# European Refugee Response

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ACF | ACTION AGAINST HUNGER UK
CRS | CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES
DFID | DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT / UK AID
DOTW | DOCTORS OF THE WORLD
DRC | DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL
EASO | EUROPEAN ASYLUM SUPPORT OFFICE
ERR | EUROPEAN REFUGEE RESPONSE
EU | EUROPEAN UNION
FYROM | FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
IMC | INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS
IRC | INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
MEL | MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING
NFI | NON-FOOD ITEM
NGO | NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION
NRC | NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL
RC | RED CROSS
SC | SAVE THE CHILDREN
SP | SAMARITAN’S PURSE
UNHCR | UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

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The Start Network is an international network of NGOs that aims to deliver the best possible solutions to people affected by crises through facilitating collaborative approaches which allow organisations to achieve more together than any single organisation acting alone could accomplish.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Start Network is an international network of NGOs that aims to deliver the best possible solutions to people affected by crises through facilitating collaborative approaches which allow organisations to achieve more together than any single organisation acting alone could accomplish.

In 2015, the Start Network members began three collaborative responses to large-scale crises: the Central African Republic Refugees in Cameroon Response (Cameroon); the Ebola Preparedness Programme (Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal and Ivory Coast); and the European Refugee Response (Greece, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia).1

DFID funded the Start Network in 2015 in response to the migration crisis in Europe, which was on a scale unseen since the end of the Second World War. £16 million was allocated to the Start Network for a European Refugee Crisis Collaborative Response and, after a project selection process, 17 Start Network member and non-member agencies were selected, operating in five countries along migration routes from Turkey to Germany or other European destination countries.

The agencies implemented a variety of assistance and protection activities: Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH), camp management, protection, shelter, distribution of non-food items (NFIs) and winterization items, increasing access to health facilities, increasing access to information and contributing to improved coordination among partners and local authorities.

£16m ALLOCATED FOR THE START NETWORK EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE

17 START NETWORK MEMBER AND NON-MEMBER AGENCIES WERE SELECTED

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This independent, external final evaluation of the Start Network European Refugee Response was commissioned as part of the Start Network Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) services, provided by ACF-UK, and was conducted by Groupe URD. The evaluation assesses the performance of the Start Network Response in achieving results, and contributes to the existing knowledge base on how to effectively and efficiently respond to crises in a collaborative manner. It covers the period from October 2015 to March 2016, and is framed around the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and collaborative advantage.

The evaluation consisted of interviews with key informants, a documentary review and an online survey with project staff working on the Start Network European Refugee Response. Fieldwork included interviews and observations in Greece (islands and mainland), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Serbia, and an information-gathering mission to Germany to interview refugees who had potentially been beneficiaries of Start Network agencies due to their transit during the time period and through the countries in which agencies were operating.

1 “Collaborative Responses” is one of the four approaches of the Start Network. For more information see http://www.startnetwork.org/
KEY FINDINGS

RELEVANCE AND APPROPRIATENESS

RELEVANCE

A substantial amount of funding came at a critical time to respond to the needs of migrants and refugees along the Balkans route just before the winter period. While it can reasonably be assumed that this funding decision was in response to high media and public interest in the needs of refugees, it provided European Refugee Response (ERR) agencies and their local partners with much-needed resources, enabling them to scale up their assistance operations. Nevertheless, advocacy vis-à-vis European donors, institutions and other stakeholders was a significant gap, in particular on protection issues. A network of experienced NGOs (17 ERR agencies) should have had a stronger voice collectively on the evolving political decisions and restrictions affecting the people that they were assisting.

COVERAGE

The range of programmes and agencies funded through the ERR meant that needs were broadly covered, including an innovative “communication with refugees” component: facilitating refugees’ access to information and ability to stay in touch with relatives. However, the lack of communication or coordination between ERR agencies resulted in some overlaps and gaps (e.g. NFI coverage). With a few rare exceptions, there was no “whole of the route” vision, nor a regional approach to support trans-border coordination.

ADAPTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

Given the fast-changing context, flexibility and adaptability were undoubtedly the main strengths of the Start Network response, such as adaptation of programming to the changing context, including rapid review by programme management of requests. ERR agencies rated the brokering role of the Start Network very highly compared to a traditional mode of interaction with the donor (particularly the rapidity of the decision-making process). The relevance of the ERR activities essentially relied on the professionalism and expertise of the individual agencies as far as programming and needs assessments were concerned. Despite attempts, the Start Network was not in a position to set up or promote any mechanism for joint needs assessments or coordinated programming.

EFFECTIVENESS

The limited timeframe (5 months, from October 2015 to March 2016), as well as some delays to the start of the implementation and the inability to obtain no-cost extensions for activities, had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the response. This was particularly the case when agencies based their decisions on the criterion of rapid disbursement rather than on the reality of needs.

The Start Network could have attempted to set up a more agile information system through instant messaging platforms (Viber, WhatsApp or Facebook) in order to take advantage of the geographical distribution of ERR agencies. This would have proved particularly useful for identifying and “tracking” the needs of migrants/refugees transiting through the five countries, and could have boosted field coordination between aid organizations. The Start Network also did not share key information about programmes and contextual developments with DfID, which would have provided political leverage vis-à-vis the UK government.
SUSTAINABILITY

Some efforts were made to work with local authorities and populations in the different countries. Coordination with local NGOs and authorities was particularly successful in FRYOM, where NGOs provided local knowledge while ERR agencies contributed additional funding and skills. Some agencies invested significant amounts of money in camp maintenance and the improvement of infrastructure in anticipation of a long-lasting crisis. However, the usefulness of these investments will depend on how the context evolves, whether there will be further waves of migration, and local authorities’ sustainability efforts.

EFFICIENCY

Allocating funds through the Start Network allowed DfID to ‘outsource’ programme management and monitoring at short notice when DfID did not have capacity to follow up all 17 projects as well as respond to winterisation needs. This delegated allocation process lightened the administrative procedures between the agencies and donor and allowed a high degree of flexibility in programme management.

Although a variety of products and communication channels were used, the information circulated by the Start Network did not reach the majority of operational staff in ERR agencies (probably linked to the lack of a permanent field presence by the Start Network staff during most of programme). The wide range of MEL products (situational reports, learning workshops, monitoring visits, case studies, peer reviews) provided a good overview of the projects carried out, but did not include crisis management or situational analysis, which could have guided crisis response and strategic positioning. The MEL framework was also supposed to promote the coherence of a multi-agency and multi-country action but the ‘broad’ monitoring carried out by the MEL services did not provide the donor with enough information about operational strategies and remaining gaps. The role of DfID in terms of monitoring and selection decisions had also not been clarified, and this led to misunderstanding and frustration.

Communication and coordination were strengthened at a later stage of the response (around February-March 2016), due to field coordination meetings and closer ties between the ERR agencies. No formal mechanism for coordination among the ERR agencies was set up, with priority given to “all agency cooperation and coordination” rather than specific collective action among the ERR agencies.

COLLABORATIVE MECHANISM

The use of the term “collaborative response” raised expectations with agencies beyond what was actually implemented. There was no clarity or general consensus about the principles and practical feasibility of a collaborative approach for ERR, and no joint programming (agencies were unwilling to agree upon an overall framework of outcomes and outputs). Among the key ingredients of a collaborative response are the presence of Start Network focal persons in the field and the decentralisation of selection processes. Start Network staff were only present at the end of ERR, and agencies sometimes felt that Project Selection Committee members lacked field perspective.

Clear mechanisms for collaboration could also have enabled identification of common challenges and collective solutions between agencies.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Applicable where appropriate for existing and future collaborative responses

RECOMMENDATION 1  BEFORE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE, THE START NETWORK TEAM AND THE AGENCIES INVOLVED SHOULD BUILD A SHARED AND COLLECTIVE VISION

RECOMMENDATION 2  START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD IDENTIFY THE APPROPRIATE SET-UP (PROCESSES, STRUCTURE AND OUTPUTS) IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE COLLECTIVELY DEFINED OBJECTIVES

RECOMMENDATION 3  START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD REVIEW THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF ERR MANAGEMENT AND MEL SERVICES, INCLUDING THEIR FIELD PRESENCE, TO INFORM FUTURE COLLABORATIVE RESPONSES

RECOMMENDATION 4  START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD REVIEW AND DESIGN AN OPTIMAL COORDINATION SYSTEM, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE NUMBER OF AGENCIES INVOLVED AND THE CONTEXT

RECOMMENDATION 5  START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD STRENGTHEN THE OPERATIONAL BENEFITS OF MEL SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION 6  START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD ESTABLISH A ROBUST COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
INTRODUCTION
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context of the European Refugee Response

The migration crisis in Europe has been unfolding since 2012. In 2015, it reached a level that was unheard of since the end of the Second World War: more than a million migrants and asylum-seekers crossed the sea to reach Europe, 3,771 of them losing their lives during perilous crossings of the Mediterranean.

In 2015, the main migration route was from Turkey through the Western Balkans. This was mainly used by migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, who then had to cross Greece, FYROM, Serbia, Croatia and Hungary to reach Austria and then get to Germany, and to a lesser extent Sweden and Switzerland. The context was highly volatile and unpredictable on political, legal and humanitarian levels.

During the summer of 2015, DfID funding to the European refugee crisis was primarily channelled through UNHCR. For other bilateral and multilateral donors, humanitarian funding was limited by both administrative and political constraints (with regard to the disbursement of funds in EU Member State territories, and UK asylum policy).

With a continuous flow of migrants attempting to cross Europe, and with winter approaching, DfID allocated £16 million through the Start Network to help meet basic refugee needs in five countries along the migration route.

DfID took advantage of an existing Memorandum of Understanding with the Start Network (signed with Save the Children on 17 December 2014) in order to expand the funding available to NGOs in their current response. The Start Network proposed to DfID to use its collective mechanism to set up a response based on the Collaborative Response model: the European Refugee Response (ERR). The ERR collaborative response was the third led by the Start Network since the beginning of 2015. DfID specified the inclusion of Start Network members as well as non-members in the response.

The context had the following unique characteristics, which influenced the nature of the response:

- **Magnitude of the refugee flow:** The number of people recorded each day crossing the sea borders of Turkey and Greece by boat (and then continuing their journey overland to Northern Europe) increased to a level that exceeded the capacity of local communities and authorities to respond on their own.

- **People’s mobility:** The refugees and migrants were extremely mobile, with a targeted geographical objective. This transient situation created many challenges for agencies in relation to the continuation of services, monitoring, protection and the provision of information.

- **Volatility of the political (European) context:** Governments had a significant role in enabling the movement of refugees and migrants and in establishing the registration processes, as well as in facilitating the work of agencies. This was an unstable and fast-changing situation, particularly due to the closing of borders and other issues. Countries in Southern Europe and the Balkans struggled to cope with the influx of migrants, while discussions in the EU continued about how to deal with this population movement.\(^\text{3}\)

\(^{1}\) Amendment letter, dated from 20 November 2015.

\(^{2}\) In addition, two major policy changes particularly affected the ERR response during implementation: in February 2016, when the decision was made to close the Balkan route, and on 8-9 March 2016 with the EU-Turkey agreement which aimed at stopping the flow of irregular migration via Turkey to Europe.
Collaborative responses aim to
“enable agencies to respond in a coordinated way to large-scale crises”

Two previous experiences of collaborative approaches have taken place:

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<td>The West Africa Ebola Preparedness Programme (£7 million) to “help governments and communities in Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal and the Côte d’Ivoire prevent and prepare for possible outbreaks of Ebola and other infectious diseases”. Seven agencies were involved in the response.</td>
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<td>02</td>
<td>The Central African Republic Refugees in Cameroon Response (£3 million), where three agencies and their partners collaborated on projects in three different regions in Cameroon.</td>
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After a call for proposals, the selection process for projects took place between 17 and 20 November 2015 in three stages:

01 Initial review of project proposals by the Project Selection Committee (PSC, 10 members): sifting of proposals;
02 A PSC meeting on 18 November 2015: provisional project selection;
03 A smaller PSC (4 members) meeting on 20 November: allocation of the remaining funding.

18 projects were selected and 17 agencies funded, for a total of £14 million (the remaining £457,422 was earmarked for WaSH to cover gaps),4 with the following characteristics:

- **Multiple assistance projects** in the sectors of food aid, water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH), camp management, protection, shelter, distribution of non-food items (NFIs) and winterisation items, improving access to health facilities, and providing agencies, partners, and local authorities with appropriate and relevant information to ensure an enhanced response capacity;
- **Implemented by 17 Start Network member and non-member agencies** (ACAPS/MapAction, Action Aid, CARE, Christian Aid, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Doctors of the World, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Oxfam, Samaritan’s Purse, Internews, Save the Children, Translator’s Without Borders (TWB) and World Vision);
- **In five countries**: Greece, FYROM, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia;
- **For refugees and migrants**, but also considering the needs of host communities.

