



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

Synthesis Report
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Conflict Management Consulting (CMC)
Brussels, Belgium
info@cmc-consult.eu

Abuja | Abidjan | Amman | Brussels | Copenhagen | Islamabad | Istanbul | Munich | Yangon | Washington DC

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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

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- The people of Ukraine for their resilience and courage in this crisis.
- The host communities in Poland and neighbouring countries, and all who support people in need.

The views expressed are those of the consultants, CMC, in their role as independent and external reviewers.

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*).

The Review found that DEC Members are doing a good job in difficult circumstances, providing aid that is meeting the needs of affected people. In doing so, the Members have developed good relationships with local partners, through whom most of the aid is delivered. Noting that some Members were already working in Ukraine and other countries, so could respond quickly, most Members were a bit slow to get going, not being present on the ground. At the time of the Review, the response was in full swing. There is a strong commitment to engaging with affected people, noting that this is not always easy. The flexibility of DEC funding is much appreciated and supports devolved decision-making that is part of good programming which can adapt quickly to changing needs. The commitment to learning has been good, noting that there are areas for improvement, such as between DEC Members and in supporting local aid workers, notably in the early stages of the response. Looking forward there is a need to ensure that the humanitarian response continues to evolve in response to the changing context; and DEC Members are well placed to support this through contingency planning.

The 10 main overall recommendations are as follows:

Maintain and enhance the strong points of the response as follow; Keep:

1. Working hard in difficult conditions, striving to meet the needs of people at risk in line with humanitarian best practices.
2. The flexibility of DEC funding, to allow real-time adaptation of DEC Member programming to meet needs.
3. Building on the existing partnership approach, continue to explore how to further develop and strengthen engagement with local partners.
4. Providing cash, complementing it where necessary with in-kind and service provision.
5. Supporting the activities of Ground Truth Solutions ¹ and the Safeguarding initiative².
6. Continue providing winter-related support as needed.

Develop the response further as follows:

¹ <https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/projects/a-locally-informed-humanitarian-response-insights-from-ukraine>

² <https://easterneurope.safeguardingsupporthub.org/>

7. As a group of DEC Members, review the current state of whole-response risk-informed contingency planning, and decide what needs to be done to ensure the overall response develops to meet evolving needs.
8. In Ukraine, support local organisations by establishing a ‘local organisation funding and support service’ to provide direct funding to local organisations, with appropriate support services.
9. Enhance the sharing of learning within and between DEC Members through simple measures such as occasional meetings and the sharing of findings from individual learning reviews
10. Support the strengthening of in-country coordination amongst local organisations, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Further overall recommendations are presented below in the recommendations section.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1. The review and this report

This is the Synthesis Report 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, Romania, Moldova and Hungary.

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 crisis³, 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).

³ In line with CHS commitment 7 “humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve”.

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 countries⁴.

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 countries⁵, out of which around 1.5 million are registered in Poland⁶.

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 ever⁷. 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 DEC Member Charities⁸ 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.

At the time of writing this report, 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 welcomed, it brings a range of ‘scaling-up’ challenges, including establishing

⁴ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ukraine/>

⁵ Ukraine Situation Flash Update #33 (21 October 2022).

⁶ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10781?secret=unhcrrestricted>

⁷ https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/Navigating_Ukrainian_dilemmas_in_the_Ukraine_crisis.pdf

⁸ 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.

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 call⁹ 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 reports¹⁰ that the country has lost 50% of its power production. On 19 November 2023, the CEO of DTEK (Ukraine's major energy company) stated¹¹ 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

The review heard from a wide range of stakeholders across the 5 countries, including:

- Affected People, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Refugees, people in conflict zones and host communities.
- Aid Workers.
- Local Actors:
 - Large national agencies.
 - Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).
 - Community Responders.
 - DEC Member Agencies.
- National and Local Authorities.
- DEC Members.
- DEC Trustees.
- Other Agencies (GTS, RedR).
- Others, including private sector and experts in this area.

The main methods of hearing from the stakeholders above included:

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), online and in-person, this allowed for both 'data collection', some preliminary analysis and the exchange of learning.
- Key Informant Discussions (KIDs) on an individual basis (or in some cases in small groups).

⁹ <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/ukrainian-refugees-should-not-return-in-winter-deputy-prime-minister.html>

¹⁰ <https://ukranews.com/en/news/896078-almost-50-of-ukraine-s-power-system-disabled-by-russian-missiles-shmyhal>

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

- Observation (a little), site visits, office visits, attending meetings.

This was complemented by a review of selected documents.

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

Overall, the response has been appropriate and relevant across all targeted countries. A positive point was the flexibility of DEC funding, allowing the response to quickly respond to changing needs; an example cited by HelpAge in Ukraine was reducing the provision of Wash/Hygiene and increasing cash. DEC Members delivered programmes related to cash, protection, food, WASH, shelter, and education. Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) was the most common support modality, and was seen to be very effective, noting the need for it to be part of a package that is tailored to the context, including prevailing market functioning. It was reported that the amount and duration of the cash people receive is insufficient for their needs. It was noted that the package of modalities evolved over time in line with changes in context and need. In addition to gender, the factors such as age and ability are very pertinent in the targeting of assistance. Looking forward, it is important that are well prepared to respond to evolving needs, which are likely to continue to change significantly in different countries.

4.2. CHS 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely

At the start, the overall humanitarian response was somewhat disorganised. As time went on, the response became more structured, particularly as the international agencies began to ramp up support. While some DEC Members were already working in Ukraine and other countries and so could respond quickly, most Members were not present in-country, and it took them some time to get up to speed, for example in establishing quality partnerships with local organisations and in recruiting full time staff. This raised a question over 'the prioritisation of access over need', especially in the early stages of the response. It took some time for the Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) modality to be accepted by some partners and then to be implemented; capacity strengthening by DEC Member helped here. At the beginning of the response, there was a tension between the perceived pressure to 'spend quickly' and the need for programmes to 'spend well', and the related challenge of getting the right balance between 'access' and 'need'. The Review notes the approval by the DEC board of a 'pipeline' process to support agencies with a smaller IOC but a larger footprint/delivery capacity in Ukraine (particularly in eastern Ukraine) directly or along with local partners. Looking forward, there is a need to ensure that Members continue with good practice, such as contingency planning, preparedness and flexibility, to ensure the response adapts to the changing context (winter and conflict).

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

The response by DEC Members has strengthened local capacities, especially of their partners, through whom most of the response was delivered. The Members developed good working relationships and provided capacity strengthening where needed. Some of the early challenges, such as the application of humanitarian principles, particularly in the Ukraine context, due diligence requirements and reporting requirements, have been noted and addressed to some extent. Partners expressed appreciation for the flexibility of DEC Members and their willingness to support innovation, especially in comparison with other donors. An issue that needs further attention is that of direct funding for local organisations, notably in Ukraine.

