

End Evaluation:

2017-18 WASH and First Aid Exit Program Nepal BRC-FI and NRCS

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ACRONYMS

BRC-FI	Belgian Red Cross Society - Flanders
CEA	Community Engagement and Accountability
CEBaP	Centre for Evidence-Based Practice
CoFA	Commercial First Aid
DGD	Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (Belgium)
D-WASH-CC	District WASH Coordination Committee
EMT	Evaluation Management Team
EQ	Evaluation Question
FA	First Aid
FARS	First Aid / Road Safety
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
LogFrame	Logical Framework
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NeFAM	Nepal First Aid Manual
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRCS	Nepal Red Cross Society
NS	National Society
OCAC	Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification
ODF	Open Defecation Free
RANAS	Risks, Attitudes, Norms, Abilities, and Self-regulation
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
VDC	Village Development Committee
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In 2016, the Belgian Red Cross-Flanders (BRC-FI) decided to phase out their work in Nepal after partnering with the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) since 1988. To this end, BRC-FI supported NRCS with a 2017-18 exit program focused on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and First Aid/Road Safety (FARS). The targeted outcomes of the WASH and FARS projects supported by the Belgian federal government (DGD) were:

1. Sustained use of sufficient safe water & sanitation facilities, as well as sustained safe hygiene attitudes & practices by the target population by 2018.
2. Lay people, Red Cross staff & volunteers have adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to provide first aid to those in need by 2018, as such enhancing community level resilience and emergency care capacity.

This summative evaluation assessed the 2017-2018 exit program in Nepal implemented by NRCS with support from BRC-FI. The primary objectives of the evaluation were to:

1. examine the extent to which the projects have achieved the two intended outcomes and indicator targets and have delivered the intended outputs, based on validation of the BRC-FI and NRCS internal baseline and endline measurements;
2. examine the extent to which the achieved outcomes are sustainable; and
3. document good practices for future programming and wider organizational learning.

Methodology

Data was collected and analyzed in order to answer six key evaluation questions. The primary means of data collection were 1) semi-structured interviews and 2) document review. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine key stakeholders, all staff of BRC-FI or NRCS. Approximately 120 documents were reviewed, including, but not limited to, the project donor proposal, NRCS quarterly narrative and financial reports, indicator/activity/financial tracking tools, baseline and endline reports, and external best practice documents. The evaluation was a desk-based review. The evaluator did not visit the projects nor speak to beneficiaries.

There were several limitations to the evaluation. The main limitation was that the evaluation design limited the ability to include beneficiary feedback and to localize the results, as no beneficiaries were contacted, no field work was conducted, and there was limited input from district or sub-district level.

Findings

The evaluation findings are presented below per evaluation question (EQ) and program outcome. The first four evaluation questions focus on effectiveness while the last two focus on sustainability.

EQ 1: To what extent were the project outcomes and outputs achieved?

The following charts summarize the extent to which the project outcomes and outputs were achieved for each project.

WASH

Outcome 1: Sustained use of sufficient safe water & sanitation facilities, as well as sustained safe hygiene attitudes & practices by 4 VDCs of Bara district (B) and 9 VDCs of Gorkha district (G) by 2018.	Mostly Achieved
Output 1.1: Increased availability of safe and sustainable water supply for 4 VDCs of Bara district (B) and 9 VDCs of Gorkha district (G) by 2018.	Achieved
Output 1.2: Increased availability of safe and sustainable sanitation facilities for 4 VDCs in Bara district by 2018	Achieved
Output 1.3: 4 VDCs in Bara district have improved knowledge & skills on safe hygiene practices by 2018.	Achieved
Output 1.4: NRCS WASH Division and Bara district chapter/subchapters have increased capacity to implement WASH related interventions by 2018.	Achieved

First Aid / Road Safety

Outcome: Lay people, Red Cross staff & volunteers have adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to provide first aid to those in need and/or apply road safety measures by 2020, as such enhancing community level resilience and emergency care capacity.	Partially Achieved
Output 2.1: High quality FA & RS awareness education for different target groups is developed by 2017 and maintained.	Achieved
Output 2.2: NRCS has a well-functioning FA service embedded in the organization by 2020.	Achieved
Output 2.3: NRCS has established a national sustainable road safety awareness network and activities in Nepal.	Partially Achieved

EQ 2: What challenges were faced during implementation, and how were these challenges addressed?

A reduction in the project budget could have led to challenges for both projects. However, both the WASH and FA projects strategically adjusted to the reduced budget and therefore this did not have a significant impact. The reduced budget did result in a reduced timeframe at the project outset, which was further compounded by a delayed start. Changes to the structure of the Nepal governmental bodies on the local level resulted in the need to adapt implementation accordingly, though this was accounted for in the beginning. Both projects struggled with volunteer retention.

The main challenges faced by the WASH project were time constraints, flooding in August 2017, availability of local resources, and community buy-in. These were mainly addressed through adapting activities. For example, NRCS increased their efforts to build relationship with community members in order to ensure buy-in.

The First Aid / Road Safety project faced several challenges. One main challenge was delays in the roll-out of the Nepal First Aid Manual (NeFAM), which was due to delays in a previous project. In order to minimize the impact of the NeFAM delay, NRCS printed the manual before official copies were available. Additionally, NRCS faced limited access to stakeholders, which primarily hindered the realization of the road safety awareness network.

EQ 3: To what extent were appropriate M&E measures put in place to ensure quality, timely and relevant project implementation?

Both the WASH and FA projects had several monitoring and evaluation (M&E) measures put in place to ensure quality and timely project implementation. These included the use of quarterly trackers (indicator, activity, and financial) by BRC-FI, quarterly narrative and financial reports by NRCS, and

baseline/endline tools. Relevance, or the extent to which the project aligned with beneficiary needs and priorities, was not measured by these M&E measures.

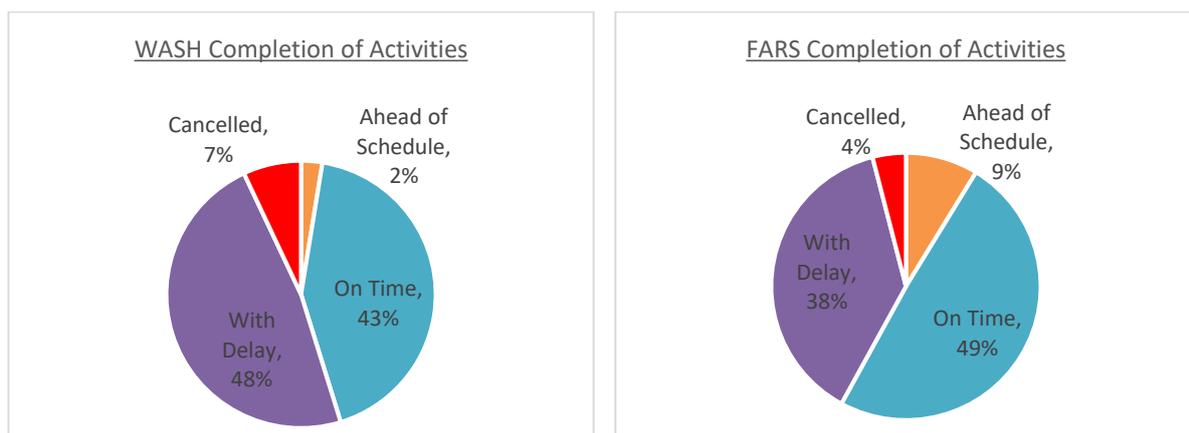
The indicators utilized in these tools were derived from the LogFrames, which were clear and well-organized. However, some of the indicators used in the LogFrames were not sufficient for measuring the outputs/outcomes. The project Theory of Change (ToC) had some additional outcomes/indicators which were not used in the LogFrame or tracking tools but would have been useful. Some additional indicators were added in the trackers that were not in the LogFrame and were necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the program effectiveness.

Regarding accountability to beneficiaries, NRCS conducted project review meetings with stakeholders, including local community members, groups, and leaders. For the FA project, FA training participants provided feedback through course evaluation forms. Accountability to beneficiaries was also ensured as the projects rely on local community volunteers and NRCS is in the communities on a daily basis. However, BRC-FI and NRCS did not include indicators related to accountability to beneficiaries in the LogFrames or trackers. Including such indicators would assist in ensuring project relevance. It can be argued that project relevance was ensured as BRC-FI and NRCS aligned the project with government policies and is owner-driven.

The baseline, midline, and endline survey used in the WASH project was very useful for ensuring quality and relevant project implementation. This was conducted through a collaboration with NRCS, BRC-FI, and the Centre for Evidence-Based Practice (CEBaP), a part of the BRC-FI. The use of the same indicators at three distinct points provided high quality comparison information. The FARS project did not use baseline and endline tools which could provide information regarding the effectiveness of the project.

EQ 4: To what extent was the project implemented in accordance with the planned time-frame for delivery?

The following charts show the percentage of program activities completed on time, ahead of time, with delay, or cancelled for each outcome.



The delays had a variety of causes. Many activities were delayed due to the late start of the overall program. Additionally, flooding in August 2017 hampered many WASH project activities, and the delay in roll-out of NeFAM was largely due to delays from the previous 2014-16 program. Regardless of these delays, both projects managed to complete all activities (aside from a small few which were cancelled at the outset) by the program end.

EQ 5: To what extent are the intended outcomes of the project likely to continue?

One major component positively influencing the likelihood of sustainability of the outcomes is the NRCS structure. There are 77 districts in Nepal and each district has a Red Cross office and sub-chapter offices in communities. Both the district and sub-district levels have local volunteers. Both projects also had substantial capacity building measures built into the activities and utilized a “local finance first” principle to ensure local resources are available. Finally, both projects worked closely with the relevant local governmental bodies, ensuring sustained political support.

In general, the WASH outcomes are likely to be sustainable due to local ownership, local capacity, availability of resources, and sustained political support. It is more uncertain whether the FARS outcomes will continue. While local ownership, capacity, and political support is likely sufficient, local resources may not be.

EQ 6: To what extent have appropriate mechanisms been put in place for institutional and financial sustainability of the WASH and FA division?

BRC-FI has worked with NRCS for over 30 years. During this time, they have contributed capacity building for both the WASH and FA departments and have built the FA department from the ground-up. The 2017-18 program was intended as an exit phase-out program, and therefore the sustainability of the WASH and FA divisions is key to ensuring that this long relationship will lead to effective programming even after BRC-FI’s withdrawal from the country. BRC-FI and NRCS put in place mechanisms for institutional sustainability of the WASH and FA divisions, including capacity building measures, which led to both being seen as sustainable. An exit strategy and partner assessment could improve the likelihood of institutional sustainability for future programs. In terms of financial sustainability, BRC-FI and NRCS faced challenges in putting in place mechanisms for financial sustainability of the FA division. The WASH division has financial means for the near-future due to the presence of other donors.

Good Practices and Recommendations

The following are the main good practices utilized in the program.

- 1. Work flexibly while prioritizing key activities.** This program faced many challenges, which were primarily resolved through adapting project activities and targets in a way that ensured the overall project was still achieved and activities were prioritized accordingly.
- 2. Design thorough, well thought-out, and clear Theories of Change.** The Theories of Change utilized in both projects were comprehensive, well thought-out, and clear.
- 3. Use consistent indicators and processes for baseline and endline tools.** The WASH project used the same indicators, tools, process, and even volunteers (to a large extent) for both their baseline and endline surveys. This led to reliable results.
- 4. Include sustainability in the program design from the outset.** BRC-FI and NRCS included a section on sustainability for both the WASH and FARS projects in the initial program proposal. The inclusion of sustainability from the initial project design was very important.
- 5. Ensure local ownership and buy-in.** NRCS made substantial efforts to ensure local ownership and buy-in, particularly for the WASH project, which was key for program effectiveness and sustainability.

While the above practices were seen in the 2017-18 program, the following are the main recommendations for BRC-FI and NRCS for improving programs in the future.

1. **Ensure that a project's Theory of Change, LogFrame, and M&E measures are all aligned.** Both projects used some indicators which did not truly reflect the outputs/outcome or were not comprehensive enough to measure the outputs/outcome. The projects' ToCs were quite comprehensive and thought-out; however, some aspects were not carried over into the LogFrame and M&E measures and were therefore lost in the program implementation. The ability to carry over all aspects of a ToC will sometimes be limited by practical realities on-the-ground.
2. **Include accountability to beneficiaries in M&E indicators and utilize participatory M&E mechanisms.** While partner National Societies may have their own means for measuring accountability, as is the case for NRCS, BRC-FI should also monitor this. Accountability to beneficiaries and participatory M&E leads to more effective programming.
3. **Develop sustainability plans and measures for ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes, in collaboration with partner National Societies.** A comprehensive sustainability plan and measures should be put in place from the beginning of projects.
4. **Prepare a formal exit strategy when partner National Societies leave a country.** This exit strategy should be led by both partner National Societies, be conducted as early as possible in the process, include financial and institutional sustainability, and be regularly communicated with key stakeholders. An exit strategy for BRC-FI leaving Nepal could have included how the FA department would be funded. To this end, NRCS should develop a strategy to ensure financial sustainability of the First Aid/Road Safety Department.
5. **Conduct a formal capacity assessment with partner National Societies if there is a desire to improve institutional sustainability.** For BRC-FI, this assessment should be done at the beginning of engaging with a new National Society or department and before considering an exit strategy, and would be used to determine plans for improvement. NRCS could also conduct capacity assessments for departments they wish to improve. BRC-FI developed an endline questionnaire which is planned to be used for this purpose in future FA projects.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) and Belgian Red Cross-Flanders (BRC-FI) have partnered together since 1988. BRC-FI has contributed to NRCS’s capacity in the fields of First Aid / Road Safety (FARS) and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), among other areas. BRC-FI aims for National Societies and communities to be self-reliant so that they can provide or sustain services autonomously and in a sustainable manner. In 2016, BRC-FI planned to exit Nepal and therefore planned the 2017-18 exit program with the support of the Belgian federal government (DGD).

For 2017-18, the targeted outcomes of the WASH and FARS projects implemented by NRCS and supported by BRC-FI were:

1. Sustained use of sufficient safe water & sanitation facilities, as well as sustained safe hygiene attitudes & practices by the target population by 2018.
2. Lay people, Red Cross staff & volunteers have adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to provide first aid to those in need by 2018, as such enhancing community level resilience and emergency care capacity.

The WASH project was implemented in Bara District, whereas the FARS project was implemented in Morang and Saptari Districts.