In terms of the Start Network structure, programme management was hosted at Save the Children, with the external Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) services at ACF UK. During the period under review (from October 2015 to March 2016), both services were mainly based in London. The MEL services, provided by ACF UK, provided monitoring and learning services via a MEL Officer (based in Athens, from March 2016) and a Senior MEL Officer (based in London).5

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4 See Minutes of Second Project Selection Meeting, European Refugee Crisis, 20 November 2015.
5 See under section 3.3.4.
1.2 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

As detailed in the Terms of Reference, the main objectives of the evaluation are:

- Assess the relevance (including the responsiveness), effectiveness and efficiency of ERR in the light of the needs of the refugee/migrant and host populations. Through an overall approach, specific attention will also be given to the complementarity and coherence of emergency response projects between the 17 members of the Start Network, their local partners and the local authorities in charge.
- Draw lessons and identifying recommendations on ways to improve such collaborative mechanisms for the response to large-scale migration crises.

After documentation review and first interviews with key stakeholders involved in ERR, a number of issues emerged (see 2.3 “Limitations and constraints” below) that led to the refocusing of the evaluation onto programme and operational issues in order to assess the potential strengths and weaknesses of such a collaborative approach. The central evaluative question was therefore reformulated to:

- What added-value did the collaborative approach set up by the Start Network (inputs, processes, structures) represent in the response to the migratory crisis, compared to the sum of several agencies’ responses?

1.3 Timeline of the context, the response and the evaluation

Figure 1 shows the timeline for the Start Network European Refugee Response within the broader context.

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*A continuation of the European Refugee Response (ERR 2) was implemented from April – August 2016. This is not included in the scope of this evaluation and will be assessed in a separate review.*
METHODOLOGY
2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Theory of change

The evaluation approach was based on a Theory of Change (ToC) proposed by the evaluation team for the Start Network Collaborative Responses. This ToC was designed during the inception phase for the purpose of the evaluation, on the basis of the documentation provided. This was presented to stakeholders at the evaluation debriefing workshop on 1 June 2016.

In order to assess the achievements and shortcomings of this collaborative approach, the evaluation team collected evidence at all levels of the results hierarchy, including inputs (brokering role of the Start Network), structure & processes (intended for programme management and MEL services) and outputs (results of the European Refugee Response).

2.2 Data and information collection

The evaluation attempted to answer the central question (What added-value did the collaborative approach set up by the Start Network (inputs, processes, structures) represent in the response to the migratory crisis, compared to the sum of the different agencies’ responses?) through the assessment of the three evaluation criteria mentioned in the ToR, namely relevance (including responsiveness or adaptiveness), effectiveness and efficiency.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Project documentation was an important source of information for the evaluation: situation reports produced by each agency (and the consolidated situational report (SitRep) produced by Start Network programme management); case studies; regional learning workshop reports; and Start MEL monitoring reports (produced by the MEL team). Documentation was accessed from the Start Network cloud-based document system, which was intended for use by programme management, the MEL team and all ERR agencies. Supplementary documentation was also provided by agencies and others during interviews and field visits.
To complement this information, four main categories of key informants were interviewed:

- Staff directly involved in ERR implementation, and in the management and monitoring of the collaborative response. This included project staff (from implementing agencies), and Start Network programme manager based in London, the MEL team, the Project Selection Committee and the Executive Board;
- DFID staff involved in grant management and field monitoring;
- Migrants/refugees who had transited through the five implementation countries during the period under review or who were still in the areas during the evaluation;
- Other stakeholders involved in ERR, such as local authorities; other NGOs and volunteer organisations that collaborated or coordinated within ERR; UN agencies (in particular UNHCR); the European Asylum Support Office (EASO); donors; and researchers.

**DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

- An online survey was designed and sent to approximately 55 ERR agency staff to gather the views of the key personnel involved in the response during the period under review (October 2015-March 2016). The survey was deliberately short and focused in order to gather key information from staff who were working in a busy and challenging context. 23 responses were received.
- Semi-structured interviews with key informants from aid agencies and other stakeholders involved in the ERR, either based at headquarters (London) or in project locations, with some donor representatives (DFID/ECHO). (See Annex 2 & 3 for list of interviewees)
- Field visits were conducted in three countries (FRYOM, Serbia and Greece) (see Figure 3) in collaboration with project staff who were implementing activities. Local NGOs, volunteers, local authorities, etc. were also interviewed.
- Data collection from refugees in one destination country (Germany) (see Box 2) as a proxy for the views of project beneficiaries. Interviewees were not selected as recipients of Start Network project activities but as indicative of the needs and experiences of beneficiaries who had travelled the Balkans route and various project locations included in the ERR.

Risks for the evaluation included:

**01 SENSITIVITY OF THE TOPICS ADDRESSED BY THE ERR**
To understand better the sensitivity of particular topics related to the European Refugee Response, a series of distance interviews were conducted with various interlocutors, and field visits were organised in close collaboration with the ERR agencies still present on the field. This was an occasion for the ERR agencies to brief the evaluation team about the evolving operational context, the history of the response, the challenges encountered, and future prospects.

**02 “DO NO HARM” APPROACH**
The evaluation team gave due consideration to not bringing about harmful effects. This was ensured by a careful analysis of the risks to which the evaluation could expose refugees. The interviews with refugees in Berlin (Germany) were conducted in a confidential manner after providing proper clarification about the purpose of the study (including the fact that the interviews would remain anonymous).
**BOX 02**

**INTERVIEWS WITH REFUGEES IN BERLIN (GERMANY)**

During 24 - 27 May 2016, ten interviews were conducted with Syrian and Iraqi refugees who arrived in Germany via the Balkans between September 2015 and March 2016. The interviewees represented either families, single women accompanied by children or young single men. These interviews were organized in a centre run by the German Red Cross. Other contacts were made through AWO (Arbeiterwohlfahrt Kreisverband Berlin-Mitte e.V. – a German social organisation) with residents of a stadium where refugees – mostly single men – are temporarily accommodated.

Finally, an evaluation workshop was held in Athens on 1 June 2016 with ERR project staff and Start Network programme and MEL staff, to share the preliminary results of the evaluation and discuss emerging recommendations (see Annex 4 for the list of workshop participants).

**FIGURE 03**

**ERR EVALUATION FIELD VISITS**

- Interviews with refugees in Berlin 24 - 27 May
- Field visit in Presevo (Serbia) 19 May
- Interviews in Belgrade 20 May
- Field visit in Tahanovce (FYROM) 17 May
- Interviews in Skopje 18 May
- Interviews and visit in Thessaloniki 19 - 21 May
- Field visit in Idomeni (Greece) 23 May
- Field visits in Lesbos 26 May and Chios 27 May (Greece)
- Interviews in Athens 30 and 31 May
- Debriefing workshop 1 June
2.3 Limitations and constraints

The retrospective nature of the evaluation, its short timeframe (April – early June 2016), and the fact that multiple countries were involved, were the main constraints for this evaluation. Key contextual elements were identified as limitations and mitigation measures were developed where possible. These contextual limitations and their main implications for the ERR evaluation are summarised in Table 1.

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<th>Limitations/constraints</th>
<th>Implications</th>
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<td><strong>Data collection during the field visits</strong> was limited due to a number of factors: the winter emergency response was over, and most of the migrant population that were the focus of this programme during the implementation period had moved on from the project locations.</td>
<td><strong>The migrant/refugee populations</strong> assisted by the ERR were no longer in the countries of operation, and may have reached their destination country (mostly in Germany). A visit to Berlin (Germany) was therefore planned in order to interview some refugees.</td>
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<td><strong>Significant changes in the context</strong>, including the application of migration policies and the restricted mobility of migrants/refugees (currently stranded in Greece). As already mentioned, two major changes in policies particularly affected the ERR response: in February 2016, when the decision was made to close the Balkans route, and on 8-9 March with the EU-Turkey agreement.</td>
<td><strong>During the evaluation, the field visits took place in a radically changed context where people were no longer free to move across borders</strong> and were stranded; mainly in Greece.</td>
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<td><strong>Closure</strong> of the ERR programme (end of March) and a parallel MEL analysis run by the MEL services which limited the availability of final results data (the final report on the programme was due to be produced at the end of May 2016).</td>
<td><strong>At the time of the evaluation, the ERR activities were no longer being implemented</strong>, although some Start Network agencies were continuing similar projects.</td>
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<td><strong>Withdrawal or downsizing</strong> of project activities and staff (especially in the Balkans states).</td>
<td>A significant proportion of <strong>operational staff</strong> involved in the response had left their positions. The evaluation team therefore developed and conducted an online survey to collect their views on ERR.</td>
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<td><strong>A compiled and aggregated picture</strong> of the overall response was not available during the evaluation process. The Start Network Final Progress Report was shared with the evaluation team at the end of the evaluation process for information purposes.</td>
<td>The evaluators decided not to duplicate such an effort (final monitoring by the MEL), but rather designed a complementary evaluation methodology.</td>
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The main findings are organised around the three main functions performed by the Start Network during the European Refugee Response: its brokering/donor role, the provision of services, and the collaborative mechanism. Figure 4 presents the main questions for each of these functions, which are then analysed in detail in the following sections.

While this evaluation does not assess the performance of the individual projects, it does include a reflection on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and collaborative advantage of the ERR, as indicated in Figure 4.
3. BROKERING/DONOR ROLE

ERR agencies were largely positive about the added-value of the Start Network brokering/donor role compared to a traditional model of individual agencies interacting with the donor.

3.1 Timeliness and scale of funding (Effectiveness)

DfID funding to the Start Network made a significant difference as it allowed international NGOs to expand and scale up their existing operations. It also came at a critical time, when the flow of migrants was reaching its peak, and before there were additional needs due to the onset of winter.

As reported by some DfID representatives, a substantial amount of funding (£16 million) was released following advocacy by DfID towards the UK government, and as a result DfID’s portfolio was rapidly extended to support NGOs through the Start Network. Funds were made available at a time when there was a serious lack of funding for NGOs to respond to the crisis, partially due to administrative barriers with regard to funding of humanitarian operations within the EU (and potentially a reflection of a highly political situation). Based on the events of previous years, the evaluators perceived some reluctance on the part of donors (and some NGOs) to engage in such a highly politicised situation.

Although relatively late, DfID funding of the Start Network was still able to meet the additional needs of refugees and migrants due to the winter period. Discussions had taken place between the Start Network and DfID over the summer, but the decision to provide funding for the refugee crisis taking place in Europe was probably triggered by the media attention and public emotion at the humanitarian tragedy unfolding. At the beginning of September 2015, the photo of drowned 3-year-old Aylan Kurdi was published around the world. Immediately afterwards, Antonio Guterres (Head of UNHCR) declared that “the photo has just stirred the hearts of the world public (…) EU now has no other choice but to mobilize full force around this crisis. The only way to solve this problem is for the Union and all member states to implement a common strategy, based on responsibility, solidarity and trust”.

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*The number of people arriving in Greece via the Mediterranean was 147,123 in September 2015 and 211,663 in October. Cf. UNHCR portal, http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/country.php?id=83*

*See DfID interlocutors listed in Annex 2*

*Until September 2015, humanitarian funding in response to the needs of migrants and refugees in Europe was mainly channelled through the EU member states and UNHCR.*

*Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/56e9793b6.html, Geneva, 4 September 2015. See also Jonathan Freedland, “Aylan Kurdi: this one small life has shown us the way to tackle the refugee crisis”, 4 September 2015, The Guardian. Available at : https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/04/aylan-kurdi-refugee-crisis*
3.2 Benefits in terms of resource allocation and reduced transaction costs (Efficiency)

From DFID’s perspective, the main reason for providing funds to the Start Network was DFID’s limited capacity to manage these funds, the increasing number of refugees, and their increased needs due to the approaching winter period. Another reason, according to interviews with DFID and the Start Network, was to ensure that the response remained flexible and adaptable so that it continued to be effective and responded to the assistance and protection needs of “people on the move” (and, later, stranded at the borders).

The total amount of £16 million was disbursed by DFID through an existing Memorandum of Understanding for donor-funded emergency responses managed by NGOs (Start Fund13), signed between DFID and Save the Children, which was being used in an adapted form for the purposes of the Start Network Collaborative Responses. This enabled a more rapid response as it meant that no new procurement process was required for each Start Network Collaborative Response.

This model allowed donor responsibility and project management to be rapidly delegated to the Start Network. However, during the interviews conducted by the evaluation team, there were diverging views about the added-value of this delegated funding mechanism, and the main reason for choosing it. For the Start Network programme management, the main added-value was cost-effectiveness, while for DFID representatives, the main reason was the capacity to manage several projects as well as the responsiveness and flexibility of the response.

Getting a clearer indication of the cost-effectiveness of the overall approach led by the Start Network would require further comparison with CHASE14 or with a scenario where DFID managed the £16 million directly (or with a commercial contractor). However, the evaluation team is of the opinion that the Start Network’s overhead costs were high (6%) for a five-month emergency programme.