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

The DEC Members made good efforts to ensure the response was based on communication, participation and feedback, noting that much of the communication with affected people has been informal. In Ukraine, this communication was supported by Government, in other countries, such support was less evident. There is an issue about how affected people can participate in shaping the response, partly because they are not used to

give feedback and partly because of their other priorities, such as dealing with the day-to-day challenges of coping. Most Members made efforts to ensure that communications could reach as wide an audience as possible, for example by ensuring both digital and non-digital means were available. One area for attention is the harmonisation of communications between agencies, to ensure all affected people have access to the information they need in the right format. Outside of Ukraine further attention is needed on how to communicate better with host communities, to manage potential tensions. There is also a need to check that all local partners adopt and use sound Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) systems. The findings of this review echo and support the findings of the review by CDAC of September 2022¹².

4.5. CHS 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed

Initially the complaints and feedback mechanisms were basic and informal, but quickly developed into more formal mechanisms which are now largely in place to elicit complaints and feedback; and some have attracted much feedback. However, it was noted that most affected people are not used to, and may be wary of, providing feedback. The Review heard that where feedback is shared with agencies, it tends to be positive, with negative comments shared internally between affected people. This emphasises the need, recognised by the Members, for the feedback mechanisms to be seen as safe and anonymous. There may be scope to improve feedback through the use of carefully selected and trained local leaders and rapporteurs, with a good 'intersectional' representation of gender, age, ability and other parameters. In this respect, the review notes the value, in Ukraine, of the perception surveys of affected populations conducted by Ground Truth Solutions¹³.

4.6. CHS 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary

Within Ukraine, there was generally good coordination of the response, with national and local authorities and through the Cluster system. In other countries coordination was less consistent with wide ranging effects on the response. There is general scope to improve coordination amongst local organisations / Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and, in certain respects, between DEC Members themselves in country. In Ukraine, there is scope to improve the coordination of referrals, to ensure people don't get lost to the system.

4.7. CHS 7: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve

The Review found a good commitment to and support of learning and improvement, including the support for MEAL systems, the provision of training and capacity strengthening. Noting that learning in the early stages was informal and experiential, support for more structured learning developed as the response progressed and is valued by local organisations. There is further scope to enhance the sharing of learning between DEC Members, including simple measures such as occasional meetings and the sharing/discussion of the findings of individual DEC Member reviews.

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

While Members have good policies in place and are making good efforts in this area (see above on training and capacity strengthening), there is room for improvement in the implementation of good practice especially with local partners. Issues included a lack of proper orientation and handover, and the voluntary approach to rest and recuperation by some local organisations. Members have been praised by partners for the formal and informal capacity strengthening and support and often quite wide ranging personal and psychosocial support given to them (and indirectly passed on to staff and volunteers). Where available, the presence has been valued of experienced DEC Member staff in offices throughout the region who have provided on the job daily support and advice. However, there remains a high level of stress and exhaustion amongst staff and partners and volunteers and there remains much to be done to support improved practice in this area.

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

The learning review format is not well suited to addressing this standard. Overall, it is noted that DEC Members have a strong track record in this area and this experience has been brought to bear in this response, for example

¹²

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60996b757eb6521a42f3839d/t/633d66abe8a58b0637d16e0b/1664968430021/Ukraine+snapshot_September+update_report.pdf

¹³ <https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/projects/a-locally-informed-humanitarian-response-insights-from-ukraine>

in adherence to the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), supported by the use of well-established administrative procedures, such as due diligence, document control, procurement management and reporting. A strong emphasis on 'due diligence' was noted when starting work with local partners, although some felt some of the provisions were too onerous, illustrating the difficulty of striking the right balance between speed of response and due diligence when scaling up quickly. Some Members implemented a 'Due Diligence Passporting' procedure, noting that not all could use this due to their internal procedures.

4.10. Some overarching findings

The Review notes the DEC Draft Response Strategy (March 2022) as a helpful document which usefully sets out guidance on the 'ambidextrous response' (Engine 1 and Engine 2), on some of key approaches underpinning the response (accountability to affected people, localisation, inclusion and safeguarding), and some useful ideas on how the DEC may be able to '*add value to the DEC collective and the wider sector*'. In relation to the 'spend smart' aspect, the Review notes that there is scope to develop and update this strategy, including an element of 'whole of response' contingency planning, underpinned by a risk-informed approach.

The Review also notes that the DEC has well established ways of working, based on what has worked in the past and that these are, quite rightly, subject to regular review. One example is the mechanism for allocating funds to DEC Members (according to the Indicator of Capacity, with adjustments); the review notes that this is to be reviewed in 2023, taking on board lessons from this crisis, including the need to address the 'access over need' issue.

The Review also notes that the Review itself was welcomed by Members who contributed actively to the process and who have provided very useful feedback to inform further reviews of this nature.

5. Conclusion

The Review concludes that, after some understandable delays, the DEC Members are doing a good job in providing much needed support, in difficult circumstances. This includes developing good relationships with local organisations. There is a strong commitment to engaging with affected people, noting that there are practical challenges here. The flexibility of DEC funding is highly appreciated and supports devolved decision-making and adaptive programming. While it took some time for most DEC Members to ramp up their response, they are now generally up to speed. The main response modality is cash, complemented by others, in discussion with local partners and affected people. The commitment to and implementation of learning has been good, especially between DEC Members and local partners, noting there is scope to improve the sharing of learning between DEC Members. While coordination in Ukraine is generally good, it is much more variable in the other countries. There is scope to improve the assessment of changing needs and to improve coordination between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). An area for further development is the funding of smaller local organisations. In view of the rapidly changing situation (winter and conflict), there is a need to ensure that humanitarian assistance continues to evolve to meet changing needs, supported by good practice such as contingency planning and regular risk assessments. The Review notes the positive response of DEC Members to the conduct of this Review, which highlights the need for such Reviews.

6. Recommendations

The overall recommendations of the Review across the whole response are as follows¹⁴:

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>All Members and staff.</i>
2. The flexibility of DEC funding, to allow devolved decision-making and real-time adaptation of DEC Member programming to meet needs.	<i>DEC Secretariat.</i>
3. Building on the existing partnership approach, continue to explore how to further develop and strengthen engagement with local partners.	<i>DEC Members in country.</i>
4. Continue with cash, complementing it where necessary with in-kind and service provision.	<i>DEC Members in country.</i>
5. Continue supporting the activities of Ground Truth Solutions ¹⁵ and the Safeguarding initiative ¹⁶ .	<i>DEC Secretariat.</i>
6. Continue providing winter-related support as needed.	<i>DEC Members in country.</i>
Even better, develop further by:	Who
7. As a group of DEC Members, review the current state of whole-response risk-informed contingency planning, and decide what needs to be done to ensure the overall response develops to meet evolving needs.	<i>DEC Secretariat to convene a meeting on this as soon as is practicable.</i>
8. In Ukraine, establish a 'local organisation funding and support service' to provide direct funding to local organisations, complemented by appropriate support services. In doing so, take note of the detailed recommendations in the recent report ¹⁷ on Options for Supporting and Strengthening Local Humanitarian Action in Ukraine.	<i>DEC Secretariat to agree with Members which Member is to lead on this.</i>
9. Enhance the sharing of learning within and between DEC Members through simple measures such as occasional meetings and the sharing of findings from individual learning reviews.	<i>DEC Secretariat to support this by convening occasional meetings, similar to those of November and December 2022 and by ensuring that all documentation is shared with the relevant people in Members and their partners.</i>
10. Support the strengthening of in-country coordination amongst local organisations, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).	<i>The DEC Secretariat to liaise with most relevant in-country Member who would be willing to do this.</i>
11. Strengthen support for good practice in ensure aid workers and community responders take care of themselves, so they can be 'effective rather than exhausted'.	<i>Each DEC Member to review how their workers and those of their partners are supported and how this can be strengthened as needed.</i>

¹⁴ Further recommendations are given in the country level reports.

