

# **END OF PROGRAM EVALUATION OF DFAT'S 'COVID-19 RESPONSE IN BANGLADESH' INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

## **Summary of management response**

DFAT agrees with the findings and recommendations of the End of Program Evaluation of the 'COVID-19 Response in Bangladesh' investment, and thanks the consultant, Dr Pieter van Diermen for the report. The 'COVID-19 Response in Bangladesh' project was funded by DFAT through an agreement with the Australian Red Cross (ARC). Activities were implemented by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS). We acknowledge the contributions of these partners towards the findings of this evaluation.

The purpose of the evaluation was to systematic and objective assessment of effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the 'COVID-19 Response in Bangladesh' project, including the extent to which it delivered the intended outcomes and objectives. The purpose of the evaluation was to undertake a systematic and objective assessment of effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the 'COVID-19 Response in Bangladesh' project, including the extent to which it delivered the intended outcomes and objectives. This investment was activated in anticipation of Bangladesh experiencing a wave of COVID-19 infections, similar to the Delta wave in India, which would have potentially overwhelmed the country's public health systems. This ultimately did not happen, and while the investments funds were used for health and livelihoods support, a portion was also used to strengthen Bangladesh's health systems in anticipation of future public health crises.

DFAT has already begun implementing some of the evaluation's recommendations, including adapting more detailed and specific reporting requirements, in subsequent investments/projects. The management response outlines planned actions by DFAT and partner in response to the mid-term review recommendations.

**JULY 2025**

## Individual management response to the recommendations

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe [If practical, please specify timeframe here]
<b>Recommendation 1</b> <i>For future similar Humanitarian rapid funding, DFAT should include more detailed and specific reporting requirements.</i>	Agree	The agreement for this investment did not outline any specific reporting requirements, especially in regard to gender and disability related data. The program reports therefore did not have any disaggregated data	We have incorporated specific reporting requirements in our subsequent agreement with ARC/IFRC (for the Cyclone Mocha Response Project in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh)	Completed
<b>Recommendation 2</b> <i>Contractor's reporting requirements should align as much as possible with DFAT's fiduciary, risk management and safeguard reporting requirement and structure of reporting.</i>	Agree	<p>ARC/IFRC used its own reporting format for the program. This did not cover all the priority areas that DFAT normally requires reporting on</p> <p>Post had limited visibility on key program documents including the risk register</p>	<p>Post have discussed this with the ARC partnership team in Canberra. For the subsequent agreement with ARC/IFRC (Cyclone Mocha Response), the partners used the '8+3' reporting format (similar to DFAT's other humanitarian partners).</p> <p>Post has been working more closely with the ARC partnership team in Canberra and has better access to</p>	Completed

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			documents including the risk register.	
<b>Recommendation 3</b> <i>At a minimum, future humanitarian emergency aid should require reporting on gender disaggregated data and consider including the cost, if any, in the contracting.</i>	Agree	Similar to recommendation 1, this point refers specifically to the lack of specific reporting requirements around providing gender and disability disaggregated data. While partners did collect this data, they did not report on it as this was not specified in the agreement	In our subsequent project with ARC/IFRC (for the Cyclone Mocha Response Project in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh), we have included specific clauses in the agreement requiring the partners to provide gender and disability level disaggregation for all results.	Completed
<b>Recommendation 4</b> <i>Partnership and localisation should be encouraged with considerations given to the feasibility of further or deeper partnerships and</i>	Agree	For this investment, DFAT partnered directly with the ARC. The program was then implemented through IFRC and BDRCS. This recommendation focuses in DFAT entering into direct partnerships with IFRC and BDRCS to deliver rapid assistance toward country-level appeals or proposals developed specifically for Post. As BDRCS is a more	DFAT will have to carry out the necessary due diligence assessments on IFRC and BDRCS to lay the groundwork for direct partnerships in the future. Additional resources might be required at Post, as this partnership would call for a more hands-on approach.	Under discussion

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<i>localisation in terms of counterpart's capacity and meeting fiduciary, risk management and safeguard assurances.</i>		'local' organisation, this would also contribute towards DFAT's larger localisation agenda. This sort of direct partnership carries greater risk, since BDRCS might not have a robust system of risk management compared to ARC. Managing a partnership with BDRCS would also require a more hands-on approach from Post, which will be a challenge given our limited resources.		