CAFOD Management Response to Humanitarian Capacity Development (HCD) Programme Phase I (2013-2015)

CAFOD welcomes the findings of the independent evaluation of its Humanitarian Capacity Development (HCD) Programme. Of the 14 recommendations made by the evaluation, we accept 12 (85%) and partially accept 2 (15%). None are rejected.

We welcome the findings and overall conclusions of the evaluation and are encouraged to note that most of the findings concur with our own assessment of the programme performance. The evaluation has also generated some useful reflections and learning, and will be helpful to inform the design of the second phase of the HCD programme

The consolidated response to the recommendations of the evaluation is provided in the table below:

	Recommendations	Accept/ Partially accept/ Reject	CAFOD Response
1	Reduce the current 14 HCD framework competency areas into 4 or 5 for the partners to choose from, based on a clearly defined "menu" for support. This would facilitate a more integrated focus for partners, connecting the various HCD elements better and would help the HCDO to prioritise types of support provided.	Accept	We accept the recommendation to reduce the competency areas and have started the process of revising and simplifying the framework into four distinct categories with clearly defined support options.
2	The country rep should meet with the leadership during the inception phase together with the HCDO to indicate clear intent to the partner and to stimulate ownership from the top. This may at the same time help bring the HCD programme closer to the country office as something of added programmatic value to CAFOD as a whole.	Accept	CAFOD is committed to ensure that we build on the learning from Phase 1 of the HCD programme. We accept the recommendation that CAFOD country representatives or designated officers-in charge should engage with the senior leadership of the partner organisation from the very outset – to encourage ownership at the senior management level.
3	HCDOs must in advance carefully prepare how they intend to engage with individual Dioceses, particularly the leadership, and they may need to seek support in doing so from relevant local actors who know and are	Accept	HCDOs are already mapping key influencers and allies that can support engagement with the local Dioceses. In Phase II, HCDOs will also conduct a detailed stakeholder

	known to the system in order to identify the best initial entry point.		mapping (both internal and external to partner organisations) in order to identify key stakeholders.
4	The HCDOs should as part of the inception process identify a formal, unpaid, contact person with the partner, who will be the direct point of engagement for planning and coordination of HCD support. Should such a person prove impossible to find, the HCDO may consider discontinuing the process due to likely lack of absorptive capacity and thus less prospect of success.	Accept	CAFOD recognises the need for partner ownership and accepts the recommendation of having a focal point/s within the partner organisation. CAFOD will also explore options to establish a working group within the partner organisation that can have the strategic oversight of the implementation of capacity strengthening plans.
5	Selection criteria of partners for phase two should take geographical spread into consideration in order to ensure provision of regular support to individual partners by the HCDO and to stimulate peer learning amongst partners to create synergies and improve prospects for wider impact. 4-5 partners per HCDO appear reasonable to enable proper follow up within the same country.	Partially accept	Partner selection criteria have been revised for the second phase and geographical spread is one of the parameters for partner selection process. We accept the recommendation to consolidate HCDO support to not more than 4-5 partners. However, in countries where CAFOD will consider more than 5 partners, additional resourcing will be explored to support HCDOs.
6	Develop a common set up benchmarks for HCDOs, unpacking the different roles of being an advisor, coach and mentor etc. and a guideline for how to do this in practice. It also involves how to "read between the lines" with the partner, as well as when to change advisory tracks in order to get the best results.	Accept	CAFOD welcomes this recommendation and has started development of a competency framework based on the different roles that HCDO plays during partner engagement. It is envisaged that the competency framework will reflect different skills and competencies required by HCDOs and will be used to identify a baseline of their existing competence and develop their personal development plans. CAFOD also plans to develop a manual for HCDOs that features guidelines for the entire capacity strengthening journey besides highlighting the specific role of HCDOs.
7	HCDO should shadow and advise on the appointments of external local consultants to confirm their qualifications and to ensure that the wider HCD picture is shared with the consultants so that their input will	Accept	CAFOD (in particular, HCDOs) will work with partners to identify appropriate and affordable ways of providing and resourcing adequate technical support for implementing their capacity strengthening plans.