¹⁵ <https://www.groundtruthsolutions.org/our-work/where-we-work/ukraine>

¹⁶ <https://easterneurope.safeguardingsupporthub.org/>

¹⁷ <https://www.dec.org.uk/report/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal-scoping-exercise-report>

12. Review and update DEC's draft response strategy.	<i>The DEC Secretariat to facilitate this as soon as is practicable, linking with the recommendation on contingency planning above.</i>
13. Explore how to support preparedness for further crises, for example policy guidance on the use of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) and 'preparedness to partner'.	<i>DEC Secretariat and Members.</i>
14. Provide more opportunities for aid workers and affected people to jointly discuss different scenarios, the needs arising and possible solutions, as part of contingency planning.	<i>Each DEC Member to review how they can implement this in their context.</i>
15. Consider more use of informal leaders and rapporteurs to enhance feedback from affected people.	<i>Each DEC Member to consider this for their context.</i>
16. Invest further in the harmonisation, across Members, of communication with affected people. In this respect, take note of the CDAC report ¹⁸ on <i>Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability across the Ukraine response</i> and on the findings of Ground Truth Solutions ¹⁹ .	<i>Action by each DEC Member according to their context.</i>
17. For agencies using a system to refer people from one agency to another, each agency to review this system to ensure that referred people are not lost.	<i>Each DEC Member.</i>
18. Each DEC Member to check that appropriate emphasis is given to a conflict sensitive approach in programming, taking particular note of the tensions that can develop within host communities as the crisis lasts longer than expected and response fatigue may set in.	<i>Each DEC Member.</i>
19. Where needed, provide more support to local partners to further develop their Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning systems including the use of complaint and feedback mechanisms and the sharing of responses by the Members with affected people, in line with best practice.	<i>Each DEC Member to check.</i>
20. Ensure adequate and appropriate human resources are in place and provided with technical and psychological support needed to deliver the response in the most effective way. In particular ensure adequate provision is made to cater for staff turnover, including recruitment, handover, induction, briefing and debriefing.	<i>Each DEC Member to check.</i>
21. Hold a collective discussion to facilitate data sharing in a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant manner amongst humanitarian actors across the response.	<i>DEC Secretariat to convene a meeting on this.</i>
22. Review the cash assistance modalities to ensure that emerging needs of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees are met effectively.	<i>DEC Collaborative Cash Delivery Network.</i>
23. Use the learning from this Review to inform further Reviews, for this and other responses, linking to learning from previous Reviews.	<i>DEC Secretariat and Board.</i>

¹⁸

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

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

7. Compiled Country Level Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations

The table below provides compiled Summary Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations for each country. Further details are provided in country reports.

CHS	Ukraine	Poland	Romania	Moldova	Hungary
<p>CHS 1: Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs.</p> <p><i>Criterion</i> Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant:</p>	<p>The Review found that the response has been appropriate and relevant. Noting that in the early days and quite understandably, the response was somewhat disorganised, as it progressed, and with support from international organisations such as the DEC Members, it became more structured. A positive point is the flexibility of DEC funding. Looking forward, there is a need to ensure that Members continue with good practice, such as contingency planning, to ensure the response adapts to the changing context (winter and conflict).</p>	<p>Overall, the response proved to be relevant to the affected people and was delivered in line with the strategies of individual DEC Members and adapted to meet the evolving context and needs. All DEC Members work with local partners and the majority are on track to deliver expected results, despite some delays and challenges faced at the beginning of the crisis. A key challenge was on coordination with the Polish Government.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The response is relevant to affected people, and affected people mention humanitarian aid as among the top sources that help them cope. The response is based on needs assessments that are conducted regularly and reflected in programming. In Moldova neither national Government nor local authorities provide social payments to affected people, so there is a need for the response to continue, catering to the evolving needs of affected people, including those caused by limited supply of heating and electricity. In Moldova affected people include both refugees from Ukraine and Moldovan vulnerable families affected by the crisis. DEC is one of the few funders to support both groups, and it is important to continue this approach.</p>	<p>Overall, the first phase of the response was considered to be appropriate and relevant to the needs of affected people. It was delivered well despite the limitations imposed by the challenging Hungarian context, including weak national coordination, a lack of structured needs assessment, the outsourcing of state responsibilities to meet refugee entitlements and state reluctance to permit Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). The DEC Member provided valuable support to partners. Challenges included perceive pressure for 'speed of spend', and requirements for due diligence, reporting and proposal-writing.</p>
<p>CHS 2: Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.</p> <p><i>Criterion:</i> Humanitarian response is</p>	<p>The initial response, mainly conducted by local organisations, community groups and individuals, was timely. Most, but not all, DEC Members had not got a presence on the ground and took time to develop their response. Those who had a presence were able to respond more quickly. The effectiveness of the response was helped by good coordination with national and local Government, with</p>	<p>As most DEC Members were not present in the country, the initial response had some delays, despite deploying staff from different countries to the response in Poland. Challenges contributing to the delay related to administrative and procurement processes. During the first phase, DEC Members delivered programmes related to cash, protection, food, WASH, shelter, and education. Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) was the</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>From the start, local CSOs started to provide response with their own resources; so was very timely. Only a few INGOs, including DEC Members, were present in Moldova. Others came later, and they brought critical resources. First actions were to set up offices, hire staff, partner up with local CSOs and provide training. Affected people, DEC Members and local partners assess that the DEC-funded response has been flexible and effective. Also, giving</p>	<p>There were delays providing assistance, caused by the lack of presence of the DEC Member and consequent need to establish quick but quality partnerships and for partners to recruit staff. The reluctance of Government to permit CVA combined with the lack of local partner readiness to implement CVA also contributed to delay. There was some misunderstanding related to DEC's flexibility of funding and the pressure to spend quickly. Due to</p>

