

Geneva, 23 November 2012  
**ICRC UNDER SCRUTINY**

**2012 Australian Multilateral Assessment and 2011 British Multilateral Aid Review:  
Facts on ICRC Scores**

Dear Friends,

We take this opportunity to present to you some results from the 2011 British Multilateral Aid Review (MAR) and 2012 Australian Multilateral Assessment (AMA), which rate the performance of over 40 multilateral organisations, including the ICRC, on the basis of assessments carried out in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

We are pleased to report the excellent showing of the ICRC in the abovementioned reviews, demonstrating that it is one of the strongest, most efficient and most trusted organisations. The AMA and MAR highlight our core strength in having unparalleled access to conflict- and violence-affected populations even in the most difficult contexts, our attention to maximizing efficiency and value vis-à-vis the funding provided to us and our strong leadership and management. These are certainly major reasons why the ICRC has been and continues to be trusted and relied upon by donor governments to deliver results.

These excellent scores are however also a challenge and concern for the ICRC and the organization will not sit on its laurels. Donors are increasingly putting organisations like the ICRC under the microscope as far as funding is concerned by adding more requirements and demanding more information, including on results. In the current environment, the ICRC fully understands the rationale behind the scrutiny and the need for accountability.

The organization is definitely committed to taking the necessary measures to improve its performance where necessary and therefore to making relevant reforms. Among other things, the ICRC is working towards even more efficient, transparent and accountable operational procedures and financial management, not just to show its added value to donors, but more importantly to adapt its responses to the needs of its beneficiaries. It is also taking steps to address points for improvement as mentioned in the AMA and MAR. It is aware of the need for more global data or macro-indicators and comparative data over the course of two or more years featuring the ICRC's action, results and efficiency. It is working on these requests.

However, while working on all these needs, the ICRC also pays attention to balancing the usefulness of measures taken with their bureaucratic effects. Thus, the ICRC is not ready to develop working procedures which would go against the capacity of its field operations to constantly adapt to their environment and to the humanitarian problems and needs they seek to address. Doing so would be inefficient and unnecessarily bureaucratic. For example, it will not require the systematic standard collection of data with no operational usefulness or which are, in many cases, not relevant for operations. On the other hand, it will also seek to define comprehensive true global data, backed by evidence.

Finally the ICRC will endeavour to keep its reports to donors concise and relevant, with comprehensive information.

Meanwhile, we hope that the information provided by the AMA and MAR will be useful to further enhancing your knowledge of our institution. Thank you for your constant support.

Best regards.



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Head  
External Resources



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# ICRC UNDER SCRUTINY

## 2012 Australian Multilateral Assessment and 2011 British Multilateral Aid Review: Facts on ICRC scores

### Introduction

As humanitarian needs throughout the world grow ever increasingly, organisations tasked to respond to these needs are also coming under more intense scrutiny from donor governments who want to ensure that their money is well spent and that concrete results are delivered, especially under the currently weak global economic climate. As an example, the Australian and British governments have recently published their own comprehensive assessments<sup>1</sup> regarding the performance of multilateral organisations (42 for the Australian and 43 for the British) through which much of their funding for aid is being channelled. Among these organisations are UN agencies (e.g. UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP<sup>2</sup>), the European Commission, global funds, development banks, and humanitarian organisations, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Organisation for Migration.

The ICRC's ratings in the two reviews have confirmed its strength as a pivotal partner of donor governments, providing excellent "value for money" and, through its unique mandate, demonstrating its ability to access conflict- or violence-affected people, and work and deliver results under the most difficult of situations. Moreover, the reviews are also optimistic of the ICRC's potential to take further strides in areas where it can still improve.

Excerpts from the 2011 British Multilateral Aid Review<sup>3</sup> (MAR) and the 2012 Australian Multilateral Assessment<sup>4</sup> (AMA) with respect to the ICRC are provided below.

### 2011 MAR and 2012 AMA: Rating the ICRC

#### Unrivalled access in the most fragile and difficult contexts

Given the ICRC's unique mandate, it is not surprising that donors put such a high value on its ability to go and work where other organisations can't, while still delivering results in the process. The MAR<sup>5</sup> points out: *"The ICRC works in some of the most challenging environments in the world and its objectives are challenging. The true added value of ICRC is its willingness to work in areas that other international agencies cannot. It therefore compares favourably against many development organisations, and even against most humanitarian organisations. There is no comparable organisation it could benchmark itself against."*<sup>6</sup> (emphasis ours)

The AMA<sup>7</sup> reiterates this core strength of the ICRC: *"ICRC maintains a strong presence in areas where state machinery has effectively disappeared and where other humanitarian actors are unable to work. ICRC's unparalleled access in some of the most fragile states, together with its ability to deliver under the most difficult circumstances, makes it an important and trusted partner of many governments, including Australia."*<sup>8</sup> (emphasis ours)

#### Major impact on the poorest and most vulnerable

Both reviews note that while poverty reduction is not the ICRC's primary objective, its humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected areas enables the poorest and most vulnerable people to uplift themselves and, indirectly, contributes to progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The ICRC thus *"protects communities, reduces their vulnerability, protects their assets and livelihoods and prevents them from falling into deeper poverty."*<sup>9</sup>