Beyond financial considerations, ‘outsourcing’ programme management and monitoring helped to address DFID’s insufficient capacity to directly manage and follow up all 17 projects within the ERR in such a short timeframe and at a time when it was not possible to recruit additional DFID staff.

3.3 Administrative/procedural flexibility (Efficiency)

From the agencies’ perspective, this delegated authority for funding allocations considerably lightened the administrative procedures between the donor and the implementing agencies.

In this sense, the brokering role of the Start Network enabled very smooth dialogue between agencies and programme management based on implicit and mutual understanding. For instance, interviewees said that the Start Network was well aware of the constraints and changing circumstances in the field (observed during the MEL visits in March on the Greek islands). This made it possible to integrate a high degree of flexibility into programme management, with agencies able to propose and agree changes with programme management within 24 hours.

The rapidity of decision-making, including the resulting reduced administrative processes, was considered by partners to be one of the main strengths and an added value of the collaborative mechanism in this very volatile context: “Start was very quick to review and respond to any needed changes in programming to address the changing context on the ground”; “Start enabled a swift approvals process to ERR budget and programming change requests”; “Requests for amendments were met in timely fashion” (Start Network implementing agencies).

Even agency staff who were used to working with DFID and ECHO, and were experienced in creating flexibility in otherwise rigid donor procedures, said that they had never worked with anything as flexible as the Start Network.

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12 See Annex 2.
13 http://www.startnetwork.org/start-fund
14 DFID Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE) operations team, which is provided by Crown Agents
3.4 Adaptability to changing needs and reactivity of activities (Responsiveness)

The flexibility with which grants were managed by the Start Network programme management meant that NGOs were able to adapt their response to a fast-changing context and fluctuating needs.

As shown in Figure 7, an overwhelming majority of survey respondents (agency staff) found that the adaptability of the response to evolving needs was “good or excellent” (21 out of 23 answers).

In particular, the flexibility of the programme management arrangements was highlighted for:

- Reformulating activities or specific objectives under the same general objective;
- Re-allocating unspent funds from one activity to another, or from one operational site to another within the same organisation (even between different countries).
3.5 Donor requirements: lack of accountability (Efficiency)

The broad monitoring carried out by the MEL services did not provide enough clarity and accountability about programmatic strategy and existing gaps. The monitoring approach was separated in terms of sectors, countries and organisations, and therefore did not provide visibility at a more global programme level (for instance, by showing how individual projects fitted into the wider context, their interactions and overlaps, etc.).

An overarching and critical analysis by the MEL team and more regular exchanges with the ERR agencies would have increased the complementarity of the response over the five countries, improved the justification for the project selection and revision processes, and provided a solid basis for dialogue with the donor.

From the beginning, clarifying the role of the donor in terms of monitoring had not been easy. Although the MEL approach was outlined in presentations to DfID (including face-to-face meetings), it was not clearly documented in the MoU or other programme documentation, and the MEL services were agreed between ACF UK (as MEL provider) and the Start Network programme management. Consequently, DfID decided to carry out several monitoring visits independently from the Start Network, with the aim of establishing an overall and more strategic picture from the field.

Similarly, DfID and the Start Network did not agree to a common set of criteria for project selection. Nor was any process specifically established between the Start Network and DfID to deal with diverging opinions about selection decisions. According to DfID, the systems put in place (the MEL services, and the selection processes through the PSC based in London for ERR) were not sufficiently impartial and accountable. And as the Start Network is a member-led network, there was no real leadership role taken by the Start Network programme management team to make difficult decisions. Certain decisions by the programme management team to validate the reorientation of project activities do not seem to have been based on an overall analysis of needs, the added value of partner organisations and the complementarity of their responses.

DfID had strong reservations about certain funding or reorientation decisions made by the Start Network (e.g. diverging views on due diligence, ethical issues and operational choices), and some concerns that they had no involvement in these decisions after the ERR grant was allocated to the Start Network.
3.6 Political leverage (Effectiveness)

Funding through the Start Network allowed DfID to support a large group of partners who were already present in an extended geographic area in various locations along the Balkans route, and operating in a wide range of sectors.

In addition, as DfID had no field presence in the region and the Start Network included a majority of UK-based NGOs, this funding channel provided political leverage vis-à-vis the UK government.

However, as previously mentioned, some staff within DfID expressed concern that they were not provided with key observations or crucial information that could be used for political advocacy.

This type of information, which is not necessarily channelled through the regular MEL reporting activities, could have provided some crucial information to guide donor advocacy and strategic aims. For their part, ERR agencies did not initially realise that there were advantages to this kind of donor involvement. However, as the situation changed over time due to political developments (Turkey-EU deal, national and EU asylum procedures, etc.), agencies began to understand the role a major donor like DfID could play in highlighting or unblocking certain situations.
4. START NETWORK SERVICES

The Start Network aims to provide certain services to its members as well as to donors, who are then able to see the real value of the network approach in terms of resource efficiency. The evaluation identified a number of shortcomings with regard to programme management and the MEL services during the period under review. It is important however to point out that some of these shortcomings were recognised and addressed spontaneously by the Start Network during the transition between ERR and the bridging phase of the programme (ERR2).

4.1 Lack of Start Network field presence (Efficiency)

Most of the interviewed agencies mentioned the lack of field presence of the Start Network services (MEL and programme management) as a key weakness in the approach: they reported that there was “very little direct on-the-ground interaction”.

Insufficient circulation of information between the Start Network and its operational partners was reported by agencies, and the evaluation identified insufficient inter-agency communication (especially at the field levels) as a gap. The lack of a permanent field presence by Start Network programme management until March 2016 most likely contributed to this issue. As several respondents to the survey stated: “It would have been good to have more constant feedback and exchange, more direct communication between the Start Network and programme managers in the field” and “It would have been necessary to have a permanent Start Network officer in place”.

4.2 Weaknesses in communication (Effectiveness)

From the beginning of ERR, several communication events were organised in order to clarify the operation of the Start Network and the roles and responsibilities of each service (mainly, programme management and MEL). This included launch meetings, MEL presentations to each agency, workshops and regular emails.

Nevertheless, communication by the Start Network did not reach a majority of operational staff at the right time. (“I did not know Start had a coordinating function until they arrived in country and called a partners meeting.”) A few examples of inconsistent communication are described in Box 4.

**BOX 04**

**EXAMPLES OF INCONSISTENT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN START NETWORK SERVICES AND AGENCIES**

**FIELD VISITS** by the MEL team were normally planned around 2-3 weeks in advance, in coordination with agencies in the field. The calendar of visits was therefore quite flexible. However, the MEL field visits were not necessarily coordinated with those in the programme management team, in particular during the period December 2015 to February 2016. There was therefore a certain amount of confusion about the different roles of MEL and programme management teams among field staff. There was also some confusion about different monitoring visits, with some carried out by DfID and others by Start Network staff. The field-based staff reported that, apart from those conducted by the MEL team, they were informed about these visits at very short notice. They were therefore unable to prepare properly or gather the relevant information and interlocutors.

**EMAIL COMMUNICATION** from the MEL service, including guidance information, was reported to be at times ad hoc and received on an irregular basis.

Regarding the **MANAGEMENT OF DONOR FUNDS**, the possibility of requesting a no-cost extension from DfID was not made clear to agencies during most of the programme. This information was shared with some partners at the very end of the implementation period. Agencies reported that they would have appreciated being informed at least one month in advance so that they could consider this option.
General information about the Start Network was not made widely available among the agency staff involved in ERR. As illustrated in Figure 8, many of the surveyed staff were not familiar with the Start Network approach, how it functioned and its support structures.

On several occasions, field staff reported that they did not know that their own organisation, or that other NGOs they were interacting with regularly, were part of the Start Network response. The fact that all communication materials were in English prevented the vast majority of MDM-Greece staff, very few of whom spoke English, from being fully informed about Start Network processes and products.

Several agencies recognised that information management and coordination of the 17 agencies in the ERR was challenging, especially at the beginning of ERR, and stated that communication was significantly improved from February to March 2016.16

4.3 Information management (Effectiveness/Efficiency)

As reported by several agencies, information and learning exchanges mainly took place through three channels:

- a cloud-based document sharing system;
- learning workshops organised by the MEL team (held in Athens in December 2015 and March 2016);
- ‘peer reviews’ (peer exchange visits between agencies) for project revisions (from March).

Most of the agencies that were informed and had access to these products or events appreciated them. Nevertheless, several agencies reported that they were not aware of the availability of such services, or had been informed quite late during ERR implementation (“The timely sharing of information on MEL processes and tools is critical, and there was an issue with this for the ERR”).

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16 This is especially true for the second stage of the response, ERR2, which began in April 2016, but is not being covered by this evaluation.
The evaluation team has formulated a series of assumptions to explain these shortcomings in communication, which would be worth exploring further for future collaborative responses:

- Lack of prioritisation by agencies of the information received by the Start Network (from end of November 2015 to the end of February 2016, i.e. an equivalent of less than 3 months), at a time when the ERR agencies were very focused on scaling up their emergency programmes;
- Inappropriate means of communication (email) or out of date contact lists due to the emergency mode of operations and high turnover of staff;
- Internal information-sharing bottlenecks within each agency.

The flow of information between the Start Network and agencies involved in the response could have been improved by a collective agreement which clarified the lines of communication and, consequently, coordination between programme management and agencies.

As the provision of reliable information was so critical during the mass influx of migrants, the way information and data management systems were put in place during ERR was a missed opportunity. The geographical distribution of agencies within ERR could have been an opportunity to exchange real-time information among themselves and with their local partners.

This would have proved particularly useful for identifying and tracing the needs of migrants/refugees transiting through the five countries, while at the same time boosting field coordination between all aid organisations (without necessarily needing a field presence from the Start Network and beyond ERR agencies).

A more agile information-sharing system could have utilised immediate channels of communication, such as instant messaging applications like Viber and Whatsapp. Many agencies were using these to share information in the field among predefined groups. This innovative use of web applications was prompted by the absence of any solid and well-structured information management system (“information provided by UNHCR was useful but not on a daily basis”).

Other collaborative tools for processing information could also have been used to fulfil certain programme level functions more effectively (operational strategies, transboundary coordination, MEL, exchange of good practices, etc.). For instance, ActivityInfo is an online humanitarian project monitoring tool used by Unicef and its partners, which collects, compiles and maps monitoring information. ActivityInfo has been developed to simplify reporting and allow for real time monitoring.

One of the many benefits of using these new means of communication would be to avoid overlaps or uncovered gaps during the response, such as those that occurred in terms of NFI coverage (see Box 9).

**BOX 05**

**INFORMATION-EXCHANGE AND COORDINATION BETWEEN NGOS THROUGH VIBER**

- An example of the use of social networks by NGOs was given by the agencies involved in the Tabanovce camp, in FYROM during the winter period in 2015. Considering the lack of a formal information system, and in order to increase the coordination between the two transit centres in the country (Tabanovce and Gevgelija), a Viber group was created to share information on key issues such as train schedules and the number of migrants on board trains. NGOs involved in the two camps were part of the group, which was coordinated by Red Cross staff in Tabanovce. It appears that information sharing and coordination mechanisms were largely informal and interpersonal, rather than based on a structured external system.
- Similarly, in the Greek islands, Whatsapp groups were created and had a high level of responsiveness between the full range of aid actors on information such as the number and needs of migrants arriving via the beaches. Agencies were therefore able to manage the refugees from the moment they landed on the shore to when they departed for the mainland, and to coordinate with other groups (such as volunteers).

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18 See at: https://www.whatsapp.com/?l=en
19 See at: https://www.activityinfo.org/
4.4 Promising MEL services, with a limited operational impact

MEL services aimed to provide a ‘programme level’ monitoring and learning system. As mentioned in the Learning Framework Guidance, the MEL framework was intended to ensure the delivery of a single, coherent programme rather than simply a group of individual projects in any given response. It consisted of: the consolidation of monthly SitReps and two donor reporting formats to be delivered by the agencies; two learning workshops; two monitoring visits by the MEL team; some case studies and peer reviews; and one final independent evaluation (see Figure 9).

The MEL framework was therefore supposed to promote the coherence of a multi-agency and multi-country approach. However, although the MEL products were properly achieved, they failed to include crisis management or situational monitoring, which could have guided project management, crisis response or strategic positioning.

The monitoring performed by the Start Network MEL team consisted mainly of the compilation of MEL information provided by the different agencies (from 17 agencies operating in five countries). In this sense, the range of MEL products offered a good overview of the various projects being implemented which, in some circumstances, facilitated networking and enhanced operational collaboration.