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effective and timely:	concerted efforts to reach all those in need. The preferred response modality was cash, noting that this was complemented by in-kind assistance and services where needed.	most common support modality, and was seen to be very effective, as Poland is a developed country with functional market systems and because this modality was well suited to the situation of refugees. Due to likely changes in the context in both Poland and Ukraine, there is a need for contingency planning, preparedness, and flexibility.	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.	the rapidly evolving challenges, continuing and strengthening the practice of contingency planning is important.	likely changes in the context in Hungary and across the region, there is a need for further contingency planning, preparedness, and flexibility.
<p>CHS 3: Communities and People affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.</p> <p><i>Criterion:</i> Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects:</p>	The Review found that DEC Members has strengthened local capacities, and especially of their local partners. The DEC Members developed good relationships with local organisations, and navigated well some of the challenges involved, such as how to apply humanitarian principles and reporting requirements. Local partners valued the support provided, the flexibility and willingness to engage with innovative approaches. An issue that needs further attention is the allocation of funds to local organisations.	All DEC Members delivered most of their programming through local partners, following their internal processes and due diligence to select local partners and ensure effective delivery of the activities. DEC Members provided capacity strengthening to their local partners to enhance their capability to effectively deliver the response; this was greatly appreciated by local partners. There was little opportunity to work with national Government, given their lack of collaboration with INGOs and NGOs.	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.	Local partners are recognised as very strong in programming and delivery. While most local organisations had no specific experience in conflict-related humanitarian response, they were able to quickly start their response activities. Later, they benefited from support from DEC Members. There is a tension between the need to deliver a response and the need to devote time for reporting and visibility. There is a recognition by DEC Members that local partners have good capacity to plan, to implement and to manage bigger budgets.	As Members of the ACT Alliance, the DEC Member (Christian Aid) was well placed to respect and understand the capacities of its partners. DEC further supported partner capacity strengthening across operational programming areas. The DEC Member and partners managed well the challenges of operating in the Hungarian context and were very adept at navigating the challenges and opportunities of delivering programmes through partnerships. The ease of access to CVA expertise within the DEC Member (and regular capacity strengthening visits) as well as presence of a member of staff based in Lviv (Ukraine) appears to have supported programming and capacity strengthening and to have permitted analysis and changes in approach and modality at an opportune moment.
<p>CHS 4: Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in</p>	The Review found that the Members have made significant efforts to ensure that the response has been guided by communication, participation and feedback. Much of this has been through Government, local partners and community groups. There is an issue of how	The communication with affected people was through social media and QR codes, posters, and local partners. The review found that there is a need to improve communications about the work of the DEC Members and their partners to ensure that affected people and	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	DEC Members make good efforts to ensure communication and participation with affected people, most of which occurs through local organisations. This mostly takes place through questionnaires about their needs and consultations with a limited number of affected people during site visits. Usually affected	The approach of the DEC Member and partners in Hungary is based on local and neighbourly knowledge, close working relations, provision of clear information on entitlements and most importantly, face to face communications between host communities, volunteer-based community groups and affected people.

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<p>decisions that affect them.</p> <p><i>Criterion:</i> Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation, and feedback:</p>	<p>affected people can actually participate, partly because of their situation and their lack of prior experience in participatory processes. An area for attention is the harmonisation of communication with affected people, to ensure all have access to the information they need in an appropriate format.</p>	<p>host communities are well informed about their entitlements and rights and to avoid potential conflict that could emerge between refugees from Ukraine and host communities.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>people don't participate in designing the aid programmes. Affected people may lack knowledge on what aid is available and what can be their needs in different scenarios. The experience of local partners and DEC Members is an asset in anticipating such needs and in contingency planning.</p>	
<p>CHS 5: Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.</p> <p><i>Criterion:</i> Complaints are welcomed and addressed</p>	<p>Mechanisms have been set up to collect complaints and feedback and some have attracted much feedback. However, it was noted that most affected people are not used to, and may be wary of, providing complaints and feedback. There may be scope to use local leaders as channels for this feedback. The review also noted the value of the findings of Ground Truth Solutions.</p>	<p>Mechanisms to support effective feedback are in place at DEC Members level, but more effort is needed to ensure stronger MEAL systems are adopted and implemented by local partners/ implementers.</p>	<p>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 PDMs were conducted to collect feedback from the refugees.</p>	<p>DEC Members have set up feedback mechanisms, directly or through local partners, including phone numbers, e-mails, boxes, visits and direct interviews, and affected people mostly know about the available mechanisms. However, these mechanisms are not always working because, according to local partners, affected people are not used to share feedback. More research and reflection are needed to learn which feedback mechanisms are more appropriate and effective, including the possible use of liaison volunteers within the affected community.</p>	<p>The response in phase one involved basic, largely informal, but varied complaints and feedback methods and feedback was seen to have informed adaptations. It is important that these remain in both digital and low-tech formats to increase inclusion and remain available to all affected people and that informal feedback mechanism are considered safe and anonymous.</p>
<p>CHS 6: Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.</p> <p><i>Criterion:</i> Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary:</p>	<p>Coordination is seen to be good at the national level, amongst the international humanitarian agencies and larger local organisations who engage well in the Cluster system. Coordination is also seen to be good at local level, notably with local authorities. However, there is room for further improvement in engaging many local organisations / CSOs in the coordination system. A challenge was noted in the management of referrals, to ensure that people do not get lost in the system. It was noted that there is scope for DEC Members to coordinate better with each other, to maximise the</p>	<p>While several coordination platforms are used by the DEC Members in the country (e.g. the Cash Working Group), the coordination and collaborative learning between DEC Members is limited and would benefit from simple measures. Coordination amongst CSOs is weak; this is recognised by local partners and CSOs, and efforts are needed and being made to address this.</p>	<p>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 (GBV) 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</p>	<p>The Review found that coordination is strong at the national level, through the Refugee Coordination Forum, with Government and with UN agencies, and through Working Groups (that perform the functions of Clusters). Local partners were already in those coordination mechanisms that were functional before the response started, such as the Ombudsman platform on human rights monitoring. However, some still question the value of participation in coordination versus the effort required. Thematic cooperation seems to be stronger than regional cooperation, for example on GBV and Child Protection. DEC Members and local partners use referrals well. A big issue flagged by</p>	<p>Formal national coordination systems are lacking in Hungary and partners have relied on local level coordination. Weak coordination has had additional wide-ranging impacts on DEC Member and partner and other agency response, including around; needs assessment, confusion for affected people, guidance and capacity supporting, response options analysis and planning, feasibility of CVA programming, coordination of response with minimum duplication and ensuring standards and monitoring of whether the humanitarian response is sufficient to meet refugee entitlements.</p>

