COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA) POLICY <YEAR>

***<Overall Guidance on developing your CEA policy***

*It is important to apply a community engagement approach to the development of this policy by consulting a wide range of staff and volunteers. If staff and volunteers are engaged in the process of developing this, and feel consulted and listened to, they will be more likely to take ownership of the policy and implement it within their area of work. If you write this policy alone in your office, it will likely remain only in your office! >*

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This policy sets out the commitments <insert name of National Society> makes in relation to engaging with and being accountable to local people. It provides staff and volunteers with clear guidance on what is expected of them in relation to community engagement and accountability (CEA) and how CEA should be integrated into other <name of National Society> documents, including the strategic plan, annual plans, proposals and other policies and guidelines.

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# Definitions and Abbreviations

Use this section to explain the terms you use in the policy and spell out any abbreviations or acronyms in full. This helps readers have a common understanding of key terms in your policy.

Examples could include;

* **Accountability:** in this document, accountability refers specifically to accountability to communities or local people and not to donors.
* **Community:** refers to any group of people your programme or activity is aiming to support. Community can be defined geographically or by demographics.
* **CEA:** Community engagement and accountability and within the IFRC
* **Complaints:** a formal expression of dissatisfaction with the programme or someone’s behaviour which requires investigation and follow-up
* **Feedback:** Information shared with us by the community and can include questions, suggestions, rumours or praise.

# Introduction

Use this section to introduce the policy and;

* Explain what CEA is
* Why CEA is important and how it fits within the National Society, Movement and wider humanitarian sector
* What the National Society has already achieved in relation to CEA and why this policy is being introduced.

**To help you get started here is an example of what this could look like;**

Community engagement and accountability (CEA) is an approach to Red Cross and Red Crescent programming and operations. It is supported by a set of activities that help put communities at the centre of what we do, by integrating communication and participation throughout the programme cycle or operation. Evidence and experience have shown that when the Red Cross Red Crescent truly engages with communities, we secure their trust and acceptance, leading to more equitable, sustainable and higher quality outcomes.

Being accountable to communities is enshrined in [the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement’s Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief](http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/code-of-conduct/code-english.pdf) and the [Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance](https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/Accountability/Principles%20Rules%20for%20Red%20Cross%20Red%20Crescent%20Humanitarian%20Assistance.pdf), the Minimum Commitments and Actions on Community Engagement and Accountability, presented at the 2019 Council of Delegates and the [Movement Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability](https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/12/IFRC-CEA-GUIDE-0612-LR.pdfhttps:/media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/12/IFRC-CEA-GUIDE-0612-LR.pdf). Within the wider humanitarian sector, there is also a growing demand for greater accountability and increased commitment towards people’s participation. This change has been reflected in global commitments such as the [Grand Bargain](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand_Bargain_final_22_May_FINAL-2.pdf) made during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. However, while participatory approaches have long been a part of many programs and operations, the Movement does not always systematically engage communities and, when it does, not always in a meaningful way.

<insert name of National Society> has been working to adopt a more systematic approach to CEA since <year>. This has included <outline what has been achieved so far in relation to CEA>. Challenges faced have included <outline challenges faced and in particular those that this policy will help to address>.

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# Purpose

In this section outline why you are creating this policy and what you hope it will address.

**For example;**

The aim of this CEA policy is to support <name of National Society> to adopt a more systematic and planned approach to engaging communities and ensure consistent and high quality accountability across all our programmes and operations. By institutionalizing CEA into our ways of working, <name of National Society> will;

* Build trust and acceptance with communities
* Improve our access and reputation
* Encourage greater community ownership of our interventions
* Which will improve programme quality and sustainability.

Through this policy, <name of National Society>;

* Set out what we commit to in relation to engaging with and being accountable to the communities we work with
* Provide our staff and volunteers with clear guidance on what is expected of them in relation to CEA, including the roles and responsibilities of different departments and levels
* Describe how CEA should be integrated into other National Society documents, including the strategic plan, annual plans, proposals and other policies and guidelines
* Outline the support, resources and operational plan to ensure this policy can be implemented within <name of National Society>.