However, while this monitoring was intended to build upon the internal monitoring and evaluation systems of each agency, this only gave a partial picture of a complex and fast-changing reality. For example, the Start Network interim report provided a ‘snapshot’ of progress rather than a significant overview of the response as a whole: it did not summarise overall outcomes or the impact of the response, nor did it give a comprehensive overview of the wide range of activities and partners involved. This is related to the fact that ERR agencies did not consider it necessary to define programme outcomes, and did not support a joint programming approach (see section 5). Defining programme outcomes was consequently a retrospective exercise.

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20 See Athens Regional Learning Workshop Report, December 2015
The MEL service’s external perspective on the response could have been very useful for operational agencies and the Start Network programme management in terms of filtering the different types of available information (real-time information, refugee profiling, assessments and coordination information) and highlighting significant trends that would have helped to implement ERR effectively. At times, however, the MEL team compiled data without sufficient analysis, which led to an unclear understanding of the situation.

Finally, the collective MEL system managed by the Start Network was mainly used for “output tracking” and as a reporting tool to the donor. The MEL database included a wide range of data, but aggregating this was practically impossible. What is more, the lack of immediacy of the MEL products removed their lesson-learning and operational potential.

**Box 06**

**How Agencies Viewed MEL Products**

**Consolidated Situation Reports and Case Studies** were considered good reporting tools, in terms of situational updates and information sharing about the activities led by the various ERR agencies. However, given the speed of change in the context, by the time these documents were disseminated, the facts and observations that they included were often out of date, and were not deemed useful by the agencies for direct project implementation.

**Learning Workshops** organised in Athens by the MEL team were appreciated by agencies as an opportunity to meet other agencies involved in the ERR. This was deemed particularly useful in order to meet informally and sometimes was a starting point for further operational coordination. However, not all agencies participated in these events and key staff from ERR agencies, including some in charge of critical tasks, received little feedback about them. In addition, the workshop reports were not sufficiently disseminated. While this should have been organised by the MEL team or internally within each organization, more prominent communication about the learning workshops and their activities and findings would have been welcomed by the agencies.

**Box 07**

**How Agencies Viewed the MEL Services - Extracts from the Online Survey**

The area that could be improved is learning from monitoring. Case studies were produced and semi-regular coordination meetings held, but the speed of change within this response meant that learning was not captured and disseminated quickly enough to benefit partners in adapting programming to meet emerging needs. A more robust real-time online MEL system would be more appropriate for this response.

The nature of the response required real-time monitoring data and learning, and the MEL systems established for ERR were insufficient to provide this information. Therefore adaptability was based on individual partner observations and coordination meetings rather than any meaningful data derived from the MEL structures. This is a unique response in this regard and so learning is key and a more responsive MEL system would be a great asset within future ERR programming.
5. COLLABORATIVE MECHANISM

Overall, the terminology of “collaborative response” raised expectations with agencies beyond what was actually achieved by the Start Network.

Over the three Start Network Collaborative Responses implemented so far, the precise mechanism for a collaborative approach has never been formalised by the Start Network. In addition, there was no clarity or general consensus about how a collaborative approach would function for ERR. There was even some degree of unwillingness from the participating NGOs to work in a collaborative manner, such as establishing common objectives and strategies, or sharing tools and resources. This perception was mainly expressed by the programme management team, who initially tried to promote a joint programming approach. Interestingly, it was also echoed by some operational staff from ERR agencies who noticed missed opportunities in terms of joint and sectoral planning at the local level (without duplicating the coordination systems already in place) or the sharing of resources and tools (especially in the field of human resources). The absence of a common approach for programming and implementation was further undermined by the fact that the Start Network services did not provide enough exploitable and timely information to improve the complementarity and coherence of the response along the migratory route.

Nevertheless, for some agencies, the vision of a collaborative approach remains valid, and practices could improve over time based on collective lesson-learning and shared experiences in the future. For others, the level of expectations raised by the Start Network around a collaborative mechanism should be revised downwards. Some agencies feel that it should be much more oriented towards a service for donors (brokering role) and should not concern close operational collaboration between agencies.

5.1 Addressing needs of refugees (Relevance/Effectiveness)

Agencies reported that needs assessments were difficult to conduct, and even impossible in some cases. Projects therefore had to be designed on the basis of assumptions about the needs of the transient refugee population: the need for warm clothes and food, shelter, access to means of communication (including translation) and information. The challenge was therefore to adapt programmes in this changing and unpredictable environment rather than invest time at the beginning of the programmes to assess needs.

The variety of programmes and agencies funded through ERR meant that needs were broadly covered, which was a strength of the ERR design. Among the innovative aspects of the response was the importance given to facilitating refugees’ access to information and ability to stay in touch with relatives (through Wi-Fi access, charging facilities for telephones, etc.). Box 8 details an analysis of the services provided by agencies from the perspective of refugees who had transited through the route where the Start Network response was being implemented and had now reached their destination country:

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22 The model presented under Section 2.1 Theory of Change was developed due to the lack of a clear process document in the programme documentation.
Provision of services was concentrated at certain borders and reception points. Therefore, some refugees did not receive any assistance when they took less travelled routes. They generally were very appreciative of the assistance that was provided along the way (information about directions and procedures, food, clothing and medical care). However, in several of the countries crossed, the only aid organisation that the refugees and migrants noticed and could recognise was the Red Cross. There were other organisations present but they could not identify or remember them retrospectively.

Special attention was given to people with specific vulnerabilities (the elderly and pregnant women; no cases of unaccompanied minors were reported), thus facilitating their transit (transportation by car, fruit, clothing, quiet places to rest, etc.).

In several places refugees and migrants felt that the aid organisations were unable to provide all the services they wanted to because of the presence of security officers (police, army) and the tightening of border restrictions. Since the time spent at border points was very short and the number of people crossing very high, there was not enough time to communicate and exchange with the aid organisations’ personnel.

In terms of communication needs, most of the refugees and migrants interviewed did not have the time or equipment (SIM card and smartphone), or were not in the right frame of mind, to stay connected and use social media along their journey.

Refugees and migrants tried to stay in touch with their relatives and friends to inform them about their current location. To check their location, they mainly used Google maps and WhatsApp. This is why a Wi-Fi zone at the border crossing points and reception centres was deemed so vital by the migrants.

However, the lack of communication and/or coordination between partners resulted in some overlaps and gaps, as described in Box 9:

In all ERR locations, overlaps were observed in the distribution of NFIs, as pointed out in the four MEL monitoring reports.

In FYROM, during a coordination meeting in January 2016 (which came quite late in the response), the agencies realised that there had been significant overlaps in the distribution of winter jackets. On the island of Chios, an NFI pipeline was established through the NRC project, which allowed for a more efficient and coordinated use of resources. In Lesvos, duplication was avoided by the pooling of NFI stocks and weekly coordination meetings among ERR agencies as well as with other aid organisations.

In contrast, in the informal camp of Idomeni (Greece), there were not enough NGOs providing winter clothes to the refugees, and the bulk of this type of assistance was covered by the volunteer organisations who had been present since the beginning of the response.

Finally, given the limited timeframe of the response (five months, from October 2015 to March 2016), some delays to the start of implementation (approximately three weeks for several agencies) and the fact that no-cost extensions were not possible, there was enormous pressure to implement projects and spend funds quickly. As a result, a few organisations reported that their decisions were based more on the criterion of rapid disbursement rather than on the reality of needs.

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23 This information was collected during a series of 10 interviews with refugees in Berlin (Germany). See Box 2 under section 2.2.
24 See Box 10: Coordination with volunteer groups in Greece, under Section 5.6.
25 This was initially stated by the Start Network, but eventually two-week no-cost extensions were granted to some partners.
5.2 Absence of a “whole of the route” approach (Coverage)

The absence of a collective “whole of the route” vision for ERR was apparent in the lack of continuity and trans-border coordination along the route between ERR agencies. This could have been one of the most significant forms of added-value of such an NGO-led mechanism, but was under-exploited and under-valued.

Coordination across borders was made particularly difficult given the nature of the crisis, in particular the highly fluctuating numbers of transiting people, and the unpredictable changes in border controls and migration policies.26

There was no overall Start Network regional approach that would have supported operational coordination between agencies and across borders. As a result, there were some coordination gaps between border points and transit centres (or camps). This was a major concern for the operational partners in the field and was often seen as a “loss of time and energy”.27

However, medical NGOs were often more capable of coordinating with partners in different countries (for instance, between Idomeni camp and the health centre/hospital of Gevgelija, the entry point to FYROM, where the patients were sent).

5.3 Strengthening local capacities (Sustainability)

Efforts were made to work with local authorities in the different countries. This was challenging in Greece where municipal authorities and social institutions were relatively weak, and much easier in the Balkans where the experiences of past crises (Kosovo, the Balkans wars) were still present in people’s minds.

In FYROM, several agencies reported that the coordination with local NGOs and authorities had been particularly successful. Local NGOs provided specific knowledge about the context while the ERR agencies provided additional funding and competencies, especially in terms of emergency and resource management skills, including the application of procedures to increase accountability. An interesting example was the partnership developed between Oxfam and MYLA (Macedonian Young Lawyers Association), a local NGO with expertise in asylum procedures.

Two important remarks can be made about collaboration with local NGOs. Firstly there is a danger of stretching the capacity of local NGOs too far when they are expected to work with several INGOs at the same time (this was particularly the case for PRAXIS in Greece). Secondly, some of these NGOs were very small and were suddenly entrusted with responsibilities of which they had no prior experience (especially in FYROM). According to several interviewees met in the field, this raises the issue of training and capacity building efforts towards local NGOs once the peak of the crisis has passed.

Some Start Network projects also developed significant working relations with inhabitants from the local populations who had been very involved in helping to meet the needs of refugees in the first phases of the response. The partly substitutive/partly cooperative continuation of projects with local actors was very much appreciated by agencies.

Some agencies invested significant amounts of money in camp maintenance and improvement of infrastructure (e.g. DRC in Serbia, IRC and Oxfam in Lesvos) in order to be able to respond to a long-lasting crisis. In Lesvos, ERR agencies took the local population into account by purchasing locally and considering more permanent or sustainable infrastructures, and recognising their environmental and socio-economic impact. In Serbia, DRC rehabilitated and refurbished an old building inside the one-stop centre in Presevo, where people could rest and take shelter, even for a very short period. This accommodation centre was intended for use in case of border restrictions for some nationalities, but when the borders closed these facilities were left empty, which raises questions about the design of the response.

In terms of emerging evidence of sustainability, the longer term usefulness of such investments will depend on how the situation evolves, whether there will there be a new influx of refugees to use them and how the facilities will be maintained.

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26 These changes started in December with the introduction of movement restrictions except for three nationalities: Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans.
27 Testimony of an NGO worker in Idomeni camp.
5.4 Connections between the Start Network and agencies (Collaborative Advantage)

Among the key ingredients of a successful collaborative response is the Start Network’s presence in the field. This allows regular interaction with operational partners and makes it possible to keep track of the main developments in such a fast-evolving context. A focal person based in the region is also the most effective mechanism to bring people together and promote collective work.

However, Start Network programme staff were only present in countries towards the end of ERR. One MEL officer recruited in December 2015 and initially based in London was deployed in Athens in March 2016, and one Athens-based programme officer was hired to follow up on ERR2 starting from May 2016 (with some assistance for ERR final reporting and related activities).

Furthermore, in terms of field perspective for project selection and design of ERR, the members of the Project Selection Committee (PSC) were sometimes perceived by ERR agencies as lacking a field perspective. In terms of project selection criteria, some criteria (e.g. the capacity to scale up) were given priority over others (e.g. local knowledge and partnerships).

An alternative to field presence and the limited number of Start Network staff would be to rely more strongly on focal points and leads among the agencies, both UK and field-based, as was partially the approach during ERR, when the agencies in the field assisted Start Network staff in identifying key contacts. This could enhance the fluidity and rapidity of interactions between the field and headquarters, but also implies that agencies agree to devote more time and staffing to these coordination tasks.

5.5 Absence of collective programming (Collaborative Advantage)

The circumstances of the ERR launch did not allow for any designed joint programming, and the operational partners were even reluctant to agree upon an overall framework of outcomes and outputs. As a respondent to the survey highlights: “The nature of rapid response, in which agencies must quickly set up operations within their established mandates, limits time to establish collaboration at the project design stage.”

The entire process from the initial call to the validation of proposals for ERR took less than 3 weeks, from 3rd to 21st November 2015. However, immediately before the implementation period, a mapping exercise was organised, which helped to identify potential gaps and uncovered needs. This may also have led to more coordinated project proposals. This process was different in the Start Network Ebola Preparedness Programme collaborative response, for which a whole response logical framework was designed at the very beginning of the implementation (mid-April 2015). As mentioned in the Ebola Programme final evaluation report, the results framework allowed a better vision of the overall programme and promoted collective learning for the Start Network management team and operating agencies. To be effective in addressing such a trans-border epidemic, the real added value of this collaborative response was the fact that all agencies worked together across the affected region. However, the ERR never had a collective vision that would have allowed a more collective response.