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	added value of DEC funding, whilst complementing existing coordination structures.		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.	local partners is the need for, and lack of, a coordination platform between Ukrainian and Moldovan NGOs / responders.	
<p>CHS 7: Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organisations learn from experience and reflection.</p> <p><i>Criterion:</i> Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve:</p>	The Review found a solid pattern of continuous learning and improvement. This ranged from the formal use of MEAL systems, the provision of training and capacity strengthening by DEC Members in humanitarian principles and practice (such as needs assessment and Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM)). Local organisations appreciate the learning support from international organisations (learning from others), and especially DEC Members, and have actively engaged in learning from their own experience. There is scope to enhance the sharing of learning between DEC Members, such as sharing key findings from their own individual Member reviews.	A good commitment to learning has been observed among all DEC Members and their partners, but there is scope to enhance this learning, especially between DEC Members. Some challenges have been identified related to the low capacity of some local partners in terms of Monitoring and Evaluations (M&E), with variations between organisations. There is a need for research that should be done by DEC Members at country level to provide better information on changing context, emerging needs, priorities, and provision by Government. This will support the design or more tailored programming able to answer affected people's changing needs and avoid duplication.	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.	The Review found a strong commitment to learn and practice of learning on the part of DEC Members and local partners. DEC Members have robust MEAL systems & conduct own reviews. MEAL informs programming and specific approaches – for example, the appointment system for affected people to timely receive support. Local partners had their MEAL systems in place, then they were further strengthened by training and examples of MEAL policies provided by DEC Members. Local partners actively implement and use them. There is scope for more structured and regular experience sharing / learning between DEC Members and local partners on what they learned and how they learn.	Due to the priority on response, structured learning was not a priority in phase one, although basic MEAL systems are in place and some informal learning has occurred. As time went on the DEC Member supported learning and there are plans to further develop this. One important learning area has been on the need for calculation of and coordination about transfer values for CVA.
<p>CHS 8: Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.</p> <p><i>Criterion:</i> Staff are supported to</p>	It was noted that DEC Members have good policies in this area and have made considerable efforts in practice. As was noted above, Members have invested in training, capacity strengthening and learning support. However, there is still considerable room for improvement in the actual implementation of good practice, especially with local	On this, the responses varied between staff members of DEC Members. Some of the more established reported that the work environment is flexible, and they work together to respond in the best way possible. Many staff members reported that they suffered from a lack of proper orientation and handover when they joined the organisation in Poland, resulting in duplication	The Review found that all DEC Members have in place policies including staff safety and security, code of conduct, Preventing Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA), and safeguarding policies. For some Members, they appointed safeguarding focal person within each local partner to mainstream	DEC Members and local partners (after being supported by DEC Members) have policies and provide support to staff (safeguarding, prevention of burnout, R&R leave). Support to community responders / aid workers is mostly provided by local partners. DEC Members give them indirect support costs for it. Also, DEC Members try to hire Moldovan staff for Moldova activities, a good practice. At the	Hiring staff was one of the most significant challenges, mitigated by the valiant efforts of volunteers. The DEC Member's partners appreciated the capacity strengthening and wide ranging personal and psychosocial support given to them, with the presence of the DEC Member staff nearby in the region being particularly noted. However, there remains a high level of stress and exhaustion amongst staff of the DEC Members

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do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably	organisations and community responders, notably on managing excessive workload and burnout.	and some problems with local partners. The DEC Members were proactive in providing support and training to staff.	safeguarding including PSEAH into all activities.	individual level, staff of local partners prioritise providing aid to affected people over taking care of themselves; there is scope for significant improvement in how support for aid workers/staff is actually implemented.	and partners and volunteers, and DEC could usefully support learning in this area.
<p>CHS 9: Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.</p> <p><i>Criterion:</i> Resources are managed effectively, efficiently, and ethically:</p>	The DEC Members have long experience in this area, and it was noted that they brought this to bear in Ukraine in a variety of ways, such as the commitment to coordination, the support for capacity strengthening and learning. One suggestion to improve the utilisation of resources was the establishment of a local mechanism to directly provide funding and support to smaller local organisations.	While a detailed assessment of this criteria was beyond the scope of the Review, it was noted that DEC Members have strong track records in delivering humanitarian response in different contexts, are committed to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and promote engagement with and participation by affected people in different phases of their programming. The DEC Members have processes in place for document control, procurement, suppliers, supervised distribution of supplies, and other governance and financial systems that were used during the first phase and set up of the operation in Poland. Such practices are a good indication that this commitment is being met.	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.	The Review identified in a general way, that DEC Members and local partners effectively, efficiently and ethically manage resources. Of concern is that, despite the coordination systems in place, there is room for improvement in systems to avoid duplication of aid delivered in Moldova, where more 'active' affected people may receive more aid than others.	The DEC Member is working with established partners, giving a reasonable level of confidence that resources are well managed. The presence of its staff and their support enhances this confidence. The flexibility of DEC funding allowed for funds to be well-deployed to meet needs in a good way (e.g. through CVA).
Summary / Conclusions	The Review concludes that the DEC Members are doing a good job in difficult circumstances, including developing good relationships with local organisations. There is a strong commitment to engaging with affected people, noting that there are practical challenges here. The flexibility of DEC funding is highly appreciated. While it took some time for most DEC Members to ramp up their	The conclusion of the Review is that after some understandable delays, the response of DEC Members in Poland was good and provided much needed support. The DEC Members work well with local partners and the flexibility of DEC funding is much valued. There is scope to improve the assessment of changing needs and to improve coordination between CSOs. A key challenge is the relationship	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	The Review concludes that the DEC Members and local partners are doing well in how they provide humanitarian aid in difficult circumstances in Moldova, covering not only refugees from Ukraine but also Moldova people affected by the crisis. They have a strong commitment to and practice of engaging with affected people, while recognising that feedback and participation are areas for improvement. The response is	Overall, in a challenging context the DEC Member and its partners did well to meet the needs of affected people. An important asset was the DEC Member's partners' approach based on neighbourly face-to-face interactions with affected people. Significant challenges included weak national coordination, the time needed to set up partnerships, the lack of structured needs assessment and the unwillingness to accept CVA. The perceived

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	<p>response, they are now generally up to speed. The main response modality is cash, complemented by others, in discussion with local partners and affected people. The commitment to and implementation of learning has been good, especially between DEC Members and local partners, noting there is scope to improve the sharing of learning between DEC Members. An area for further development is the funding of smaller local organisations. In view of the rapidly changing situation (winter and conflict), there is a need to ensure that humanitarian assistance continues to evolve to meet changing needs, supported by good practice such as contingency planning and regular risk assessments.</p>	<p>with the national Government. The response in Poland would benefit from more communication and sharing of learning between DEC Members and there is a need to be prepared for significant changes in the context, both in Poland and in Ukraine.</p>	<p>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, M&E, and continue to provide technical support according to need.</p>	<p>timely and well-planned, and winterisation needs are being addressed. Local partners are very strong. Appreciating the flexibility of DEC funding, there is still room for further decentralisation and empowering of local partners in decision-making. Both DEC Members and local partners have a good commitment to and implementation of learning, noting there is scope to improve the sharing of learning between DEC Members, and between Members and local partners. In the context of rapidly evolving situation, it is important to strengthen the practice of contingency planning, so that the stakeholders, notably local organisations, have ready scenarios and resources to be able to urgently respond to emerging and evolving needs of affected people.</p>	<p>pressure on 'speed of spend' needs attention. While hiring staff was a key challenge, partners appreciated the support of the DEC Member in capacity strengthening, noting that more needs to be done to address staff workloads.</p>
<p>Recommendations, Keep:</p>	<p>Working hard to meet the needs of people at risk in line with best practice, such as engaging with affected people, coordinating with Government and other humanitarian agencies and investing in capacity strengthening and learning.</p> <p>Maintain flexibility of DEC funding, to allow real-time adaptation of Member programming to meet needs.</p> <p>Building on the good relationships between DEC Members and local partners. Continue exploring how to develop these partnership approaches, including provision of capacity strengthening and support and strengthening engagement of local partners.</p>	<p>Working hard in difficult conditions, striving to meet the needs of people at risk in line with best practice.</p> <p>Maintain flexibility of DEC funding, to allow real-time adaptation of Member programming to meet needs.</p> <p>Maintain the existing partnership approaches, the capacity strengthening, and support provided and deepen the relationships and trust with local partners.</p> <p>Continue with cash, complementing it where necessary with in-kind and service provision.</p>	<p>Working hard in difficult conditions, striving to meet the needs of people at risk in line with best practice.</p> <p>Maintain the flexibility of DEC funding to allow real-time adaptability of the Members.</p> <p>Continue the technical support provided to the local partners.</p> <p>Maintain cash assistance and review the different modalities to ensure that CVA modalities are matching the affected populations' journeys and changing needs.</p> <p>Maintain and increase MHPSS services for boys and girls and women given the compounding of difficult experiences, in</p>	<p>Working hard in difficult conditions, striving to meet the needs of people at risk in line with best practice.</p> <p>Conducting needs assessments and consultations with affected people to inform programming. Intensified consultations will be even more beneficial</p> <p>Providing support not only to refugees from Ukrainian but also to Moldovans who have been affected by Ukrainian crisis or are vulnerable otherwise.</p> <p>The flexibility of DEC Secretariat and Members as a pre-requisite for effective response and look for ways to strengthen this flexibility even further.</p> <p>Probing new practices of reaching out to affected people, such as an</p>	<p>Working hard in difficult conditions, striving to meet the needs of people at risk in line with best practice.</p> <p>The flexibility of DEC funding and ensure this is well understood.</p> <p>The constructive approach to partnership by the DEC Member.</p>