The MAR also cites examples from Afghanistan and Somalia, where the ICRC's role *"has evolved from its traditional emergency response model towards innovative approaches that are more sustainable in chronic crises"*<sup>10</sup>, showing the organisation's adaptability to carry **out longer-term, resilience-oriented operations.**

<sup>1</sup> Assessments carried out in 2010 and 2011 respectively for the British and Australian governments and published the year after

<sup>2</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP)

<sup>3</sup> Full report at [http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/mar/multilateral\\_aid\\_review.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/mar/multilateral_aid_review.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Full report at <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/partner/Documents/ama-full-report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The ICRC's individual assessment in the MAR at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/mar/ICRC.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> MAR individual assessment, p. 19

<sup>7</sup> The ICRC's individual assessment in the AMA at <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/partner/Documents/icrc-assessment.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> AMA individual assessment, p. 7

<sup>9</sup> AMA individual assessment, p. 3 and MAR individual assessment, p. 3

<sup>10</sup> MAR individual assessment, p. 7

### Strong operational and financial management

Both reviews express their faith in the ICRC's leadership and management principles, which have driven the organisation's success in the field. In particular, they put high regard for the ICRC's long-term strategic planning<sup>11</sup>, its annual "Planning for Results" framework<sup>12</sup>, its human resources policies<sup>13</sup> and strict mechanisms for financial accountability<sup>14</sup>.

Australia and the UK also cite the existence of an ICRC Donor Support Group<sup>15</sup>, where donor governments are provided a valuable forum to discuss policy and raise issues of concern.<sup>16</sup>

### Positive outlook for change

The reviews likewise point out that the ICRC still stands to improve on a wide variety of indicators, including on gender<sup>17</sup>, environmental strategy<sup>18</sup>, cost consciousness<sup>19</sup>, transparency<sup>20</sup> and monitoring and evaluation<sup>21</sup>.

Both reviews, however, duly recognize that the ICRC pursues efforts for meaningful reform. For example the MAR cites the ICRC for making "significant progress in recent years on gender equality in its staffing and also in the way it develops its needs assessments and reports on gender outcomes."<sup>22</sup> The AMA also appreciates the efforts of ICRC governance to "regularly scrutinize its operations and budget and provide feedback on efficiencies and cost savings."<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the MAR recognizes that as far as prospects for positive change are concerned, the ICRC's potential is "likely"<sup>24</sup>

### Over-all, one of the strongest and most efficient organisations

With high grades across a wide swath of indicators, the ICRC emerged as one of the top organisations in both the MAR and AMA. In the MAR's "value for money" chart<sup>25</sup>, the ICRC was one of just nine organisations ranked as "very good". AMA's comparison of results/relevance vis-à-vis organisational behaviour/performance<sup>26</sup> also saw the ICRC put on a strong over-all showing.

The MAR says: "ICRC is widely recognised as one of the best performing humanitarian agencies with a clear and well-supported mandate..."<sup>27</sup>

The AMA further states: "The ICRC works effectively in many low income countries and among communities most affected by poverty and consequences of conflict. It has developed a strong track record of effectively targeting people in need and delivering efficient operations in these contexts."<sup>28</sup>

### The way forward

Both reviews were not meant to be a one-off affair. They are part of a continuing process for both donor governments, who have put in place regular monitoring and review mechanisms, and the subject organisations, including the ICRC. Going forward, the ICRC is committed to continuing its engagement and cooperation with donor governments in the context of these performance assessments. It will aim to remain strong in aspects where it has scored well and pursue improvements where it can, not just within the framework of the MAR and AMA recommendations, but independently as an organisation, as it endeavours to fulfil its mandate of helping and protecting millions of conflict- and violence-affected people throughout the world in the most relevant and most efficient way possible.

<sup>11</sup> AMA individual assessment, p. 9 and MAR individual assessment, pp. 21-22

<sup>12</sup> AMA individual assessment, p. 10 and MAR individual assessment, pp. 21-22

<sup>13</sup> AMA individual assessment, p. 11 and MAR individual assessment, p. 23

<sup>14</sup> AMA individual assessment p. 15 and MAR individual assessment, pp. 25-27

<sup>15</sup> The ICRC's Donor Support Group (DSG) is made up of those governments contributing more than CHF 10 million in cash annually. It comprised 18 members in 2012 (based on the 2011 contributions).

<sup>16</sup> MAR individual assessment, p. 22

<sup>17</sup> MAR individual assessment, pp.9-12

<sup>18</sup> MAR individual assessment, pp. 12-13

<sup>19</sup> AMA individual assessment, p. 11 and MAR individual assessment, p. 28-30

<sup>20</sup> MAR individual assessment, pp. 37-39

<sup>21</sup> AMA individual assessment, p. 10 and MAR individual assessment, p. 24

<sup>22</sup> MAR individual assessment, p. 9

<sup>23</sup> AMA individual assessment, p. 11

<sup>24</sup> MAR individual assessment, pp.40-41

<sup>25</sup> MAR full report, p. iv

<sup>26</sup> AMA full report, p. xii

<sup>27</sup> MAR individual assessment, p. 41

<sup>28</sup> AMA individual assessment, p. 2