5.6 Start Network coordination: objectives and limitations (Effectiveness)

As conceived by the Start Network, if any formal coordination mechanism was to be set up, it could not duplicate the existing coordination circles (notably led by UNHCR) or take up significant amounts of agencies’ time and effort. As far as coordination and collaboration are concerned, this is often referred to as the Start Network’s “light touch” approach, or its intention not to create another “humanitarian clique”.

As a result, a real “coordinated response” or further cooperation among the partners was not promoted in a clear and proactive way by the Start Network. Field coordination meetings among the operational partners were put in place only in February-March 2016.

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28 Out of the 18 proposals, 17 agencies were selected to take part in ERR. Solidarités was the only candidate that was rejected as it was not already operational in the region and did not get its due diligence membership for the Start Network within time.
During ERR, the majority of operational coordination happened in the field, which was usual practice. At the field level, coordination took place between all the actors involved, including the local authorities and civil society groups (volunteers, local NGOs) and other international organisations and NGOs.

Coordination among Start Network partners happened informally, based on operational links and encounters in the field or at MEL events (such as the December 2015 Athens workshop, for those agencies who participated). The lines of communication and coordination were strengthened during the later stages of the response, as the Start Network partners were increasingly familiar with each other. As illustrated by the responses to the survey of ERR agency staff, priority was given to “all agency cooperation and coordination” rather than specific collective action among the Start Network agencies (“Coordination with other partners of the network was good, but spontaneous in the field, not properly structured form the beginning of the implementation”). Box 10 illustrates an example of coordination with non-Start Network groups by ERR agencies.

**FIGURE 10**

**COORDINATION WITH OTHER ERR PARTNERS/ACTORS: ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS**

- Excellent: 1
- Good: 16
- Insufficient: 5
- Very poor: 1

**BOX 10**

**COORDINATION WITH VOLUNTEER GROUPS IN GREECE**

In Greece, one significant coordination advantage by ERR was the involvement of voluntary groups (made up of local inhabitants and/or European citizens), which made a clear contribution to the response in terms of harnessing additional resources. However, this caused some problems in relation to the operational methods of humanitarian organisations, and required time and energy. Start Network agencies met in the field highlighted the overall disorganisation of these groups (which even caused some security concerns in some camps) and their unwillingness to participate in the existing aid coordination mechanisms.

In Idomeni, some examples of successful coordination between Start Network agencies, their local partners and volunteer groups were found. PRAKTHI (operational partner of Save the Children) centralised and distributed the food provided and prepared by the volunteers. On the Greek islands (especially in Lesvos and Chios), the situation was rather chaotic before and during the winter, though volunteers were and still are key actors, especially on the shoreline operations (patrolling, maritime rescue, first reception and the distribution of food, hot liquids, dry clothes, blankets, etc.). When the humanitarian agencies arrived, the volunteer associations were sometimes “subcontracted”, but many refused and remained largely independent. Coordination gradually improved with regard to the different stages of assistance: alert, boat arrival and reception, initial relief on the beach, relief on the way to the first transit point, initial transportation, reception in transit centres, and transportation to the hotspot for registration and to the ports where refugees could take ferries to the mainland.

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30 This was maintained and increased for ERR 2.
31 Chaotic food / NFI distribution resulting in crowd movements and protests in the Idomeni camp: blocking of access for the vehicles transporting patients during food distribution etc.
Limited engagement in a collaborative mechanism (Collaborative Advantage)

The two previous findings underline the distinction between facilitating a “coordinated process” or a “collaborative mechanism” among the partners.

Despite what might have been expected, there was no clear intention to promote a real collaborative form of response, for example through the sharing of common resources and tools. When it was attempted, for example the design of a common results framework,\(^{32}\) this was not necessarily judged useful by the agencies.

This also reveals the lack of real engagement on the part of the participating agencies in the collaborative mechanism, as well as the initial lack of clarification about the role of the Start Network in this regard.

Finally, the Start Network limited itself to facilitating a coordinated response among the 17 agencies, but did not have the necessary legitimacy to develop it across the region. The reason for this is that creating a real space for collaboration requires time and trust from the various agencies involved.

Even if the collaborative model was still being developed, some common challenges could have been identified by the Start Network and collectively worked on. More specific clarification and guidance could have been provided, and more exchanges and synergies promoted, with the general aim of enhancing the implementation of projects.

In order to ensure a more coherent and complementary response, some areas of potential reflection and synergies could have been linked to:

- Structural issues, such as registration processes (especially in Greece), human resources regulations (recruitment of non-EU staff, salary scale, etc.), logistical issues, etc.
- More localized operational issues, such as: high number of aid agencies (in Lesvos) and other key coordination requirements between different geographical sites, transit points or neighbouring countries (NFI provision, cash support, protection referrals, for example).

Lack of common advocacy

On advocacy (in particular on protection issues), it is surprising that a network of 17 European agencies did not have a stronger voice in order to influence European donors, institutions and other stakeholders.

**Analysis of Protection Needs from the Refugees’ Perspective**

Most of the refugees interviewed in Berlin\(^{33}\) considered that the riskiest part of the trip was crossing the sea between Turkey and the Greek islands. In some cases, the people interviewed feared for their lives during the sea crossing. The cost of the sea crossing was sometimes as much as half of the total cost of the journey from Iraq or from Syria (i.e. between 1000 and 1500 USD for each adult).

The other main threats encountered on the Balkans route were:

- **01** Smugglers who told the migrants to get rid of all their belongings on the inflatable boats which were often overcrowded with people (up to twice their normal capacity).
- **02** Alleged activity of mafia groups, especially in FRYOM and Serbia, who may be responsible for disappearances (three cases reported during the interviews), and possibly of human traffickers on the Bulgarian route (thus avoided by the migrants).
- **03** Mistreatment by some police (or state) agents, between Greece, FRYOM, Slovenia, Serbia and Hungary. Some migrants said they had been pushed or kicked, for instance, at the border crossings in the Balkans, or beaten by the army in Hungary.

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\(^{32}\) See Athens MEL workshop report, December 2015.

\(^{33}\) Refer to previous Boxes 2 (section 2.2.) and 6 (section 4.4.)
Though it might be difficult to reach a common position for the 17 agencies (each with its own advocacy system), there is a shared view within the Start Network agencies that “advocacy on the real suffering that EU politics caused could have been a more central part of the Start Network project” (see figure 11).

Based on several field interviews and observations, the evaluation identified some missed opportunities for collective advocacy about important protection concerns (Box 12):

**Box 12**

**Missed Opportunities for Advocacy**

In FRYOM, no external actors (police or humanitarian workers) were allowed to travel with the refugees on the trains from Gevgelija to Tabanovce, which created additional protection risks for some categories of the population. It also posed an important operational constraint as no information about specific needs could be communicated in advance to the humanitarian organisations waiting for the train. The three- to four-hour waiting period for refugees would have been an opportunity to communicate with the refugees, as there was no time in the transit centres to discuss potential protection needs or other important humanitarian issues. Beyond this, an international presence in these trains may have pushed for more dignified transportation conditions: there were often more than 800 people travelling in trains with a limited capacity of up to 600, and paying €25 per person when the normal price is €5.

In the area of Idomeni camp, where police violence took place during the closure of the borders with FRYOM, attempts were made to establish joint advocacy between several NGOs and UNHCR but with no significant results.
CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS
6. CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation answers the central question on the basis of the three criteria mentioned in the Evaluation Terms of Reference: relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The links between criteria, evaluative questions, findings and conclusions are presented in the matrix in Annex 6.

6.1 Relevance/ Appropriateness of the European Refugee Response

RELEVANCE

A substantial amount of funding came at a critical time to respond to the needs of migrants and refugees along the Balkans route just before the winter period. While it can reasonably be assumed that this funding decision was triggered by the public emotion and subsequent political reactions to the refugee crisis, it provided ERR agencies and their local partners with much-needed resources, enabling them to scale up their assistance operations.

One important gap was related to advocacy vis-à-vis European donors, institutions and other stakeholders, in particular on protection issues. A network of experienced NGOs (17 ERR agencies) should have had a stronger voice collectively on the evolving political decisions and restrictions affecting the people that they were assisting.

COVERAGE

The range of programmes and agencies funded through the ERR meant that needs were broadly covered, including an innovative “communication with refugees” component: facilitating refugees’ access to information and ability to stay in touch with relatives. However, the lack of communication or coordination between ERR agencies resulted in some overlaps and gaps (e.g. NFI coverage). With a few rare exceptions, there was no “whole of the route” vision, nor a regional approach to support trans-border coordination.

This was particularly difficult to achieve given the nature of the crisis (transient population, fluctuating number, changes in border restrictions and migration policies). Nevertheless, the absence of a trans-border approach had a negative impact on coverage/effectiveness as it prevented the continuity of services.

ADAPTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

Flexibility and adaptability were undoubtedly the main strengths of the Start Network Collaborative Response, such as adaptation of programming to the changing context, including rapid review by programme management of requests. ERR agencies rated the brokering role of the Start Network team very highly compared to a traditional mode of interaction with the donor (particularly the rapidity of the decision-making process, sometimes within 24 hours).

The relevance of ERR activities essentially relied on the professionalism and expertise of the individual agencies as far as programming and needs assessments were concerned. Despite attempts, the Start Network was not in a position to set up or promote any mechanism for joint needs assessments or coordinated programming.

Furthermore, as the context and needs could change within days or even hours, it is important to acknowledge that the results of any kind of field assessment would rapidly be out of date and of little use for direct implementation.

6.2 Effectiveness

The limited timeframe (five months, from October 2015 to March 2016), as well as some delays to the start of the implementation and the inability to obtain no-cost extension for activities, had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the response. This was particularly the case when agencies based their decisions on the criterion of rapid disbursement rather than on the reality of needs.
In such circumstances, and given the fluctuating context and needs, it was particularly challenging for the Start Network team to establish an overall view and lead programme management among 17 agencies operationally spread over five countries. The Start Network team could have attempted to set up a more agile information system through instant messaging platforms (Viber, WhatsApp or Facebook) in order to take advantage of the geographical distribution of ERR agencies. This would have proved particularly useful for identifying and “tracking” the needs of migrants/refugees transiting through the five countries, and could have boosted field coordination between aid organizations. Other collaborative tools for processing information could also have been used to fulfil some programme functions more effectively (operational strategies, transboundary coordination, MEL, exchange of good practices, etc.).

The Start Network team also did not share key information about programmes and contextual developments with DfID, which would have provided political leverage vis-à-vis the UK government. As the crisis was closely intertwined with political developments, it is important for the donor to properly understand what is happening and how its resources are being used. The implementing agencies need to be more aware of this, as there was potential for political involvement to play a positive role in highlighting or unblocking situations in the medium and long term.

SUSTAINABILITY

Some efforts were made to work with local authorities and populations in the different countries. Coordination with local NGOs and authorities was particularly successful in FRYOM, where NGOs provided local knowledge while ERR agencies contributed additional funding and skills. Some ERR projects also involved significant cooperation with local people who had been the first-responders to the emergency. ERR agencies greatly appreciated this form of cooperation.

Some agencies invested significant amounts of money in camp maintenance and the improvement of infrastructure in anticipation of a long-lasting crisis. However, the usefulness of these investments will depend on how the context evolves, whether there will be further waves of migration, and local authorities’ sustainability efforts.

6.3 Efficiency

Going through the Start Network allowed DfID to ‘outsource’ programme management and monitoring in a short space of time when DfID did not have the capacity to manage all projects.

This delegated allocation process lightened the administrative procedures between the agencies and the donor, and allowed a high degree of flexibility in programme management (as explained in the section on Relevance/Responsiveness).

While a variety of products and communication channels were used, the information circulated by the Start Network did not reach the vast majority of operational staff among ERR agencies. This resulted in a widespread lack of knowledge about the functioning of the Start Network, its structure and main services (programme management and MEL), in particular at the field and operational levels. Insufficient circulation of information was most probably linked to the lack of a permanent field presence by the Start Network staff during most of ERR. It was only considered towards the end of ERR.

The wide range of MEL products (situational reports, learning workshops, monitoring visits, case studies, peer reviews) provided a good overview of the projects, which facilitated networking and operational coordination between ERR agencies. However, these did not include crisis management or situational analysis. Analysis of this kind could have guided crisis response and strategic positioning, as the MEL framework was also supposed to promote the coherence of a multi-agency and multi-country action.

Thus, the ‘broad’ monitoring carried out by the MEL services did not provide the donor with enough information about operational strategies and remaining gaps. What is more, the systems put in place (MEL services, selection process through the PSC) were not considered sufficiently accountable by the donor. The role of DfID in terms of monitoring and selection decisions had not been clarified, and this led to misunderstanding and frustration. An overarching and more critical analysis of monitoring information could have enhanced the complementarity of the response (across all five countries) and provided a solid basis for dialogue with the donor.
Communication and coordination was strengthened at a later stage of the response (around February-March 2016), due to field coordination meetings and closer ties between ERR partners. No formal mechanism for coordination among the ERR agencies was set up, in order to avoid duplicating existing coordination processes (led by UNHCR and/or national authorities). Coordination among ERR agencies was more informal, based on operational links and encounters in the field, or Start Network workshops. Priority was given to “all agency cooperation and coordination” rather than specific collective action among ERR agencies.