2.2 Evaluation Objectives

This summative evaluation assessed the 2017-2018 exit program in Nepal according to the evaluation criteria of effectiveness and sustainability.

The primary objectives of the evaluation were to:

1. examine the extent to which the projects have achieved the two intended outcomes and indicator targets and have delivered the intended outputs, based on validation of the BRC-FI and NRCS internal baseline and endline measurements;
2. examine the extent to which the achieved outcomes are sustainable; and
3. document good practices for future programming and wider organizational learning.

2.3 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation consisted of six key questions: four related to program effectiveness, and two related to sustainability.

Effectiveness

1. To what extent were the project outcomes and outputs achieved?
2. What challenges were faced during implementation, and how were these challenges addressed?
3. To what extent were appropriate M&E measures put in place to ensure quality, timely and relevant project implementation?
4. To what extent was the project implemented in accordance with the planned time-frame for delivery?

Sustainability

5. To what extent are the intended outcomes of the project likely to continue?
6. To what extent have appropriate mechanisms been put in place for institutional and financial sustainability of the WASH and FA division?

A full evaluation matrix, including judgement criteria, indicators, and data sources per evaluation question, is included in [Annex 2](#).

2.4 Evaluation Design and Methodology

Data was collected and analyzed in order to answer the evaluation questions, as per the evaluation matrix ([Annex 2](#)). The evaluation focused on effectiveness and sustainability, and therefore does not comment on program relevance/appropriateness, efficiency, or impact. The primary means of data collection were 1) semi-structured interviews and 2) document review. The evaluation was a desk-based review. The evaluator did not visit the projects nor speak to beneficiaries. The only primary data consulted was the interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine key stakeholders. These stakeholders were Nepal-based NRCS and BRC-FI staff, as well as BRC-FI HQ technical staff. Stakeholders were selected in coordination with BRC-FI in order to ensure the most relevant individuals were consulted and ensure a diversity of stakeholders. The interview guide ([Annex 3](#)) was adapted for each person being interviewed.

Approximately 120 documents were reviewed, including:

- Project donor proposal
- NRCS and BRC-FI organograms
- BRC-FI-NRCS project agreements, including LogFrame, budget, etc.
- NRCS quarterly narrative and financial reports
- BRC-FI quarterly indicator, activity, and financial tracking tools
- Internal NRCS-BRC-FI baseline and endline reports
- Baseline and endline tools, templates, explanations, sampling, and protocols
- WASH midterm survey

- Other monitoring tools (e.g. First Aid pre- and post-test questionnaire, training evaluation form, list of participants, etc.)
- External documents (to provide a wider perspective of best practices, as necessary)

Key documents are included as an annex to this report.

Data from interviews and document review were analyzed using basic coding per evaluation question. The draft report was reviewed by the Country Representative Nepal (BRC-FI), the WASH Focal Point (BRC-FI), the FA Focal Point (BRC-FI), and the Head of FA Division (NRCS).

The evaluator ensured the process was aligned with BRC-FI Framework Standards for Evaluation, and focused on localization, participation, and utility throughout the evaluation process.

2.5 Amendments to the ToR

There were no major amendments made to the ToR. The evaluation questions were slightly modified in order to 1) reflect the consultant’s understanding, 2) frame the questions in an open-ended and unbiased manner, and 3) limit the number of questions to ensure the evaluation was targeted. The questions also ensured analysis of the sustainability of the NRCS FARS and WASH divisions. Furthermore, the ToR stated that the evaluation would “validate the quality and results of the BRC-FL and NRCS internal baseline and endline measurements.” This wording can imply a quantitative analysis of the baseline and endline data, as does the request for a sampling methodology. However, the evaluator and BRC-FI focal point agreed that quantitative analysis was outside the scope of the evaluation. The “validation” of the baseline and endline measurements (along with other M&E tools) was conducted through a qualitative analysis to see if they were appropriate and according to best practice.

2.6 Limitations

The following were some of the key limitations of this evaluation:

- The evaluation design limits the ability to include participation of beneficiaries. Feedback from beneficiaries is highly valuable in determining both the effectiveness and sustainability of a program. The evaluation management team decided to not include field work as part of the evaluation. Therefore, the consultant attempted to draw out beneficiary feedback included in already-collected data, but this was limited.
- Similarly, the evaluation management and design were not able to be localized to a significant extent. NRCS staff was not involved in the evaluation design (including ToR or inception report review). Additionally, the evaluator was not able to interview staff from NRCS sub-district chapters and was only able to interview one staff from the district-level chapter. The remainder of NRCS staff interviewed were from HQ (Kathmandu). This means that the majority of the people interviewed were not direct implementers. Only one NRCS staff member reviewed the draft report.
- Sustainability is best measured a significant time after the end of the project. This evaluation took place in the two months following the program end. Therefore, the ability to assess sustainability (of the program outcomes and NRCS’s capacity) is limited. The evaluator used the available data and best practice information to assess likelihood of sustainability.
- Some staff that were key to the program were not available for interview as they had left the program. Most notably, the BRC-FI Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Manager was no longer with the BRC-FI at the time of the evaluation, but she was key in the program design and monitoring. Additionally, some BRC-FI WASH staff involved in the implementation were no longer with BRC-FI at the time of the evaluation.

- There is a risk of bias in any evaluation, and this evaluation has a particular risk due to the lack of field visits and limited interviews. The evaluator attempted to manage possible biases by ensuring that she gathered information from multiple sources and triangulated data wherever possible.
- The final NRCS quarterly narrative/financial reports were not available in time for this evaluation. The final quarterly indicator, activity, and financial trackers were also not completed but the evaluator had access to draft versions. The evaluator therefore supplemented the missing information through consulting with key stakeholders.

3 FINDINGS

The evaluation findings are presented below per evaluation question (EQ) and program outcome. The first four evaluation questions focus on program effectiveness, while the last two focus on sustainability.

3.1 EQ 1: To what extent were the project outcomes and outputs achieved?

Note that for this question, the evaluation focused on the outcomes and outputs as stated in the original proposal LogFrame submitted to the DGD.

3.1.1 WASH

The following chart summarizes the extent to which the project outcomes and outputs were achieved, using a comparison of baseline, target, and endline indicators, as well as input from interviews and document review.

Indicator	Baseline (as per LogFrame)	Target (as per LogFrame)	Endline (as per indicator tracker)	Achievement
Outcome 1: Sustained use of sufficient safe water & sanitation facilities, as well as sustained safe hygiene attitudes & practices by 4 VDCs of Bara district (B) and 9 VDCs of Gorkha district (G) by 2018.				Mostly Achieved
Indicator 1.1: % of households in the target area using sufficient safe water from an improved water point for drinking.	19%	+80%	96.3% (+77%)	Achieved ¹ (96%)
Indicator 1.2: % wards of target area communities declared ODF according to national standards.	50% (18/36 wards)	+50% (36/36 wards)	64% (+14%) (23/36 wards)	Achieved ²
Indicator 1.3: % of households in target area whose members wash their hands with water & soap at critical times.	36% 30% according to baseline	+20%	44.0% (+14%)	Mostly achieved (70%)
Additional Evidence:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional indicators provided in baseline/endline survey showed substantial improvement, e.g. % of households that store drinking water in a separate and covered container. The sustainability of the use of safe water & sanitation facilities and safe hygiene attitudes and practices is perceived to be high due to local ownership, local capacity, availability of resources, and sustained political support. 				
Output 1.1: Increased availability of safe and sustainable water supply for 4 VDCs of Bara district (B) and 9 VDCs of Gorkha district (G) by 2018.				Achieved
Indicator 1.1.1: Number of water points constructed/rehabilitated according to national standards.	0 constructed 0 rehabilitated	+135 constructed +600 rehabilitated	115 constructed 800 rehabilitated	Achieved ³ (100% and 133%)

¹ Project activities in Gorkha were excluded from this evaluation as they were conducted by a different department active in the 2015 earthquake and used different monitoring mechanisms.

² Changes in the structure of rural government structures changed this indicator. Currently, 23 out of 36 wards are ODF (64%) and others are expected to be declared ODF by February 2019. Therefore, this indicator is seen as achieved.

³ Targets were revised at project start from 135 constructed / 600 rehabilitated to 115 constructed / 800 rehabilitated.

Indicator 1.1.2: Number of constructed/rehabilitated with an established water user committee.	0	+135	115	Achieved (100%) ⁴
Output 1.2: Increased availability of safe and sustainable sanitation facilities for 4 VDCs in Bara district by 2018.				Achieved
Indicator 1.2.1: Number of improved toilets built	0	+ 1.309 toilets	1.754	Achieved (134%)
Indicator 1.2.2: Number of Child, Gender and Differently-abled friendly toilets built in schools in the target area.	0	+ 10 toilets	6 constructed 4 renovated	Achieved (100%) ⁵
Output 1.3: 4 VDCs in Bara district have improved knowledge & skills on safe hygiene practices by 2018.				Achieved
Indicator 1.3.1: Number of people trained in hygiene behavior methodology.	Total: 0 Women: 0 Men: 0	Total: +60 Women: +38 Men: +22	Total: 311 Women: N/A ⁶ Men: N/A	Achieved (518%)
Indicator 1.3.2: Number of hygiene behavior change techniques implemented.	0	+5	0	Not applicable ⁷
Additional Evidence:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the RANAS model was not utilized, other hygiene behavior change techniques were utilized which NRCS was already familiar with. Additional indicators included in baseline and endline surveys demonstrate improved knowledge & skills on safe hygiene practices. For example, number of households whose members wash their hands with water and soap at critical times was 44.0% at project end, up from 17.6% at the baseline. 				
Output 1.4: NRCS WASH Division and Bara district chapter/subchapters have increased capacity to implement WASH related interventions by 2018.				Achieved
Indicator 1.4.1: Number of activities related to evidence-based practice (EBP) NRCS engages in.	0	+3	0	Not applicable ⁸
Additional Evidence:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis shows that the WASH Division and Bara district chapter/subchapters have increased capacity and sustainability due to local ownership, local capacity, availability of resources, and sustained political support. 				

In addition to measuring the outputs/outcomes, the impact of the project was measured in the indicator trackers and baseline/endline survey via the prevalence of diarrhea in the target area, disaggregated by households with children below 5 years of age. As per a report by the Centre for Evidence-Based Practice (CEBaP), a part of the BRC-FI, there was significant positive change seen, from 42.9% to 18.4% for households with children below 5 years of age, and 24.1% to 7.5% for households with no children below 5 years of age. While it is likely that the project significantly contributed to this impact, it is not possible to attribute the changes completely as other factors may have been involved.

The following further explains the achievement of each outcome/output in the project LogFrame.

⁴ Target was revised at project start from 135 to 115 constructed.

⁵ Target was changed at project start.

⁶ Disaggregated data unavailable at time of writing.

⁷ RANAS cancelled at beginning of project. However, other hygiene behavior change techniques were utilized.

⁸ RANAS cancelled at beginning of project. However, other hygiene behavior change techniques were utilized.

Outcome 1: Sustained use of sufficient safe water & sanitation facilities, as well as sustained safe hygiene attitudes & practices by 4 VDCs of Bara district (B) and 9 VDCs of Gorkha district (G) by 2018.

The majority of data, along with interviews with key project staff, confirms that the WASH outcome was **mostly achieved**.

Project activities in Gorkha were excluded from this evaluation.

Indicator 1.1 (% of households in the target area using sufficient safe water from an improved water point for drinking) was 96% achieved for Bara District. As per a survey and analysis conducted by CEBaP in cooperation with the NRCS, 96.3% of households had water from an improved drinking supply, just short of the 99% target. Note that there was some difficulty measuring this indicator due to the definition regarding an “improved water point.” While the project defined these as 150 ft. deep wells, in the baseline shallower wells were included which may contain arsenic.

Indicator 1.2 (% wards of target area communities declared ODF according to national standards) was complicated as the government redrew ward lines during the project period. As per the indicator trackers, 64% of the target wards were ODF at the end of the project, though the remainder were expected to be declared ODF by February 2019. Therefore, it is mostly achieved pending governmental declarations.

Indicator 1.3 (% of households in target area whose members wash their hands with water & soap at critical times) was mostly achieved. As per the CEBaP survey, 44.0% of households reported washing their hands at critical times with soap and water. The LogFrame indicated a baseline of 36% and a target of +20%. The baseline report had a more accurate measure of 30% and therefore this was used. This indicator was 70% reached.

The indicator tracker and baseline/endline survey utilized in the project included additional indicators which were useful for ensuring a more holistic view of the outcome achievement and showed substantial improvement from baseline to endline. These included:

- % of households always using a latrine – increased from 28.4% to 63.7%
- Time spent daily for water collection (incl. queuing) – decreased from an average of 30 to 25 minutes
- % of households with access to an improved latrine – increased from 34.9% to 73.5%
- % of households that store their drinking water in a separate and covered container – increase from 51.2% to 76.6%
- % of households that have a utensils drying rack – increased from 18.7% to 42.8%
- % of households that have a washing platform – increased from 45.6% to 76.6%
- % of households that have a clean cooking space – increased from 39.6% to 62.3%
- % of households owning a clean latrine – increased from 28.0% to 60.3%
- % of households with a compost pit – increased from 13.7% to 19.1%.

It is also worth noting that there was a major flood during this project. Natural disasters often result in a decrease in safe water and sanitation facilities, as well as safe hygiene practices. Therefore, the extent of improvement despite this challenge is a project achievement.

The outcome designates *sustained* use of sufficient safe water & sanitation facilities, as well as *sustained* safe hygiene attitudes & practices. None of the indicators used can accurately measure the sustainability of these. In general, the WASH outcomes are likely to be sustainable due to local ownership, local capacity, availability of resources, and sustained political support. See Section 3.5.1 for an analysis of the sustainability of the project outcome.

Output 1.1: Increased availability of safe and sustainable water supply for 4 VDCs of Bara district (B) and 9 VDCs of Gorkha district (G) by 2018.

This output was **achieved**. It was measured via indicators 1.1.1 (# water points constructed/rehabilitated according to national standards) and 1.1.2 (# water points constructed/rehabilitated with an established water user committee). The targets for these indicators were changed at the outset of the project (from 135 constructed and 600 rehabilitated to 115 and 600 respectively) and these revised targets were met at 100% and 133% as per the indicator tracker. The indicator tracker also measured the percentage of schools with access to a functional drinking water source which showed positive improvement.

