



**Real-Time Response Review
of
Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal 2022
for
Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)**

Romania Country Report
Submitted 07 February 2023

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Acronyms

CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CMC	Conflict Management Consulting
CSO	Civic Society Organisations
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
KID	Key Informant Discussions
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MPC	Multi-Purpose Cash
NFI	Non-Food Items
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PSEA	Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSHEA	Protection against Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
RTR	Real-Time Review
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UHA	Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Acknowledgments

The CMC team would like to acknowledge the following:

- All the respondents, for their time and constructive inputs to the Review.
- The DEC Members, their staff and partners who supported the Review.
- The DEC Secretariat, for their patience and support throughout.
- The people of Ukraine for their resilience and courage in this crisis.

1. Executive Summary

Since 24 February 2022, the conflict in Ukraine has led to a major humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need, including those who have fled across borders, those who are displaced inside the country and those unable or unwilling to leave conflict-affected areas. On 3 March 2022, DEC launched the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal (UHA), which has raised £400 million to date, of which £215 million was allocated in Phase 1 and £86 million spent. 13 Member Charities responded as part of the DEC appeal, working with partners in Ukraine and four neighbouring countries: Poland, Romania, Moldova, and Hungary.

As part of its commitment to accountability and learning, the DEC commissioned this Real-Time Response Review, its aim being '*to instigate collective real-time reflection and learning to inform adjustments across DEC Members' responses.*' It draws on the experience of initial phase of the response to help formulate lessons to be applied in real-time and to the second phase of the response. The approach of the Review was to support real-time learning as part of the Review process and to further support this and future learning with reports and inputs to workshops. In line with the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), which is itself at the centre of the DEC's Learning and Accountability Framework, the Review was centred on affected people. In execution, it was rapid and light in touch, and used participatory and qualitative methods. It sought to hear from all the main stakeholders (affected people, aid workers, local organisations, DEC Members and others), to reflect and report on what was heard and from this to draw conclusions and propose recommendations. In doing so, it used the 9 commitments of the CHS as the main framework for the discussions (further details in *Annex*).

CHS1 - Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant: Romania is a transit country, where the majority of refugees cross through it to reach other European countries. Through this journey, the humanitarian response delivered by DEC Members and their partners aimed at providing humanitarian assistance to temporary refugees as well as those who decided to settle in the country. The response proved to be relevant to the affected people and aligned with DEC Members' strategies and priorities. While large scale needs assessments were not conducted at the start of the response, DEC Members and local partners were able to conduct small scale interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with affected people to assess their needs and priorities and inform the design of their programmes.

CHS 2 - Humanitarian response is effective and timely: Overall, the DEC response in Romania proved to be effective and timely managed. The partnership approach (see CHS 3) followed by most of DEC Members greatly contributed to the effectiveness of the response. As in the neighbouring countries, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local communities were the first to provide support to refugees from Ukraine who were fleeing the conflict. DEC Members partnered and worked closely with CSOs who were active in the ground, with direct contact with affected people and very good knowledge of their needs and priorities.

CHS 3 - Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects: DEC Members adopted a variety of partnership approaches, some working intensively with a small number of partners and some with a broader range. All included a strong element of strengthening the capacity of local partners. This included training to help partners improve their efficiency, to ensure that all policies are in place to implement their project in line with the international humanitarian standards, to include safeguarding in programming and to support appropriate behaviour when working with refugees.

CHS 4 - Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation, and feedback: The localised approach followed by DEC Members and their partners was very effective in terms of having direct and good communication with the affected people. According to local partners, while they have in place some tools and mechanisms of communication such as flyers, phone number and social media groups, most of their communication is also based on direct and face to face contact with the affected people. However, the review heard that more effort should be deployed to ensure that all affected people have access to the right information on a timely manner.

CHS 5 - Complaints are welcomed and addressed: The interviews with DEC Members and their partners also showed that there is no systematic approach followed to collect the feedback and views of affected people on

the services they are receiving. However, phone number and email addresses were always shared with the affected people, and a few post-distribution monitoring were conducted to collect feedback from the refugees.

CHS 6 - Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary: In Romania, there is good overall coordination, led by the Government. There are good coordination efforts among humanitarian actors, mainly through sectoral coordination groups supported by UN agencies. Many DEC Members and their partners confirmed that they are part of several coordination groups and panels such as the Cash Working Group, the Gender Based Violence Group, and the Child Protection Group, the Winterisation Group, and the Data Sharing Group. In addition, DEC Members were involved with some Governmental coordination panels organised with civil society, the Regional Refugee Response coordinated by UN Agencies. They also coordinate with faith-based organisations and through meetings at the local level with prefectures. However, the Review found that there is scope for increased coordination between DEC Members in Romania.

CHS 7 - Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve: The Review revealed a good commitment to learning among DEC Members and their partners. This was detected in DEC Members' plans and proposals for Phase 2, where the design of the second phase was based on learnings generated during the first phase. Local partners confirmed their intention to review their plans and ensure more systems are in place for the next phases of the response. But this is taking more time, and more capacity should be built at local level for better and systematised learning mechanisms.

CHS 8 - Staff are supported to do their job effectively and are treated fairly and equitably: The Review found that all DEC Members have in place policies including staff safety and security, code of conduct, Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and safeguarding policies. For some Members, they appointed safeguarding focal person within each local partner to mainstream safeguarding including PSHEA into all activities.

CH 9 - Resources are managed effectively, efficiently, and ethically: DEC Members have a track record in the good management of resources and the Review noted that their work in this response follows standard policies and processes to ensure a similar standard effectiveness of the delivery of the response at their level, but also at the level of local partners.

Summary of conclusions: Overall, the response in Romania was relevant to the affected people fleeing Ukraine and provided effective support to those who are transiting as well as refugees who decided to settle in the country. Romania is a transit country, where the number of Ukrainians staying in the country was limited at the start of the crises and increased with time. The availability of experienced local partners to deliver the response greatly contributed to its effectiveness and to answering the affected people's needs on time. Considerable capacity strengthening and support has been provided by DEC Members to local partners to ensure their engagement and adherence to the CHS, as well as delivering the response effectively and in line with international standards. For this, DEC Members delivered workshops and trainings on safeguarding, financial management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and continue to provide technical support according to need.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1. The review and this report

This is the Country Report for Romania of the Real-Time Review (RTR) of the response funded by the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal (UHA). It follows the Aides Mémoire, draft country reports and a draft of the synthesis report, taking on board comments received and recent discussions, such as the learning workshops of 4 November and 9 December 2022. This report complements the Country Reports for Ukraine, Poland, Moldova Hungary and the Synthesis Report.

The primary purpose of the RTR is to *instigate collective real-time reflection and learning to inform adjustments across DEC Members' responses*. The Review draws on the experiences in the initial phase of the response in order that lessons be applied in real-time and into the second phase of the Members' programmes. Recognising

the lead role played by national and local actors in the crisis response to date, and the DEC's own commitments to strengthen localisation efforts, attention to how DEC Members are establishing and scaling up their responses in ways that are complementary to and reinforcing of local humanitarian action was an important part of the picture. The RTR serves an accountability function, both to communities and people affected by crisis¹, as well as to the UK public and other key supporters of the DEC appeal. Complementing this Review, a third party monitoring process is ongoing in Ukraine, being conducted on behalf of the FCDO of the UK.

