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Real-Time Response Review – DEC programme for Cyclone Idai

Malawi country report

Key Aid Consulting

August 2019

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Funding

This is an independent report commissioned and funded by the Disasters Emergency Committee. The UK Department for International Development has contributed to the DEC Cyclone Idai Appeal through its AidMatch scheme. However, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect DEC or the UK Government's official policies. Responsibility for the views expressed in this publication remains solely with the authors.

Contribution

The authors would like to thank all DEC and DEC partners' team members, as well as crisis affected households who contributed to the success of the review by sharing their views and insights. A special thanks goes to the DEC Secretariat for its continuous support throughout the review process.

Collaboration

The DEC and the Humanitarian Coalition (HC) in Canada have made an ongoing commitment to collaborate, where appropriate, when undertaking such reviews due to a significant overlap in membership.¹ In this instance, Care, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Oxfam, Plan International and Save the Children are shared DEC/HC responders, along with a number of local/national partners. While it was not considered necessary for the Humanitarian Coalition programmes to be assessed separately, the head office in Canada actively contributed to the inception phase, sent a senior representative to accompany field work in Zimbabwe, and participated in the learning workshops in both Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The Humanitarian Coalition has also committed to translate the report into French and proactively support with dissemination.

Citation

This report should be cited as: Mutsaka B., Dlugosz A., Gift Kanike B., Harris-Sapp T., Juillard H. (2019) *Real-Time Response Review – DEC programme for Cyclone Idai, Malawi country report*. London: DEC.

¹ <https://www.humanitariancoalition.ca>

Executive summary

Tropical Cyclone Idai swept through Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe and caused heavy rainfall starting in early March 2019. Based on the expected scale of the crisis, the Government of Malawi declared a State of Disaster in 15 districts in the southern and central regions on 8 March 2019. The cyclone affected 975,000 people and displaced approximately 87,000 people,² most of whom found temporary accommodation in evacuation camps and makeshift sites. These however were mostly in schools, which disrupted teaching. The damages were massive: more than 288,000 houses³ were partially or totally destroyed, while physical assets in the agricultural sector were washed away, further increasing the already high food insecurity levels.

DEC allocated appeal funds totalling 2,651,641 GBP to Malawi for Phase 1, out of a total of 14,660,429 GBP⁴ for the three countries (Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi). The largest sectoral share went to livelihoods (24%), followed by WASH (20%), while 27% was allocated to Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) that covered various sectoral outcomes. Nine DEC members responded to the disaster in nine of the 15 Cyclone Idai-affected districts, which were: Nsanje, Chikwawa, Phalombe, Blantyre, Mulanje, Zomba, Machinga and Mangochi in the south and Balaka in the central part of Malawi.

Relevance and appropriateness

On geographic coverage, the response prioritised those areas most affected by the cyclone. DEC agencies covered areas that had fewer organisations responding, such as Mangochi, Machinga, Zomba and Phalombe Districts. In particular in traditional authority (TA) Mlolo, Nsanje District where coverage was low due to accessibility constraints, Oxfam responded using boats to reach the targeted populations.

In terms of sectoral priorities, all DEC members reportedly used participatory needs assessments to inform their respective programmes and overall, the DEC members' prioritisation aligns with the inter-agency assessment.⁵ Three out of the nine DEC members contributed to the Government's Post Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA). Two DEC members also conducted assessments specifically looking at the needs of women: CARE at the regional level⁶ and Plan International at the country level.⁷ A district level needs assessment in Chikwawa that Islamic Relief conducted established that priority needs of the affected people were first food, second shelter and third agricultural inputs and other NFIs such as clothing and beddings. Unsurprisingly,

² Government of Malawi.

³ Government of Malawi, "Malawi 2019 Floods Post Disaster Needs Assessment," 2019.

⁴ DEC. "Cyclone Idai Appeal Consolidated Finance – Phase 1 Plans," n.d.

⁵ Government of Malawi, "Malawi 2019 Floods Post Disaster Needs Assessment."

⁶ CARE Rapid Gender Analysis, March 2019, Cyclone- and Flood-Affected Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

⁷ PLAN, April 2019, Report on rapid gender analysis and MHM assessment, Malawi.

needs prioritisation was highly dependent on the displacement status of the population, as well as the type of settlement in which the intervention was implemented (e.g. camp or not). For example, in camps, households tended to prioritise WASH and health interventions, and as such deemed Save the Children's mobile clinics in Nsanje highly relevant.

Modality wise, a large portion of assistance was delivered using CVA. The use of CVA was consistently considered by both DEC members and crisis affected people as highly relevant in providing households the necessary flexibility to cover their specific needs.

