

DRC Afghanistan

Humanitarian Accountability Framework (HAF)

July 2011

1. Brief description of the programme

The issue of Afghan refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons must be seen in a regional context, comprising Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan and all the way into the Ferghana Valley in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Consequently, DRC is strengthening and expanding the strategic regional approach to Afghan displacement. Given the highly volatile security situation and fluctuating crisis scenarios, DRC carries out a comprehensive set of activities reflecting specific local needs and conditions, focusing on improved protection and livelihoods as well as establishing contingency capacities along the entire displacement axis.

Three decades of conflict have left Afghanistan as one of the world's poorest countries, despite modest progress reported in the health and education sector. According to the UNDP, the life expectancy at birth is 44 years. Only 23 percent of the population enjoy access to safe water and 88 percent of Afghans do not have access to adequate sanitation. The country's limited resources are further strained by the return of over five million refugees since the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001, and by the large number of IDPs, who have been forced from their lands due to conflict and drought amongst other causes.

In Afghanistan, the goal of DRC is to promote durable solutions to refugee and displacement problems, on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights. In Afghanistan, DRC focuses mainly on livelihood and infrastructure support to the increasing number of returnees and IDPs squatting in the slum areas of Kabul, where living conditions are deplorable and health hazards accelerated due to poor shelter, lack of access to basic necessities, and scarce employment opportunities. Through a participatory and community-based approach, DRC also aims at enhancing the protection capacities of urban communities hosting IDPs and returnees. In addition, DRC organizes the Afghan Diaspora in Denmark via a grants facility to take part in the support to sustainable livelihoods of compatriots in Afghanistan.

Although DRC started up humanitarian relief and livelihood operations in January 2011 only, it has an extensive operational history in the country, mainly through the two following entities.

- The consortium interventions of the *Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees* (DACAAR, since 1984). DRC is a founding member of DACAAR, which has almost 30 years of experience conducting relief and development work in Afghanistan. Among DACAAR's main activities are safe water supply, hygiene education and sustainable rural development, with families from the returnee and IDP communities being among the main beneficiaries.
- The *Danish Demining Group* (DDG, since 1998), DDG is a humanitarian mine action unit in DRC. In Afghanistan, DDG has recovered and disposed of more than 33,000 landmines and 1.3 million pieces of unexploded ordnance. The beneficiaries of DDG Afghanistan include recently returned refugees from Iran and Pakistan, vulnerable rural populations and the wider humanitarian and development community.

2. DRC's objectives, partners and stakeholders

The strategic objective of DRC is the protection and promotion of durable solutions to refugee and displacement problems on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights. Durable solutions are based on long term safety and security, restitution or compensation for lost property, and establishment of an environment that sustains life of former refugees and IDPs under normal economic and social conditions.

In addition, the immediate objectives of DRC are the following ones.

- Protection of the right to life has been strengthened in areas of immediate conflict or disaster;
- Sustainable livelihoods have been strengthened in DRC areas of operation;
- Protection has been strengthened in DRC areas of operation.