While the indicators do not measure that the water supply is sustainable, it is likely to be sustainable based on an analysis of the local ownership, capacity, availability of resources, and political support. See Section 3.5.1 for a discussion about the sustainability of the project outcome.

Output 1.2: Increased availability of safe and sustainable sanitation facilities for 4 VDCs in Bara district by 2018.

This output was **achieved**. It was measured via indicators 1.2.1 (# of improved toilets built) and 1.2.2 (# of child, gender, and differently-abled friendly toilets built in schools in the target area), which were met at 134% and 100% respectively as per the indicator tracker. While the indicators do not measure that the sanitation facilities are sustainable, they are likely to be sustainable based on an analysis of the local ownership, capacity, availability of resources, and political support. See Section 3.5.1 for a discussion about the sustainability of the project outcome.

Output 1.3: 4 VDCs in Bara district have improved knowledge & skills on safe hygiene practices by 2018.

This output was **achieved**. It was measured by two indicators. Indicator 1.3.1 (# of people trained in hygiene behavior methodology) was achieved at 518% of the original target as per the indicator tracker. Indicator 1.3.2 (# of hygiene behavior change techniques implemented) was not applicable as BRC-FI and NRCS decided not to use the behavior change model that the project aimed to implement, RANAS. However, other behavior change techniques were utilized that NRCS was already familiar with. Additional indicators included in the project survey demonstrate improved knowledge & skills on safe hygiene practices. For example, number of households whose members wash their hands with water and soap at critical times was 44.0% at the endline, up from 17.6% at the baseline.

Output 1.4: NRCS WASH Division and Bara district chapter/subchapters have increased capacity to implement WASH related interventions by 2018.

This output was **achieved**. Indicator 1.4.1 (# of activities related to evidence-based practice NRCS engages in) was not applicable due to the cancellation of RANAS. However other behavior change techniques were utilized. The indicator trackers also measured the number of income generating activities operational with exit strategy. The target for this was originally two but reduced to one.

These indicators do not fully capture the increased capacity to implement WASH related interventions. For a full discussion on this topic, see Section 3.6.1, which concludes that the WASH division is likely to be sustainable on an institutional and financial level. The project contributed to this increased capacity through activities such as training staff and constructing a building to be used at the district-level for income generation.

3.1.2 *First Aid / Road Safety*

The following chart summarizes the extent to which the project outcomes and outputs were achieved, using a comparison of baseline, target, and endline indicators, as well as input from interviews and document review.

Indicator	Baseline (as per LogFrame)	Target (as per LogFrame)	Endline (as per indicator tracker)	Achievement
Outcome: Lay people, Red Cross staff & volunteers have adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to provide first aid to those in need and/or apply road safety measures by 2020, as such enhancing community level resilience and emergency care capacity.				Partially Achieved
Indicator 2.1: Number of lay people with a FA certificate, registered in the NRCS FA database.	Total: 1,793 Female: 717 Male: 1,076	Total: +576 Female: +190 Male: +386	Total: 2372 (+579) Female: 1,011 (+294) Male: 1,361 (+285)	Achieved ⁹ (101%)
Indicator 2.2: Number of Red Cross volunteers and staff with a FA certificate, registered in the NRCS FA database.	Total: 1,994 Female: 758 Male: 1,236	Total: +720 Female: +238 Male: +482	Total: 2,766 (+772) Female: 1,035 (+277) Male: 1,731 (+495)	Achieved (107%) ¹⁰
Additional Evidence:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll-out of NeFAM countrywide and refresher trainings were major achievements in ensuring adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to provide first aid to those in need. The effectiveness of FA training to impact attitudes to providing first aid was confirmed via the 2016 evaluation. No indicators were used to measure adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to apply <i>road safety measures</i>; nor regarding enhancing community level resilience and emergency care capacity. Some output indicators indirectly measured these aspects. Interviews and anecdotal evidence point to the achievement of this outcome. 				
Output 2.1: High quality FA & RS awareness education for different target groups is developed by 2017 and maintained.				Achieved
Indicator 2.1.1: Implementation of finalized gender sensitive NeFAM based basic FA didactical training materials.	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved (100%)
Indicator 2.1.2: Number of lay people trained in FARS.	0	Total: +576 Female: +190 Male: +386	Total: 579 (+579) Female: 294 (+294) Male: 285 (+285)	Achieved ¹¹ (101%)
Additional Evidence:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of high-quality FA & RS awareness education depends on the financial sustainability and sustained political support after the project ends, which is uncertain. Local ownership and capacity will likely contribute to maintenance. 				
Output 2.2: NRCS has a well-functioning FA service embedded in the organization by 2020.¹²				Achieved

⁹ While the target for men was 74% achieved, the target for women was overachieved at 155%. While this target was reached, the NRCS database does not capture outflow of volunteers and/or expiration of certificates, and therefore this number is not completely reliable.

¹⁰ While this target was reached, the NRCS database does not capture outflow of volunteers and/or expiration of certificates, and therefore this number is not completely reliable.

¹¹ While the target for men was 74% achieved, the target for women was overachieved at 155%.

¹² The project duration was shortened to 2019 at the outset.

Indicator 2.2.1: Number of Red Cross volunteers trained and/or refreshed in FA.	0	Total: +672 Female: +222 Male: +386	Total: 916 (+672) Female: 341 (+222) Male: 575 (+575)	Achieved (136%)
Indicator 2.2.2: Number of active FA Trainers.	Total: 895 Female: 358 Male: 537	Total: +48 Female: +16 Male: +32	Total: 911 (+16) Female: 365 (+7) Male: 546 (+9)	Partially achieved (33%)
Additional Evidence:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 66 lay people have been trained in ToT as part of this project. Analysis shows that the FA service is well-functioning but financial sustainability is uncertain. 				
Output 2.3: NRCS has established a national sustainable road safety awareness network and activities in Nepal.				Partially achieved
Indicator 2.3.1: Nr. of organizations contributing resources to the road safety awareness network and/or activities in Nepal.	2, NRCS, Traffic Police	+33 WHO, Dept. of Roads Private companies/ NGOs	33 (+31) ¹³	Partially achieved (94%)
Indicator 2.3.2: Nr. of beneficiaries reached through FA and RS awareness activities.	0	+146,000	238,079	Achieved (163%)
Additional Evidence:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewed stakeholders stated that the road safety awareness network was largely unsuccessful as NRCS was not able to ensure the buy-in of key stakeholders. While the number for 2.3.1 nearly achieves the target, the contributions of many of the organizations have been small. 				

No indicators were included to measure impact and therefore this cannot be commented on.

The following further explains the achievement of each outcome/output in the project LogFrame.

Outcome: Lay people, Red Cross staff & volunteers have adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to provide first aid to those in need and/or apply road safety measures by 2020, as such enhancing community level resilience and emergency care capacity.

This outcome was **partially achieved**.

This outcome was measured through indicators 2.1 (# of lay people with a FA certificate, registered in the NRCS FA database) and 2.2 (# of Red Cross volunteers and staff with a FA certificate, registered in the NRCS FA database). Both of these indicators were achieved, 101% and 107% respectively, as per the indicator tracker. Indicator 2.1 was not achieved for men but was overachieved for women and therefore deemed sufficient. These measurements depend on the NRCS FA database, which, as will be discussed in Section 3.3.2, is not completely reliable due to issues with measuring outflow and total countrywide inflow.

This outcome has three separate parts: 1) Lay people, Red Cross staff & volunteers have adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to *provide first aid to those in need*; 2) Lay people, Red Cross staff & volunteers have adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to *apply road safety measures*; and 3) enhancing community level resilience and emergency care capacity.

¹³ This is an estimate used at time of writing as final numbers had not been counted.

The first part of this outcome (first aid) was achieved. Indicator 2.1 and 2.2 address the first part of this outcome. The country-wide roll-out of the evidence-based NeFAM was seen as a major achievement towards ensuring lay people, Red Cross staff, and volunteers have adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills, and attitudes to provide first aid to those in need. The quality of first aid trainings was deemed adequate due to the usage of evidence-based NeFAM and the monitoring of training quality through course participant evaluations, pre- and post-tests, final written and practical tests, and the usage of standardized lesson plans, examinations, etc. The NeFAM utilizes the latest medical and scientific knowledge, including relevance in Nepal and train among beneficiaries. Additionally, the “2016 End Evaluation Nepal & Uganda” reported that people were utilizing the first aid trainings in practice.

The second and third parts of the outcome are not measured via indicators. The road safety measures are not captured, nor is community level resilience and emergency care capacity, which can be seen as more of an impact. Some indicators in the outputs indirectly measure these aspects (e.g. indicator 2.3.2 number of beneficiaries reached through FA and RS awareness activities and indicator 2.1.1 implementation of finalized NeFAM) but not fully.

That being said, several interviewees felt that the outcome had been achieved due to seeing the results of the FA trainings and road safety awareness firsthand, such as observing community members begin to utilize zebra crossings, hearing stories of people being helped in an accident, or previously experiencing that First Aid trained beneficiaries were effective after the 2015 earthquake, prior to this project. Interviewees also expressed that the FA training was high quality, though quality differs according to location.

Output 2.1: High quality FA & RS awareness education for different target groups is developed by 2017 and maintained.

This output was **achieved**. The evidence-based NeFAM was rolled out country-wide. Interviewed stakeholders also confirmed that the first aid trainings were high quality. The roll-out of this manual was therefore key in this output. The indicators 2.1.1 (Implementation of finalized gender sensitive NeFAM based basic FA didactical training materials) and 2.1.2 (# of lay people trained in FARS) were both achieved as per the indicator tracker. These indicators assume that the NeFAM and the FARS trainings are high quality as the NeFAM is evidence-based.

The second part of this output is that the education is maintained. This is not measured in the indicators, but according to interviews is likely to be achieved. See Section 3.5.2 for a further discussion on the sustainability of the project.

Output 2.2: NRCS has a well-functioning FA service embedded in the organization by 2020.

This output was **achieved**.

The project was changed from the outset to end at the beginning of 2019 rather than 2020.

Indicator 2.2.1 (# of Red Cross volunteers trained and/or refreshed in FA) was achieved at 136%. BRC-FI provided an addendum to the original contract for an additional 72 staff/volunteers, though this number was exceeded. Indicator 2.2.2 (# of active FA trainers) was only 33% achieved as per the indicator tracker. According to interviews and narrative reports, NRCS decided to have fewer FA trainers with more experience, rather than more trainers with less experience. 66 people successfully passed ToT training as part of this project. NRCS has more trainers than those identified, but not all meet BRC-FI's definition of “active,” i.e. having given two or more trainings in the last year.

These indicators do not entirely reflect the output, as the number of active FA trainers or volunteers trained/refreshed in FA does not necessarily reflect a well-functioning service embedded in the organization (though having well-trained and active FA trainers does positively suggest a well-functioning service). Based on analysis beyond these indicators, the FA service is seen to be well-functioning at HQ and district levels, though its sustainability depends on funding decisions. Interviewees affirm that the FA service is well-functioning and that FA volunteers and their services are valued by other organizations. See Section 3.6.2 for a further discussion on the institutional capacity and sustainability of the FA department.

Output 2.3: NRCS has established a national sustainable road safety awareness network and activities in Nepal.

This output was **partially achieved**.

Indicator 2.3.1 (# of organizations contributing to the road safety awareness network and/or activities in Nepal) was 94% achieved, though the contributions from some organizations were small. This target was deliberately ambitious as per BRC-FI delegate. According to interviews, there was a lot of effort put into creating a road safety network through discussions with stakeholders such as WHO and the police. However, this was not successful. It was planned that NRCS would hold two meetings with key stakeholders. NRCS was the main organizer for one meeting, and according to interviews, the meeting topics were not focused on road safety due to the priorities of the involved stakeholders. Other meetings have been held by other stakeholders, which helped NRCS to gain support for road safety. The RS media folder has been used by other stakeholders and NRCS has been a collaborator for the Nepal Injury Research Centre. Interviewees noted that the traffic police staff were often changing, complicating the ability to create a standing relationship.

Indicator 2.3.2 (# of beneficiaries reached through FA and RS awareness activities) was 163% achieved. However, this indicator does not truly reflect the output, as reaching a number of beneficiaries does not ensure that this activity is sustainable.

3.2 EQ 2: What challenges were faced during implementation, and how were these challenges addressed?

According to interviews and NRCS narrative reports, a few challenges were faced by both the WASH and FA projects. Both projects had to make adjustments due to cuts in the project budget. The WASH project reduced targets for number of water points constructed (from 135 to 115). They also decided to utilize hygiene behavior change techniques which NRCS were already familiar with, rather than implementing the RANAS model which would have taken more time to fully implement. Some minor project activities were also cancelled, including the support to construction of animal sheds. The First Aid project focused on two districts rather than the four originally envisioned. The flexibility shown in the program, while prioritizing key activities, was a good practice.

Good Practice:

1. BRC-FI and NRCS worked flexibly to accommodate project challenges while prioritizing key activities.

The reduced budget also resulted in a reduced time, which proved challenging for completing all activities on time. This was compounded by a delayed start. The project did not fully begin until end of the first quarter of 2017 as BRC-FI was still finalizing all contracts with NRCS and the DGD.

Additionally, there were changes to the structure of the Government of Nepal during the implementation period. Village Development Committees (VDCs) were eliminated and replaced by municipalities, rural municipalities, and wards. The project therefore had to adapt to this new structure and, in some cases, form relationships with new leaders. Adjusting to this new structure was planned as a core activity in assuring sustainability of the departments. This change in government structure also led to some stakeholders being unavailable as they were busy with the change.

Interviews identified mixed opinions regarding the quality of the relationship between NRCS and BRC-FI. Difficulties in ensuring open communication was noted by some interviewees, though many interviewees stated it was nonetheless a very fruitful relationship and that all partner relationships can be challenging due to different organizational goals. Some BRC-FI staff expressed that NRCS did not always agree with BRC-FI input, resulting in some frustration. The reasons behind difficulties in the relationship were unclear and may require further exploration, though it did not appear to significantly impact the quality of the project. When issues in the relationship arose, both parties attempted to resolve the issue through increased communication.

3.2.1 WASH

The main challenges faced by the WASH project were time constraints, flooding, availability of local resources, ensuring community buy-in, and retaining volunteers.

Time Constraints

As mentioned earlier, the reduction of the timeframe was a constraint for the WASH project. In addition to the project starting late and being shortened, according to interviews, the festival season in September and October limited the ability of the implementers to reach key stakeholders. Many project activities were therefore completed at the very end of the project in November/December 2018.