# Scope and audience of policy

In this section outline who the policy applies to within the National Society, what departments or work it impacts upon.

**For example;**

This policy applies to;

* All staff and volunteers working for <insert name of National Society>
* All <name of National Society> members of Governance
* Partners of <name of National Society> implementing projects in <country>.

While this policy covers all aspects of <name of National Society>, it has particular importance for departments and projects involved in the delivery of programmes and operations within communities.

# Key principles of the policy

This section is where you outline the main content of the policy. It should include;

* The overall principles or commitments the National Society makes in relation to CEA. For example, in relation to the core principles of CEA such as transparent communication, participation, listening to and acting on feedback and complaints, sharing information in emergencies, supporting community advocacy or social and behaviour change communication. These could come from the Minimum Commitments on Community Engagement and Accountability currently being developed to present at the Council of Delegates in late 2019
* The specific actions the National Society will take to ensure these commitments are met. These should be more detailed and connect to the overall principles or commitments above and could come from the minimum actions as outlined in the [Movement Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability](https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/12/IFRC-CEA-GUIDE-0612-LR.pdfhttps:/media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/12/IFRC-CEA-GUIDE-0612-LR.pdf). However, these should be developed within the context of your National Society so do not copy and paste from the Guide.
* See below for some ideas to get your started;
  + <name of National Society> will always hold an orientation meeting with communities at the start of programmes to explain who we are, the behaviour they can expect from us and what will happen in the programme
  + <name of National Society> will establish a feedback and complaints system and ensure all feedback and complaints is recorded, analysed, acted on and responded to. The feedback and complaints system will use channels the community feel comfortable using
  + Every <name of National Society> programme will be overseen by a project management committee that will include members of the community, including men, women, boys and girls, elderly and other vulnerable groups. These committees will be trained on their roles and responsibilities and their effectiveness monitored
  + <name of National Society> will include minimum 5% budget for CEA within every programme proposal and operational plan
  + <name of National Society> will include a CEA focal point within its HR structure
  + <name of National Society> will integrate CEA within all existing and new policies, procedures, annual plans and strategic plan
  + <name of National Society> will include community feedback as a standing agenda item at all SMT meetings
  + CEA will be included in all staff job descriptions and appraisal processes.

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# Roles and Responsibilities

Outline who has responsibility in implementing this policy and what their responsibilities are. This depends very much on the content of your policy and who will be critical to implementing it within your National Society. Below are some examples of the different roles you might want to include, but you do not have to include all of these, unless it makes sense for your National Society.

This could include;

* Responsibilities common to all staff and volunteers
* Responsibilities of the Secretary General and senior management
* Responsibilities of programme and operations managers, for example head of health, disaster management etc
* Responsibilities of connected cross-cutting areas, such as the planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting team, organisational development or protection, gender and inclusion
* Responsibilities of other support services such as finance and human resources
* Responsibilities for branch managers
* Responsibilities of Governance, at the branch and headquarters level
* Responsibilities of Partner National Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC.

# Implementation and monitoring of this policy

In this section, set out briefly how this policy will be implemented and monitored. This should include;

* Who has the overall responsibility for overseeing this policy?
* What will happen to support the implementation of the policy? For example, will an action plan or strategy be developed to outline how the actions in the policy will be implemented? Will staff be briefed on the policy? How will it be widely circulated? Is there training planned?
* How will implementation of the policy be monitored? For example, will an annual evaluation be carried out? Will it be reported on at board meetings? Are there key indicators to measure how the policy is being met?

# Related Policies, Strategies, Procedure and Guidelines

In this section, list all the existing <name of National Society> policies, procedures, plans and guidelines that CEA will be integrated into or that link to this policy and how they connect. Examples could include; National Society strategic plan; PMER guidelines; Human Resources policy; Disaster Response Standard Operating Procedures; Human Resources Policy; Communication Policy etc.

# Appendix

Include here any other key documents linked to the implementation of this policy, for example the National Society CEA strategy or action plan.