The comparison between the members' intended outcomes and planned outputs demonstrates a clear logical link between outputs and results, both across sectors and DEC members. The review team did not find any activities planned that did not logically feed into the intended results. Informants also agreed that the design of the cyclone response was consistent with the overall goal and objectives.

Effectiveness of the response in achieving its intended outcomes

This response review was mainly qualitative and did not focus on quantitative monitoring and evaluation data. Key informants from DEC agencies and discussions with communities provided qualitative information on the affected communities' satisfaction with the services they received from DEC members. Feedback from the affected communities during the review indicated that health needs were well addressed through Save the Children's mobile clinics. Women in TA Tengani in Nsanje who received corn soy blend (CSB) support from Christian Aid also expressed their satisfaction with the visible effects of the CSB on the health status of their children under-5 years old. Livelihood interventions have started, but have not yet produced results. For example, a FGD with male farmers in TA Nkhulambe in Phalombe where Concern Worldwide is implementing a livelihoods intervention stated that they have just replanted seedlings in their gardens and are now waiting for the next harvest. In the WASH sector, informants highlighted the contribution of the pre-existing water point committees as an important factor for the recovery, as volunteers readily carried out water treatment and disinfection across the designated latrine facilities and water points in the camps, as mentioned in TA Benje, Nsanje. However, some camps such as Chagambatuka reported poor sanitation due to overcrowding, which also compromised privacy. In the early stages of the response, Islamic Relief provided shelter support in the evacuation camps of Chikwawa and later provided iron sheets, nails and plastic sheeting as part of the shelter recovery phase. Communities however highlighted that they needed more support for resettlement.

On protections issues, Tearfund and AGE/MANEPO mentioned that they ensured distributions occurred during the day to guarantee the safety of beneficiaries. Save the Children addressed protection issues through awareness campaigns in Zomba and Phalombe Districts using radio jingles, dramas and training sessions for child protection committees. Safe spaces, delivery kits

and mobile clinics, even in hard to reach areas, ensured the protection of vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant or lactating women. Similarly, Plan International implemented protection activities amongst the affected population through raising awareness on gender-based violence and providing safe spaces for the youth and children in the displacement camps and communities.

The timeliness of the response was dependent on the location and the modality used. There was a general consensus among the communities that food and WASH interventions were provided in a timely manner (i.e. within the same week of the disaster occurring) in the camps. One of the main factors that contributed to the timeliness of this basic needs support was that organisations were able to use their own core funds to start activities and procurement, and then be reimbursed by DEC afterwards.

Outside of the camps, the timeliness of the response was dependant on the flood water levels. Some areas were still flooded after the start of the response, while others became flooded during the response. For example, Concern reported they had to wait until the water levels had reduced before doing seed distributions. The quality of the items provided was deemed appropriate, convenient and of good quality by stakeholders and affected communities. These included items such as food aid, corn soya blend (CSB) for children under five years old, drought tolerant seeds, agriculture inputs and equipment, and iron sheets. KIIs mentioned that delays were largely due to procurement processes, as well as the lack of availability of skilled labour to support WASH-related artisan work.

Key informants mentioned that the flexibility of DEC funding was instrumental for programmes to be sufficiently adaptable and agile to respond to changes and act quickly. The pre-existing presence of long-term development projects and knowledge among three of the nine DEC members were one of the key success factors of the response.

Accountability to affected population

All DEC members have agreed on an Accountability Framework.⁸ As part of their organisational commitments towards accountability, DEC members are using the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance provided. This helps to ensure the timeliness of support and continuous communication, feedback and address mechanisms, while also using learning to improve and adjusting interventions accordingly.

⁸ https://www.dec.org.uk/sites/default/files/PDFS/dec_accountability_framework_-_explained.pdf

Sustainability and connectedness of the response

Due to their historical presence in Malawi, DEC members were able to draw on their knowledge of the country's long-term needs to design an emergency response that was linked to a long-term plan. This was especially highlighted by affected households and local authorities who noted the added value of DEC members' longer-term presence when compared to others that "come in for the emergency response and go."

Coordination and complementarity

In Malawi, the response is coordinated by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA). DEC members all participated in coordination meetings, and also informally shared information amongst themselves to prevent their interventions from overlapping in the same district or camps. This resulted in their activities being to a great extent complementary and creating bilateral synergies.

Conclusion

The cyclone response presented unique challenges: physical access was difficult in the first few days and infrastructure destruction hampered communication. Overall, DEC members' response to Cyclone Idai can be considered a success, in so far that DEC provided a flexible source of funds that allowed members to adapt their responses quickly to changing circumstances, address the most relevant needs of the targeted communities, and build accountability to affected populations into the response.