Flooding

In August 2017, the project area suffered from a major flood which hampered project activities. NRCS staff struggled to reach the implementation area due to damaged roads, and therefore relied on local staff/volunteers for monitoring. Many project volunteers were involved in the flood response and were thus not available for WASH project implementation, resulting in delays in certain activities (household visits and community events). This shift in priorities is to be expected after a major disaster. Additionally, meetings with stakeholders for behavior change activities were delayed. The WASH team addressed this by being flexible with their activities: they supported beneficiaries with emergency water purification and repairing water tables. They also emphasized the need for improved and heightened latrines in the project area, which was demonstrated from the flooding. A midline survey was conducted in order to establish a new baseline, which was seen as a “restart” of the project.

Local Resources

The project faced challenges due to lack of some key local resources. For example, according to interviews and narrative reports, trained masons were not available due to seasonal migration to other areas, some families had no land for toilet construction, and the procurement of certain contracts was a challenge. Procurement processes necessitated by the government of Nepal and by internal NRCS policies are strict. These procurement processes led to delays which NRCS managed by doing many activities at the end. For the construction of the deep wells, BRC intervened in the procurement process to ensure quality.

Community Buy-In

Securing community buy-in was another significant challenge. There were several reasons for this. One was that Bara District and the targeted communities were reportedly underserved, traditional, distrustful of the local government, and reluctant to change behaviors. NRCS did not have much experience working in Bara District, and therefore was not completely trusted by the community at the beginning of the project. Due to cultural norms, it was difficult to engage women in the project. One of the project process-related targets included in the indicator trackers was reaching women beneficiaries indirectly. This target was not reached due to low engagement of women in local government.

NRCS addressed poor community buy-in by revising the project after they held meetings with community members as part of the project review process. They used different motivational techniques, and the Program Coordinator spent substantial time in the field to build relations and convince beneficiaries about the value of the project. Volunteers from the district also visited households many times to build trust.

Similarly, there were challenges in involving the local government. According to NRCS activity reports, the District WASH Coordination Committee (D-WASH-CC), the district-level governmental body responsible for WASH, was not very active and local leaders did not take responsibility for the sanitation movement.

Beneficiaries had a high demand for subsidies while country policies did not allow NRCS to provide substantial subsidies. As per interviews, in order to address this, NRCS discussed with the local government so that they could provide subsidies to poor / ultra-poor community members with co-funding from the local government. For those not eligible for support, NRCS held discussions with stakeholders including the D-WASH-CC, rural municipalities, and beneficiaries to explain that it was only possible to provide subsidies for poor / ultra-poor persons.

Community people had a higher interest in receiving hardware (e.g. physical materials) rather than software (e.g. trainings related to behavior change). Hardware is also more visible and perceived as easier to address than software. In order to be successful, the project needed a balance of hardware activities and software activities. For example, NRCS built some deep boreholes. Communities already had access to shallow boreholes, but these contained high concentrations of arsenic. In order to ensure beneficiaries utilized safe water, NRCS sensitized the communities to the importance of using the deep boreholes. Therefore, NRCS ensured that community members understood that hardware services would be provided along with software services.

Retaining Volunteers

Retention of local volunteers (social mobilizers) was also a challenge. The district chapter selects local volunteers at the district and sub-district level for projects. Many local volunteers were more interested in working on the floods or other interventions aside from WASH. Volunteers also expected more salary/benefits than NRCS was able to provide, causing some volunteers to leave the project. This was particularly detrimental as NRCS had already provided training to these volunteers and therefore lost this capacity.

3.2.2 First Aid / Road Safety

The First Aid project faced several challenges, including delays in the roll-out of NeFAM, limited access to stakeholders, and retaining volunteers.

NeFAM Delay

According to interviews, the finalization of creating, designing, and producing the NeFAM was planned for the end of 2016 as part of a previous project. This was delayed for a variety of reasons,

meaning the manual was not ready to be printed and rolled-out according to the expected timeframe. In order to minimize the impact of this delay, NRCS copied the manual rather than awaiting the official publication. The NeFAM roll out was therefore able to be completed in time. BRC-FI also provided budget for three additional trainings to roll out NeFAM.

Access to Stakeholders

The establishment of a national road safety awareness network (Output 2.3) was not achieved. The project proposal included involving a stakeholder in the network through a Memorandum of Understanding, but this was not realized. According to interviews, NRCS faced challenges in implementing this as stakeholders at the national level were very busy and had different priorities. There was one meeting of many stakeholders at the beginning of the project, but even during this meeting the topic shifted from NRCS's focus on how to minimize road casualties to issues regarding traffic and transport unions. NRCS reportedly tried many times to hold a second meeting but was unsuccessful.

Retaining Volunteers

NRCS struggled to retain community-level volunteers as some left the project area to find work, had limited availability, or were involved in earthquake recovery programs. NRCS managed this by gathering all volunteers and holding a meeting to identify availability and create a schedule.

3.3 EQ 3: To what extent were appropriate M&E measures put in place to ensure quality, timely and relevant project implementation?

Both the WASH and FA projects had several M&E measures put in place to ensure quality and timely project implementation. These included the use of quarterly trackers (indicator, activity, and financial) by BRC-FI, quarterly narrative and financial reports by NRCS, and baseline/endline tools. No M&E measures were used to measure relevance.

The indicator, activity, and financial trackers used by BRC-FI were used in both the WASH and FA projects. The tracker formats are standardized throughout BRC-FI. NRCS did not use these trackers directly, and therefore they appear to be more of a tool for BRC-FI HQ rather than on project level. Stakeholders had mixed views regarding the usefulness and clarity of these trackers.

NRCS utilized narrative and financial reports, which were reviewed by the BRC-FI Country Representative. The financial reports were also viewed by BRC-FI HQ. The narrative reports were useful on the project-level and to the evaluator, as they provided qualitative information and process-related information.

The indicators utilized in these tools were derived from the LogFrames, which were clear and well-organized. The project Theory of Change had some additional outcomes and indicators which were not used in the LogFrame or tracking tools but would have been useful. For example, the ToC and project design aimed to include women and girls, though this was only measured through the disaggregation by gender of training participants and indirect beneficiaries reached. Paying special attention to the needs and role of girls and women was not measured. Additional indicators to measure gender mainstreaming could have been useful in order to ensure this aspect of the ToC was carried into the project activities, such as measuring satisfaction of women and girls. Stakeholders noted that it is not always feasible to align the ToC with the LogFrame and indicators, as simple measurements must be used in the field and contradicting information from different sources makes collecting complex M&E information difficult. The ToC for both projects was comprehensive and clear.

Good Practice:

2. BRC-FI designed thorough, well thought-out, and clear Theories of Change.

Some additional indicators were added to the trackers that were not in the LogFrame but were necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the program effectiveness. Additionally, some process indicators were included. The WASH project also included some impact-related indicators which were very useful. The FA project did not include impact-related indicators.

Community engagement and accountability (CEA) is an approach to Red Cross programming and operations that helps put communities at the center of programs. According to the ICRC and IFRC, CEA “is about using the most appropriate communication approaches to listen to communities’ needs, feedback and complaints, ensuring they can actively participate and guide Red Cross Red Crescent actions.”¹⁴ To ensure CEA in this program, NRCS conducted project review meetings with stakeholders, including local community members, groups, and leaders. For the FA project, FA training participants provided feedback through course evaluation forms. Accountability to beneficiaries was also ensured as the projects rely on local community volunteers and NRCS is in the communities on a daily basis. It can be argued that project relevance was ensured as BRC-FI and NRCS aligned the project with government policies and is owner-driven. However, BRC-FI and NRCS did not include indicators related to accountability to beneficiaries in the LogFrames or trackers. Including such indicators would assist in ensuring project relevance, which is currently not captured in the BRC-FI M&E mechanisms. See the Recommendations section for more information related to accountability to beneficiaries.

Recommendations:

1. BRC-FI and NRCS should ensure that a project’s Theory of Change, LogFrame, and M&E measures are all aligned.
2. BRC-FI and NRCS should include accountability to beneficiaries in M&E indicators and utilize participatory M&E mechanisms.

3.3.1 WASH

In order to look at the appropriateness of the M&E measures utilized specifically in the WASH project, the following aspects will be discussed: indicators used, baseline/endline survey, and local monitoring mechanisms.

Indicators

As discussed in Section 3.1.1, the indicators included in the LogFrame were not comprehensive enough to accurately measure the outcome of the project. However, these indicators were supplemented by additional indicators in the indicator trackers. Many of these indicators matched with those recommended by the SPHERE standard guidelines for WASH.¹⁵ The indicators for the outputs also did not completely capture the information required to implement the project as per the ToC, as discussed previously.

Baseline/Endline Survey

NRCS, in collaboration with BRC-FI, conducted a baseline, midline, and endline survey to capture key outcome-related indicators. Volunteer enumerators went house-to-house to conduct a survey using KoBo Toolbox, a mobile data collection tool which is free for humanitarian organizations. In order to minimize bias, the enumerators were from the district, but not the same communities. NRCS WASH staff trained these enumerators regarding how to use the data collection tool, the meaning of different questions, and how to avoid bias. According to interviews, this was an effective system and

¹⁴ IFRC (2017) “A Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)” (2016). <https://media.ifrc.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/01/CEA-GUIDE-2401-High-Resolution-1.pdf>

¹⁵ SPHERE (2017) “SPHERE Handbook.” <https://handbook.spherestandards.org/>

volunteers found the survey easy-to-use. There were some minor challenges because some volunteers were not used to the system. Additionally, while the survey itself was translated from English to Nepali for the enumerators (and field tested prior to roll-out), some input fields allowed for text which the enumerators filled in with Nepali, leading to issues for the analysis later. The Program Officer in NRCS managed the data collection. This data was then sent to BRC-FI, who used their internal Centre for Evidence-Based Practice (CEBaP) to conduct the analysis and compile a report.

The same process, and mostly the same volunteers, were used to conduct a midline partway through the process and an endline, which provided consistency in the process and easy comparators. This was a largely effective process and provided good information for comparing the effectiveness of the project. The NRCS Program Officer is knowledgeable about the use of the tool and data collection, and CEBaP has experience working with supporting humanitarian organizations with scientific research, and therefore both added value to the project. Indicators in the survey were more comprehensive than those used in the LogFrame, and provided solid information related to the project outcome. It was also useful to include a midline in the project, as this helped to see changes post-flooding.

Good Practice:

3. BRC-FI and NRCS used consistent indicators and processes for WASH project baseline and endline tools.

One indicator was not clearly defined and therefore not useful in the survey (improved water point for drinking) as the baseline questionnaire interpreted the question to include shallow handpumps whereas the intention was to identify 150ft deep wells. Additionally, the Program Officer was not provided with the final baseline / endline reports, which would be useful for capacity building and improving monitoring tools in the future.

Local Monitoring Mechanisms

On the local level, the BRC-FI Country Representative repeatedly visited project areas alongside NRCS. According to interviews, NRCS had a quarterly review process where HQ staff visited the communities to meet with local staff, local government, community motivators, selected beneficiaries, and local social leaders. During these meetings, stakeholders could raise issues and NRCS would make plans to resolve these issues. Additionally, NRCS visited the district every six months and annually to review the activities achieved, consider lessons learned, and revise the plan for the following period. For example, during one of these meetings NRCS discussed their challenges in providing subsidies for local people to build hardware, resulting in the local government providing some co-funding for this. The NRCS HQ Program Coordinator also called the project officials in the districts on a regular basis to discuss issues and provide advice.

In addition to NRCS HQ-level M&E mechanisms, monitoring was conducted regularly on the district and local levels. District chapters monitored the project by speaking with volunteer social mobilisers, who monitored the behavior of beneficiaries to see changes, and the Junior Engineer monitored any construction on a technical level. A joint monitoring team including the Project Steering Committee (NRCS District Chapter staff, Sub-Chapter Staff, and District Project Officer) and the D-WASH-CC visited the field, held meetings and focus group discussions, and the D-WASH-CC provided feedback. NRCS also monitored information from local government health institutions to see changes in the number of diarrheal cases and WASH-borne diseases. All WASH-related activities must be approved and monitored by the Government of Nepal and go through local committees.

3.3.2 First Aid / Road Safety

In order to look at the appropriateness of the M&E measures utilized in the FARS project, the following aspects will be discussed: indicators used, baseline/endline tools, the FA database, and local monitoring mechanisms.

Indicators

As discussed in Section 3.1.2, the indicators included in the LogFrame were not comprehensive enough to fully measure the outcome of the project, and to some extent the outputs. Simple indicators were deliberately chosen in order to be easily measurable on-the-ground. Therefore, this can be a conflict between what is ideal from HQ perspective and what is possible in reality.

The narrative report monitored changes in number of traffic casualties as a means of measuring impact, though these numbers might not mean a lot as there is also a trend of growing motorization.

Baseline/Endline Tools

BRC-FI did not conduct a baseline or endline in regard to the FARS LogFrame results. They mainly used indicators which measured an increase from a starting point (e.g. number of lay people trained in FARS from 0 to a goal of +576) and therefore a baseline and endline was not needed. A baseline number was included for some of the LogFrame indicators, but the end target was still expressed as an increase rather than a total (e.g. +576 rather than a total of 2,369 number of lay people with a FA certificate registered in the NRCS FA database).

NRCS conducted the FARS Baseline Report 2017, which measured some of the indicators from the LogFrame. This was conducted independently by NRCS without input from BRC-FI. The numbers in this baseline report did not match the numbers used in the LogFrame. There also was no comparable endline conducted similar to this baseline report. Therefore, this report was not useful to measuring project achievements.

The other document used by the evaluator to inform a baseline was the end evaluation of the 2014-16 FARS Program in Nepal & Uganda. This report was not specific to the 2017-18 project and was not focused on the same district but provided an overall idea of the achievements and challenges for the NRCS FA Division.

An “endline questionnaire” was used to evaluate the FA department on an organizational level. This was not used as an endline for the 2017-18 program but rather as a measure of the state of the FA in general, providing useful information regarding NRCS’s FA education quality and quantity, institutional organization, FA at work / CoFA, and gender.