### 6.4 Collaborative mechanism

The use of the term “collaborative response” raised expectations with agencies beyond what was actually implemented.

There was no clarity or general consensus about the principles and practical feasibility of a collaborative approach for ERR. What is more, the circumstances in which ERR was launched did not allow for any joint programming as the agencies were unwilling to agree upon an overall framework of outcomes and outputs.

Among the key ingredients of a collaborative response are the presence of Start Network focal persons in the field and the decentralisation of selection processes. Start Network staff were only present at the end of ERR, and operational staff sometimes felt that PSC members lacked field perspective.

Finally, the Start Network limited itself to facilitating the coordination of the 17 agencies, but did not have the legitimacy to develop a real collaborative mechanism across the 5 countries. This is due in part to the fact that the collaborative response model is still being developed, but also to the fact that participating agencies are not sufficiently committed to this kind of approach.

Some common challenges could have been identified and collectively worked on. In the future, the Start Network could promote reflection and synergy between agencies both on structural issues (i.e. legal requirements, human resources, and logistics) and on more localised operational or coordination issues (especially between different geographical sites).
7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations refer to collaborative responses in general, including any current responses, and need to be implemented before the implementation phase of future Start Network Collaborative Responses. They could also be used to develop a collaborative response model based on the proposed Theory of Change.

It is important to note that some of the problems and shortcomings underlined in this independent evaluation report have already been identified and addressed by the Start Network team and ERR agencies at the end of ERR and during the transition to bridging phase (ERR2).

RECOMMENDATION 1

BEFORE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE, THE START NETWORK TEAM AND THE AGENCIES INVOLVED SHOULD BUILD A SHARED AND COLLECTIVE VISION

01 Build a consensus among the participating agencies about objectives for the collaborative approach (from light collaboration to full integration).
02 Involve DfID at this stage for their input on the specific goals and the expected added value of such a collaborative response.
03 Once this is established, the partners need to make a formal commitment to the specific collaborative process.

RECOMMENDATION 2

START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD IDENTIFY THE APPROPRIATE SET-UP (PROCESSES, STRUCTURE AND OUTPUTS) IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE COLLECTIVELY DEFINED OBJECTIVES

01 Start Network should determine appropriate mechanisms to set up in accordance with the chosen model and degree of collaboration, including:
   • Formulate at least a common framework of action, before the implementation phase.
   • Define selection criteria and processes which guarantee the coherence of the overall strategic approach, or, at the very least, ensure that selected projects are of good quality and that there is equity between operating partners.
   • Develop a monitoring system, from donor reporting to contextual analysis to guide strategic decision-making and/or advocacy purposes.
   • Establish the appropriate communication and coordination system, the two extremes being a system with minimal Start Network staff or one with a network of focal persons in the field.
02 Consult with the donor about the donor's involvement at different stages (operational strategy, selection, monitoring and follow-up, potential advocacy) and the required mechanism for interaction with the Start Network.

RECOMMENDATION 3

START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD REVIEW THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF ERR MANAGEMENT AND MEL SERVICES, INCLUDING THEIR FIELD PRESENCE, TO INFORM FUTURE COLLABORATIVE RESPONSES

After an internal review of the model of management and MEL services for ERR, for future collaborative responses, the Start Network should consider:

01 Including Start Network staff in the field to promote effective collaboration among agencies.
02 Reviewing the current programme management and MEL structure by clarifying the roles and
responsibilities of programme management and MEL teams, in particular with regard to overlapping spheres of responsibility (communication, coordination, monitoring and operational follow-up, etc).

03 Investing the necessary resources in order to guarantee that the operational impact of the services it provides is in proportion to the level of fees received.

RECOMMENDATION 4

START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD REVIEW AND DESIGN AN OPTIMAL COORDINATION SYSTEM, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE NUMBER OF AGENCIES INVOLVED AND THE CONTEXT

For any existing response:

01 Strengthen the flows of information among Start Network agencies and other stakeholders, without duplicating the existing coordination circles.

For future responses, depending on the level of integration and the size of the budget, other steps could be taken:

02 Agree upon and define coordination roles for the Start Network team and possibly some of the agencies involved.
03 Increase the means at the disposal of the Start Network to improve inter-agency and inter-country coordination (human resources, communication, expertise, etc.).

RECOMMENDATION 5

START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD STRENGTHEN THE OPERATIONAL BENEFITS OF MEL SERVICES

Start Network team should ensure that MEL services for future collaborative responses:

01 Formulate a monitoring plan aligned to the common framework for action, which will encompass indicators, sources of information and frequency of collection.
02 Define the type of data and information to be collected either by the MEL service or the operational agencies (to be specified within the monitoring plan).
03 Ensure that the MEL team has the capacity to triangulate information and to carry out contextual and strategic analyses in order to support overall project steering.
04 Separate donor reporting responsibilities (entrusted to the programme management team) and evaluation and learning functions (MEL services).
05 Identify issues of common interest (strategic, operational, advocacy) to be further addressed through commissioned studies, or during workshops and coordination meetings.

RECOMMENDATION 6

START NETWORK TEAM SHOULD ESTABLISH A ROBUST COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Start Network team should:

01 Develop collectively an Information and Communication strategy (target audiences, information needs, tools, channels, languages, etc.).
02 Set up an agile and real-time information system (including instant messaging) for the response.
03 Select useful tools for information processing to enhance the impact and coherence of the collective response.
04 Ensure mechanisms for information synthesis to fulfil donor requirements in terms of accountability.
05 Explore agency opinions on providing key information to donors (contextual, strategic, programme-related), that could be used for political leverage vis-à-vis governments.
ANNEXES
ANNEX 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

01. INTRODUCTION

The Start Network is an international network of NGOs that aims to enable a broad range of humanitarian actors and partners to provide the best possible solutions for people affected by crises. It aims to provide platforms to enable collaborative approaches to decision-making and provision, to achieve more together than any single organisation acting alone could accomplish. In 2015, the Start Network began three collaborative responses to enable agencies to respond in a coordinated way to large-scale crises: the Central African Republic Refugees in Cameroon Response; the Ebola Preparedness Programme (Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal and Ivory Coast); and European Refugee Response (Greece, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia). The unique consortium arrangements of the Start Network aim for funding to be disbursed quickly, and the collaborative approach to enable a larger response, across a number of sectors, in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The Start Network is planning to conduct an independent evaluation of the European Refugee Response (hereby referred to as ‘ERR’). Action against Hunger UK is delivering the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning service for the Refugee Response, which includes managing the independent evaluation process.

The evaluation serves the following purposes: i) assess performance of the European Refugee Response to date in achieving results and on invested resources; ii) generating evidence and contributing important lessons learned to the existing knowledge base on how to effectively and efficiently respond to crises in a collaborative manner.

The evaluation will be conducted by independent evaluators and managed by the Start Network Evaluation Advisor, based at Action Against Hunger UK, in close cooperation with the Start Network programme manager, the consortium of 17 agencies and the Start Network Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Team.

02. BACKGROUND

In 2015 more than a million refugees and migrants entered Europe fleeing war, prosecution or poor economic conditions in their home countries. 1,008,616 people arrived in Europe by sea, 84% of which come from the world’s top 10 refugee-producing countries (Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq being the top three). By the summer of 2015, the number of people recorded each day crossing the sea borders of Turkey and Greece by boat (and then continuing their journey overland to Northern Europe) rose beyond the capacity of local communities and authorities to respond on their own. The situation has sparked a crisis as countries in Southern Europe and the Balkans struggle to cope with this influx, while the discussions in the EU on how to deal with the movements and resettlement of this population are still ongoing.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the leading coordinating actor in most locations where the response is visible. Governments also have a significant role in enabling the movement of refugees and migrants and in setting the registration processes, as well as in facilitating the work of agencies. This is a fluid situation, due to border closures and other issues, but the migration route is more or less established from Greece to FYROM, Serbia and Croatia through specific transit checkpoints and short-term stay centres and facilities, where most agencies carry out activities. This transient response creates many challenges for agencies in relation to the continuation of services (particularly medical and psychosocial), monitoring, protection and provision of information.

Winterisation activities and the distribution of warm clothes and relevant equipment were deemed vital since the weather conditions deteriorated during the winter months from October 2015. In response the Start Network received £16 million in UK Aid to distribute to 17 agencies which have undertaken emergency response projects in five counties: Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. The agencies involved are ACAPS/
MapAction, Action Aid, CARE, Christian Aid, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Doctors of the World, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Oxfam, Samaritan’s Purse, Internews, Save the Children, Translator’s Without Borders (TWB) and World Vision.

The ERR began at the end of October 2015, with a programme length of five months, and consisted of projects providing assistance in the sectors of Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH), camp management, protection, shelter, distribution of non-food items (NFIs) and winterisation items, increasing access to health facilities, increasing access to information and contributing to improved coordination among partners and local authorities.

The objectives of the ERR were:

- Providing vulnerable people including children at risk with protection services
- Meeting refugee’s basic needs: adequate winter support, appropriate shelter, food, cash, non-food items (NFIs) and WASH, access to basic health services along the migrant route
- Providing agencies, partners and local authorities with appropriate and relevant information to ensure an enhanced capacity to respond.

The primary focus of the ERR was the needs of refugees and migrants, but the ERR also considered the needs of host communities. The response has been conducted in a rapidly evolving context, and the unpredictability and changing context of response has been a defining factor for the response.

The overall budget was £16 million, and the programme duration was end of October 2015 to 31 March 2016. As of 31 March 2016, the programme has been extended for 3 months. This extension will not directly be included in the scope of the evaluation, as there may be some adjustments to the programme.

The programme locations are indicated in the annexed infographic.

**03. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION**

The goal of the independent evaluation of the European Refugee Response is to provide an opportunity to reflect, learn and adapt the programming to enhance the effectiveness of the overall response and future collaborative responses.

The objectives of the evaluation of European Refugee Response are to conduct an independent assessment of:

- the appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of the ERR in meeting the intended programme outcomes of reducing human suffering and increasing dignity by providing winter support to refugees/migrants in Greece, Croatia, FYROM, Serbia and Slovenia;36
- to assess the adaptiveness and responsiveness of the ERR;
- define and assess the degree and value of cooperation of collaboration within the ERR, including i) factors that aided or hindered agencies responding in a collaborative way; ii) any collaborative advantage (or disadvantage) of the ERR at all levels (in-country, between countries and at the member agency HQ level) with a view to identifying those factors that may improve collaborative responses going forward.

A key aim of the evaluation is to build on the existing body of monitoring and reporting data collected by the ACF-UK Programme MEL services and agencies’ own systems.

The intended audience for the evaluation is member agencies of the ERR, the Start Network, DfID and the wider humanitarian community involved in the crisis.

35 http://www.startnetwork.org/collaborative-response/european-refugees
36 In line with Core Humanitarian Standards of ensuring communities and people affected by crisis are placed at the centre of humanitarian action to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance provided and facilitate greater accountability to communities and people
04. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The criteria for this evaluation are: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Collaborative Advantage.

Indicative evaluation questions have been developed to guide the evaluators, listed below. The final set of evaluation questions should be determined after consultation with the evaluation manager and presented in the inception report.

RELEVANCE/APPROPRIATENESS

- How appropriate was the ERR to the needs and priorities of refugees and migrants, and how were these identified?
- How appropriate was the coverage of the ERR, in particular the extent to which the needs of the most vulnerable were met?
- How adaptive and responsive was the ERR to i) changes in country contexts and over time, including political decisions; ii) changing needs of refugees and migrants (and how were these identified), and what gaps remained and why?

EFFECTIVENESS

- To what extent has the ERR contributed to the overall aim of meeting the immediate needs of refugees and migrants?
- What has the ERR achieved in terms of building community capacity, use/strengthening of local and national partners, and integration of approaches into national and regional initiatives aimed at addressing the needs of refugee and host communities, and how likely are they to continue after the Response?

EFFICIENCY

- To what extent were the available resources (e.g. funds, expertise, time, administrative support) of the ERR adequate to achieve the expected outcomes?
- To what extent did projects timelines take account of the nature of the crisis?

COLLABORATIVE ADVANTAGE

- In what ways did agencies (individuals and organisations) in the ERR work together (coordinate and collaborate) in the response, and what were the drivers and mechanisms for this?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Start Network approach for the ERR, including:
  - programme management including speed and flexibility of decision-making
  - Common framework and approach for monitoring, reporting and learning

Consideration of the ERR as the third Start Network collaborative response should also be included where appropriate, to contribute to a broader body of evidence.
05. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

This section outlines the expected methodological approach for the evaluation, in the following phases:

DESIGN PHASE

01 An evaluation technical briefing will be held between the evaluators and the evaluation manager. At this meeting, the evaluators will be provided with access to all relevant documentation, an indicative list of interviewees, and key dates during the evaluation.