The Phase 1 response to the Idai Cyclone in Malawi presents a great opportunity to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus and to operationalise the New Way of Working. The long-lasting presence of DEC members in Malawi is an asset that can be built upon so that crisis-affected households not only get back on their feet, but are also integrated into longer term resilience projects. With a high likelihood of another disaster (drought or flood) occurring in the future, preparing would help strengthen the gains made in this response and potentially protect people from the worst effects of another crisis.

Recommendations

1. DEC members should aim to jointly plan and design Phase 2, building on longer term programmes aimed at reducing needs and future risks while building resilience.
2. Early recovery designs should consider the environment and incorporate Building Back Better and Greener in their activities through mapping out the potential effects.

3. Assess the extent to which humanitarian cash assistance can build on existing social protection schemes.
4. DEC members need to be cash ready and ensure unconditional, unrestricted cash assistance is the default option.
5. DEC members need to be aware of local markets and aim to support value chains in long-term programmes.
6. DEC members should advocate with the Government of Malawi to establish emergency evacuation centres in flood prone areas.
7. DEC members should use the membership as an opportunity for learning, conducting joint risk assessments and exploring better programme design alignment.
8. Agencies should use multiple methods of getting feedback from communities based on communities' preferences and needs.
9. Agencies should ensure they make market monitoring an integral element of their regular monitoring frameworks.

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List of acronyms

CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CARD	Church in Action Relief and Development
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
CVSU	Community Victim Support Units
CSB	Corn Soy Blend
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DoDMA	Department of Disaster Management Affairs
DSWO	District Social Welfare Officer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IOC	Indicator of Capacity
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
MANEPO	Malawi Network of Older Persons' Organisations
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MNSSP	Malawi National Social Support Programme
MWK	Malawian Kwacha
NFI	Non-Food Item
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OP	Older Persons
OPC	Office of President and Cabinet
OPwD	Older Persons with Disabilities
PWD	Persons With Disabilities
RTR	Real-Time Review
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TA	Traditional Authority
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
VCPC	Village Civil Protection Committee
VSL	Village Savings and Loans
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

I. Introduction

I.1. Humanitarian context in Malawi

Malawi is located in the Sub-Saharan African region; it borders Zambia (west), Mozambique (eastern and southwest) and the United Republic of Tanzania (northeast). Malawi remains one of the poorest and most densely populated countries in the world, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of 3.5 billion USD and per capita income of 290 USD.⁹ More than half¹⁰ of the population lives below the poverty threshold. Poverty is primarily rural, with about 60%¹¹ of the poor living in rural areas.

Malawi is highly prone to natural disasters, especially drought – and to a lesser extent floods – with the most vulnerable areas being the central and southern parts of the country. More than 1.5 million people live in areas vulnerable to droughts, and the recurrent extreme weather events have eroded households' resilience to shocks. As a result, prior to Cyclone Idai, more than 3.3 million people were already food insecure in the districts Idai's flooding would affect.¹²

Tropical Cyclone Idai caused heavy rainfall starting in early March 2019, even before making landfall. Based on the expected scale of the crisis, the Government of Malawi declared a State of Disaster in 15 districts in the southern and central regions on 8 March 2019 and launched the 2019 Flood Response Plan and Appeal.

The cyclone made landfall during the night of 14 March 2019 near Beira City, in Mozambique. It then continued across the continent as a tropical storm, hitting Malawi with heavy rains and strong winds and damaging some of the areas that were already affected by January 2019 flooding. The cyclone affected 975,000 people, of which it displaced approximately 87,000 people.¹³ Because there were no adequate pre-identified evacuation centres, the majority of the displaced households ended up in makeshift camps or in schools, further disrupting education. These camps and makeshift sites did not have proper shelter and sanitation, which posed a number of health and protection risks.¹⁴ The damages were massive: more than 288,000 houses¹⁵ were partially or totally destroyed while physical assets in the agricultural sector were washed away, further increasing the already high food insecurity levels.

Presidential elections on 21 May 2019 saw heavy contestations and street protests as the preliminary results announced the re-election of President Mutharika. Since then, the National Electoral Commission has suspended the declaration of the official results, but violent protests

⁹ UN - Malawi, "Malawi Country Profile," 2014.

¹⁰ International Monetary Fund, July 2017.

¹¹ World Bank 2017.

¹² Government of Malawi, "Malawi 2019 Floods Post Disaster Needs Assessment," 2019.

¹³ Government of Malawi.

¹⁴ International Organisation for Migration (IOM), "Multi-Sectoral Location Assessments," 2019.