	complement and be embedded with other ongoing works under the HCD programme.		
8	The HCDO should together with the partner from the beginning develop a monitoring plan to shadow the HCD programme accomplishments. This would help capture essential learning points, as well as how outputs, in fact, lead to changing behaviours.	Accept	As part of phase II of the programme, CAFOD will introduce a robust monitoring and learning framework, designed to capture 'change stories' which promotes learning and programme effectiveness.
9	Partners and HCDOs should identify more effective ways to report systematically on increased partner capacity to respond to real emergencies and the relevance of provided capacity support from HCDOs. Otherwise, the HCD programme runs the risk of being undervalued for its true potential to increase partners' humanitarian response capacity in practice.	Accept	We are working to refine monitoring and reporting templates and processes for the second phase of the programme and also working on how we can communicate the 'benefits' of HCDO engagement in concrete terms, both internally and externally.
10	The HCD programme should identify concrete ways to support partners in becoming eligible for and to provide access to small scale emergency funding. This would increase the possibilities that partners can actually apply what they have learnt from the programme for real emergencies.	Accept	CAFOD is committed to facilitate that our partners have increased access to emergency funding and are better prepared to meet the eligibility criteria of both small and large donors. The HCD framework has been revised to incorporate concrete indicators around this recommendation. We have also been spearheading the agenda for localisation of aid as part of Charter 4 Change commitments as well as establishment of a START Local Fund for exclusive access by southern NGOs.
11	Governance and leadership should become integrated into the HCD framework which may also ensure that these issues are raised already during the inception phase when exploring new partners. Without buy-in from the leadership at the start, the programme stands much less of a chance to really influence how things are done in practice.	Accept	The revised HCD framework now includes a distinct competence domain on governance. We accept the recommendation to explore the issues around leadership commitment during the inception phase and have already formalised this during the selection of new partners for the second phase of the programme.
12	The HCDOs should, as part of the monitoring process, score the partner against priority areas at the start,	Partially accept	The HCD framework has been revised and a new simple scoring system has been introduced. The scoring system is based on a clear requirement for 'evidence' in order

	midway and at the end of the support process. The objectivity of scoring has been a request by the partners. HCDOs through their in-depth knowledge of the partner would be able to ensure that the score is related to the context of the partner, while adding some external objectivity as well.		to validate the scores. This has been primarily in response to the partner requests to enhance the objectivity of scoring. At the same time, we recognise the need to retain the 'self-assessment' nature of scoring done by partners. However, we agree that HCDOs should provide a stronger steer to facilitate this process and encourage or challenge the partners in case of over or under assessment.
13	HCDOs must seek to establish more learning oriented dialogues with the partners and between staff themselves outside formal reviews in order to promote a more curious culture about how things are, how things should become within their own organisations, and what, in fact, is accomplished beyond the production of policies, manuals and trainings.	Accept	CAFOD aims to strengthen the monitoring and learning framework of the programme. As part of this, we plan to introduce non-traditional evaluation methods like 'Most Significant Change' and 'Appreciative enquiry' - to generate change stories by various stakeholders involved in the HCD programme.
14	As part of the phasing out of HCD support, a transition plan should be developed by the HCDO with the partner. Such a transition plan would contain a summary of accomplishments, current state of affairs and future CS plans of the partner. It should also have a strong external orientation so as to help the partner position itself strategically vis- à-vis other actors and potential funders.	Accept	CAFOD will ensure that a smooth transition plan is put in place as part of the HCD programme exit – linking partners to relevant stakeholders, especially other CIMOs. Transition planning will also be discussed right from the outset to plan how CAFOD support will be phased-out.
15	As part of the design of phase two of the HCD programme, the concerned country representatives with relevant programme staff should together with the HCD team create a common strategic foundation for collaborations with concrete measures to deepen integration at the partner and country levels in the future.	Accept	We agree with this recommendation in principle and plan to work more closely with CAFOD country offices and explore potential options to identify synergies and ensure that HCD activities are aligned with CSP priorities.