02 Based on, but not limited to the documentation provided by the evaluation manager, the evaluators will undertake a desk review of: programme documentation including planning documents, monitoring and reporting documents from both Start Network MEL services and individual agencies, communication materials, financial reports, and other documents from secondary sources.

03 The evaluators will conduct phone and in-person (depending on availability) interviews and surveys with key stakeholders identified by the evaluation manager and programme staff, including but not limited to i) programme manager and the Start Network Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Team; ii) project staff in Greece, FYROM, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia; iii) DFID. It is important to prioritise interviews with stakeholders and programme coordinators at the field level who may not be available at the time of the field visit. The evaluators will work with the evaluation manager and member agencies to identify this personnel.

04 The evaluators will obtain feedback from member agencies and field staff on the most relevant sites to visit. It is proposed that four countries could be visited during the evaluation - Greece, FYROM, Serbia, and Croatia37 - ideally in two parallel field visits (one team for project sites in Greece, and one team for other 3 countries). As the evaluation will not be able to conduct fieldwork on activities implemented during the ERR due to project deadline of 31 March and the large number of partners, sites will be selected for activities that are indicative of the ERR, which may also include be ERR projects which have been extended. Consideration will also be given to accessibility and security issues.

05 Due to the fluid nature of the response, and the mobile nature of the beneficiary population, consideration for ‘light touch’ data collection from beneficiaries during the field phase in transit countries or destination countries will need a particular focus during the design phase. This evaluation is being complemented by a bespoke research component conducted by CDAC network on communication with communities in the context of the European refugee crisis. This is currently being conducted and synergies with this research could be explored during the design phase.

06 At the end of the design phase, the evaluators will prepare an inception report [see template] that will include the finalised evaluation questions, data collection and analysis strategy, including selected sites for field visit, data collection tools and detailed workplan. The inception report will be submitted to and approved by the evaluation manager.

FIELD PHASE

After the design phase, the evaluators will conduct a two week fieldwork to collect and analyse data in order to answer the evaluation questions. Additional capacity for data collection during the field phase could be provided by ACF-UK staff (who would be independent of the ERR).

Data collection methods should be inclusive and include a broad range of partners and stakeholders and utilise a range of methods, including: key informant interviews with key project stakeholders (project staff, local/national representatives, local authorities, humanitarian agencies) and beneficiaries as appropriate in line with the methodology and tools outlined in the finalised inception report. The use of surveys and other remote data collection tools should also be explored by the evaluators to maximise data collection.

The evaluators should ensure a systematic triangulation of data sources and data collection methods and tools, and seek to validate data through regular exchanges with project staff where appropriate.

37 Project activities in Slovenia have finished, so they can be assessed via a desk research.
At the end of the field visits, the evaluators will hold informal debriefs with project staff and stakeholders, with a view of validating preliminary findings, and providing feedback on tentative lessons learned and identified good practices. These will be ‘light touch’ meetings with key personnel to minimise the ‘footprint’ of the evaluation on agencies.

Implementing agencies will provide support to the evaluation at the field visit stage by helping to identify project sites and the availability of key project staff for interview, and where possible facilitating access to key locations (e.g. camps). For all other field visit tasks, the evaluators will be expected to make own travel and logistical arrangements where possible, to minimise the burden on in-country partners.

REPORTING PHASE

The evaluators will conduct further analysis of collected all data and prepare a draft final evaluation report [see template], to be prepared in English and submitted to the evaluation manager for comment. After revision, the final evaluation report will then be submitted by the end of the agreed consultant contract period.

DISSEMINATION PHASE

During this phase, relevant stakeholders, including Start Network members, DfID, agencies and stakeholders will be presented with the results of the evaluation. A management response or similar response mechanism for the evaluation will be prepared in consultation with the programme manager and relevant stakeholders. Both this and the evaluation report will be published on Start Network website. Appropriate evaluation deliverables will be developed, in consultation with stakeholders, depending on budget availability. Additional opportunities to present the findings and recommendations from the evaluation presented at key events will also be explored.

06. KEY DELIVERABLES

- Inception report
- Notes of field phase debriefing meetings
- Draft Evaluation Report
- Final Evaluation Report
- Dissemination presentation

All deliverables should be submitted in English. Any amendments to the templates for the key deliverables should be agreed in advance with the evaluation manager.

07. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE (subject to discussion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation phase</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>Drafting of ToR</td>
<td>3rd week March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultation on ToR</td>
<td>Final week March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment of consultant</td>
<td>w/c 10th April 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Evaluation technical briefing with evaluation manager</td>
<td>w/c 10th April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desk review and interviews</td>
<td>18- 29th April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submission of inception report</td>
<td>29th April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field phase</td>
<td>In-country field work</td>
<td>2 - 13 May 2016</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Submission of draft final evaluation report</td>
<td>23rd May 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>Submission of final evaluation report</td>
<td>31st May 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38 Recommendations should include for programme management and for future collaborative response approaches
08. QUALIFICATIONS/RECRUITMENT

The required qualifications for the evaluators are:

- Advanced degree in social sciences, political sciences, economics, development or related fields
- Extensive previous experience in leading multi-country, complex evaluations, especially in the field of humanitarian response
- Experience with operations and coordination in humanitarian response, with experience in evaluating partnerships and collaborative responses an asset
- Excellent management skills and ability to facilitate multi-partner engagement in the evaluation process
- Experience in participatory evaluation methods

Due to the proposed field work approach of two parallel teams, the proposed team should include additional capacity to accommodate the data collection requirements for the field phase (for example additional data collectors/researchers for field phase only).

The proposed team should also include a dedicated evaluation team leader, who will lead all phases of the evaluation and be responsible for all final deliverables.

09. MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE EVALUATION

These Terms of Reference have been developed by the evaluation manager, with inputs from Start Network and ERR agencies.

The evaluators will report directly to the evaluation manager, who is independent of the Start Network Response. The evaluators will submit all deliverables to the evaluation manager, who will coordinate all comments on deliverables, for final approval.

10. LEGAL AND ETHICAL MATTERS

The ownership of draft and final documentation belongs to Start Network. Draft documentation should not be shared with anyone unless agreed to in advance by the evaluation manager.

Start Network is the main addressee of the evaluation.

All relevant documentation will be shared with the evaluators via a secured document repository, and remain the property of Start Network.

This is an independent evaluation and it is essential that the evaluators do not have any links to the design or implementation of any aspects of the object being evaluated, or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation.
## ANNEX 2

### PERSONS INTERVIEWED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation / Job Title</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ERR1 Programme Manager</td>
<td>Lydiah Mutimbanyoka</td>
<td>13/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Senior MEL Officer</td>
<td>Tony Spence</td>
<td>28/04/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Regional MEL Officer</td>
<td>Mariagni Ellina</td>
<td>26/04/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ERR2 Programme lead</td>
<td>Steve Williams</td>
<td>04/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ERR1 Interim Programme Manager, PM ; ERR2, PM - current</td>
<td>Emily Whitehead</td>
<td>10/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Humanitarian Advisor, Migration Unit, DfID</td>
<td>Nadia Guillin</td>
<td>09/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 DfID</td>
<td>James Purcell</td>
<td>26/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ECHO</td>
<td>Jorg Roos</td>
<td>13/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 ActionAid</td>
<td>Amanda Weisbaum</td>
<td>25/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Consultant, European Refugee Crisis, Mercy Corps (MC), Brussels</td>
<td>Graham Niven</td>
<td>10/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Mercy Corps - Programme Manager on Lesbos (previously); Team Leader for the Balkans (current)</td>
<td>Radovan Jovanovic</td>
<td>13/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Programme manager, (IMC, operating in Greece), London-based</td>
<td>Gemma Bruley</td>
<td>10/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Christian Aid</td>
<td>Sian Rowbotham</td>
<td>12/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 CRS, FRYOM</td>
<td>Joshua Kyller</td>
<td>12/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Senior project officer, CRS, USCCB Branch Office in FRYOM</td>
<td>Milica Petrushevska</td>
<td>11/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Senior Director Global initiative Internews</td>
<td>Allison Campbell</td>
<td>27/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Project Manager</td>
<td>Nurangiz Khodzharaova</td>
<td>27/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Executive Director; Translators Without Border</td>
<td>Rebecca Petras</td>
<td>27/05/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Senior Research Associate HPG/ODI</td>
<td>John Borton</td>
<td>27/05/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ANNEX 3

## PEOPLE MET DURING FIELD WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation / Job Title</th>
<th>Location of meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17/05/2016</td>
<td>Goran Stojanovski</td>
<td>Head of Regional Crisis Management Centre Kumanovo, Tabanovce Camp Manager</td>
<td>Tabanovce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marina I. Todorovska</td>
<td>Administration and Finance Officer for CRS emergency response activities in FRYOM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>SOS Children’s Village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nikola</td>
<td>La Strada/Open Gate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vlatko Jovanovski</td>
<td>Emergency Field Coordinator, UNICEF Skopje</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanja</td>
<td>Red Cross</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ljupce Velkovski</td>
<td>ORT</td>
<td>Skopje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/05/2016</td>
<td>Suzana T. Paunovska</td>
<td>Secretary of the City Red Cross of Skopje</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Violeta Nicheva Tikveshanska</td>
<td>MEL Officer, Save the Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ivan Sterjoski</td>
<td>Oxfam project coordinator for FRYOM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irena Zdravkova</td>
<td>Protection Officer, DRC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tomislav Zulim</td>
<td>Country Representative, DRC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aleksandar Vladicevski</td>
<td>Program Manager, DRC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lawyer/jurist from Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA), OXFAM partner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/05/2016</td>
<td>Radovan Jovanovic</td>
<td>Emergency Team Leader Balkans (former programme manager in Lesbos)</td>
<td>Presevo</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sasa Marusic</td>
<td>Mercy Corps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nikic</td>
<td>Camp manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marija Vranesevic</td>
<td>Programme manager Philanthropy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Radovan Jovanovic</td>
<td>Mercy Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verica Recevic</td>
<td>Programme manager, DRC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anica Dudukovic</td>
<td>Protection Officer DRC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miograd Mitic</td>
<td>Location coordinator, SOS Children’s Villages Serbia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milenko Vikic</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Gervier</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Organisation / Job Title</td>
<td>Location of meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SERBIA</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/05/2016</td>
<td>Dino Mujanovic</td>
<td>Programme manager for Serbia, CRS</td>
<td>Belgrade</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nevena Milufinovic</td>
<td>Save the Children</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Massimo Moratti</td>
<td>Protection manager, DRC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boris Vitlacil</td>
<td>Project Manager, OXFAM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vladan Nikolic</td>
<td>Project coordinator, CARE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gordana Vucinic</td>
<td>Project coordinator, CARE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GERMANY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>In regular</td>
<td>Regina Radke-Lottermann</td>
<td>DRK-Landesverband; Leiterin Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit</td>
<td>Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact</td>
<td>Julika Krimphove</td>
<td>AWO Berlin, Referentin des Vorstandes/Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 &amp; 27/05</td>
<td>Iris Rehberg</td>
<td>DRK; Heimlat Leiterin</td>
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<tr>
<td>24/05/2016</td>
<td>Rojina Issa</td>
<td>AWO Berlin</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GREECE (North)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>19/05/2016</td>
<td>Sambhavi Cheemalapati</td>
<td>IMC Emergency Programme Manager</td>
<td>Thessaloniki</td>
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<tr>
<td>20/05/2016</td>
<td>Triantafullou Dimitra &amp; volunteers</td>
<td>Human in Needs – volunteers organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>23/05/2016</td>
<td>Corina Kanistra</td>
<td>Médecins du Monde (MDM) - Deputy Field Coordinator</td>
<td>Oreokastro Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Youkee</td>
<td>Médecins du Monde (MDM) - Medical Coordinator</td>
<td>Idomeni Camp</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Harriet Zych</td>
<td>PRAKSI, Nurse</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elodie Lemal</td>
<td>UNHCR Protection officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>24/05/2016</td>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Save The Children – NFIs Distribution Coordinator</td>
<td>Polykastro</td>
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<td><strong>GREECE (Islands)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>26/05/2016</td>
<td>Nicole Epting</td>
<td>UNHCR – Head of Sub-Office Lesbos</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dennis Moroni</td>
<td>IRC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panis Navrozidis</td>
<td>IRC</td>
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<td>Frédéric Mollet</td>
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<td>27/05/2016</td>
<td>Nectarios Bako</td>
<td>Save The Children / PRAKSI</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/05/2016</td>
<td>Katerina Tsixera</td>
<td>IMC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natalia Raimelioti</td>
<td>IMC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Organisation / Job Title</td>
<td>Location of meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/05/2016</td>
<td>Joseph Kuper</td>
<td>HCR Chios</td>
<td>Chios</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Floramæ Esapebong</td>
<td>Samaritan’s Purse Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ariane Mige</td>
<td>NRC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/05/2016</td>
<td>Dina Prior</td>
<td>IMC, Country Director Athens</td>
<td>Athens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria Jack</td>
<td>Internews, Humanitarian Data Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stijn Aelbers</td>
<td>Internews, Humanitarian Advisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/05/2016</td>
<td>Amy Frost</td>
<td>Save The Children – Team Leader Greece Response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carlotta Wolf</td>
<td>UNHCR – Head of office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophia Glazunova</td>
<td>Associate External Relations Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sorana Rasu</td>
<td>Protection officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marilena Chatziantoniou</td>
<td>DRC – Area Manager, Attica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph Murran</td>
<td>ECHO surge - Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Head DGECHO Task Force Refugee Crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/06/2016</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FINAL WORKSHOP IN ATHENS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANNEX 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Geneviève Gaston</td>
<td>IRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Joshua Killer</td>
<td>CRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Alain Homsy</td>
<td>NRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Mary Menis</td>
<td>Action Aid UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 George Mavrogonatos</td>
<td>Action Aid Hellas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Claire Seaward</td>
<td>Oxfam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Carolyn Davis</td>
<td>Internews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Stijn Aelbers</td>
<td>Internews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Katerina Sikeza</td>
<td>IMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 David Treseder</td>
<td>Samaritan’s Purse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Kaja Wislanska</td>
<td>Mercy Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Lali Foster</td>
<td>TWB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Tricia Cassidy</td>
<td>Start Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Emily Whitehead</td>
<td>Start Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Olivia Roberts</td>
<td>MEL Services (ACF UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Mariagni Ellina</td>
<td>MEL Services (ACF UK)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 5