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	<p>Continue with cash, complementing it where necessary with in-kind and service provision; the latter may become more important as the context evolves and the market may not be able to respond (e.g., for winter kit, such as generators).</p> <p>Contextualizing the humanitarian principles among the local partners, notably for them to ensure neutrality in the context of protracted information psychological warfare conducted by both sides, as well in their attitudes to residents of occupied and de-occupied territories.</p>		country of origin and throughout the journey.	<p>appointment system for affected people to register for aid without waiting in the line. It is important to make sure that such a system is comfortable for all affected people whatever their vulnerability.</p> <p>Hiring Ukrainians and Moldovans as much as possible, as soon as they have necessary skills and capacity or can quickly learn them.</p> <p>Developing new practices of liaising with affected people to encourage their participation and collecting feedback from them, such as looking for affected people through volunteers among the refugee community – those who stay within the communities of affected people and know everybody there.</p>	
<p>Recommendations,</p> <p>Even Better if:</p>	<p>Ensure that winter-related support is provided without delay. Understanding that humanitarian crisis will most likely continue for at least another year, start planning for 2023/2024 winterisation in summer 2023.</p> <p>Develop quick and adaptable frameworks of internal guidelines, processes, cooperation across Members in the provision of in-kind assistance in situations of deficit of certain items on the market.</p> <p>Conduct contingency planning as a group of DEC Members (engaging representatives of the Members and their local partners), including a regular assessment of changing risk to affected people. ensuring this</p>	<p>Ensure adequate contingency planning is being done as a group. While there is value in individual agencies doing this, there is added value in doing so as a group, linking with other key actors, such as UNHCR, and Government if possible.</p> <p>This would help ensure agencies are prepared for a range of possible developments in the context, especially important given the unpredictability of the current situation.</p> <p>Ensure that programming is risk informed and intersectional so that it takes account of the varying risks faced by affected people, including those with disability, the LGBTQ community, the elderly, and Roma community.</p> <p>Collaborate more closely, and work with other humanitarian</p>	<p>Strengthen the capacity of local partners to develop and implement robust learning mechanisms.</p> <p>Provide more support to local partners to strengthen their M&E systems.</p> <p>Increase efforts to build capacity in child protection, MHPSS, and education within existing Government systems to avoid creating parallel system.</p> <p>Ensure more inclusion and adapted programming for people with disability, LGBTQ community and elderly.</p> <p>Follow conflict-sensitive and inclusive approach programming to avoid tensions between host communities and refugees' populations.</p>	<p>Continue working in Moldova in the second phase of UHA response, since the affected people will be in need of further aid. Capitalise on good practices already in place.</p> <p>Strengthen contingency planning by elaborating on different scenarios – from business as usual to the influx of more refugees and a deteriorated energy crisis.</p> <p>Consider using mechanisms for expedited procurement of energy generators for the centres/facilities frequented by affected people if the blackouts in Moldova become regular.</p> <p>Make the mechanisms for sharing / collecting feedback more diverse, so that every beneficiary has a choice of what mechanism</p>	<p>Explore how national level coordination in Hungary can be strengthened. Do this in conjunction with other donors and key humanitarian actors in Hungary.</p> <p>Continue to work around the lack of national level coordination and promote more structured joint needs assessment.</p> <p>DEC and Member to decide what are non-negotiable areas of programme quality, and which are the areas to take a step back on and give space to partners to lead the way?</p> <p>Explore how to support preparedness for further crises, including policy guidance on the use of CVA and 'preparedness to partner.'</p>

CHS	Ukraine	Poland	Romania	Moldova	Hungary
	<p>complements existing planning by individual Members.</p> <p>In contingency planning, provide more opportunities for aid workers and affected people to jointly discuss different scenarios, the needs arising and possible solutions. Notably, identify good practices of the Members that are already organising such discussions, and share these practices.</p> <p>Consider establishing a 'local organisation funding and support service' to provide direct funding to local organisations (in parallel with current modality of sub-granting), complemented by appropriate support. In doing so, take note of the detailed recommendations in the recent report²⁰ on <i>Options for Supporting and Strengthening Local Humanitarian Action in Ukraine</i>.</p> <p>Partner up with local-level (not only national-level) CSOs in UHA countries in terms of delivering response and collecting feedback from affected people, since such local-level CSOs may be closer to affected people.</p> <p>Conduct sessions / consultations between the Members, including local partner, to share experience and identify multiple, community preferred and effective mechanisms. Where relevant, consider more use of informal leaders to strengthen</p>	<p>actors such as UNHCR, on regular formal and large-scale needs assessment on a regular basis. This would help ensure proper follow up of the emerging needs of refugees and identify the unmet needs. Newly arrived refugees have different needs compared to those who have been in the country for more than 6 months.</p> <p>Conduct a thorough analysis of Government policies, strategies, and programmes on refugees from Ukraine. This would help ensure that the Members programmes complement the work of the Government rather than duplicating or replacing the Government role.</p> <p>Update and adapt the policies and standards of DEC Members to the local context. This includes recognising, and not duplicating, policies that are already in place, such as safeguarding and duty of care.</p> <p>Enhance the communication with affected people to ensure that refugees and host communities are well informed about their rights and entitlements.</p> <p>Enhance communication and learning between DEC Members by establishing a simple cross learning platform, such as a monthly learning meeting. This would help foster the added value of DEC funding. It should be done with due</p>	<p>Ensure that engagement with Government does not contribute to existing social and political tensions.</p> <p>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 report²² on <i>Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability across the Ukraine response</i> and on the findings of Ground Truth Solutions.</p> <p>Increase coordination and learning sharing between DEC Members at national and regional level.</p> <p>Hold a collective discussion to facilitate data sharing in a GDPR compliant manner amongst humanitarian actors in Romania and neighbouring countries.</p>	<p>to share feedback they can use – dropbox, questionnaires, hotline, QR code, website, Telegram, Viber and other groups in social networks, conversation with an aid worker or a representative of a monitoring mission, etc.</p> <p>Use groups / networks of refugees from Ukraine as platforms to facilitate their participation in programming and decision-making over humanitarian response.</p> <p>Seek complaints and feedback from affected people through informal leaders or groups of affected people.</p> <p>Strengthen coordination between DEC Members operating in Moldova and seek opportunities for delivering as a team, so that the DEC response in Moldova is bigger than the sum of its parts.</p> <p>Recognise the capacity of local partners, notably the capacity to plan, and seek an improved balance between priorities of DEC Members and priorities of local organisations.</p> <p>Simplify reporting from local partners. Local partners have strong capacity to design, implement and monitor programmes and demonstrate a high level of integrity and efficiency.</p> <p>Ensure more structured and regular experience sharing /</p>	<p>DEC to support collective learning when and where there are no more appropriate fora doing so.</p>