The Review covered the humanitarian response in 5 countries, conducted by 13 Members and supported by the DEC Secretariat, and involved discussions with a wide range of stakeholders. The Review focused on 'collective learning' and did not conduct in-depth reviews on the responses of individual DEC Members.

The review was designed as a participatory process, whereby collective learning was facilitated during the course of the review, notably in the use of workshops and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), both in-country and across the whole of the response. This report is the final stage of this process.

Further details on the review purpose, approach and methodology are given in the *Annex*.

2.2. Background and context

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) brings together 15 of the UK's leading aid charities to raise funds in response to major international humanitarian crises. In order to support Members' activities, harness lessons and inform real-time revisions to ongoing humanitarian programmes, the DEC Secretariat commissioned this Review of programmes funded by the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal (UHA).

Since 24 February 2022, the conflict in Ukraine has escalated and led to a massive humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need, including those who have fled across borders and many more who are on the move inside the country or unable to leave encircled towns and cities. Currently over 5.6 million people are displaced internally and more than 7.8 million refugees from Ukraine have fled to European countries².

The majority of those fleeing Ukraine are women and children. Over 4.3 million refugees from Ukraine have registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in different European countries³, out of which around 1.5 million are registered in Poland⁴.

The Ukraine crisis has triggered exceptional levels of support and solidarity. Neighbouring Governments have mobilised quickly, as have local communities in those countries. In contrast with their approach to refugees from other conflicts, EU countries have been fast to provide temporary protection and access to jobs and services to Ukrainians. The UN humanitarian flash appeal for Ukraine is one of the biggest and most generously funded ever⁵. Public appeals in many European countries have also been very well supported.

As part of this support, the DEC launched the UHA on 3 March 2022. 13 Member Charities⁶ have responded as part of the DEC appeal, working with partners in Ukraine and 4 neighbouring countries: Poland, Romania, Moldova and Hungary, and providing cross-border support from Romania and Slovakia.

¹ In line with CHS commitment 7 "humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve".

² <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ukraine/>

³ Ukraine Situation Flash Update #33 (21 October 2022).

⁴ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10781?secret=unhcrrestricted>

⁵ https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/Navigating_Ukrainian_dilemmas_in_the_Ukraine_crisis.pdf

⁶ Action Against Hunger, ActionAid, Age International, British Red Cross, CAFOD, Care, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, International Rescue Committee, Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children and World Vision. Islamic Relief Worldwide and Tearfund will respond at a smaller scale with their own funds but will participate in DEC MEAL activities.

At the time of writing, the DEC fundraising campaign has raised over £400 million. The 13 Member charities taking part in the appeal will spend DEC funds over a period of at least 3 years, split into Phase 1 (the first 6 months) and Phase 2 (the following 30 months) of the response. During Phase 1 £215 million was allocated to DEC Members to support humanitarian programmes.

The response priorities for DEC Members and their partners in Phase 1 were:

- Health: provision of primary healthcare services, providing items like trauma kits and first aid kits, as well as supporting healthcare facilities with oxygen compressors and vital pharmaceutical products.
- Cash: support affected populations needs (Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees, as well as members of the host communities) through Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) delivered using a variety of approaches: pre-paid cards, digital transfers etc to meet vital basic needs and protection services.
- Food: food assistance, hot meals or using cash transfers like supermarket vouchers.
- Water, sanitation & hygiene: safe drinking water, hygiene information and hygiene kits.
- Protection: psychosocial support for affected people, stress management training sessions.
- Shelter: bed linen, blankets, towels, kitchen sets, jerry cans, buckets for displaced people and host communities.

Large scale and rapidly evolving context: As the data shows, this is a large scale, sudden onset crisis, and the scale of the response has been very large, in a region where many Members had little presence. While this large-scale response is welcome, it brings a range of ‘scaling-up’ challenges, including establishing partnerships, recruiting staff and developing support systems, that were particularly evident in the early stages of the response.

In recent months, the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, which was already dire, has further deteriorated, with winter having come and the systematic destruction of critical infrastructure by the Russian military. A notable development is a call⁷ from Ukraine’s Government for those who have left the country not to return until after winter. Public statements have also been made about the possible need to evacuate Kyiv, due to the destruction of its energy and water infrastructure. Ukraine’s Government reports⁸ that the country has lost 50% of its power production. On 19 November, the CEO of DTEK (Ukraine’s major energy company) stated⁹ that Ukrainians should consider leaving the country for at least for 3-4 months to help save energy. With continuing attacks on infrastructure, the situation is likely to deteriorate further.

Another reason for a likely increased demand for humanitarian aid is related to liberation of Ukraine’s regions in September-November 2022, especially parts of Kharkiv, Donetsk and Kherson regions. Firstly, people who lived under occupation are now encouraged by the Government to leave these areas for safer regions, because the liberated areas are now heavily shelled by the Russian military and continue to be mine-contaminated. These people will need continued assistance. Secondly, for those who remain, improved humanitarian access allows aid to be brought to the several hundred thousand residents of these areas who remain, and who are badly in need of assistance.

3. Who we heard from

With support from DEC Members, in Romania, the Review heard from the following people/agencies:

- 10 Key Informant Discussions (KIDs) with DEC Members staff in Romania.
- 3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with local partners in Romania.
- 1 KID with a local partner.

⁷ <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/ukrainian-refugees-should-not-return-in-winter-deputy-prime-minister.html>

⁸ <https://ukranews.com/en/news/896078-almost-50-of-ukraine-s-power-system-disabled-by-russian-missiles-shmyhal>

⁹ <https://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2022/11/19/694029/>

- 1 FGD with affected people (8 women from 2 cities in Romania and different profiles and age range).

4. Findings

This section presents the findings of the Review, structured according to the 9 CHS commitments. The findings in this report present an overall view of the response in the country; they do not assess specific Members and their performances.

4.1. CHS1: Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant

Romania is considered as a transit country, where the majority of refugees cross the country to reach other destinations in Europe. The humanitarian response delivered by DEC Members and their partners proved to be relevant to the affected people and aligned with the strategies and priorities of DEC Members.

Through their local partners, DEC Members delivered a range of activities aiming at meeting the different needs of affected people who are in constant movement, including cash assistance, Non-Food Items (NFIs) and (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)).

At the start of the crisis and during the first phase, only a few DEC Members were able to conduct needs assessments so most of the programming design was based on the knowledge of the local context, refugee experience of the local partners and data and reports shared by UNHCR. No formal large-scale needs assessments were conducted by DEC Members and their partners to assess the emerging needs of refugees from Ukraine. But some of the Members confirmed that they are currently conducting large scale need assessments to develop better understanding of people's needs and tailor their winterisation planning.

Some local partners were able to conduct small scale interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the affected people since the start of the crisis to assess their changing needs and adapt their programming accordingly. This was possible as most of local partners were present on the ground from the very beginning and developed good relations with Ukrainian communities. But the majority of stakeholders interviewed confirmed that there is a lack of systematic research to allow a better understanding of how the needs are changing among the affected people in Romania.