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

- European Commission, communication from the commission to the European parliament, the council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions European agenda on migration, Brussels, May 2015
- Joint agency briefing note, A safe haven? Britain’s role in protecting people on the move, April 2016
- MSF, Obstacle course to Europe : a policy-made humanitarian crisis at EU borders, Médecins Sans Frontières, décembre 2015
- REACH, Situation Overview: European Migration Crisis, Western Balkans, December 2015
- REACH, Situation Overview: Rapid Assessment of Stranded Migrants Across the Western Balkans, 16 March 2016
- Start Network, External European Refugee Response Folder

WEBSITES CONSULTED

- IOM – Migration flow Europe http://migration.iom.int/europe/
### MATRIX OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (ToRs)</th>
<th>Evaluation questions (ToRs)</th>
<th>Reference to the findings (Sections 3 - 5)</th>
<th>Correspondence with Conclusions (Section 6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance &amp; Appropriateness</td>
<td>1.1 How appropriate was the ERR to the needs and priorities of refugees and migrants, and how were these identified?</td>
<td>3.1 Timeliness &amp; scale of funding</td>
<td>• Responsiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 How appropriate was the coverage of the ERR, in particular the extent to which the needs of the most vulnerable were met?</td>
<td>3.4 Adaptability to changing needs and reactivity of activities</td>
<td>• Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 How adaptive and responsive was the ERR to i) changes in country contexts and over time, including political decisions; ii) changing needs of refugees and migrants (and how were these identified), and what gaps remained and why?</td>
<td>4.2 Weaknesses in communication</td>
<td>• Timeliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1 Addressing needs of refugees</td>
<td>• Relevance/Responsiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2 Absence of a “whole of the route” approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6 Start Network coordination: objectives and limitations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8 Lack of common advocacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>2.1 To what extent has the ERR contributed to the overall aim of meeting the immediate needs of refugees &amp; migrants?</td>
<td>3.1 Timeliness &amp; scale of funding</td>
<td>• Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 What has the ERR achieved in terms of building community capacity, use/strengthening of local and national partners, and integration of approaches into national and regional initiatives aimed at addressing the needs of refugee and host communities, and how likely are they to continue after the Response?</td>
<td>4.2 Weaknesses in communication</td>
<td>• Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1 Addressing needs of refugees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>5.3 Addressing needs of refugees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>5.6 Start Network coordination: objectives and limitations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5.8 Strengthening local capacities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>3.1 To what extent were the available resources (e.g. funds, expertise, time, administrative support) of the ERR adequate to achieve the expected outcomes?</td>
<td>3.2 Benefits in terms of resource allocation &amp; reduced transaction costs</td>
<td>• Efficiency</td>
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<td>3.3 Administrative/procedural flexibility</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3.5 Donor requirements: lack of accountability</td>
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<td>4.1 Lack of Start Network field presence</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4.2 Weaknesses in communication</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4.3 Information management</td>
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<td>4.4 Promising MEL services, with a limited operational impact</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4 Connections between the Start Network and agencies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative advantage</td>
<td>In what ways did agencies (individuals and organisations) in the ERR work together (coordinate and collaborate) in the response, and what were the drivers and mechanisms for this?</td>
<td>4.3 Information management</td>
<td>• Collaborative Advantage</td>
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<td>What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Start Network approach for the ERR, including:</td>
<td>4.4 Promising MEL services, with a limited operational impact</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ programme management including speed and flexibility of decision-making</td>
<td>5.4 Connections between the Start Network and agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ common framework and approach for monitoring, reporting and learning</td>
<td>5.5 Absence of collective programming</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>5.7 Limited engagement in a collaborative mechanism</td>
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ANNEX 7

START NETWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Groupe URD has been contracted to conduct the evaluation of the European Refugee Response piloted by the Start Network from October 2015 to March 2016.

With a view to learn from this unique experience and improve such a collaborative response mechanism in the future, it would be great if you could dedicate a short time to answer to the ten following questions. Please include a narrative explanation in the box below each question. Don’t hesitate to use concrete examples and illustrations. This will allow you to precise your main ideas, and will permit us to do a more in-depth and useful analysis. Similarly, if you have difficulty answering any questions, please explain why in the box, including if you choose “Not Applicable”. E.g.: Lack of information, question not applicable to the context, not well positioned to answer.

This survey is strictly anonymous. Therefore, you do not need to identify yourself (or your organization) in the narrative comments.

Q1 PLEASE SPECIFY WHETHER YOU REPRESENT AN AGENCY WHICH IS A MEMBER OF THE START NETWORK.

Q2 PLEASE SPECIFY IN WHICH COUNTRY AND FOR WHICH PERIOD OF TIME YOU WERE INVOLVED IN THE ERR IMPLEMENTATION.

Q3 WHAT WERE THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ERR?

- Speed and flexibility of the response
- Capacity building of local partners
- Successful collaboration with partners and local actors
- Project adaptations based on actual needs
- Reaching the most vulnerable
- Other (please specify):

RATING: □ VERY POOR □ INSUFFICIENT □ GOOD □ EXCELLENT □ NOT APPLICABLE

Q4 WHAT WERE THE MAIN CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ERR?

- Coordination with other partners/ actors
- Changes in context and/or location of the response
- Project monitoring
- Adequate feedback from the affected population
- Political factors hindering implementation
- Identifying the most vulnerable
- Other (please specify):

RATING: □ VERY POOR □ INSUFFICIENT □ GOOD □ EXCELLENT □ NOT APPLICABLE

Q5 HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ERR REGARDING THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES (as further detailed in the ERR Results framework)?

- Access to information, enhanced coordination and capacity building
- Delivery of protection services
- Coverage of basic needs (Shelter, Wash, NFI, camp management, FSL, Health)

RATING: □ VERY POOR □ INSUFFICIENT □ GOOD □ EXCELLENT □ NOT APPLICABLE
Q6 HOW RESPONSIVE AND FLEXIBLE WAS THE ERR TO THE RAPID EVOLUTIONS IN THE POLITICAL CONTEXT AS WELL AS IN MIGRANTS’ NEEDS?
RATING: □ VERY POOR □ INSUFFICIENT □ GOOD □ EXCELLENT □ NOT APPLICABLE

Q7 HOW FAMILIAR WERE YOU WITH THE COLLABORATIVE APPROACH PROMOTED BY THE START NETWORK, ITS MAIN GOALS, FUNCTIONING PROCESSES AND SUPPORT STRUCTURE?
RATING: □ NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR □ NOT VERY FAMILIAR □ REASONABLY FAMILIAR □ VERY FAMILIAR □ NOT APPLICABLE

Q8 HOW WOULD YOU ASSESS THE OVERALL ADVANTAGE OF THE START NETWORK COLLABORATIVE APPROACH COMPARED TO THE USUAL FUNDING AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS AMONG THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY?
RATING: □ VERY POOR □ INSUFFICIENT □ GOOD □ EXCELLENT □ NOT APPLICABLE

Q9 HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE BENEFITS OF THE ERR COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE IN THE FOLLOWING FUNCTIONS?

- Information exchange and coordination among Start Network agencies
- Enhanced coordination with partners and local authorities
- Monitoring of the response and collective learning
- Coverage of evolving needs
- Access to information for refugees
- Responsiveness/adaptability of the programme activities
- Institutional posture and relationship with national authorities
- Access to funds
- Advocacy
- Other (please specify):

RATING: VERY POORLY | INSUFFICIENTLY | REASONABLY WELL | VERY WELL | NOT APPLICABLE

Q10 TO WHAT EXTENT THE MEL SUPPORT ALLOWED TO INCREASE THE QUALITY OF THE ERR?
RATING: □ NOT AT ALL □ INSUFFICIENTLY □ TO A REASONABLE EXTENT □ COMPLETELY □ NOT APPLICABLE

Please provide below an explanation of your rating, how could this support be improved, etc.

Q11 PLEASE PROVIDE COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE SUCH A COLLABORATIVE MECHANISM, FOR THE CURRENT RESPONSE TO THE EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS OR A SIMILAR LARGE-SCALE CRISIS?

Q12 WHAT WAS THE MAIN LEARNING FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE OUT OF THIS ERR COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE?
ANNEX 8

INTERVIEW TEMPLATE FOR REFUGEES

NUMBER(S) & GENDER OF THE INTERVIEWEE(S): ___________________________

DATE OF THE INTERVIEW: ___________________________ PLACE: ___________________________

PARTICIPANTS OF THE INTERVIEW: Groupe URD & Interpreter

REMARKS (e.g. any constraints or limitations...): ___________________________

The interviewer will fill in this template during the interview. Each chapter should be documented during each interview. However the list of points for each chapter is just indicative. This list is neither exhaustive nor compulsory to be filled in entirely. The information will not be asked in a linear manner.

YOUR TRANSIT ITINERARY:

• Describe the geographic itinerary and timing of your itinerary, from your home place to here (Berlin)
• What has been the final cost of your itinerary? What did you cost most, in relation with some itinerary portions?
• Can you evaluate the repartition between transport vs. food and accommodation?

THE MAIN CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED:

• What main difficulties/dangers did you encounter on your way?
• What/Who did help you most on the way (i.e. people, events, transportation or cash assistance…)?

These questions are entry points to explore protection concerns. However, they could also be addressed at a later stage of the discussion - see following rubric “The aid received”

BASIC NECESSITIES AND THEIR COVERAGE:

• What were your basic needs along the route? What did you need/lack most on your way?
• Were those properly covered / answered to (fully/partially/not at all)?
• What differences can you make according to the geographic places you crossed?
• Did you have a chance to express these needs to supporting organisations or people? Who were they? Where did this take place? Did they take them into account?

THE AID RECEIVED:

• What kind of assistance (material) and other types of support or services did you receive along the way?
• Who did help/protect you (most) along the way? [Entry point to explore protection concerns]
• In general, was the aid or support received appropriate to your main concerns/needs (Ex.: winter jackets)?
• Was it suited to specific characteristics of the people, such as age, disability, gender, etc.?
• Did the people who needed most assistance were properly taken into consideration? Who were they?
• Can you give examples / describe situations, by locating and identifying the support organization as much as possible?
• Other relevant issues regarding assistance / support

THE INFORMATION RECEIVED:

• On which topics did you need most information along the route? What were the most valuable information sources (TV, sms, social networks, websites, organisations, people? etc)?
• How did you manage to get the most valuable information along the route? What were the difficulties encountered?
• On which means of communication or sources of information did you rely most? To communicate among other refugees and migrants, with aid organisations, or local institutions, etc.
• Did this vary according to the topic of interest (migratory route, border closures, asylum procedure, assistance provided, etc.)?
• Which type of information, did you need most from aid organisations or other institutions?
• Were the aid organisations helpful in providing you with useful information? Which types, which body/organization/people?

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

• As a matter of conclusion, what comments/opinions would you like to share?
• What recommendations would you like to suggest, especially to the aid organisations who are trying to improve their response in the context of migratory flows in Europe?