, 2022.**

**Commissioning Managers:**

* Tariq Riebl, Global Programme Strategy and Innovation Director, NRC
* Giovanna Federici, Global Camp Management Specialist, NRC