²⁰ <https://www.dec.org.uk/report/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal-scoping-exercise-report>

²² https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60996b757eb6521a42f3839d/t/6336e153b424b77aca87d05c/1664541074709/Ukraine+snapshot_September+update_overview.pdf

CHS	Ukraine	Poland	Romania	Moldova	Hungary
	<p>engagement with and feedback from affected people.</p> <p>Enhance the sharing of learning within and between DEC Members through a) more structured exchanges and information-sharing at country level and b) between Member HQ and staff in-country.</p> <p>Where relevant, encourage local partners to engage in the work of Clusters / sub-Clusters.</p> <p>Strengthen support for policies and practice to ensure aid workers and community responders take care of themselves.</p> <p>Invest further in the harmonisation of communication with affected people. In this respect, take note of the CDAC report²¹ on <i>Communication, Community Engagement and Accountability across the Ukraine response</i> and on the findings of Ground Truth Solutions.</p> <p>Make sure all groups of affected people have access to all necessary information about humanitarian in an appropriate format and have full access to different (online and offline) feedback sharing mechanisms.</p> <p>Conduct sessions / consultations between the Members to explore ways on how DEC Members and local partners could relate in more equal manner and reduce bureaucracy while respecting</p>	<p>consideration for existing learning and coordination mechanisms.</p> <p>Support the strengthening of coordination amongst local organisations, including CSOs.</p> <p>Ensure that more emphasis is given to a conflict sensitive approach in programming, taking note of the tensions that can develop within host communities as the crisis lasts longer than expected.</p> <p>Provide more support to local partners to develop their monitoring, evaluation and learning systems including the use of complaint and feedback mechanisms.</p> <p>Ensure adequate and appropriate human resources are in place and providing technical and psychological support to enhance their capacity to deliver the response in the most effective way.</p> <p>Hold a collective discussion to facilitate data sharing in a GDPR compliant manner amongst humanitarian actors in Poland and neighbouring countries. Data sharing is identified as one of the main challenges faced to avoid duplication, especially for cash programming, it is recommended to have a collective discussion about GDPR, put in place pre-agreements on data protection to facilitate data sharing among humanitarian</p>		<p>learning between DEC Members and local partners.</p> <p>Develop and enforce clear requirement that staff of local partners, should have access and be encouraged to free psychological counselling, guaranteed annual and sick leaves, and psychological supervision.</p> <p>Encourage staff, notably staff of local partners, to take care of themselves to be able to provide a response over the long-term.</p> <p>Improve national level coordination.</p> <p>Establish a coordination platform between Ukrainian and Moldovan NGOs / responders to exchange experience and jointly address humanitarian issues that cross the border.</p>	

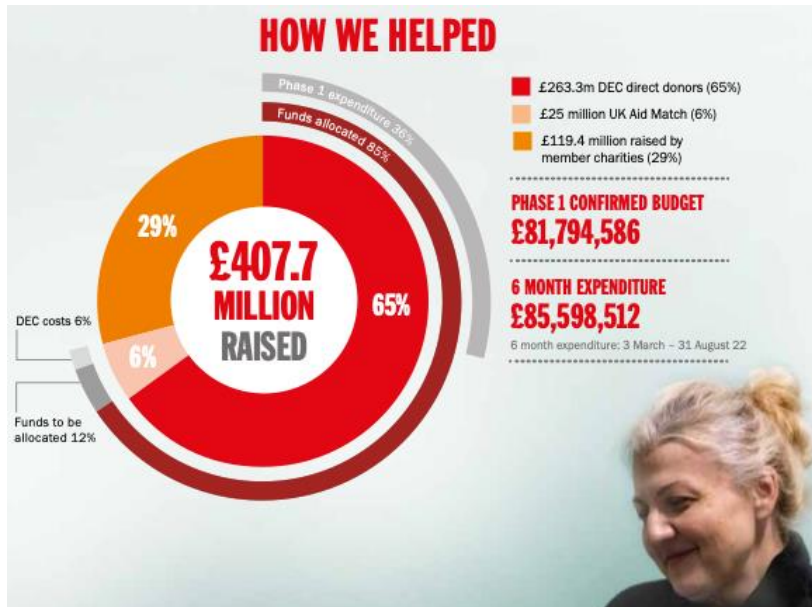
²¹ https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60996b757eb6521a42f3839d/t/6336e153b424b77aca87d05c/1664541074709/Ukraine+snapshot_September+update_overview.pdf

CHS	Ukraine	Poland	Romania	Moldova	Hungary
	<p>the need for accountability and transparency.</p> <p>Review the system of referrals between agencies and local partners, to actively monitor the handover and ensure that people are not lost to or confused by the system</p> <p>Consider repeating the Review periodically by the DEC. Encourage the Members to coordinate on their reviews and evaluations and share findings between the Members and between countries.</p>	<p>actors in Poland and neighbouring countries.</p> <p>Review the cash assistance modality to ensure that is answering the needs of refugees, as feedback from affected people showed that while it is very useful and important, it is not considered enough to meet their needs, especially with the rent problems they are facing in Poland.</p>			

Annexes

8. Overview of DEC Response

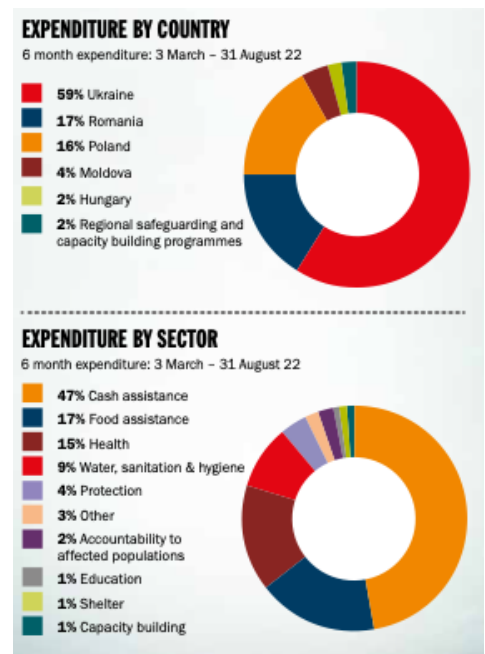
The charts and text below give a brief overview of the DEC Response²³.



