**TOOL 4: Template CEA Strategy**

This tool provides a template to help you develop a CEA Strategy, including guidance on what should be included in each section and some content to help you get started. A strategy sets out how the organization will strengthen CEA over the coming years.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA) STRATEGY**

**<YEAR to YEAR>**

***Overall Guidance on developing your CEA Strategy***

* *Develop the CEA Strategy with key people across the organization, including branch staff and volunteers. Being accountable to communities is a shared responsibility, so it’s important the strategy to achieve this is also shared.*
* *One approach to developing a CEA Strategy is to add a fourth day onto the* [*community engagement and accountability training*](https://communityengagementhub.org/learn-and-share/3-day-cea-training-package/) *to carry out a self-assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses in how the National Society engages communities, and guide which areas to focus on in this strategy.* [***Tool 3: CEA self-assessment and planning workshop***](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/)*, provides facilitator notes, worksheets, and PowerPoint slides to run this workshop.*
* *This CEA Strategy template is structured to match the CEA self-assessment and planning workshop process so that findings from this workshop can be easily translated into a strategy. However, there are many ways to develop and structure a strategy so National Societies are free to use whichever approach works best for their context. Some examples of CEA Strategies are included at the end of this template.*
* *Any strategy should be reviewed annually and updated if needed.*

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# Introduction

*Use this section to introduce the policy and:*

* *Define CEA and why it is important*
* *What the National Society has already achieved in relation to CEA and the challenges or barriers still faced*
* *Why this strategy is being introduced and what it hopes to achieve*
* *(Optional) Background on what is happening in the Movement and wider humanitarian sector.*

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

Community engagement and accountability (CEA) is a way of working that recognises and values all community members as equal partners, whose diverse needs, priorities, and preferences guide everything we do. We achieve this by integrating meaningful community participation, open and honest communication, and mechanisms to listen to and act on feedback, within our programmes and operations. Evidence, experience, and common sense tells us when we truly engage communities and they play an active role in designing and managing programmes and operations, the outcomes are more effective, sustainable, and of a higher quality.

<insert name of National Society> has been working to strengthen CEA since <year>. This has included <outline what has been achieved so far in relation to CEA. For example, staff positions created, trainings delivered, policies developed, CEA activities which have been integrated within programmes or operations e.g. feedback mechanisms>. This has led to a number of benefits for the <insert name of National Society> including <list any positive outcomes the National Society has experienced as a result of CEA, such as improved understanding of communities, better quality programmes and operations, more community ownership of interventions, better trust and access to communities, improved reputation with donors and partners. Try to be specific and give concrete examples of how CEA has contributed to the National Society.>

Despite these positive impacts, the National Society still faces a number of challenges to adopting a more systematic approach to CEA. These include <outline challenges or barriers faced in strengthening CEA in brief, drawing on the results from the force field if this was carried out>.

<insert name of National Society> is introducing this CEA Strategy to build on these good practices and address the outstanding challenges and barriers. This strategy outlines the key strategic changes the National Society needs to make to over the following <insert number of years> to ensure a high quality of community engagement in all its interactions with communities, at all times. The strategy also identifies the activities and roles, responsibilities and resources needed to achieve these changes.

More broadly, within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) there are commitments to being accountable to communities in [the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement’s Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief](https://www.ifrc.org/media/48907). The [Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance](https://www.ifrc.org/document/principles-rules-humanitarian-assistance) commit to including transparent communication and feedback mechanisms in emergency responses. In December 2019, the first set of [‘Movement-wide Commitments for Community Engagement and Accountability’](https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/04/R1-Movement-wide-commitments-for-CEA.pdf) was approved at the Council of Delegates. Within the wider humanitarian sector, the Core Humanitarian Standard, Grand Bargain 2.0, and Interagency Standing Committee all support and encourage greater accountability to and engagement with communities.