The DEC Members and their implementing partners reported that they prioritised humanitarian assistance in Romania, because at the beginning of the crisis a large number of people from Ukraine transit through Romania, and only a limited number of refugees had plans to stay in the country at that time. The unpredictability and mobility of refugees represented a challenging situation for DEC Members and their partners, making planning extremely difficult, so flexibility and adaptability were crucial. Cash assistance, despite the technical challenges that were occasionally faced, was reported to be the most flexible modality for the affected people as it allows more freedom for people who are on the move. In addition, needs and demands for shelters and safe spaces, MHPSS and protection services were high as they provided a relief to the affected people when they reached Romania and allowed some temporary rest before they continued their journey to other countries.

The DEC response proved to be broadly in line with the Romanian Government strategy. The local organisations and DEC partners in Romania were aware of the Government efforts to implement humanitarian response¹⁰ targeting refugees from Ukraine. Therefore, they designed programmes to complement the Government efforts and fill in the gaps, mainly when it comes to health and education services. Even though the coordination between central Government and local civil society organisations was limited, more coordination was observed at local level with local authorities (see CHS 6).

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.ro/ro/pagina/ukraine-together-we-help-more>

4.2. CHS 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely

Overall, the DEC response in Romania proved to be effective and timely. The partnership approach (see CHS 3) followed by most of DEC Members greatly contributed to the effectiveness of the response. Civil society Organisations (CSOs) and local communities were the first ones to provide support to refugees from Ukraine who were fleeing the conflict. DEC Members partnered and worked closely with CSOs who were active on the ground, with direct contact with affected people and very good knowledge of their needs and priorities.

A local partner reported that “DEC Member support reached us right on time,” as they were running out of resources, and needed more financial and technical support to manage the increasing numbers of refugees they were receiving.

Most of DEC Members staff Members reported that finding local partners in Romania was not a big challenge. Most of Romanian CSOs they partnered with were able to deliver the humanitarian response, they were well grounded and had good access to affected people, which contributed to the effectiveness of the response.

Interviews with local partners showed that most of them had prior experience working with refugees, immigrants, and vulnerable people in different settings, which allowed them to act quickly to respond to refugees from Ukraine needs on time. Local partners reported that being present at check points and on the ground from the start of the crisis allowed them to build trust with refugees from Ukraine. This approach allowed the implementers to be informed of the refugees needs and adapt their programmes and approaches accordingly.

Affected people in the FGDs¹¹ confirmed that all services received were effective and timely but emphasised the effectiveness of cash assistance and MPHSS services as in helping them cope with their situation.

The Review found that most Members are on track in achieving their expected outputs and objectives. Programmes benefited from the flexibility of funding and were being adapted to the needs of the refugees, noting that needs were different between those who transiting and those staying in the country. While transiting people’s main needs were temporary shelter, cash and food, the refugees who stayed in the country have more emerging needs such education for children, language support, long term shelters / safe spaces to live and finding jobs to be able to support their family.

4.3. CHS 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.

As mentioned earlier, almost all DEC Members delivered their programmes in Romania through local partners, following due diligence and their standard procedures to select local partners.

Some Members partnered with a few local organisations with good track records and experience in working with immigrants and refugees. These local organisations delivered humanitarian services directly to the affected people and were supported by DEC Members to develop their capacities in terms of humanitarian management response, develop their safeguarding and child protection policies as well as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems.

Other Members partnered with a large number of local CSOs, to able to reach several regions and localities, and deliver several activities under protection. This approach allowed the Members to shorten the long process of due diligence as they only provided small amounts of funding for each local partner, so managing risk, and thereby to move ahead quickly with the delivery of assistance to reach the most vulnerable refugees. This approach was challenged by the amount of reporting that DEC Member had to receive and compile, as well as the need to provide more capacity strengthening and trainings to the local CSO to ensure that all activities are delivered in line with humanitarian standards.

¹¹ The FGD was conducted with 8 women (representing young and elderly, working and housewives).

Another model was followed by some Members where they partnered with other international organisations with good knowledge of the Romanian context, and an established network. While this approach raised some concerns regarding its efficiency, it proved its effectiveness as it allowed the Members to move quickly and reach the most vulnerable people on the ground.

The local partners reported that the technical support they received from DEC Members was very effective, and helped them to improve their work efficiency, and ensure that all policies are in place to implement their project in line with the international humanitarian standards and ensure safety programming and support protocols and appropriate behaviour when working with refugees.

In addition, some local partners confirmed that they are still facing challenges related to M&E (reporting and tracking indicators) due to their lack of experience in this area. This situation is being improved during the second phase, as DEC Members are providing Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) support and local organisations are hiring MEAL managers.

Regarding the work with the Government, the Review found that there are limited opportunities for DEC Members to provide direct support to central or local Government and contribute to strengthening their capacities. However, the local partners in different locations work in close collaboration with local authorities.

4.4. CHS 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation, and feedback

The partnership approach followed by DEC Members with their partners was very effective in terms of having direct and good communication with affected people. According to local partners, while they have in place some tools and mechanisms of communication such as flyers, phone number and social media groups, most of their communication is based on direct, face-to-face contact with affected people.

The majority of local partners operate in limited and small locations, where they mostly know everyone. This helps them to limit their effort and keep a personalised follow-up approach with the Ukrainian communities. However, the Review team could not collect any evidence on the effectiveness of the approach and the extent to which this approach is not leaving anyone behind, and that affected people are properly informed about their rights and entitlements.

FGDs with affected people showed that their main source of information is social media, friends and family and local organisations that are supporting them. The discussion showed that participants have different versions of information, and not all of them are informed about some services and how to access them. A participant reported that her main challenge was related to finding the right information about the Romanian system and administrative services (e.g., where to get health care, vaccines, legal papers, etc.).

4.5. CHS 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed

Some Members and local partners were able to conduct surveys and post distribution monitoring to ask affected people about their feedback and satisfaction of the process and to collect information about the timeliness of assistance and lessons learnt to inform future project phases. However, this practice was not systematic among all implementing partners, due to the lack of MEAL capacity and knowledge among most of local partners. The partners reported that they had no capacity to hire a MEAL staff member or conduct any systematic data collection during the first phase.

The interviews with DEC Members and their partners also showed that there is no systematic approach to collect the feedback and views of affected people on the services they are receiving. In addition, there is no evidence that the available complaints and feedback mechanisms tools (phone numbers, email address and face-to-face) are effective in terms of collecting feedback and making sure that affected people's voices are heard properly and that their complaints and feedback are being solved. Some organisations are planning to start conducting systematic rounds of interviews, to make sure that they are listening to the people's complaints, feedback, and concerns, and to address them on a timely manner.

4.6. CHS 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary

Overall, the coordination of humanitarian response in Romania between different humanitarian actors is good, led by the Romanian Government. Many DEC Members and their partners confirmed that they are part of several coordination groups and panels such as Cash Working Group, GBV group, and Child Protection Group, Winterisation Group and Data Sharing Group. In addition, some Governmental coordination panels are organised with civil society, and the Regional Refugee Response is coordinated by UN Agencies.