FA Database

There is some inconsistency in numbers between the different tools used (trackers, baseline in LogFrame vs in NRCS baseline report, etc). One potential reason for this inconsistency is the FA database. Stakeholders note that maintaining reliable databases is a challenge in many National Societies. NRCS uses Excel to track and record individuals with FA certificates. The end evaluation of the 2014-16 program in Nepal noted the lack of a relational database to accurately track trainers (active vs inactive) and trainees (with an FA diploma, expired diploma, or no diploma), and that the Excel spreadsheets did not have consistent management and cleaning. According to interviews, IFRC attempted to build and implement a country-wide NRCS database but was unsuccessful. BRC-FI had previously invested in a database and during this program allocated some money for cleaning up the database. They decided not to further invest in restructuring the database during this program, as the amount of time and effort it would take was deemed overly ambitious for a two-year exit program. It was also a concern that changing the database would be unsuccessful due to poor internet in Nepal and the required organizational change from NRCS.

The “NRCS FA training database” is listed as one of the primary means of verification in the LogFrame, being used in five of eight outcome and output indicators. In order to address this challenge, BRC-FI and NRCS phrased many indicators as an increase from the base level, rather than a total number. For example, the target number of active FA trainers in the LogFrame is +48. NRCS provided numbers related to these indicators in their quarterly reports so that they would not have to rely on the country-wide database for input.

Local Monitoring Mechanisms

The BRC-FI delegate visited the field several times during this project to monitor. NRCS has a country-wide system to monitor the quality of FA education. However, it is often hard to assess the quality of education, particularly in more remote locations. The NRCS HQ Program Coordinator visited the field monthly, and the Head of the FA Division visited every two months. During these meetings, NRCS HQ staff met with the district chapter, volunteers, community people, and the traffic police to hear how the project was going, their experiences, and to determine if any adjustments were needed. NRCS HQ also received quarterly reports from districts. Additionally, the FA program utilizes evaluation forms, which are collected at the end of trainings and provide information related to the trainer’s performance, training management, quality of food provided, etc. This feedback is used to improve the trainings. Pre- and post-tests are used during the FA training to determine if participants could be certified, which also ensures a high quality of the trainings. During meetings in the field, NRCS asks volunteers to perform FA skills to evaluate their skill and knowledge. The FA program is also aligned to governmental priorities.

3.4 EQ 4: To what extent was the project implemented in accordance with the planned time-frame for delivery?

In order to answer this question, the evaluator looked at the activity trackers and discussed with key staff regarding the completion of activities according to the planned timeframe. Note that Section 3.1 discusses whether the outcomes and outputs were achieved by the end of the project, whereas this section discusses whether the activities were achieved according to their planned timeframe.

One of the main challenges for the timeframe was that the project did not start until the end of quarter one, rather than its intended start date on January 1, due to finalizing contracts. This led to delays in many activities. See section 3.2 for a discussion of additional challenges which led to some of the delays. Regardless of these delays, both projects completed all activities expected by the time of writing, aside from those cancelled from the project outset or deemed unnecessary.

3.4.1 WASH

The activity tracker lists a total of 154 activities intended to be completed as of the time of writing.¹⁶ Of these activities:

¹⁶ End of January, 2019

- 4 (2.6%) were completed ahead of time. These included installation of tube wells (completed early in order to be finalized before monsoon season), formation of Junior/Youth Red Cross / child clubs in schools, and design/procurement of incinerators for health posts (completed early due to use of a prefabricated design).
- 67 (43.5%) were completed on time.
- 11 (7.1%) were cancelled. These were related to implementation of the RANAS model or construction of animal sheds. Both activities were cancelled due to reduction in funding, leading to shifts in priorities.
- 72 (48.7%) were completed with a delay.



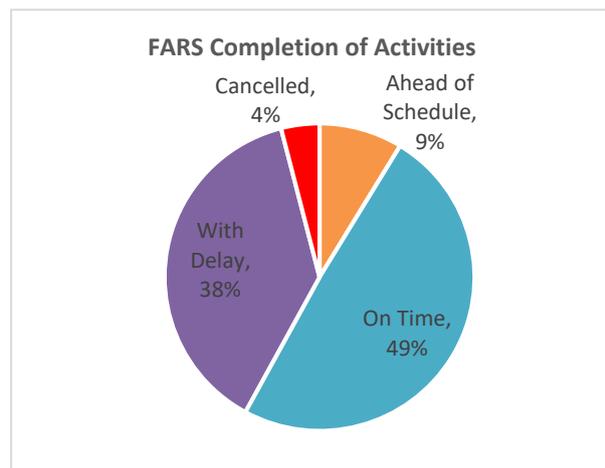
The activities completed with a delay had an average delay of 6-7 months, with the most common (mode) delay of one year. These delays had a variety of causes. Many activities were delayed due to the late start of the overall project. Some activities built on each other, and thus could not be completed prior to another activity’s completion, leading to a ripple effect. Flooding in August 2017 hampered many project activities. Furthermore, procurement of materials and availability of suitable supplies (such as local masons) were often a challenge.

Despite delays, the WASH project managed to complete nearly all of the activities expected to be completed by the time of writing, except those cancelled. Substantial work was completed at the end of the project to catch up.

3.4.2 First Aid / Road Safety

The activity tracker lists a total of 126 activities intended to be completed as of the time of writing.¹⁷ Of these activities:

- 11 (8.7%) were completed ahead of time. These included providing the mannequins for childbirth, completing FARS Training of Trainers, and completing advanced and simulation FA training for volunteers.
- 62 (49.2%) were completed on time.
- 5 (4.0%) were cancelled. Most of these were cancelled due to changes in procedures (e.g. advertising/receiving proposals for mannequins for childbirth was cancelled as they were purchased from a registered supplier). The Annual National Road Safety Stakeholder Meeting was cancelled.
- 48 (38.0%) were completed with a delay.



The activities completed with a delay had an average delay of 3-4 months, with the most common (mode) delay of one month. Delays had a variety of causes. Many activities were delayed due to the

¹⁷ End of January, 2019

late start of the overall project. Additionally, the rollout of NeFAM was delayed largely due to delays from the previous 2014-16 project.

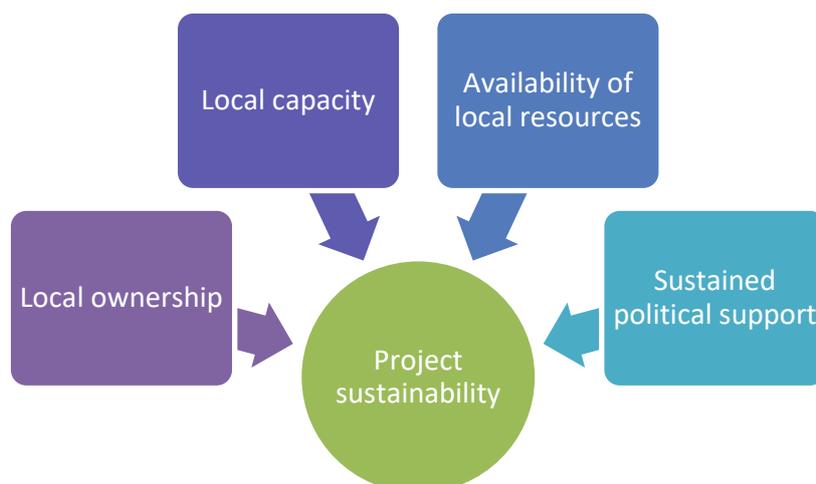
Despite these delays, the FARS project managed to complete all of the activities expected to be completed by the time of writing, other than those deliberately cancelled.

3.5 EQ 5: To what extent are the intended outcomes of the project likely to continue?

This evaluation question focused on the sustainability of the project outcomes. The sustainability of an intervention is ideally measured several years after the intervention. This was not feasible for this evaluation, and therefore factors contributing to the likelihood or unlikelihood of sustainability are discussed. The evaluator looked at four key factors:

1. Local ownership, including participation and empowerment of target beneficiaries;
2. Local capacity, including knowledge and skills of target beneficiaries;
3. Availability of local resources, including finances and materials; and
4. Sustained political support.

These factors were adapted from Danida's evaluation guidelines.¹⁸



While the individual WASH and FA projects have unique factors contributing to their sustainability, the projects have some factors in common.

One major component positively influencing the likelihood of sustainability of the outcomes is the NRCS structure, which increases local ownership, capacity, and availability of resources. According to interviews and the 2014-16 end evaluation, there are 77 districts in Nepal and each district has a Red Cross office. There are also sub-chapter offices in communities. Both the district and sub-district levels have volunteers. They are supported by the HQ in Kathmandu but are often self-sufficient. This structure brings the project ownership to the local level. While the sustainability of the NRCS HQ is discussed in Section 3.6, the sustainability of the district and sub-district chapters is therefore discussed in this section.

Regarding local ownership, both the WASH and FARS projects put in measures to ensure local ownership, such as meetings with local community members.

¹⁸ Danida (2006) "Evaluation Guidelines." <http://www.netpublikationer.dk/um/7571/html/chapter05.htm>

Both projects worked closely with the relevant local governmental bodies, ensuring sustained political support.

Both projects had sustainability measures built into the program design from the outset, as seen in the project proposal. These included capacity building measures built into the activities and utilizing a “local finance first” principle to ensure local resources are available. The FA project also focused on sustainability through capacity building of the department, including for a long period prior to the 2017-18 program. The endline questionnaire measured the FA department on an organizational level in 2018 and, based on this, stakeholders deemed the department sustainable.

Good Practice:

4. BRC-FI and NRCS included sustainability in the program design from the outset.

While the project proposal included a section for each outcome on technical, financial, and social sustainability, this section is very brief and does not capture all the aspects required for sustainability. A more comprehensive plan could provide fuller information for ensuring sustainability in future programs.

Recommendation:

3. BRC-FI and NRCS should develop sustainability plans and measures for ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes.

See the Recommendations section for more information regarding sustainability plans.

3.5.1 WASH

In general, the WASH outcomes are likely to be sustainable due to local ownership, local capacity, availability of resources, and sustained political support.

Local Ownership

Overall, the WASH project appears to have substantial local ownership, positively contributing to the likelihood of sustainability.

Good Practice:

5. NRCS ensured local ownership and buy-in for the WASH project, contributing to sustainability.

While community buy-in was perceived to be a challenge at the start of the project, the efforts of NRCS to build relationships were substantial and reported to be effective in interviews. The project ensured local ownership through a variety of mechanisms. Firstly, Bara District and sub-district chapters were directly implementing the project and developed a sustainability and monitoring plan for after the BRC-FI project ended. The social mobilizers used in the project were volunteers from the district (often from neighboring communities to the target communities) and therefore have reason to continue the benefits of the WASH project. Secondly, according to interviews, NRCS met with community members at the beginning of the project to inform that it was a two-year project that would be phased out, and to discuss how they could ensure sustainability. Furthermore, community groups were established or activated to be involved in the project, including the formation/mobilization of Water Users Committees, School Toilet Management Committees, and the Junior Red Cross Circle. Hardware constructed during the project was handed over to these groups at the end of the project, and trainings were conducted for maintenance. These activities were not captured in the indicator trackers and therefore difficult to measure but were reported in interviews with staff and

activity trackers. Awareness-raising activities were also conducted to increase the motivation for sustained WASH behavior change.

One aspect that may hinder sustainability is that the D-WASH-CC group was not very active, as per the activity tracker and interviews. The D-WASH-CC is the district-level governmental body responsible for WASH, and therefore a key stakeholder.

Local Capacity

The project appeared to strengthen local capacity of community members, thereby positively contributing to the likelihood of outcome sustainability.

In order to understand local capacity, several stakeholders must be considered: district/sub-district NRCS staff and volunteers, and community members.

At the height of the project, NRCS was funding six staff in the district chapter and 24 social mobilisers, according to interviews. The district-level NRCS staff and all but two volunteers were no longer able to be supported after the closure of this project. As per the proposal, the project included capacity building measures such as establishing a program steering committee at district level, holding program orientation and planning workshops, and providing volunteers trainings regarding activities and organizational development. These staff and volunteers presumably learned a substantial amount during the implementation of this project, and therefore losing them is likely to negatively affect the sustainability of the outcomes. However, the volunteers will ideally remain in the communities, and therefore be able to apply their strengthened capacity as local leaders. It is reported that one month after project closure, some of the volunteers continue to work as the rural municipality and D-WASH-CC is still requesting their support.

The project increased the local capacity of community members by multiple means. Firstly, according to the activity trackers, established community groups and individuals were trained to ensure sustainability. For example, masons were trained in toilet construction, caretakers were trained in the maintenance of hand pumps and water quality testing, and health facility staff were trained in ODF activities. Secondly, the project focused on behavior change and sensitizing people to the benefits of this behavior change. Activities included hand washing demonstrations, organization of street drama shows, Global Handwashing Day activities, household visits by motivators, etc. This was a challenge as it is often more demanded by the communities to have hardware rather than software, but it was key that software and hardware activities were both conducted. Behavior change was measured in the endline survey and found to be successful. While it is unknown if this behavior change will remain, volunteers remaining in the community may continue to follow-up on this. The evidence-based RANAS model was cancelled. However, multiple techniques were used to address hygiene behavior, which is key in creating sustainability for both the hardware and software aspects of the project. These techniques also aligned with a review¹⁹ to determine which promotional approaches are effective in behavior change.

Availability of Local Resources

The project outcomes are likely to be sustainable when considering the availability of local resources.

The project utilized a “local finance first” principle. This means that, as much as possible, local funding and resources were utilized. One of the main outcomes of the project according to interviews was the

¹⁹ Campbell Systematic Review (2017) “Approaches to promote handwashing and sanitation behaviour change in low- and middle-income countries: a mixed method systematic review.”
<https://campbellcollaboration.org/library/handwashing-sanitation-behaviour-low-middle-income-countries.html>

development of income generation activities for the district chapter. A building was constructed which can be rented out to other organizations or individuals at a profit. According to interviews, NRCS agreed with the district chapter that 20% of the income of this building will be spent on the monitoring, repair, and maintenance of WASH activities and services. Additionally, the district HQ has other resources available to them, for example through local governmental bodies. One goal of the project was to establish an income generating strategy for sub-chapters, but this was not completed as per the indicator trackers.

For community members, this means that they will have maintained support from the district HQ and local governmental bodies. As per the project proposal, the resources used in this project were locally sourced, and beneficiaries contributed to the building of the hardware. A matching fund was established with ward WASH committees so that poor and ultra-poor beneficiaries would have access to WASH materials.

Sustained Political Support

The project was keen to ensure sustained political support after closure, resulting in positive indicators for the sustainability of the outcomes.