# Methodology

*In this section explain the approach used to develop the strategy, including who was consulted and what methods were used. If you used the self-assessment and planning workshop approach, see below for an example. Otherwise explain what methods were used (key informant interviews, focus group discussions, secondary data review, workshops etc), and how many people took part.*

**For example:**

This strategy was developed through a self-assessment and planning workshop, which was delivered directly following the three-day CEA training. This workshop was attended by <insert number> National Society staff and volunteers, including <insert departments or role types> <and XX partner National Society, IFRC or ICRC staff if they were also in attendance>.

This workshop used an approach called force field analysis to explore the factors that are supporting or blocking stronger accountability to communities within the National Society. Factors included tangible resources, such as policies, funding, staff positions, manuals, or intangible elements such as organizational culture, staff attitudes and behaviours, or relationships between different groups in the organization. The causes and effects of the main barriers to accountability were discussed, and potential solutions for overcoming them identified, including the resources required to implement them.

A self-assessment exercise was also conducted to assess how well the National Society is meeting the 18 Red Cross Red Crescent minimum actions for CEA, and identify gaps in relation to institutionalization, programmes, and operations.

In the final stage of the workshop, groups developed CEA action plans using the findings from the force field analysis and the self-assessment exercises which identified key actions to improve CEA, who would lead the action, resources required and timelines. Groups then reviewed and voted on the minimum actions that should be prioritized in this strategy.

A range of documents were also reviewed as part of the process of developing this strategy including <insert names of documents, such as the National Society organizational strategy, CEA policy, evaluations and plans, other policies, and guidelines, Movement documents>.

Drafts of this policy were also shared and reviewed by <insert names of roles or departments who fed into revisions of the document>.

# Community engagement and accountability enablers and best practices within <insert name of National Society>

*In this section outline the main factors that are supporting or enabling the National Society to have a strong systematic approach to accountability to communities as identified in stage one of the force field analysis exercise. Depending on how many groups took part in the exercise and how many enablers were mentioned in total, you may choose to only include the enablers mentioned more than 2-3 times. You should not include more than 5-6 enablers for the sake of keeping the strategy concise.*

*This section should also outline which of the 18 minimum actions for CEA the National Society is meeting well and scored highly on in the self-assessment exercise. These are the National Society’s best practices or strengths in relation to CEA.*

*If you did not use the force field or self-assessment workshop approach, use this section to outline what is working well for the National Society in relation to CEA, what has been achieved so far, what good practices or resources exist already, and what approaches have been successful for strengthening CEA in programmes, operations and at the organizational level.*

**For example:**

<Insert title of first enabler e.g. Leadership prioritize CEA>

<Explain what groups said about this enabler and how it is supporting the National Society to have stronger accountability to communities. If you have good quotes from individuals these can be included here to illustrate the point.>

**CEA strengths and best practices**

<Explain which of the CEA minimum actions the National Society is meeting well and how, including examples of the mechanisms in place e.g., a CEA policy, strong feedback mechanism, good approaches to ensure community participation in programmes.>

# Community engagement and accountability barriers and gaps within <insert name of National Society>

*In this section outline the main factors that are preventing or blocking the National Society from having a more institutionalized approach to CEA. These should be the main barriers that were prioritized and taken through to stage two of the force field analysis. Include in the description, the causes and effects of the key barriers as discussed in stage two of the exercise. Depending on the number of key barriers you may want to only include those mentioned by more than one group. You should not include more than 5-6 barriers for the sake of keeping the strategy concise.*

*You could also decide to include some of the barriers from stage one of the exercise that were not prioritized and taken forward to stage two, if they were mentioned by multiple groups.*

*This section should also include where the National Society’s biggest gaps exist in relation to meeting the 18 minimum actions for CEA. These are the minimum actions with the lowest score in the self-assessment exercise.*

*If you did not use the force field approach, use this section to outline what barriers or challenges the National Society faces in relation to strengthening CEA and where the biggest gaps in community engagement practices, policies and resources exist. Use the 18 minimum actions to help you.*