According to interviewees, while these coordination panels are not perfect, they are very important and helpful, as it allows them to coordinate their work, avoid duplication, increase efficiency, and learn from different other humanitarian agencies operating in the same country and region.

In addition, good coordination by the Government has been noted, an example being the second Refugee Coordination Forum that was held on 24 June with officials from the Government¹², partners and donors. However, coordination between DEC Members and national Government partners remains very limited; coordination was more developed with local Government, where almost all local partners are involved. Some DEC Members confirmed their plans to approach national Government to discuss their involvement at this level. It is worth mentioning that other UN agencies and humanitarian actors are already working with central Government and supporting their efforts in coordination.

The Review found that there is generally poor level of confidence in the Government, so while agencies need to engage with the Government and complement their effort and expand coverage to support refugees from Ukraine, it is important to ensure that the engagement does not contribute to the already existing political and social tensions in the country.

The Review results showed that there was no coordination between DEC Members. No mechanisms were in place to share lessons learned between Members operating in the same country. Most of DEC Members' staff interviewed reported that they are not aware of the existence of other DEC Members, which was partially caused by the high staff turnover that the Members have faced during the first phase of the response, and the lack of internal communication within DEC Members.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) remains a challenge that all agencies face, as it limits data and information sharing between Members, especially that there are no agreements in place on the sharing of information including on the effectiveness of the response (e.g., cash programming).

4.7. CHS 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve

The Review showed that during the first phase of the response, there was a lack of structured learning mechanisms and approaches among local partners in Romania, mainly because of the focus on emergency response as well as the lack of resources needed for such mechanisms. The majority of local organisations interviewed confirmed that they did not have a MEAL coordinator or manager to ensure systematic data collection for learning. However, many organisations reported that they rely on their knowledge of the local context and direct interaction and informal relation with affected people to collect information that helps them to adapt their programmes based on the detected needs.

The Review revealed a good commitment to learning between DEC Members and their partners. This was observed in DEC Members' plans and proposals for Phase 2, where the design of the second phase was informed by learning during the first phase. Local partners confirmed their intention to review their plans and ensure more learning systems are in place for the next phases of the response. But this is taking more time, and more capacity should be built at local level for better and systematised learning mechanisms.

¹² <https://reliefweb.int/report/romania/regional-refugee-response-plan-ukraine-situation-inter-agency-operational-update-romania-june-2022>

Local partners interviewed reported that there is a need for research to better understand the changing context where the Members are working; over time the needs of affected people change, and it was felt that there is no systematic process of information gathering on how these needs are changing and what are the new priorities. In addition, as Romania is a transit country, planning is very challenging and needs more follow-up and monitoring of the changing context to ensure programmes continue to meet the needs of affected people.

It is worth noting that several Members have their MEAL systems in place including learning reports and they confirmed that they are planning to conduct several studies, RTRs and multi-sector needs assessments that will inform their winterisation plans and beyond.

4.8. CHS 8: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably

DEC Members faced only few challenges related to recruitment of permanent staff at the beginning of the response, as they mostly delivered programmes through local partners. This challenge was managed effectively during the first phase of the response, and currently most Members have all needed resources in place.

The review found that all DEC Members have in place policies including staff safety and security policy, code of conduct, PSHEA, and safeguarding policies. Some Members appointed a safeguarding focal person within each local partner to mainstream safeguarding, including PSEA into all activities.

This Review could not check in detail the extent to which each DEC Members and its partners was able to ensure implementation of existing policies, but interviews with Members staff showed some positive cases where staff reported that the work environment is flexible, and that they work as a team to accomplish their tasks and respond in the best way they could. Other comments received about the high workload due to lack of proper resources sometimes, high turnover and the lack of handover and proper orientation when they joined their positions.

In addition, staff Members reported that they usually have access to training portals (related to child protection, PSEA) and that psychological support has been provided when needed.

4.9. CHS 9: Resources are managed effectively, efficiently, and ethically

The Review did not assess in detail how well resources are managed. However, based on the interviews with DEC Members, and documents that has been shared, it was clear that Members have a good track record delivering humanitarian response in different other contexts, and for the Ukraine response, standard financial policies and processes have been followed to ensure effective delivery of the response by DEC Members and by local partners.

DEC Members have processes in place for document control, procurement, lists of pre-qualified suppliers, supervised distribution of supplies, and other governance and financial systems that were used during the implementation of the response. However, it was noted that some procurement policies and due diligence still need to be adapted to the Romanian context, taking into consideration the country's existing policies (gender, child protection, safeguarding etc.).

5. Conclusions

The Review concludes that overall, the response of DEC Members in Romania was relevant, effective, and well-tailored to the local context, especially in the engagement with and support provided to local partners.

The availability of such experienced local partners to deliver the response greatly contributed to its effectiveness and to answering the affected people's need on time. Considerable capacity strengthening and support has been provided by DEC Members to local partners to ensure their engagement and adherence to the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), as well as delivering the response in the most effective way and in line with international

standards. For this, DEC Members delivered workshops and trainings on safeguarding, financial management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and continue to provide technical support based on their specific needs.

The flexibility of DEC funding was a key factor that supported a good adaptation of programmes to the emerging needs of affected people, including those transiting and those who decided to stay in the country.

Despite the lack of proper and large-scale need assessments, the Members were able to collect information from affected people through local partners who developed good relations and trust with refugee communities. The fact that each local organisation focuses on a limited area helped to develop good access to affected people.

The different partnership approaches used by DEC Members proved to be effective. However, some concerns were raised about the efficiency and value for money related to the layers of partnerships used by some Members, and the extent to which it could be possible for DEC to provide direct funding to organisations with better footprint even if they are not part of DEC network.

The overall coordination of the response by humanitarian actors in Romania was good. Several sectoral coordination mechanisms exist, mainly Working Groups where several humanitarian actors come together to discuss challenges and share learning; however, no coordination has been observed between DEC Members in the country. More coordination between the Members would contribute to learning and reflection, building on the strengths of each Member and supporting more effective programming.

The activities and programmes delivered by DEC Members and their partners including Non-Food Items (NFIs), cash, shelter, education, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) etc were very effective. As they are part of the affected people's coping mechanisms. The programmes adapted to the changing needs of affected people. At the beginning they needed food and shelter the most, but later, the needs were mainly related to psychological support, education services for their children, and skills that will allow them to find jobs and become more independent. This shows that because priorities and needs are changing over time more robust learning and feedback mechanisms should be in place in order to be able to understand the changes and review priorities.

While all DEC Members in Romania have in place policies including staff safety and security policy, a code of conduct, Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and safeguarding policies, some challenges have been detected related to heavy workload, high staff turnover and lack of proper handover and orientation for new staff. These challenges have been partially addressed and the overall situation is improving.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations in this section are based on the findings and conclusion discussed above.