The Government of Nepal is focused on a Total Sanitation national development framework, and therefore WASH activities are prioritized. As per interviews, the project aligned with governmental regulations, and therefore had substantial buy-in from local governmental leaders. According to narrative reports and interviews, NRCS has a good relationship with governmental bodies, including local elected leaders (rural municipality and ward chairmen), district organizational bodies (D-WASH-CC), and local organizational bodies (V-WASH-CC). Monitoring of the project was conducted jointly with governmental officials, and regular meetings were held with political leaders and the V- and D-WASH-CCs. As per interviews, NRCS communicated with local leaders at the beginning of the project that “this project is not ours, this is your project.” At the end of the project, it was officially handed over to the government. Local government bodies reportedly have sufficient resources for continuing these sorts of projects.

As of one month after the project end, there were reports that the social mobilizers / volunteers were continuing some of their work as a result of requests from the D-WASH-CC and rural municipality. This bodes well for the sustainability of the project outcomes.

3.5.2 First Aid / Road Safety

The factors leading to sustainability of the FARS project outcomes are mixed. Local ownership, capacity, and political support are likely to contribute to sustaining the project outcomes, whereas it is unclear if local resources will be adequate.

Local Ownership

Local ownership of the project is likely to contribute positively to the likelihood of project outcome sustainability.

As mentioned previously, the NRCS structure of having volunteers from the local districts or communities is key to ensuring local ownership of the project. Furthermore, for the road safety project, NRCS targeted “highway communities,” which are disproportionately affected by traffic accidents and are therefore presumably more likely to see the benefit of FARS projects. NRCS also conducted awareness activities, including sensitization workshops, Road Safety Week celebrations, and distributing promotional materials and radio messages, in order to convey the importance of FARS to the target beneficiaries. According to interviews, the local traffic police and governmental

bodies appear to have ownership of this road safety project, as seen in the section below on Sustained Political Support.

Local Capacity

It is likely that the local capacity will be sufficient to contribute to project outcome sustainability, though there are some aspects that are risks to sustained local capacity.

The volunteers in the projects are likely to remain in the communities, and these volunteers gained knowledge and experience by participating in the intervention, thereby increasing local capacity.

The FARS project was heavily focused on trainings, including trainings for health workers, traffic police, school teachers, and students. The project was designed in order to ensure that countrywide training was conducted recently to a large number of participants, which will positively contribute to the likelihood of the outcome sustainability. The skills learned in these trainings may continue. According to a draft of a report on retention of First Aid trainings in Nepal, FA knowledge and skills decrease significantly over time, with a refresher training improving retention slightly.²⁰ Therefore, consistent monitoring and refresher trainings are needed for this outcome to be sustainable. Providing refresher trainings and monitoring is inexpensive and could be done easily by district offices. According to the endline questionnaire, district offices are currently inconsistent in providing monitoring, which is a risk for sustainability.

NRCS also provided Training-of-Trainers (ToT), resulting in a total of 66 additional trained trainers as per the narrative report. As per the indicator trackers, this led to 911 active trainers (trainers which have given at least two trainings in the last year) out of a target of 943. As mentioned previously, this goal was not met as it was decided to instead focus on a smaller group of experienced trainers rather than more, less experienced trainers. There is a risk that these trainers may become inactive, but otherwise having this number of active trainers will contribute to the sustainability of the project as long as they continue providing trainings.

Finally, the project included provision of materials, including mannequins, visibility materials, training materials, and Road Safety Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. These materials will remain in the project area and the IEC materials are easily re-printable. It is unclear where the funding for repairing or buying additional materials would come from and whether NRCS will invest in this.

Availability of Local Resources

It is unclear if local resources will be available to sustain the project outcomes. As will be discussed in Section 3.6.2, the financing of NRCS HQ FA projects is uncertain, though it is likely they will be able to maintain at least a minimum of activities, including refresher workshops and updating volunteers. At the district level, FA activities are reportedly often covered through other projects and therefore will continue. Some districts earn money through commercial First Aid, and Road Safety IEC materials can provide additional funding. FA activities are scheduled in the NRCS district chapters annual programs. Additionally, the government has interest in continuing road safety projects, as will be discussed below.

Sustained Political Support

There appears to be sustained political support for the road safety and First Aid project outcomes.

²⁰ Vande Veegaete, A., Avau, B., Scheers, H., De Buck, E., and Vandekerckhove, P. (2018) "Determining First Aid Knowledge and Skills Retention with Laypeople: A randomized controlled trial in Nepal." Centre for Evidence-Based Practice.

According to interviews, NRCS has good relationships with local government and traffic police, and it is likely that some minimum road safety activities will continue after the project ended as other stakeholders will probably take on tasks. NRCS staff recounted the story of a traffic policeman who was transferred from the project area to another area and was seen to promote road safety sensitization information (which he learned as a result of the NRCS project) in his new area. Both traffic police and the local government provided volunteers for some key project activities, such as during Road Safety Week, as well as financial resources in some cases, such as to co-fund painting zebra crossings. NRCS held regular meetings with the traffic police which strengthened their relationship. The project did not reach its target of 35 organizations contributing resources to a road safety awareness network and/or activities in Nepal, though approximately 33 organizations did contribute at varying levels.

The project planned to have two annual meetings of national road safety stakeholders. One meeting was held in the first year of the project, but the topics discussed deviated from those prioritized by NRCS. This meeting did not happen in the second year, reportedly because it was impossible to organize due to low availability of stakeholders and turnover of staff in stakeholder organizations. There was a meeting held by WHO in 2018 which NRCS was not involved in. This network is therefore not organized and unlikely to be sustainable.

In regard to First Aid projects, interviewees report that there is high demand. According to the endline questionnaire, FA is not included in any national legislation or regulations and is therefore seen to be a low priority for the Government of Nepal. However, interviewees state that the Government of Nepal has approved the NRCS FA course and NRCS is the only organization authorized to provide FA training. Many governmental authorities have therefore been trained by NRCS.

3.6 EQ 6: To what extent have appropriate mechanisms been put in place for institutional and financial sustainability of the WASH and FA division?

While the sustainability of the WASH and FA divisions at district and sub-district level were discussed in Section 3.5, this section explores the sustainability at HQ level in Kathmandu.

The following sections on the WASH and FA divisions focus on the mechanisms BRC-FI and NRCS have put in place during the 2017-18 program. However, these mechanisms are part of a larger context. BRC-FI has been working in Nepal and with NRCS since 1988. During this time, BRC-FI and NRCS worked extensively on capacity building as part of their projects. BRC-FI has included WASH components as part of their community development projects since 1988 and began doing explicitly WASH projects in 2008. BRC-FI has supported NRCS with First Aid since 2002, and since then the FA division was built completely from the ground up. As per the endline questionnaire conducted in 2018, the FA department is now strong in nearly all areas. They have an evidence-based manual, a documented curriculum approved by the Government of Nepal, standardized country-wide trainings, training evaluation tools, income from CoFA, a country-wide management and monitoring structure, a registration system, FA materials and inventory system, an FA strategy, a volunteer base, etc. This is a substantial achievement. Unfortunately, this evaluation mostly focused on the 2017-18 program and was not able to go in-depth into the work of BRC-FI and NRCS over the last 30 years and therefore this is only reflected on a superficial level. Additionally, by focusing on the 2017-18 program, the evaluation did not look into any independent work by NRCS for developing their institutional and financial sustainability. This is a gap as NRCS is ultimately responsible for institutional and financial sustainability of these divisions.

Through BRC-FI's understanding of NRCS after years of working together, and due to pressures from donors, in 2016 BRC-FI determined that NRCS was sustainable and BRC-FI did not have much to further contribute. The FA endline questionnaire further provided evidence of this for the FA

department. Stakeholders stated that the WASH department is experienced and follows governmental policy and strategy. Furthermore, NRCS is a well-established and well-organized national society according to interviews and the 2014-16 end evaluation. NRCS has a network of District Chapters in every district in Nepal, and more than 300 sub-chapters and cooperation committees on the sub-district level. As per the 2014-16 end evaluation, NRCS has a Central Assembly at the national level, including Central Executive Committee representatives from district chapters and statutory nominees. The secretary general and executive director manage the daily operations of NRCS. NRCS has 11 departments. The FA division falls under the Health Services Department, while the WASH Division falls under the Community Development Department.

Creating an exit strategy is best practice when organizations leave a country. There is substantial research on the topic of best practice for exit strategies. An article from INTRAC²¹ lists some of the key principles for closing projects and ending partnerships, including planning for an exit from the outset, thinking about sustainability early on, consulting with partners and stakeholders about the exit regularly, and communicating with stakeholders constantly. A formal, comprehensive exit plan from the time that BRC-FI knew they would be leaving the country (ideally more than two years in advance), led by NRCS and local community stakeholders, would have provided significant value for further providing evidence that the exit was done in a way that ensured sustainability. An exit strategy could have also included staff care and personnel management for any staff which were no longer funded, as well as ensuring sufficient finances from local funders. Regular monitoring or ad hoc support after the project ended could also have been established.

Capacity building of partners is key for institutional sustainability. Best practice suggests that using a formal assessment or partnership review mechanism to evaluate partner capacities is crucial to understanding capacities and where organizations can improve.²² This assessment should be conducted at the very beginning of a partnership and used to develop an improvement plan. Partner needs should be prioritized.²³ BRC-FI has been working with NRCS for 30 years, and therefore know NRCS well. Additionally, the BRC-FI Country Representative for Nepal is based in Nepal and has strong contextual understanding and understanding of NRCS. Nonetheless, a formal capacity measurement would be useful for creating a shared vision and strategy for improving institutional sustainability. BRC-FI developed a questionnaire for measuring the FA departments of partner National Societies. This was used in Nepal in mid-2018. If BRC-FI and NRCS intend to build mechanisms for institutional sustainability, a similar tool could be developed for other departments. There was no similar tool developed for the WASH department, but BRC-FI did not aim to strongly focus on building the institutional sustainability of the WASH department. NRCS conducted an Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) exercise in 2014 to identify issues for organizational development. According to stakeholders, the OCAC is on a higher strategic level and therefore not useful for considering department-specific capacity with a limited budget. Additionally, BRC-FI did not have the resources to fund projects solely focused on organizational development, and therefore decided to focus on projects directly impacting beneficiaries while including some organizational development activities. It is important to balance organizational development projects with projects directly benefiting beneficiaries.

Recommendations:

²¹ INTRAC (2014) "NGO exit strategies: Are principles for closing projects or ending partnerships necessary?" <https://www.intrac.org/ngo-exit-strategies-principles-closing-projects-ending-partnerships-necessary/>

²² INTRAC (2016) "Exit strategies and sustainability: Lessons for practitioners." <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Exit-strategies-and-sustainability.-Lessons-for-practitioners.-November-2016.pdf>

²³ INTRAC (2012) "Partnerships and Capacity Building." https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Partnership-and-Capacity-Building_A-Guide-for-Small-and-Diaspora-NGOs-1.pdf

4. BRC-FI should prepare a formal exit strategy for countries that they are leaving, in collaboration with partner National Societies. NRCS should work with partner National Societies to create exit strategies.
5. BRC-FI and NRCS, in cooperation with partner National Societies, should conduct formal capacity assessments if they wish to improve their institutional sustainability.

While the above is focused on longer-term, BRC-FI and NRCS did put several mechanisms in place to increase the likelihood of sustainability for the WASH and FA divisions during the 2017-18 program. These are discussed below.

Due to a change in priority countries by the DGD, BRC-FI was aware at the time of writing the 2017-18 program proposal that they would need to phase out their work in Nepal. BRC-FI and NRCS therefore designed the 2017-18 program as a phase out program in order to ensure sustainability after BRC-FI left, particularly for the FA department. This was an important decision for ensuring sustainability rather than focusing on new activities.

As per the program proposal, the intervention strategy of the BRC-FI is based on the idea of self-reliance. The BRC-FI staff assisted to build capacity through providing technical and managerial input but did not directly implement.

The following section discusses the financial and institutional sustainability of the WASH and FA divisions.

3.6.1 WASH

Financial Sustainability

In regard to financial sustainability, the WASH department in NRCS HQ is seen to be sustainable for the medium-term. According to interviews, they are currently funded by several different partner National Societies, including the Korean Red Cross and Australian Red Cross. There is a fear that these national societies may also exit Nepal in the near future. The WASH department is reaching out to the IFRC, British Red Cross, and Japanese Red Cross for additional funding, as well as discussing with the partners involved in the Earthquake Recovery Operation to see if there are remaining funds that could be channeled to the WASH department. They are also actively seeking in-country partners for funds, including UNICEF Nepal and UN Habitat. Currently, all WASH staff are funded from either the general project or a project budget, so there will be no cuts in the WASH department for the time being. The 2017-18 exit program purposely did not focus on the financial sustainability as it was known that several other partner National Societies are supporting NRCS WASH activities.

In the long-term, it is unclear if the WASH department at NRCS HQ will have sustained funding, though this is a concern in nearly all development organizations. NRCS staff expressed that BRC-FI leaving Nepal will significantly impact the WASH department and the BRC-FI's investment in Nepal was very meaningful as it allowed NRCS to build capacity and be able to reach more remote areas.

Institutional Sustainability

There are several aspects of institutional sustainability that can affect the sustainability of NRCS's WASH Department. Overall, the WASH Department is seen to be sustainable. Factors considered included brand, strategy, capacity, quality, and quality control / standardization. These were adapted from research on indicators for effectiveness of capacity building initiatives for NGOs.²⁴ The following

²⁴ Lempert, D. (2015) "A quick indicator of effectiveness of 'capacity building' initiatives of NGO and international organizations." <https://www.ejge.org/index.php/ejge/article/view/63/59>

section describes the current institutional sustainability of the WASH department and the 2017-18 program's mechanisms to address this.

The brand recognition of NRCS in terms of WASH is unclear as there are many organizations working in this area in Nepal.

According to interviews, NRCS's WASH division has a solid strategy in place, with good policies, procedures, monitoring committees, etc. WASH activities were included in NRCS' 2016-2020 Development Plan.²⁵

NRCS also has substantial capacity, ensuring quality activities. One of the project outputs was that "NRCS WASH division... has an increased capacity to implement WASH related interventions by 2018." Therefore, capacity building activities were conducted including training staff, establishing program steering committees, conducting program orientation and planning workshops, as per the activity trackers. These mechanisms were useful for ensuring institutional sustainability. The WASH HQ department has seven staff.