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.



²³ From the DEC's 6 month report, March to August 2022.

9. Purpose and Scope of Review

9.1. 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 crisis²⁴, 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.

9.2. 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-days²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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

²⁴ In line with CHS commitment 7 "humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve".

²⁵ One consultant working for one day gives one consultant-day, a team of 4 working for 50 days gives 200 consultant-days.

²⁶ 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.

of the Review, it was not practical to go into depth on the responses of any one Member. In this regard, it is noted that individual Members have been conducting their own reviews, and this review should be seen as complimentary to those.

10. Review Concepts and Approach

10.1. 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 response²⁷.

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.'

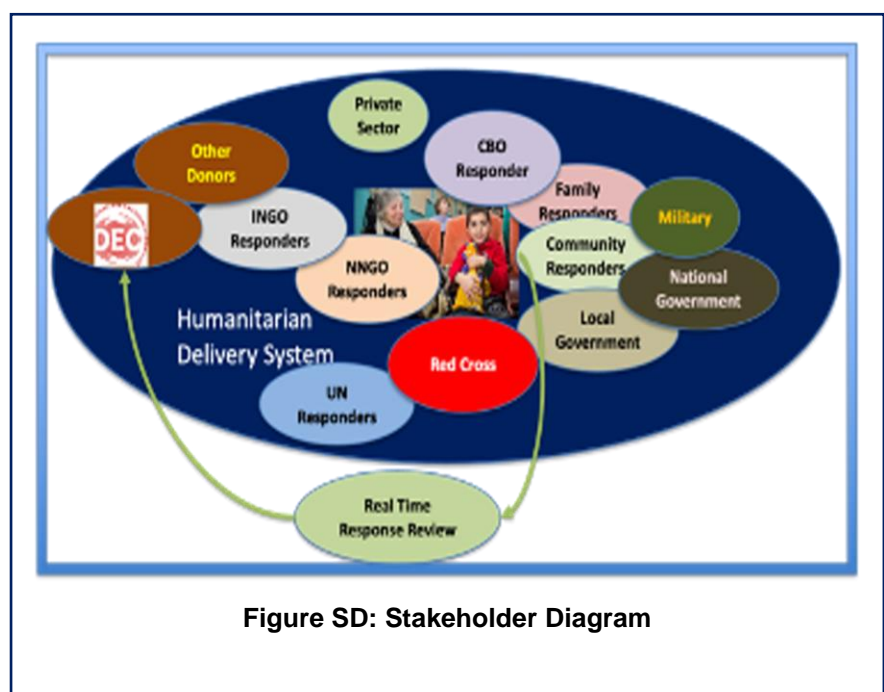


Figure SD: Stakeholder Diagram

²⁷ <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 worker²⁸ 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 recognised²⁹ 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.

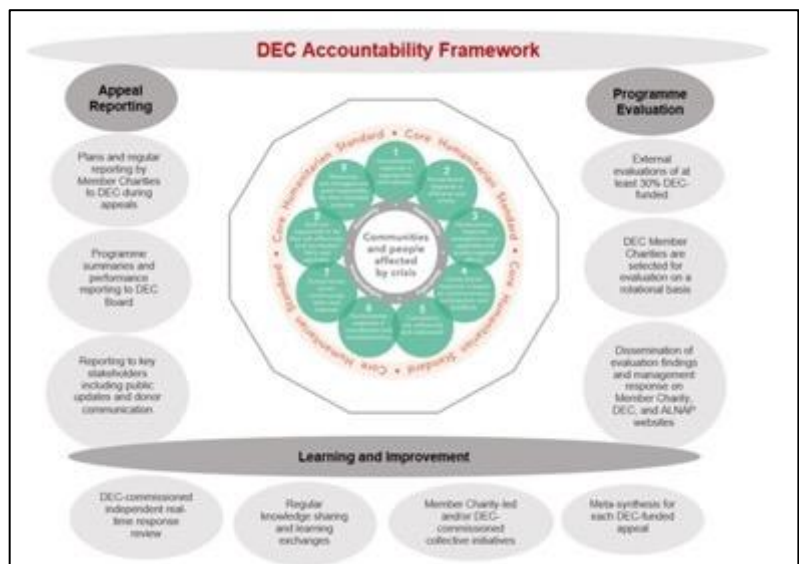
Truth to power: The consultants understand the need for an external, independent and professional source of information ready to ‘speak truth into power’ and acknowledge the full support of the DEC in this regard. It gives due regard to confidentiality, especially for key informants.

10.2. 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.



²⁸ In this context an ‘aid worker’ is anyone providing assistance or support to affected people, whether working informally or for an ‘official’ agency.

²⁹ 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)?

11. Review Methodology and Deliverables

11.1. 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 DEC³⁰.
- 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:



³⁰ 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.

11.2. 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.

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

12.1. 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.

12.2. 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?*³¹

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?

³¹ <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/from-real-time-evaluation-to-real-time-learning>

- Individual aid workers (MASKS³², 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.

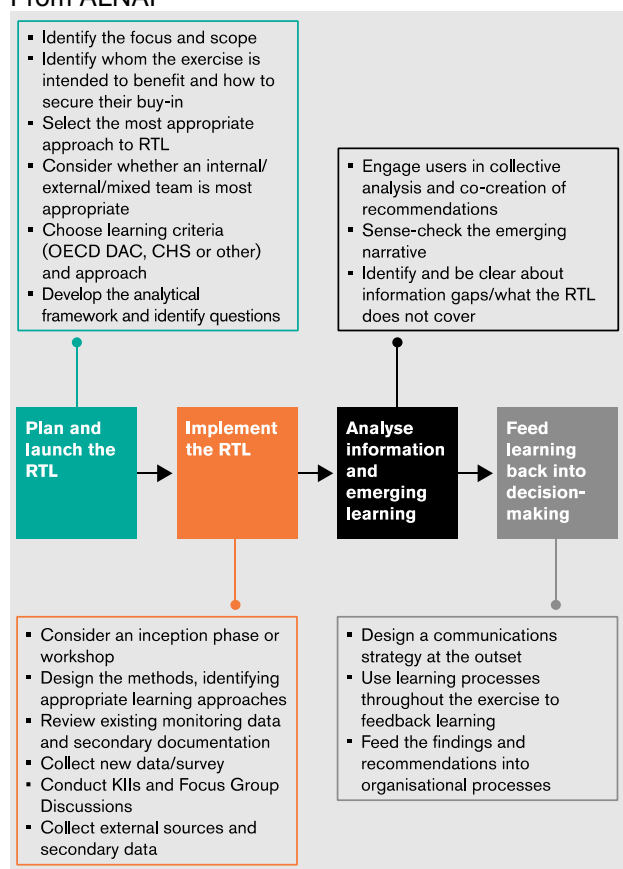
Cycle of learning: Consider the full cycle of learning:

- 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 ALNAP³³



³² Motivation, Attitude, Skills, Knowledge and Support - elements of competence

³³ <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/from-real-time-evaluation-to-real-time-learning>

12.3. 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.