Keep, maintain and enhance the strong points of the response	Who
1. Working hard in difficult conditions, striving to meet the needs of people at risk in line with best practice	<i>DEC secretariat and Members.</i>
2. Maintain the flexibility of DEC funding to allow real time adaptability of the Members.	<i>DEC Secretariat.</i>
3. Continue the technical support provided to the local partners.	<i>DEC Members.</i>
4. Maintain cash assistance and review the different modalities to ensure that Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) modalities are matching the affected populations' journeys and changing needs.	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>
5. Maintain and increase Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services for boys and girls and women given the compounding of difficult experiences, in country of origin and throughout the journey.	<i>DEC Members are their partners.</i>
Even better,	Who
6. Strengthen the capacity of local partners to develop and implement robust learning mechanisms.	<i>DEC Members.</i>
7. Provide more support to local partners to strengthen their M&E systems.	<i>DEC Members.</i>
8. Increase efforts to build capacity in child protection, MHPSS, and education within existing Government systems to avoid creating parallel system.	<i>DEC Members and their partners</i>
9. Ensure more inclusion and adapted programming for people with disability, LGBTQ community and elderly.	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>
10. Follow conflict-sensitive and inclusive approach programming to avoid tensions between host communities and refugees' populations.	<i>DEC Secretariat / DEC Members and their partners.</i>
11. Ensure that engagement with Government does not contribute to existing social and political tensions.	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>
12. Improve communication tools and channels used to ensure that affected people have access to the right information and are very well informed about their rights and entitlements throughout their journey. In this respect, take note of the CDAC report ¹³ on <i>Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability across the Ukraine response</i> and on the findings of Ground Truth Solutions ¹⁴ .	<i>DEC Members and their partners.</i>
13. Increase coordination and learning sharing between DEC Members at national and regional level.	<i>DEC Members.</i>
14. Hold a collective discussion to facilitate data sharing in a GDPR compliant manner amongst humanitarian actors in Romania and neighbouring countries	<i>DEC Members.</i>

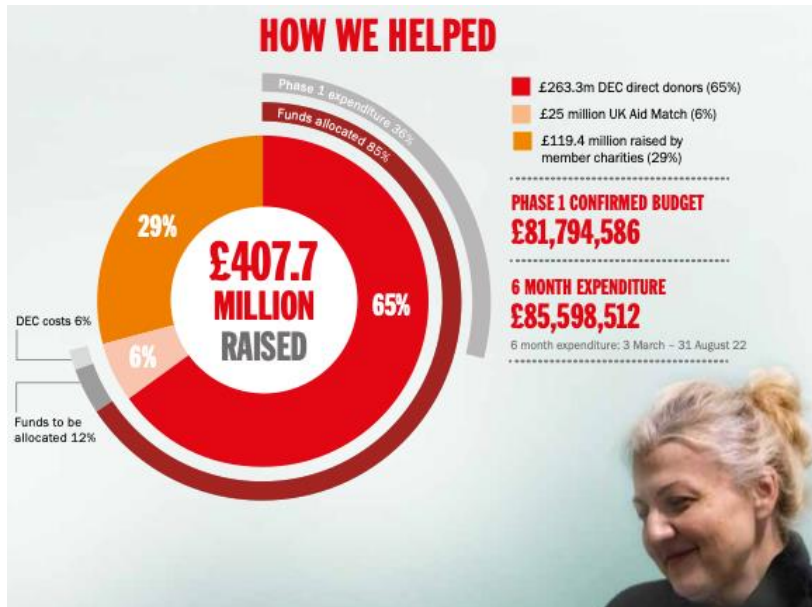
¹³ https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60996b757eb6521a42f3839d/t/6336e153b424b77aca87d05c/1664541074709/Ukraine+snapshot_September+update_overview.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/projects/a-locally-informed-humanitarian-response-insights-from-ukraine>

Annexes

7. Overview of DEC Response

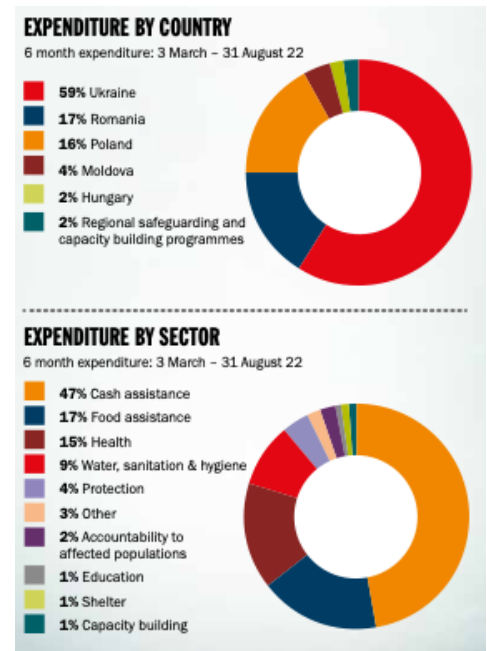
The charts and text below give a brief overview of the DEC Response¹⁵.



After weeks of escalating tensions, the conflict in Ukraine began in the early hours of 24 February 2022. Intense clashes and aerial attacks forced thousands of families to flee as their homes were destroyed and essential infrastructure such as water supplies, hospitals and schools were damaged.

Within a week, more than one million people had fled Ukraine and many more were displaced inside the country. Hundreds of thousands of people began to cross the borders into neighbouring countries, mostly women and children who arrived with only what they could carry. With the country on the brink of a humanitarian crisis, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launched an appeal on 3 March 2022 for people affected by the conflict, including refugees, those displaced within Ukraine and people still in situ. 13 DEC Member charities are responding with DEC funds to the crisis in Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Moldova and Hungary.

The conflict caused Europe's fastest growing displacement crisis since World War II. Nearly 13 million people fled their homes in less than two months – almost a third of the population. There has been widespread urban devastation and destruction of civilian infrastructure. Around 300 health facilities are in conflict areas and many health workers have been displaced or are unable to work. Almost half of Ukraine's pharmacies are thought to be closed. In April 2022, it was reported that 1.4 million people in Ukraine had no access to water, and another 4.6 million people had only limited access. By June 2022, 15.7 million people were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance; this figure rose to 17.7 million by October 2022.



¹⁵ From the DEC's 6 month report, March to August 2022.

8. Purpose and Scope of Review

8.1. Purpose

The primary purpose of the Real-Time Review is to instigate collective real-time reflection and learning to inform adjustments across DEC Members' responses. The Review draws on the initial phase of the response in order that lessons be applied in real-time and into the second phase of the Members' programmes. Recognising the lead role played by national and local actors in the crisis response to date, and the DEC's own commitments to strengthen localisation efforts, attention to how DEC Members are establishing and scaling up their responses in ways that are complementary to and reinforcing of local humanitarian action was an important part of the picture. The RTR serves an accountability function, both to communities and people affected by crisis¹⁶, as well as to the UK public and other key supporters of the DEC appeal.

The Review aims to:

- Provide an overview and assessment of the response so far against the Core Humanitarian Standard commitments (CHS).
- Draw out key lessons, at operational level, that can inform real-time adjustments and be utilised during implementation of on-going DEC programmes.
- Highlight good practice in the humanitarian operations funded by the DEC.
- Where relevant, identify gaps, areas of unmet needs, and challenges to the humanitarian operations funded by the DEC, from both a sectoral and cross-cutting perspective.
- Inform the partnership approach of DEC Members (including their relationship with national and local partners).
- Explore the extent to which the implementation of the CHS contributes towards high quality and accountable programme plans.