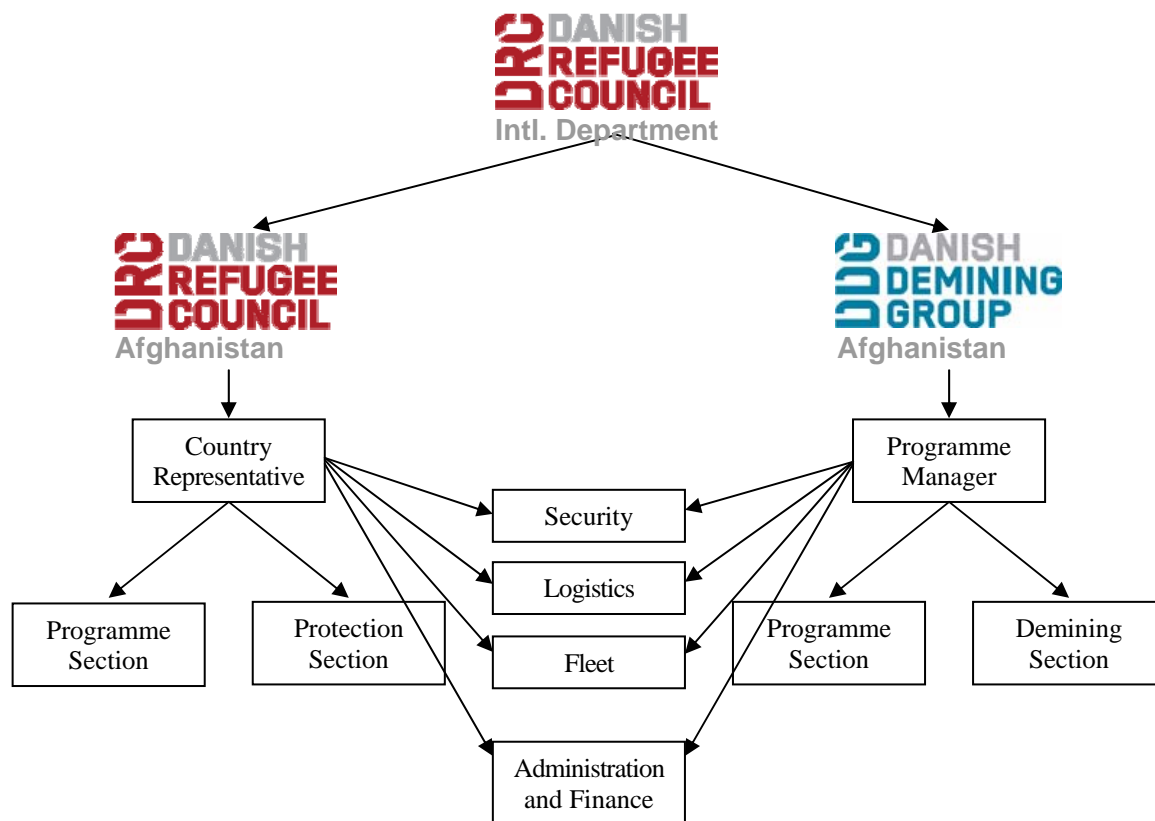
DRC's main partners are: the Afghan authorities (central, regional, provincial and municipal); the community leaders; the local civil society.

DRC's primary beneficiaries are the Afghan population affected by displacement. DRC coordinates its operations with other international NGOs, ICRC, and UN agencies.

Up to date, DRC's donors are the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

3. Organigram including staff line functions

The organizational chart below - including both DRC and DDG in Afghanistan - illustrates the current structure.



4. DRC Afghanistan is committed to working within or meeting the requirements of the following codes, laws, standards, etc.

The mandate for the international activities is the protection and promotion of durable solutions to refugee and displacement problems, on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights, including:

- Providing refugees, internally displaced persons and other affected groups in situations of war and conflict with assistance according to their rights. This assistance can consist of relief and other humanitarian aid, rehabilitation and support to return home, as well as contributions to the promotion of durable solutions.
- Contributing to capacity building and co-operation between local and national authorities, as well as other relevant organizations. This work aims at strengthening advocacy and promoting solutions to problems related to situations of conflict, particularly with a view to improving the protection and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons.

In addition to the internationally acknowledged standards for humanitarian assistance listed in the DRC global HAF (available on www.drc.dk), DRC is committed to:

- National labour laws;
- NGO registration requirements and visa regimes.

5. DRC Afghanistan relations to beneficiaries

DRC is committed to providing information to its beneficiaries where the organisation deems it safe to do so. Due to the highly sensitive and complex situation and to the security constraints in Afghanistan, DRC adopts a low profile approach. In general, DRC will avoid making information publicly available and will work in close cooperation with local authorities and community leaders to identify and liaise with beneficiaries.

DRC seeks to the extent possible to ensure beneficiaries' participation throughout the project cycle. This is secured through the two following approaches.

- ***Community-based development:*** DRC seeks to work closely with communities and in this process address the needs identified by beneficiaries themselves. DRC bases its community assistance on the Participatory Learning Approach (PLA) whereby DRC staff is in constant dialogue with beneficiaries in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities. Through the PLA, communities are empowered to identify their most pressing needs which DRC will then respond as well as advocate for with the relevant duty bearer.
- ***Complaint mechanisms:*** A formal complaint mechanism has been developed for Afghanistan. Beneficiaries are informed by DRC staff about the complaint mechanism, while receiving the complaint sheets indicating the procedure for any complaints. Any written complaint is accepted and is dealt with by DRC.

DRC and its employees - in the relationship with beneficiaries - are required at all times to act in accordance with the following five fundamental principles representing the value compass of DRC.