In terms of quality control, the M&E frameworks of the NRCS WASH department were particularly noteworthy in the findings of this evaluation. NRCS currently has a PMER (Planning, Monitoring, Evaluating, Reporting) Coordinator, formerly a Program Officer, who is responsible for WASH projects and skilled in data collection. It is standard for NRCS to hire a consultant to analyze data and produce reports. This task was assigned to the CEBaP for the 2017-18 project. This was a missed opportunity for BRC-FI to provide useful capacity building, as having someone in-house with the ability to analyze data could prove very useful for NRCS in the future.

NRCS staff expressed the desire that BRC-FI would remain in Nepal and support projects in other emerging issues in the country which NRCS does not have capacity in, including menstruation hygiene, emergency WASH, gender equity and social inclusion in WASH, and becoming a total sanitation state. They also felt that it would be useful if BRC-FI would provide some continuity; for example, by having check-ins with NRCS WASH Division, inviting NRCS staff for trainings, or providing ad hoc technical support. BRC-FI did not provide mechanisms to ensure that NRCS would have continued monitoring after the project ended, though the feasibility of providing this type of support is uncertain.

3.6.2 First Aid / Road Safety

Financial Sustainability

BRC-FI worked extensively with NRCS over the course of many years to build the Commercial First Aid (CoFA) offerings. During the 2017-18 program, some mechanisms were intended to be put in place to ensure the sustainability of the FARS Division, namely a Road Safety network.

The majority of stakeholders interviewed agreed that the FARS project is unlikely to be sustainable at present. While the volunteer structure and district-level structure may manage at a minimum level, HQ will not be able to support fully. HQ would reportedly be able to provide minimum monitoring visits, conduct limited refresher workshops, and update volunteers on changes, but would not be able to train volunteers or produce new materials. Several staff had already left NRCS or been transferred to different departments at the time of writing. The NRCS Head of FA Division is paid from the general funds and is therefore still employed. The Program Coordinator was paid from the BRC-FI project and is currently working unpaid. He has been working with NRCS for 19 years and therefore losing this staff member would lose significant capacity for NRCS.

²⁵ NRCS (2016) "7th Development Plan (2016-2020)." (<https://www.ejge.org/index.php/ejge/article/view/63/59>)

Currently, the FA Division has no remaining donors as per interviews. At the time of writing, NRCS was still working with the BRC-FI delegate in Nepal to develop project proposals for partner societies, including the Finnish Red Cross. A concept note had already been submitted to the IFRC.

The project ToC included the short-term outcome that “NRCS has adequate financial means to provide resources for its FA/RS.” It was intended that the CoFA unit would provide financing, as would funds from networking via the Road Safety network.

NRCS’s Commercial First Aid department was established previous to this project with support from BRC-FI. BRC-FI also supported NRCS with a market study, cost model, materials, exchange visits, etc.

NRCS HQ typically holds one or two Commercial First Aid courses per month according to interviews. Currently, funding from these courses are being used to sustain CoFA and are used for non-commercial FA only for minimum activities. Some stakeholders expressed that funds from CoFA and a fixed deposit account would sufficiently fund the FA department to update trainers, prepare FA materials, and celebrate FA events to raise public awareness. However, commitment from NRCS is uncertain as there is no formal agreement or policy from NRCS that this money will be used in this way. It is therefore up to NRCS management to allocate funds to the FA department.

The profitability of CoFA in Nepal is debated. Currently, NRCS does not have a separate CoFA unit, marketing plan, or business plan. BRC-FI hoped that NRCS would create a business model in order to ensure CoFA would sustain non-commercial FA activities. The FA Department conducted a market survey in 2012. In 2016, the BRC-FI used volunteer students to research a cost model for NRCS which showed that CoFA was not profitable for NRCS and provided recommendations for how to improve the income. However, NRCS disagreed with how this cost model was calculated as they believe some costs were overestimated, particularly indirect costs such as use of office equipment. CoFA currently has a net income of approximately \$35,000 per year as per the endline questionnaire.

Furthermore, the Road Safety Network was planned to be a source for financial sustainability, as it was perceived that businesses and other stakeholders prioritize road safety and therefore might contribute to this cause. However, as discussed in Section 3.1.2, the establishment of the road safety network was a challenge and therefore cannot ensure this sort of sustainability.

It is noted by interviewees that at district level, other organizations request FA volunteer teams during mass gatherings, which results in some financial support.

NRCS should develop a strategy to ensure financial sustainability of the First Aid/Road Safety Department. This strategy could include Commercial First Aid, a road safety network, or other in-country donors which are sustainable. This can be done through NRCS creating a policy stipulating that a portion of CoFA funds will be used for funding the FA department, and by utilizing a cost model to calculate profitability of CoFA activities.

Institutional Sustainability

On an institutional level, if funding were in place, the FA Department appears to be sustainable. BRC-FI and NRCS put several mechanisms in place to ensure the institutional sustainability of the FA Department. Many of these were put in place before the 2017-18 program, though the 2017-18 program expanded on these.

There are several factors to consider when analyzing the institutional sustainability of the FA department. These include brand, strategy, capacity, quality, and quality control / standardization.

These were adapted from research on indicators for effectiveness of capacity building initiatives for NGOs.²⁶

According to interviews, NRCS has strong brand recognition in Nepal, and NRCS has become synonymous with “First Aid.” One of the outcomes in the project ToC was that “NRCS (Co)FA training and RS awareness service is a strong brand and has a solid market position.” While this was not measured in the LogFrame, it appears that NRCS had a strong brand before this project, as BRC-FI and NRCS had already invested in First Aid services since 2002. This project also included diplomacy and relationship-building with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, further increasing the brand recognition and trust. The 2014-16 end evaluation stated that NRCS became more visible as FA and RS actors as a result of that project. Interviewees affirm that other organizations value NRCS FA volunteers and their services.

The FARS strategy in NRCS appears to be strong. According to the endline questionnaire, NRCS includes FARS in their Strategic Plan, and has a designated First Aid Policy and First Aid Strategy. However, they do not have a specific training policy/strategy, and some interviewed stakeholders questioned whether having policies in place will guarantee that this is operationalized.

The NRCS FA Division has strong internal capacity. BRC-FI has been supporting NRCS for 17 years in building FA capacity in terms of standardization, quality control, monitoring, etc. They have also built the management structure from HQ to sub-chapters country-wide. Country, regional, and district committees are in place for ensuring standardization and quality. The FA capacity building program started in 2002. The 2017-18 program focused on the rollout of the NeFAM training materials as a final capacity-building measure, as well as training staff, volunteers, and laypeople. The staff of the FA division have substantial experience: The Head of FA Division has worked with NRCS for more than 25 years and the FA Division for more than 10 years, while the Program Coordinator has been working with NRCS for 19 years. There is a fear that if funding is not found for the FA department soon, NRCS will lose this capacity as staff might leave. The 2017-18 project also focused on adjusting the FA division to the new governmental structure in order to increase sustainability of the FA department.

The quality control and standardization of the FA Division is generally strong. As per the endline questionnaire, NRCS has a documented curriculum approved by the government of Nepal, as well as documented guidelines/procedures for training, guidelines on certification for basic First Aid, a First Aid manual, a First Aid trainers manual, a knowledge exam, an evaluation tool, an inventory system for training materials, adequate training equipment, a system in place to monitor the quality of trainings and coach FA trainers, a First Aid Training Curricula Advisory Board, and more. Some of the things lacking include the use of a lesson plan and didactical tools, regular meetings at HQ level with volunteers, monitoring of first aid delivery, the lack of a sufficient registration system (database), and an annual training plan. The country-wide roll-out of the new NeFAM was one of the main strategies to fill a gap before exit related to standardization. The roll-out of NeFAM was seen to be successful in ensuring quality control for the future.

²⁶ Lempert, D. (2015) “A quick indicator of effectiveness of ‘capacity building’ initiatives of NGO and international organizations.” <https://www.ejge.org/index.php/ejge/article/view/63/59>

4 CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation of the 2017-18 WASH and FARS program, implemented by NRCS with the support of BRC-FI, had three primary objectives:

1. examine the extent to which the projects have achieved the two intended outcomes and indicator targets and have delivered the intended outputs, based on validation of the BRC-FI and NRCS internal baseline and endline measurements (effectiveness);
2. examine the extent to which the achieved outcomes are sustainable (sustainability); and
3. document good practices for future programming and wider organizational learning (good practices and recommendations).

Effectiveness

Regarding the effectiveness of the projects, four key evaluation questions were considered: 1) To what extent were the project outcomes and outputs achieved?, 2) What challenges were faced during implementation, and how were these challenges addressed?, 3) To what extent were appropriate M&E measures put in place to ensure quality, timely, and relevant project implementation?, and 4) To what extent was the project implemented in accordance with the planned timeframe for delivery?

1. To what extent were the project outcomes and outputs achieved?

The WASH project was seen to mostly achieve its outcome, “Sustained use of sufficient safe water & sanitation facilities, as well as sustained safe hygiene attitudes & practices by 2018.” All project outputs were achieved. The achievement of the FARS outcome that “Lay people, Red Cross staff & volunteers have adequate, up-to-date and evidence-based knowledge, skills & attitudes to provide first aid to those in need and/or apply road safety measures by 2020, as such enhancing community level resilience and emergency care capacity” was partially achieved. Of the three FARS project outputs, two were achieved and one was partially achieved.

2. What challenges were faced during implementation, and how were these challenges addressed?

A reduction in the project budget could have led to challenges for both projects. However, both the WASH and FA projects strategically adjusted to the reduced budget and therefore this did not have a significant impact. Both the WASH and FA project faced challenges due to a reduced timeframe and delayed start, changes to the structure of the Nepal government bodies, and difficulty retaining volunteers. The main challenges faced by the WASH project were time constraints, flooding, availability of local resources, and community buy-in, whereas the main challenges faced by the FA project were delays in the roll-out of NeFAM and limited access to stakeholders. These challenges were largely addressed due to strategic changes in the project from the start (including cancelling some activities), and adjustments to the project as challenges came up (such as increasing communication with communities to ensure buy-in).

3. To what extent were appropriate M&E measures put in place to ensure quality, timely, and relevant project implementation?

Both projects had thorough and clear Theories of Change and LogFrames. The LogFrame indicators did not always reflect or were not sufficient to measure the outcome/output they were intended to measure, which is partially due to the LogFrame not fully capturing the Theory of Change. Both projects utilized quarterly financial and narrative reports and quarterly activity, indicator, and financial trackers. These tools were useful for monitoring project progress. Accountability to beneficiaries was addressed through project review meetings with stakeholders, relying on local community volunteers, and regular field visits. The program could be improved by including indicators related to accountability to beneficiaries in the LogFrame and trackers. While the baseline/endline tools used by

the WASH project were useful for monitoring project outcomes, the FA project did not utilize baseline/endline tools that could provide information related to LogFrame achievements.

4. To what extent was the project implemented in accordance with the planned timeframe for delivery?

For the WASH project, 45% of activities were completed ahead of schedule or on time. 58% of activities were completed ahead of schedule or on time for the FARS project. Regardless of delays, both projects managed to complete all activities expected to be completed by the time of writing (aside from a few which were cancelled at the outset).

Sustainability

The evaluation focused on two questions to measure sustainability: 1) To what extent are the intended outcomes of the project likely to continue?, and 2) To what extent have appropriate mechanisms been put in place for institutional and financial sustainability of the WASH and FA division?

5. To what extent are the intended outcomes of the project likely to continue?

In order to measure the sustainability of the project outcomes, four key factors were analyzed: local ownership, local capacity, availability of local resources, and sustained political support. One major component positively influencing the likelihood of sustainability of the outcomes is the NRCS structure, which has district offices in all 77 districts in Nepal and sub-chapters in communities. BRC-FI and NRCS included sustainability in the program design from the outset. Both projects also had substantial capacity building measures built into the activities, utilized a “local finance first” principle to ensure local resources are available, and worked closely with the relevant local governmental bodies. In general, the WASH outcomes are likely to be sustainable due to local ownership, local capacity, availability of resources, and sustained political support. While local ownership, capacity, and political support is likely sufficient for sustainability of the FARS outcomes, local resources may not be.

6. To what extent have appropriate mechanisms been put in place for institutional and financial sustainability of the WASH and FA division?

Regarding the sustainability of the WASH and FA division at HQ level, BRC-FI and NRCS worked together since 1988 to build NRCS’s capacity. The FA department was built from the ground-up into a strong division. Both the WASH and FA departments are seen to currently have institutional sustainability. The 2017-18 program included capacity building mechanisms for both departments. The financial sustainability of the FA division is uncertain. CoFA and the Road Safety Network were measures intended to improve the financial sustainability of the FA division. The WASH division is currently financially stable as they have other funders. The 2017-18 program did not focus on the financial sustainability of the WASH department as it was already known that they would have other funders.

The main best practices and recommendations from this evaluation are found in the following section.

5 GOOD PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the evaluation goals was to document good practices for future programming and wider organizational learning. This section therefore explores both good practices utilized in the program, as well as recommendations for future programs.

5.1 Good Practices

The following were some of the main good practices seen by BRC-FI and NRCS in this program.

5.1.1 *Effectiveness*

1. **Work flexibly while prioritizing key activities.**

This program faced many challenges, which were primarily resolved through adapting project activities and targets in a way that ensured the overall project was still achieved and activities were prioritized accordingly. The limited timeframe and reduced budget of the program could have been a major obstacle to achieving the projects' outputs/outcomes. However, BRC-FI and NRCS strategically modified the projects in a way that limited the negative consequences of challenges. A few activities were cancelled or reduced at the outset which NRCS and BRC-FI wanted to implement but recognized as low priority compared to other activities. For example, the implementation of the RANAS model was cancelled and replaced by other behaviour change techniques. While many activities were delayed in the projects, the majority were nonetheless completed by the end due to this level of flexibility.

2. **Design thorough, well thought-out, and clear Theories of Change.**

The Theories of Change utilized in both projects were comprehensive, well thought-out, and clear. They included information about desired impact, long-term outcomes, and short-term outcomes, as well as assumptions, key stakeholders, program activities, and the connections between all these components. This is useful for ensuring all aspects of a project are considered and well-designed.

3. **Use consistent indicators and processes for baseline and endline tools.**

The WASH project used the same indicators, tools, process, and even volunteers (to a large extent) for both their baseline and endline surveys. This led to reliable results which reflect project outcomes. NRCS has a designated staff member skilled in data collection and M&E who was instrumental in this process, as was the collaboration with BRC-FI's CEBaP.