8.2. Scope and limitations

The Review covered the humanitarian response in 5 countries, conducted by 13 Members and supported by the DEC Secretariat. For this, a total of 202 consultant-days¹⁷ was available. In line with this and the scope of the humanitarian action, the Review included in-country fieldwork in Ukraine and Poland, remote missions for Romania and Moldova and a more limited remote mission for Hungary.¹⁸ Due to the breadth in scope and in line with the TOR, the Review focused on 'areas of enquiry most relevant and meaningful to them (DEC Members) as a collective.'

A limitation was the fact that not all DEC Members and local partners have physical presence in one location. Instead, their main offices are scattered around Ukraine and Europe, requiring their staff to regularly depart for travels, which due to security concerns, take a long time. Therefore, it was impossible to gather representatives of DEC Members operating in Ukraine and their local partners in one place, so online discussions were necessary. Furthermore, the busy schedules of stakeholders made it impossible for everyone to participate in the Review and prevented certain Members from delegating the same representatives for different discussions in the Review, which would have helped with consistency. In Ukraine, an additional limitation was the security situation, which limited travel within the country.

As the Review focused on what was heard from a wide range of stakeholders about the overall response, it was not generally feasible to disaggregate that part of the response funded by the DEC. Similarly, given the breadth of the Review, it was not practical to go into depth on the responses of any one Member. In this regard, it is noted

¹⁶ In line with CHS commitment 7 "humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve".

¹⁷ One consultant working for one day gives one consultant-day, a team of 4 working for 50 days gives 200 consultant-days.

¹⁸ Ukraine and Poland were chosen as this is where the majority of the affected people are, which has also translated into where DEC and its Members plan to spend the majority of funding – 54% in Ukraine and 20 % in Poland.

that individual Members have been conducting their own reviews, and this review should be seen as complimentary to those.

9. Review Concepts and Approach

9.1. Concepts

Key aspects of the conceptual framework of the Review are outlined briefly below. These align closely with the concepts underpinning the Terms of Reference (TOR) and the DEC strategy.

Guided by TOR: The Review adhered closely to the key requirements of the TOR, noting, in particular, the requirement for *'real-time reflection and learning to inform adjustments across DEC Members' responses,*' bearing in mind the DEC's plans for Phase 2. It also provides a strong element of accountability, notably through its engagement with affected people and allowing another, independent, channel for their voices to be heard by the DEC.

Centred on affected people and communities, participation by humanitarian actors: The Review centred on the people and communities affected by the crisis. As illustrated in the simplified diagram below, the Review aimed to act as an independent channel for the voice of affected people to reach the DEC, complementing the current mechanisms through which the DEC hears their voices.

This centring on affected people aligns with the DEC Accountability Framework and the Grand Bargain commitment (No. 6) to a 'Participation Revolution'. In line with this, the Review notes the work of Ground Truth Solutions (GTS), which the DEC has commissioned to ascertain the perceptions of people on the humanitarian response¹⁹.

The Review is informed by a 'risk-informed approach,' which seeks to understand how affected people cope with the risks they face, including considerations of the main hazards faced, and their capacities and vulnerabilities that affect their ability to manage their risks. This understanding is informed by an intersectional approach, noting how risk varies with characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, class and location.

In so doing, the Review explored how the humanitarian action is enhancing the agency of affected people and their communities, supporting their resilience and 'doing no harm.'

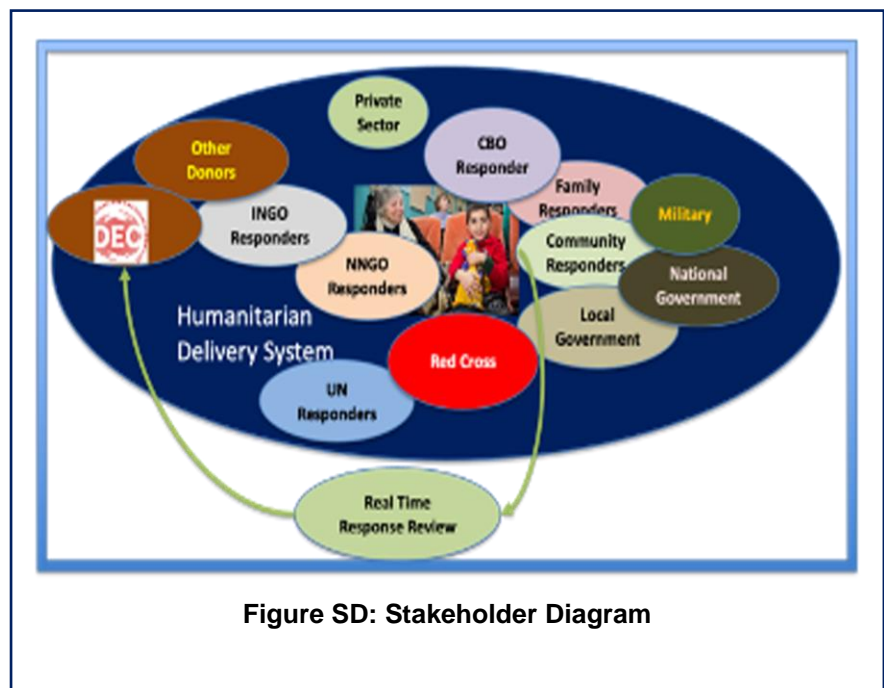


Figure SD: Stakeholder Diagram

recruited, trained, supported and released. Recognising this, and complementing the voice of affected people, the review sought to hear directly from and give voice to the aid workers on the ground.

The Review briefly examined the structure and architecture of the humanitarian system, noting in particular how it supports and builds local capacity in a spirit of partnership and the nature of coordination with local actors. In

¹⁹ <https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/projects/a-locally-informed-humanitarian-response-insights-from-ukraine>

Linking the above, noting the need to review how the affected people participate in decisions that affect them, the Review will ask how humanitarian actors engage with affected people and participate in their decisions and actions in managing their risks. In doing so it examined the role that DEC plays, and can play, in this complex set of relationships.

Engaging with the aid worker: Within the complex set of relationships that form the humanitarian system, the relationship between the aid worker²⁰ and the affected people is key, as the aid worker is one of the main interfaces with affected people. As has been learned over decades, and as is reflected in Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) commitment No. 8, the competence of the aid workers is crucial to an effective response; this includes how the aid workers are recruited, trained, supported and released. Recognising this, and complementing the voice of affected people, the review sought to hear directly from and give voice to the aid workers on the ground.

The Review briefly examined the structure and architecture of the humanitarian system, noting in particular how it supports and builds local capacity in a spirit of partnership and the nature of coordination with local actors. In this examination, the role of DEC Members was explored, particularly in relation to their engagement with local actors and through them with affected people.

Learning and improving: It has long been recognised²¹ that learning is central to effective humanitarian action, bringing learning in from previous operations, sharing and supporting learning within an operation, and taking that learning out for other contexts. The Review examined how such learning was fostered within this operation and how lessons are identified and applied in practice to bring about improvements, including ‘are we doing things right, are we doing the right things?.’ In doing so, it notes that learning is a mutual, two-way process.