- Humanity - people's right to a life in dignity takes precedence over politics and principles;
- Respect - for the equal rights of human beings;
- Independency and neutrality - towards the environment where DRC operates;
- Participation - of the people DRC helps;
- Honesty and transparency - for all beneficiaries, donors, partners and other stakeholders.

In addition, the following operational principles are applied throughout the project cycle in order to ensure the quality and impact of interventions on beneficiaries.

- **Participation:** DRC includes the target group in project design, beneficiary selection and implementation. It also ensures, to the extent possible, beneficiary, community and administration contributions in the form of labour and materials to housing, infrastructure and income-generating projects.
- **Capacity development:** DRC works to strengthen capacities of its partner communities and civil society, primarily through implementing projects in close partnership, so offering practical on-the-job guidance as well as formal training.
- **Gender:** gender is mainstreamed into projects through analysis of gender-specific risks, vulnerabilities and capacities. Such approach is practically feasible, because DRC also internally ensures that women staff is prioritized in its staff capacity building efforts.
- **Advocacy:** DRC seeks to advocate on behalf of displaced groups, in cooperation with the UNHCR and primarily through relations with authorities.
- **Do-no-harm:** The tailor-made approach developed on a careful risk analysis in most programming ensures DRC's attention to Do-No-Harm. Likewise, DRC staff is aware to limit and manage potential expectations of the target group.
- **Collaboration with local partners:** DRC seeks to partner with local NGOs and communities. In general, the programme will be most relevant and sustainable when based on a partnership with local communities.
- **Complementarity:** DRC has always worked closely with other organizations to not only avoid duplication in assistance, but also to get more out of the total donor funding in the region. Consortiums between NGOs are always something DRC would engage in when relevant, feasible and pertinent.
- **General replicability of strategies and methods:** DRC is a learning organization which strives to learn from the experiences of other humanitarian players as well, and to disseminate own lessons learned through a large number of humanitarian associations and institutions.
- **Sustainability:** DRC's overall goal of durable solutions places a natural stress on ensuring sustainability. The priorities and intentions of beneficiaries are always assessed as part of project design.
- **Environment:** DRC includes an understanding of the effects of activities on the environment and efforts to minimize or mitigate the harmful ones.

6. List of current projects

<i>Project title</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Relevant authorities</i>	<i>Funding donors</i>	<i>Implementing partners</i>
<i>Protection of displaced and support to livelihood</i>	Displaced persons in Kabul Informal Settlements have improved protection of their rights and are closer to durable solutions to their displacement.	IDPs and returnees in Kabul Informal Settlements (KIS)	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, Department of Kabul of Refugees and Repatriation, Municipality of Kabul	DANIDA	CEDO
<i>Beskyttelse af fordrevne i Afghanistan</i>	DRC programme is started-up in Afghanistan.	IDPs and returnees in Kabul Informal Settlements (KIS)	n/a	DRC	n/a

7. Essence of Accountability Baseline and Accountability Improvement Plan

DRC Operations Handbook and Programme Handbook have been distributed among management in the field.

Focal points and staff in the field have been trained.

The contextual HAF has been developed and made available through DRC website (www.drc.dk).

<i>New quality objectives</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Means of verifications</i>
HAF is updated every six months and shared with DRC staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The present HAF is endorsed by HQ; - It is presented to the staff and made available along with the Global DRC HAF at DRC offices in Afghanistan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minutes of staff meetings; - Staff performance's appraisal.
Information about DRC background and progress reports are made available to DRC staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DRC teams share their respective progress reports with each other; - Financial and narrative reports are equally disseminated to DRC partners; - A summarised final report is submitted to beneficiaries upon project completion; - An annual report is shared with all stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minutes of coordination meetings; - DRC website; - Satisfaction surveys; - Annual report.
Beneficiaries' participation in DRC programme's decision is formalised and documented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus group discussions and meetings are generalised over the programme and findings are shared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reporting tools; - Satisfaction surveys; - Exchanged documents and letters archived.
DRC staff's skills are improved, then enhancing the quality of humanitarian assistance provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DRC staff members are trained on relevant topics; - Staff training is developed and implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff performance's appraisal forms; - Training plan; - Training agendas; - Training reports.
DRC stakeholders (i.e. beneficiaries, partners, staff) are given the opportunity to complain and feedback about DRC operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff complaint mechanisms are put in place and used by DRC staff; - Complaint mechanisms are established and made accessible to DRC beneficiaries; - DRC partners are regularly consulted and can feedback on DRC programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff complaints' archives; - Minutes of meetings.