5.1.2 *Sustainability*

4. **Include sustainability in the program design from the outset.**

BRC-FI and NRCS included a section on sustainability for both the WASH and FARS projects in the initial program proposal. The inclusion of sustainability from the initial project design was very important. Income generating activities, the concept of "local finance first," and capacity building measures were all included in the original project proposal and seen to positively impact the sustainability of the project outcomes.

5. **Ensure local ownership and buy-in.**

Local ownership affects both the effectiveness and sustainability of programs but is key for sustainability of project outcomes. NRCS made substantial efforts to ensure local ownership and buy-in, particularly for the WASH project. Ensuring community buy-in was described as a

challenge at the start of the WASH project, and NRCS actively worked to resolve this. They increased local ownership through several means, including meeting with community members regularly and adjusting project activities based on these meetings, and having volunteers regularly visit households to build trust. They also communicated to stakeholders at the beginning that it was a short-term project, and handed over the project to local community groups at the end. The NRCS structure further ensured local ownership, as the project was largely implemented by district or sub-district chapters.

NRCS also ensured local ownership by actively engaging with the government on the local and national levels, including having regular meetings, joint monitoring mechanisms, and aligning with governmental priorities and policies.

5.2 Recommendations

The following are the main recommendations for BRC-FI and NRCS. They provide information for improving practices for future programming and wider organizational learning.

5.2.1 *Effectiveness*

1. **Ensure that a project's Theory of Change, LogFrame, and M&E measures are all aligned.**

The project Theory of Change was quite comprehensive and thought-out; however, many aspects were not carried over into the LogFrame and M&E measures and were therefore lost in the project implementation. This is partially due to the fact that the ToC was developed for multiple countries and then adapted to the Nepal context. Additionally, it was expressed that on the field-level it is not always possible to follow the ToC precisely due to practical realities, and for that reason indicators must be kept simple.

The LogFrames in this program used some indicators which did not truly reflect the outputs/outcomes or were not comprehensive enough to measure the success of the outputs/outcomes. The indicators therefore should be aligned with the ToC as much as possible given contextual realities. For example, additional indicators could have been used to measure the FARS outcome, such as pre- and post- survey responses regarding road safety knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Similarly, BRC-FI and NRCS should ensure that tools used for baseline and endline are comparable and aligned with the ToC, LogFrame, and other M&E measures. The WASH project used the same tool for baseline and endline measurements, which proved very useful in measuring change. The FA project used different tools for each measurement. They were therefore not comparable and did not provide sufficient information regarding effectiveness.

Gender sensitivity should be included in M&E measures as well. In this project, gender aspects were included in the ToC but only used to a very limited amount in the LogFrame and M&E measures. Additional indicators to measure gender mainstreaming could have been useful in order to ensure this aspect of the ToC was carried into the project activities, such as measuring satisfaction of women and girls. Due to the lack of these indicators, it is therefore difficult to determine if the needs of women and girls were adequately addressed, which was one aspect of the ToC.

2. **Include accountability to beneficiaries in M&E indicators and utilize participatory M&E mechanisms.**

BRC-FI and NRCS should ensure accountability and participation on several levels. Firstly, they should ensure that indicators are included in M&E measurements that a) require participation and b) monitor participation and accountability. For example, indicators for the program could

have included the existence and use of an effective feedback and complaint mechanism, the number of community meetings held to discuss the project implementation, the number of community members participating in project decision making, the percent of community members satisfied with the project, etc. Secondly, they should ensure the use of M&E tools which include the views of beneficiaries to ensure accountability and participation through qualitative methods such as focus group discussions, participatory workshops, community meetings, etc. While partner National Societies may have their own means for ensuring accountability to beneficiaries, as is the case for NRCS, BRC-FI should also monitor this. This may mean including more qualitative indicators in the current tracking tools or adding additional M&E tools.

Accountability to beneficiaries and participatory M&E mechanisms lead to more effective programming. ICRC/IFRC developed a Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)²⁷, which offers advice and support to improving community engagement and accountability. While this guide is focused on disaster settings, it nonetheless provides useful insights on practices which BRC-FI and NRCS could incorporate in their everyday programming, including community participation/feedback mechanisms, providing information to communities, behavior and social change communication, and evidence-based advocacy. ICRC/IFRC also developed an associated toolkit which could be used as a starting point.²⁸ Furthermore, MANGO offers an “Accountability to Beneficiaries Checklist.”²⁹

5.2.2 Sustainability

3. **Develop sustainability plans and measures for ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes, in collaboration with partner National Societies.**

While BRC-FI and NRCS included some information regarding sustainability in the original project plan, a more thorough plan would have been instrumental. A comprehensive sustainability plan and measures could be put in place from the beginning of the project in collaboration with and buy-in from the partner National Society. This plan could measure key indicators, such as local ownership, local capacity, availability of local resources, and sustained political support.³⁰ It could also take each outcome one-by-one to test assumptions related to their sustainability.

If feasible, this plan should be evidence-based. For example, the WASH project ToC noted the assumption that “Hygiene promotion via different methodologies leads to sustainable hygiene behavior change.” BRC-FI participated in a review³¹ to determine which promotional approaches are effective in behavior change, in collaboration with CEBaP, the Centre for Evidence-Based Health Care of Stellenbosch University South Africa, and 3ie. The results from this review were used to ensure National Societies were using the most evidence-based techniques.

4. **Prepare a formal exit strategy when partner National Societies leave a country.**

²⁷ IFRC (2017) “A Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)” (2016). <https://media.ifrc.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/01/CEA-GUIDE-2401-High-Resolution-1.pdf>

²⁸ IFRC (2017) “Community Engagement and Accountability Toolkit.”

<https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/community-engagement-and-accountability-toolkit/>

²⁹ MANGO (2010) “Accountability to Beneficiaries Checklist.” <https://www.mango.org.uk/pool/g-accountability-to-beneficiaries-checklist.pdf>

³⁰ These factors were adapted from Danida’s evaluation guidelines. Danida (2006) “Evaluation Guidelines.” <http://www.netpublikationer.dk/um/7571/html/chapter05.htm>

³¹ Campbell Systematic Review (2017) “Approaches to promote handwashing and sanitation behaviour change in low- and middle-income countries: a mixed method systematic review.” <https://campbellcollaboration.org/library/handwashing-sanitation-behaviour-low-middle-income-countries.html>

This exit strategy should be led by the host National Society and include financial and institutional sustainability. There is substantial research on the topic of best practice for exit strategies. An article from INTRAC³² lists some of the key principles for closing projects and ending partnerships, including planning for an exit from the outset, thinking about sustainability early on, consulting with partners and stakeholders about the exit regularly, and communicating with stakeholders constantly. This would allow BRC-FI to ensure sustainability and National Society ownership of the project, and would provide NRCS with a mechanism to work with donor National Societies to create exit plans to ensure sustainability after partners leave. BRC-FI and NRCS can use several sources as a start for creating exit plans. For example, IFRC provides an Exit Strategy Guidance Tool³³ which is focused on beneficiaries but can be adapted for partnerships, and INTRAC provides a compiled list of articles on best practices for exit.³⁴

The exit strategy could also include any agreed monitoring after the end of the project, such as regular check-ins with the National Society or inviting National Society staff to capacity-building trainings. Furthermore, BRC-FI should consider commissioning more comprehensive evaluations for future exit programs as part of their exit strategy. A more comprehensive evaluation in Nepal would have allowed the BRC-FI to see the full extent of their work over the 30 years they were in Nepal, provide information related to sustainability, and provide lessons learned for future projects.

An exit strategy for BRC-FI leaving Nepal could have included how the FA department would be funded after BRC-FI's departure. To this end, NRCS should develop a strategy to ensure financial sustainability of the First Aid/Road Safety Department. This strategy could include Commercial First Aid, a road safety network, or other in-country donors which are sustainable. One step may be for NRCS to create a policy stipulating that a portion of CoFA funds will be used for funding the FA department, and utilizing a cost model to calculate profitability of CoFA activities.

5. Conduct a formal capacity assessment with partner National Societies.

If BRC-FI aims to improve institutional sustainability of partner National Society departments, they can conduct a formal capacity assessment at the beginning of engagement with a National Society or department and before considering an exit strategy. Based on this assessment, partner National Societies can work together to prioritize any activities for improvement and communicate roles and responsibilities in these activities. This would ensure buy-in from both national societies. NRCS could conduct this assessment independently for specific departments they wish to strengthen. This tool should include sustainability measures, and therefore support BRC-FI and NRCS in ensuring that their efforts lead to sustainable national societies.

There are many partner assessment tools available for use, such as the ones explored in IFRC's review of key assessment tools.³⁵ BRC-FI should consider creating their own partner assessment tool and incorporate findings from any Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) completed by partner National Societies in order to not avoid duplication.

³² INTRAC (2014) "NGO exit strategies: Are principles for closing projects or ending partnerships necessary?" <https://www.intrac.org/ngo-exit-strategies-principles-closing-projects-ending-partnerships-necessary/>

³³ IFRC (2017) "Tool 16: Exit Strategy Guidance." <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/tool-16-exit-strategy-guidance/>

³⁴ INTRAC (2016) "Exit strategies and sustainability: Lessons for practitioners." <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Exit-strategies-and-sustainability.-Lessons-for-practitioners.-November-2016.pdf>

³⁵ IFRC (2017) "Overview of Key Assessment Tools." <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/11/Overview-of-Key-Assessment-Tools.pdf>

The BRC-FI endline questionnaire that has been developed for FA departments is a good example of a capacity assessment. BRC-FI plans to use this in all countries with FA departments moving forward, which is a good step. BRC-FI intentionally did not focus on improving institutional sustainability of the WASH department. As such, no capacity assessment tool was used.

6 ANNEXES

6.1 Annex 1: ToR

See Google Drive.

6.2 Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Key Question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data Sources
Effectiveness			
1. To what extent were the project outcomes and outputs achieved?	Extent to which the project outcomes and outputs were achieved	% of outcomes / outputs that were achieved (as per comparison of indicators in LogFrame with baseline and endline/last quarterly report) Stakeholders perceptions of achievements	Key informant interviews Project donor proposal BRC-FI-NRCS project agreement NRCS narrative and financial reports BRC-FI tracking tools NRCS-BRC-FI baseline and endline reports
2. What challenges were faced during implementation, and how were these challenges addressed?	Challenges faced and the response of NRCS/BRC-FI	External and internal challenges listed in reports Stakeholders perceptions of challenges and how they were addressed	Key informant interviews NRCS narrative reports
3. To what extent were appropriate M&E measures put in place to ensure quality, timely and relevant project implementation?	Presence and quality of M&E measures	M&E tools Stakeholders perceptions of M&E measures	Key informant interviews Baseline and endline measurements NRCS narrative and financial reports BRC-FI tracking tools Other monitoring tools External documents regarding best practices
4. To what extent was the project implemented in accordance with the planned timeframe for delivery?	Extent to which actual timeframe matched planned timeframe	% of activities/outputs completed on time, # of weeks delayed Stakeholders perceptions of alignment with planned timeframe	Key informant interviews Project donor proposal BRC-FI-NRCS project agreement NRCS narrative and financial reports BRC-FI tracking tools
Sustainability			
5. To what extent are the intended outcomes of the project likely to continue?	Extent to which the project outcomes are likely to continue (including benefits to the people reached) and factors affecting sustainability	# of staff/volunteers/beneficiaries able to provide trainings in WASH/FA (or similar indicator, depending on availability)	Key informant interviews NRCS narrative and financial reports BRC-FI tracking tools NRCS-BRC-FI baseline and endline reports WASH midterm survey

	Presence and quality of mechanisms put in place for outcome sustainability	Reported behavior change (or similar indicator, depending on availability) Stakeholders perceptions of sustainability of outcomes	External documents regarding best practices
6. To what extent have appropriate mechanisms been put in place for institutional and financial sustainability of the WASH and FA division?	Institutional sustainability Financial sustainability Presence and quality of mechanisms put in place for sustainability (including exit strategy planned from the beginning of the project, follow-up support that may be required, etc.)	Quality and appropriateness of mechanisms put in place to ensure sustainability, including institutional mechanisms/framework, technical guidance, M&E frameworks, and financial mechanisms/funds Structure/governance of NRCS Capacity of FA/WASH staff and volunteers Financing structure of FA/WASH programs Stakeholders perceptions of institutional and financial sustainability	Key informant interviews Project donor proposal BRC-FI-NRCS project agreement NRCS narrative and financial reports BRC-FI tracking tools NRCS-BRC-FI baseline and endline reports Exit strategy plan (if available) Endline reports Financial and institutional documents External documents regarding best practices

6.3 Annex 3: Data Collection Tools

See Google Drive.

6.4 Annex 4: Itinerary of Consultant

Phase	Dates	Dec 2 - 8	Dec 9 - 15	Dec 16 - 22	Dec 23 – Jan 5 [Holiday]	Jan 6 - 12	Jan 13 - 19	Jan 20 - 26	Jan 27 – Feb 2	Feb 3 - 9	Feb 10 - 16	Feb 17 - 23
	Activities											
Inception	Inception meeting with EMT	█										
	Preliminary desk review of key documents											
	Develop methodology/ inception report and submit to focal point	█	█									
	Receive feedback on proposed methodology		█	█								
	Finalize inception report and evaluation tools			█								
Data Collection	Data collection (collect project documents, conduct interviews)	█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Synthesis	Compile and analyze information					█	█	█	█	█	█	█
	Prepare draft report and submit to EMT					█	█	█	█	█	█	█
	Receive feedback on draft report					█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Dissemination	Finalize report and submit to EMT	█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█	█	█

6.5 Annex 5: List of Persons Interviewed

#	Key Informant	Title
1	Els Schapendonk	Country Representative Nepal, BRC-FI
WASH		
2	Charlotte Schelstraete	WASH Focal Point, BRC-FI
3	Amar Mani Poudel	Head of WASH Division, NRCS
4	Krishna Subedi	Program Coordinator HQ, NRCS
5	Hira Bishwokarma	Project Officer Bara, NRCS
6	Suvechhya Manandhar	PMER Coordinator WASH Division, NRCS
First Aid		
7	Lieve Adam	First Aid Focal Point, BRC-FI
8	Krishna Ghimire	Head of FA Division, NRCS
9	Raju Raut	Program Coordinator HQ, NRCS

6.6 Annex 6: Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collected, including Reference Documents

See Google Drive.

END OF DOCUMENT