**For example:**

<Insert title of first barrier e.g. CEA is not well resourced in terms of staff and funding>

<Explain what groups said about this barrier, what is causing it and the impact it has on the National Society. If you have good quotes from individuals these can be included here to illustrate the point.>

**CEA weaknesses and gaps**

<Explain which of the CEA minimum actions the National Society is not meeting well e.g., a CEA there is no CEA manager, no policy, staff have not been trained, feedback mechanisms are not in place, communities are rarely involved in designing programmes etc.>

# Strategic changes to strengthen community engagement and accountability within <insert name of National Society>

*Use this section to outline the strategic changes needed for the National Society to strengthen the quality of its community engagement and accountability. The content for this section should come from the solutions identified in the force field analysis workshop and the action planning exercise. Focus on those voted by participants as the priority activities to focus on. Rather than listing all the activities, it can help to group these together around the key barriers identified in the previous section. For example, if a key barrier was lack of understanding and practical skills to implement CEA, you may identify a key strategic change as ‘Strengthen CEA knowledge, understanding and capacity within the National Society’ and then list the activities needed to achieve this, the resources required, timeline for implementation and role or department responsible. See below for an example of this. If helpful, you may wish to separate this section by changes needed at the institutional level and changes needed within programmes and operations but noting that institutional efforts to strengthen CEA will also facilitate improved CEA in programmes and operations. There are many ways to organize and present this section so pick the approach that works best for your National Society.*

*If you did not hold a self-assessment and planning workshop, use this section to outline the key changes you want to achieve with this strategy. This could be organized around an overall goal, priority areas of focus and key outputs and activities under each priority area. See examples of different strategy approaches at the end of this document.*

**Here is an example of how this could look:**

**Strategic change 1: Strengthen CEA knowledge, understanding and capacity within the National Society**

Add a brief explanation of why this change is needed and what barriers or gaps it will address.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **All relevant staff and volunteers are trained on CEA** | | | |
| **Activities** | **Resources** | **Lead** | **Timeline** |
| Roll out the CEA branch-level training to all branches | Training package in local language  Funding to deliver a TOT | CEA dept | End of 2022 |
| Deliver a CEA briefing session to the Board and Governance | Briefing packages  Support from the SG to convene the Board | SG, with CEA dept support | July 2022 |
| Deliver the CEA 3-day training once per year to senior management, programmes, and operations staff | Training package  Funding | CEA dept | Annually |
| **Staff and volunteers have access to CEA guidance, tools, and support** | | | |
| CEA Guide and toolkit is translated into the local language | Translation budget | CEA dept | End of 2022 |
| A CEA policy is developed for the National Society | IFRC support | SG, with CEA dept support | July 2022 |
| Support visits are carried out by the CEA Manager to branches | Travel budget  CEA staff positions | CEA dept | Ongoing |

# Monitoring progress

*In this section, explain how implementation of the CEA Strategy will be monitored. This could include key performance indicators to measure the National Society’s levels of accountability to communities and specific indicators to measure if the changes called for in this strategy are being implemented. Some example key performance indicators include:*

* *% of community members who feel support provided by the National Society currently covers their most important needs*
* *% of community members who feel the National Society takes their opinion into account when providing support*
* *% of National Society programmes and operations that have community engagement activities and budget included (e.g., activities on information sharing, participation and feedback)*
* *# of National Societies policies, strategies and procedures that have integrated the Movement-wide commitments or minimum actions (for example, disaster response, health care, gender, protection, communications and staff and volunteer management)*

*Set targets for indicators and explain how and when data will be collected, who has responsibility for this, and where progress will be discussed and reported e.g., in management meetings. For more on CEA monitoring, including a wider choice of indicators, see* [*Tool 7: CEA M&E tool.*](https://communityengagementhub.org/resource/cea-toolkit/)

# Appendix

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