

Checklist for National Societies’ Preparation for auxiliary role discussions

This checklist is meant to provide guidance to National Societies who would like to prepare for discussions with their public authorities on the auxiliary role. This checklist is not exhaustive, and is merely a tool to collect information that could help the National Society to prepare for and facilitate discussions.

Having a thorough understanding of the auxiliary role can help a National Society determine if there is room to strengthen or “grow” its auxiliary role. It will also help the National Society to gather the information and evidence to effectively advocate with the public authorities to do so.

Any exploration of how to make use of the auxiliary role must take into account the national context. A National Society which is interested in enhancing the auxiliary role should also look at potential risks such as the perception of being too close to the government or how to avoid confusion around the National Society’s role, for example.

The auxiliary role is only as effective as the capacity of the National Society to act under it. Creating false expectations will be counter-productive. It is important to find a balance between the needs and capacities of the National Society and those of the public authorities. While the National Society may support the humanitarian and development activities of its public authorities, the public authorities also have an interest to support the capacities of their National Society. Commitments to strengthening National Societies are often made through International Conference Resolutions and pledges.

Auxiliary role – mutually beneficial cooperation (what for?)

- Creation of an enabling environment for the National Society;
- Continuous dialogue to ensure complementarity, coordination and common planning;
- Building National Society’s capacity to respond to humanitarian needs on the ground and to become a valuable, transparent and reliable partner for public authorities in humanitarian and development activities.

...In respect of fundamental principles, in particular the principle of independence.

- **RCRC law or Act**
 - Was the National Society created by a law, act or decree? When?
 - Does the law/act/decree refer to the auxiliary role and if so how?
 - Does the law/act/decree specify certain types of activities or a role for the National Society and if so what kind?
 - Does the law/act/decree grant the National Society any particular privileges?
 - Has the law/act/decree been reviewed by the National Society /public authorities since its creation? When? Have any changes ever been made to it?
 - Has the humanitarian or development context in the country changed since the RC law/act/decree was last reviewed?

- Does the law/act/decreed adequately define and enable the National Society's current areas of activity?
- **Points of contact with public authorities**
 - Is there regular contact between the National Society and the public authorities?
 - How frequently does the National Society meet with public authorities to discuss the auxiliary role (monthly/yearly)?
 - How frequently does the National Society meet with public authorities to discuss specific humanitarian or development issues (monthly/yearly)?
 - At what level are meetings held between the National Society and the public authorities? Ministerial? Senior Management? Technical staff?
 - How many individuals or official points of contact does the National Society have with the public authorities? Is there one central point of contact? Are the contacts in various ministries?
 - Does the National Society have contacts within all relevant Ministries (including Ministry of Finance)?
 - Is contact between the National Society and the public authorities solely at the national level or also at local level? If also at local level, is there any coordination in the National Society to ensure consistency between these contacts? How is information shared?
- **Agreements?**
 - Are there agreements, i.e. MoUs detailing the National Society's agreed activities with the public authorities? If so, what types of agreements? What do they include? Are they time restricted or open-ended?
 - Do existing agreements address support- for example financial contributions and other resources, by public authorities to the National Society in order to be able to carry out the outlined activities?
 - Do agreements exist at the national, local or both levels?
 - Do the agreements cover the breadth of the activities that the National Society conducts or merely specifically agreed activities?
- **Planning**
 - Do the public authorities consider the National Society to be an expert in the humanitarian field? Is the National Society seen as a partner capable to provide evidence-based technical advice? Does the National Society carry out this role?
 - Is the National Society part of any national or local governmental committees on humanitarian or development policies?
 - Is the National Society part of any national or local governmental committees on humanitarian or development programs?
 - Is the role of the National Society set out in laws, policies and plans relevant to disaster risk management, public health promotion and/or social welfare?
 - Does the National Society have the opportunity to provide input or counsel when the public authorities are making humanitarian and development decisions, setting goals or creating plans?

- **Partnership**

- Do the public authorities view the National Society as part of the domestic response to humanitarian challenges and a humanitarian actor that can rely on a large humanitarian network in case of exceptional levels of need?
- Do the public authorities consider the National Society to be a partner of choice when implementing humanitarian activities/programs that are sponsored by international or multilateral organizations?

- **Risk Mitigation**

- Is the National Society aware of and prepared for challenges to operating in accordance with the Fundamental Principles? Have the Fundamental Principles and Emblem Protection been widely disseminated among key stakeholders multiple levels of government so that the parameters of the auxiliary role and the importance of independence are clear? How recently was this done? Does such dissemination need to be repeated due to staff turnover or changes in government?
- Is the National Society prepared to answer hard questions about performance, integrity etc. while discussing the auxiliary role with the government?
- Is the national or local government currently involved in any conflicts? Will the National Society be pressured to perform certain duties or work in certain areas (or conversely, not to work in certain areas)? How does the National Society plan to approach this situation?

- **Research and evidence**

- Can the National Society provide evidence to demonstrate its effectiveness in the services it is currently providing?
- Can the National Society provide evidence on the impact that its activities have had on reducing burden on systems or services provided by the public authorities themselves? (i.e. in the time span of a 5 year campaign by the National Society to vaccinate against polio, there was a 35% decrease in public hospital admissions related to new cases of polio- resulting in an estimated savings of XXX for the public authorities)
- Has the National Society conducted any cost-benefit analyses for programs? If so, have these analyses been shared with the public authorities?

- **Support**

- Is there support between the National Society and the public authorities in exchanging knowledge or expertise? If so, is this part of any agreement?
- Is there an investment by the public authorities to build skills or capacity within the National Society?
- Does the National Society have any exclusive service provision such as first aid training?
- Do the public authorities provide the National Society with direct or indirect financial support?

- For direct support, is it annual? Attached to specific activities? Earmarked or un-earmarked? Relevant to operating costs?
- For indirect support, are there benefits provided? i.e. tax or customs exemptions, in-kind donations such as land or office space? Preferential rates on government controlled goods or services such as telephone rates or petrol?

- **Looking forward**

- Does the current state of the auxiliary role serve the needs of the National Society? The public authorities? How could it better serve the needs of both?
- Does the National Society have an in-depth understanding of the humanitarian and development goals of the public authorities? Are there areas where the National Society could contribute to achieving these goals where it does not currently do so?
- Can the National Society define where the public authorities could have more success in their humanitarian endeavours they were supported by the network of RC volunteers?
- Are the independence of the National Society and its obligation to act in accordance with the Fundamental Principles sufficiently respected by the public authorities?
- Is there sufficient investment in skills, exchange of information? Are effective coordination mechanisms in place? Is the National Society financially sustainable? Could this be improved? How? (keep in mind that the public authorities will most greatly profit from the auxiliary relationship where the National Society has sufficient capacity and there is an open and continuous exchange of information)