

**TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

**Development of Red Cross/ Red Crescent Guidelines on Community Based Early Warning Systems**

**Background**

Based on the expressed needs of Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) partners working in the field of disaster preparedness and risk reduction, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) will contract a consultant to develop guidelines for establishing and maintaining community based early warning systems. Community based early warning systems (CBEWS) are increasingly recognized as critical to saving lives and livelihoods in the event of an emergency.

Community based early warning systems require the commitment of communities to maintain and monitor the functioning of the system. It is no use designing locally based early-warning monitoring and alert mechanisms that cannot be sustained by the communities they seek to protect. The challenge is that CBEWS need to be complex enough to interface with different government and non-governmental bodies, accessible enough to reach marginalized and highly-vulnerable populations, and yet simple and inexpensive enough to be managed and sustained by the communities themselves.

Communities use diverse coping strategies based on local knowledge of their environment, their socio-economic situation and livelihood strategies. However, while still important in today’s world, this indigenous knowledge needs to be reinforced by modern methods of risk mapping and hazard monitoring. The combination of local knowledge and modern methods is where the National Society and other partners play a role in helping the communities establish and maintain efficient CBEWS.

A community based early warning system does not function in isolation. It is part of a chain and needs to be linked to government and other partners that work at the local level in early warning and disaster risk reduction. Long-term partnerships need to be established with these different organizations to ensure the system’s sustainability. An early warning system should not be static – it needs to be changeable and adaptable to time and local conditions. It should be based on a variety of information sources and result in different actions for alerts and warnings. Early warning for rural and urban situations might look very different as will models for areas which attract tourists and those that serve remote village communities. All early warning systems, need to comprise four elements; risk knowledge; technical monitoring and warning services; dissemination and communication of warnings; response capability and preparedness to act. Weaknesses in any of these elements could lead to failure of the whole system.

The role of the local Red Cross or Red Crescent National Societies can play in helping communities establish early warning systems is a critical one. Not only do National Societies have volunteers that understand the communities’ diversity and can help establish the appropriate local systems, they can also provides structures at the branch and headquarters levels to process and filter early warning data going to and coming from the community.

Approach

Disasters are increasing in number and severity, to be effective, early warning systems for natural hazards need to have not only a sound scientific and technical basis, but also a strong focus on the people exposed to risk, and with a systems approach that incorporates all of the relevant factors in that risk, whether arising from the natural hazards or social vulnerabilities, and from short-term or long-term processes.

Community based early warning systems need the active involvement of the community people, a strong public education on and awareness of risks, an effective communication system ensuring a constant state of preparedness. Taking in to account this International Federation will develop global guidelines for establishing and maintaining community based early warning systems to support National Societies activities on this area.

The development of the CBEWS guidelines will consider the very different contexts and capacities of the RC/RC and other actors in different parts of the world. This will include the following:

* Differences in the types of disasters: slow onset, fast onset; hurricanes, flood, drought, earthquakes and tsunamis, landslides, fires, (as well as combinations of these); localised or widespread disaster events.
* Different livelihood groups and communities facing different hazards, with consequent differences in information requirements for early warning (e.g. pastoral and agricultural populations living in close proximity or people living on the coast and those a few kilometres inland).
* Indigenous early warning systems that already exist : RC/RC role may be to link indigenous and formal early warning systems (i.e. links with meteorological forecasting systems)
* Capacities of RC/RC National Societies in relation to data collection, analysis and communication, taking also into account capacities of other actors and institutions that form part of the early warning system.
* Capacities of communities to ensure long-term management and maintenance of CBEWS with limited support from RC/RC, government, and other partner agencies.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this consultancy is to develop RC/RC guidelines on establishing CBEWS based on best practices found within the RC/RC movement and wider humanitarian sector.

**Consultant Key tasks**

* In close consultation with the IFRC Community Based Disaster Preparedness Senior Officer, finalise the overall structure and content of the guidelines.
* Review the key materials, documents, information available related to CBEWS from RC/RC and Other organizations.
* Research and include additional materials (including online resources) on slow onset and quick onset disasters.
* Present an initial draft of the guidelines (with the format of standard RC/RC publications )for discussion to the Community Preparedness and Risk Reduction Department and other selected departments
* Incorporate feedback from the RC/RC into the guidelines and deliver the final document

**Expected outputs**

The Consultant shall be expected to deliver the following outputs:

A final draft of “Guidelines for Developing a Community Based Early Warning System”. The guidelines should be simple, written in English in an accessible language and not longer than 50 pages, organized based on the following broad structure proposal. The consultant should present a new version after revised the information available:

1. Definitions of EWS and main components
2. Types of Hazards
   * Quick onset
   * Slow onset
3. Early warning systems - characteristics and interconnectedness of global, regional, national and community EWS
4. Definition of CBEWS main Components
5. RCRC Involvement in CBEWS
6. Inventory of CBEWS - short case studies of practical examples of RC/RC (or other organisations) CBEWS
   * Floods and landslides
   * Hurricanes
   * Earthquakes and tsunamis
   * Drought and famine
7. Operational aspects of CBEWS
   * Establishment and maintenance
   * Monitoring
   * Alert and communication
   * Preparedness for response, and response

**Duration and indicative schedule**

The consultant will present a detailed work plan for the development of the guidelines. The final product of the Consultancy should be completed by December 2011.

1. Draft guidelines, by 30 November 2011
2. Final guidelines by 30 December 2011

**Management**

The consultant will be hired by and report to the Head, Community Preparedness and Risk Reduction Department. Day to day reporting lines will be to the Senior Officer, Community Based Disaster Preparedness.

**Selection criteria**

The criteria to be used for the selection of the consultant shall include:

* 7-10 years of experience working with a humanitarian organisation at the community level (on early warning and disaster preparedness).
* At least 3 years prior experience of working on CBEWS
* Strong publications experience
* Excellent analytical and writing skills
* Prior knowledge and experience of RC/RC work is preferable.

**Technical proposal**

The technical proposal should be accompanied by a completed submission form and should address before October the 28th  17:00 h Geneva Time:

a. The Consultant’s Organization and Experience;

b. Comments or Suggestions on the Terms of Reference;

c. Description of the Approach, Methodology and Work Plan for Performing the

Assignment;

d. Team Composition and Task Assignments;

e. Curriculum Vitae (CV) for Proposed Professional Staff;

f. Staffing Schedule; and

g. Work Schedule.

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Revised October 2011