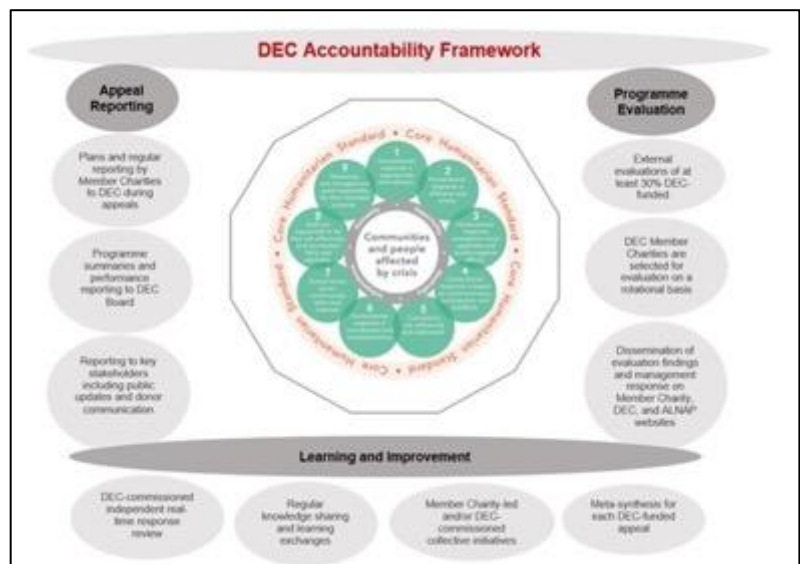
Truth to power: The consultants understand the need for an external, independent and professional source of information ready to ‘speak truth into power’ and acknowledge the full support of the DEC in this regard. It gives due regard to confidentiality, especially for key informants.

9.2. Approach and priorities

The Review was conducted in line with the DEC’s Accountability Framework (see below), noting the centrality of communities and people affected by the crisis, the Humanitarian Principles and the nine CHS commitments.

The nature of the Review was light-touch, qualitative and participative; it aimed to harvest and document real-time key learnings.

- Light, rapid and participatory.
- Use of appreciative inquiry (what is working well, how to improve, key challenges).
- A critical friend / sparring partner stance, promoting dialogue, constructive criticism and learning.
- Open and adaptive, learning within the review and adapting the review as needed.



²⁰ In this context an ‘aid worker’ is anyone providing assistance or support to affected people, whether working informally or for an ‘official’ agency.

²¹ An example was the formation of ALNAP (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance).

- Practical and realistic, recognising the human and logistical constraints involved in the response and the Review.
- Rigorous and evidence-based, as far as possible within the constraints of this Review.

The Review was concerned to learn was the response ‘doing the right things and doing them in the right way.’ Arising from the consultations and review in the inception phase, the following 5 priorities were identified to guide the Review:

- Are affected people at the centre and is their voice being heard and acted on?
- How healthy and functional is the relationship between DEC Members and local organisations (including Government): is the DEC engaging as well as it could?
- Are ‘frontline’ aid workers / volunteers / local groups being well supported in their work?
- Is the DEC and its Members able to respond quickly and well to rapidly changing circumstances, predicted (such as winter) and unpredicted (such as changes in the conduct of the conflict)?
- Is learning being promoted at all relevant levels (including DEC board level) through structures and processes that work and result in improved practice (both in Ukraine and elsewhere)?

10. Review Methodology and Deliverables

10.1. Methodology

A mix of methods and tools were used, and a wide variety of information sources were consulted to facilitate triangulation and verification of data. The mix was developed during the initial inception, during the country briefing workshops and adapted in line with the realities on the ground. The tools included:

- A focused review of secondary data, including key documents, agreed with the DEC²².
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), semi-structured in nature.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).
- Observation, including onsite visits and attendance at operational meetings (where possible).
- Participatory analysis, incorporated in the FGDs.

The Review questions were developed to expand and better understand the implementation and performance of DEC funded programmes. A review matrix was developed during the inception phase and was used to inform the conduct of the review.

The phasing of the review is outlined and discussed briefly below:



²² Secondary data will also be obtained from Ground Truth Solutions (GTS), with whom CMC will coordinate throughout the assignment. CMC have contacted with GTS in the inception phase and are liaising with them, with support from DEC. CMC will explore how to utilise the data from GTS to inform the review and in particular to triangulate the findings from the qualitative data collected in the review. Additionally, during the inception phase the data collection tools will be informed by the initial findings of GTS, and CMC will make sure that there is complementarity.

Inception: During this phase, the team conducted a preliminary desk review, a range of inception interviews, drafted the inception report, held a participatory inception workshop, finalised the inception report and made the necessary logistical preparations for the field work.

Field work with debrief: The field work was conducted from late September into November 2022, starting with the in-person field missions to Ukraine and Poland, and followed by remote missions to Romania, Moldova and Hungary. The fieldwork involved a considerable amount of discussion between DEC Members and with others, so facilitating reflection and learning throughout the process.

Initial analysis and Aide Memoire: After the field work, an Aide Mémoire for each country was prepared and shared with the DEC Secretariat and through them with the DEC Members. This was to allow for early feedback to inform the design and implementation of Phase 2, in advance of the more formal country and synthesis reports.

During this phase, the initial findings, conclusion and tentative recommendations were presented and discussed at an online learning workshop held on Friday 4 November.

Data analysis and reporting: During this phase, the review team conducted further analysis of the data and drafted the country reports.

Reporting and Presentation: During this phase, drafts of the reports will be reviewed and discussed, and a final presentation made.

10.2. Deliverables

The deliverables are as follows:

Deliverable	Date
An inception report submitted to the DEC Secretariat and presented to Members as part of an inception meeting in London or online.	12 Sep 2022
Facilitation of the inception workshop sessions with DEC Members and their partners.	12 Sep 2022
Facilitation of in-country briefing workshops for DEC Members and partners.	3 Oct 2022
Contribute to DEC Members Humanitarian Directors' Meeting.	4 Oct 2022
Facilitation of in-country learning / debriefing workshops at close of field work phase.	17 Oct 2022
5 Aides Mémoire, one for each country, submitted after completion of field work.	End Oct 2022
Contribute to a DEC Membership and Accountability Committee Meeting.	3 Nov 2022
Contribution to a response wide learning workshop at the end of the field work.	4 Nov 2022
Five brief draft country reports (this report) and a draft Synthesis report.	Late Nov 2022
Presentation at debriefing meetings with DEC Secretariat and Members (and possibly FCDO) in London or online.	Early Dec 2022
Receive comments from DEC Members & Secretariat.	Late Dec 2022
Finalise the 5 country reports and synthesis report.	Early Jan 2023
Submit the final reports.	Late Jan 2023

It is noted that a key result of the real-time review is *collective real-time reflection and learning* on the part of the DEC Members, the Secretariat and local organisations. In addition to reports and other knowledge documents, this reflection and learning has been facilitated during the course of the review by the discussions at the interactive and participatory workshops listed above.

11. Reflections from the Real-Time Review (RTR)

11.1. Using the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)

These notes are provided to give some reflections on the use of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) in the response and in the review itself. It is not intended as a comprehensive review, which is beyond the scope of this Real-Time Review (RTR).

For the Review: The CHS gives a useful framework for the Review and discussions. It helps keep discussions structured but is not too complicated.

For a full learning exercise, it would be a useful part of the package.

For supporting the response: DEC Members were familiar with it – so that is good.

In the view of the review team, it provides a useful framework for checking that the response is doing what it should be doing. However, it must be used as part of a package, alongside assessment (risk-informed approach), planning (the logical planning framework) and implementation methods (project cycle) and linked to a credible Theory of Change.

Suggested improvements:

- **CHS1 and 2** Amalgamate them – very hard to separate these in discussions or analysis.
- **CHS 4** – Review this to ensure participation is the right way around – that agencies recognise they are participating with affected people, local organisations and Government. There is still a strong (and understandable) tendency for aid workers to see 'participation' as meaning how 'beneficiaries' participate in the response, rather than how agencies participate with affected people. Review wording in light of the proposed principle set out below.
- **CHS 8:** This needs strengthening, for example "Policies are in place, are implemented in practice and regularly reviewed" for the various items.

Statement of principle: 'our rights respected and risks managed': *We, the people affected by disaster, assert our right to assistance that helps ensure our rights are respected and that supports us in managing the risks we face and in coping and developing as communities and individuals. Such assistance will be based on a sound assessment of the hazards we face, respect for our capacities as well as our needs and will be designed and provided in a framework that is people-centred and community-led, with appropriate external agency participation, and which enhances our resilience to future risks.*

As affected people, we have a right to participate in the governance of the assistance provided by external actors, by having meaningful representation in oversight and governance mechanisms.

A key competency of external actors and their staff shall be their ability to engage with us as affected people, with competence and respect. Their selection, preparation and training shall include this aspect.

11.2. Learning about learning

Good responses are supported by good learning and a RTR can be one useful component of the learning support package, alongside others. DEC as a collective is well placed to support this process, and perhaps even to extend it, seeing it as an 'investment not a cost.'

In looking at what constitutes a learning support package for a response, the following points may be considered.

Firstly, a useful question to guide the design of the learning is: *What do we need to learn and how can we best meet the learning needs of the organisation as well as groups of individuals within the organisation?*²³

Theory of Change for learning: In current parlance, work with an evidence-based theory of change that supports effective learning, at all relevant levels, including individual, organisational and institutional.

Agree on the key metric for effective learning, proposed as an improvement in practice (not simply more knowledge).

Who needs to learn?

- Affected People, the starting point: what do we (affected people) need to know and learn in order to cope with our situation?

²³ <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/from-real-time-evaluation-to-real-time-learning>

- Individual aid workers (MASKS²⁴, Technical & Operational Competence including Welfare).
- Country team and operations (MEAL, the Project Cycle, Systematic Induction and Briefing of staff).
- DEC Members: from board to field worker, linking to organisational capacity, recognising key drivers of learning.
- Between Members – supporting collective learning.
- DEC Secretariat – including as a facilitator.
- DEC Board – strategic lessons to be learned, including monitoring the learning process itself.
- Broader humanitarian community, recognising the convening and advocacy potential of the DEC.

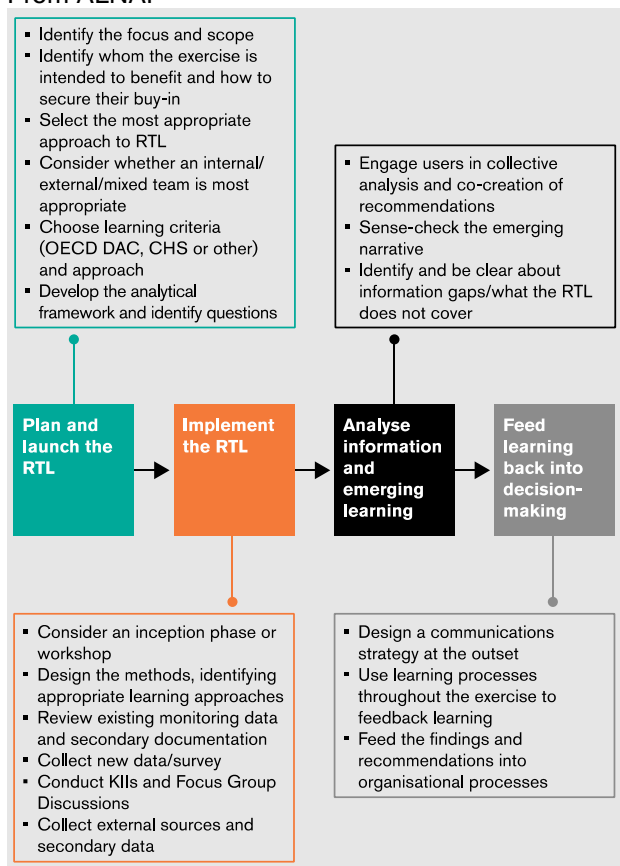
Cycle of learning: Consider the full cycle of learning:

- Before: Bringing learning in from previous experiences.
- During: Sharing learning around and developing learning.
- After: Taking learning out and incorporating into practice, using policies, procedures and support.

Learning Process: At the DEC level, provide for linking current learning exercises to learning from previous exercises, including reviews and/or evaluations by the DEC, and taking on board external sources of good practice (e.g. ALNAP, see below). As part of this process, check how previous learning has been incorporated by the DEC (at board, Secretariat, and Member level).

During a crisis look at how learning is supported, developed and shared during the course of the crisis, at all levels. Consider developing a simple mechanism to support further learning between DEC Members, including regular exchanges and sharing of key information (such as learning from Member reviews).

From ALNAP²⁵



²⁴ Motivation, Attitude, Skills, Knowledge and Support - elements of competence

²⁵ <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/from-real-time-evaluation-to-real-time-learning>

11.3. Real-Time Review (RTR) Process

The RTR was appreciated by all the stakeholders. In addition to being seen as good practice, it also gave them a forum to feed back to the DEC through an independent channel. This is also an important point for DEC governance. The emphasis on collective reflection and learning was well judged.

How can this process itself be improved?

- Results focus: clarify the desired learning result (e.g. improvement in practice).
- Strengthen the focus on learning, reduce that on evaluation. Review the language used in the TOR.
- Keep: light-touch, rapid, qualitative, participative.
- Enhance: Participatory nature with a focus on real-time learning during the review e.g. emphasise in-country learning workshops. Note the action taken on the proposal for coordination between DEC Member.
- Timing – Consider starting earlier in the response; start commissioning process as soon as possible after appeal is launched, use 'light touch reporting' even more, participatory workshops and Aides Mémoire.
- Duration – Run the RTR in parallel with the response, not just as a 'one-off' review.
- Framework: Clarify from the start that the CHS is to be used as the basic framework for the review
- Scope: Encourage a more strategic 'whole of the response' approach, including initial decision to launch, the allocation of funds and the engagement by DEC Members. Link to overall DEC learning process, 'before and after' (see below). Avoid going into low-level operational detail at Member level.
- Reporting: Reduce the amount and time involved, use the Aide Memoire format for country reports and one synthesis report.