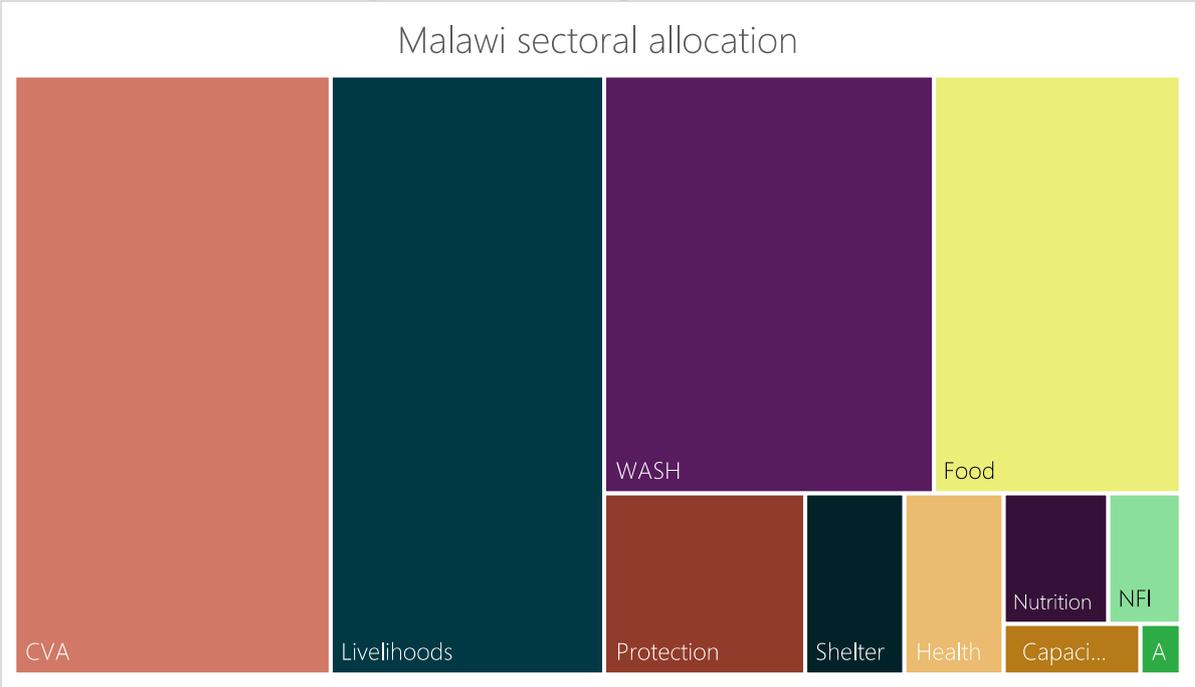
¹⁵ Government of Malawi, "Malawi 2019 Floods Post Disaster Needs Assessment," 2019.

still sporadically erupt, especially in urban centres. This has created further challenges to delivering aid.¹⁶

I.2. Humanitarian response provided by DEC members

The total DEC appeal funds allocated to Malawi for the Phase 1 of the response is 2,651,641 GBP, out of a total of 14,660,429 GBP for the three countries affected by Cyclone Idai (Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe).¹⁷ The greatest sectoral share of the Malawi funding was for livelihoods (24%) followed by WASH (20%). The largest share of the funding (27%) was allocated to Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), without however giving indication of which types of outcomes CVA was meant to cover.

Figure 1: Sectoral funding allocation Malawi¹⁸



In Malawi, nine of the 14 DEC member agencies responded: World Vision, Save the Children UK, Oxfam GB, Concern Worldwide, Plan International, Christian Aid, Tearfund, Islamic Relief, and Age International.

These agencies targeted to support a total of 209,436 people, as demonstrated in the table below.^{19,20} Of the nine agencies, World Vision had the largest net number of beneficiaries.²¹

¹⁶ AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES, “Malawi Narrwoly Re-Elects Peter Mutharika: Commision,” May 27, 2019.
¹⁷ DEC. “Cyclone Idai Appeal Consolidated Finance – Phase 1 Plans,” n.d.
¹⁸ This sectoral allocation has been calculated on the basis of the 2,651,261GBP dedicated to programmes in country.
¹⁹ Plan International; Save the Children; Christian Aid; World Vision International; Oxfam; Tearfund; Age International; Concern Worldwide; and Islamic Relief.
²⁰ DEC. “Cyclone Idai Appeal Consolidated Outputs – Phase 1 Plans,” n.d.
²¹ Net number of beneficiaries is number of beneficiaries for all DEC activities for the member agency that accounts for some beneficiaries receiving more than one type of service. The total net number of beneficiaries for all member agencies may have some double counting, however.

Table 1 Intended beneficiaries' coverage

ORGANISATION	INTENDED NET NUMBER OF RECEIPTS
WORLD VISION	41,000
SAVE THE CHILDREN	31,000
OXFAM GB	30,878
CONCERN WORLDWIDE	27,650
PLAN INTERNATIONAL	26,460
CHRISTIAN AID	20,148
TEARFUND	12,751
ISLAMIC RELIEF	10,000
AGE INTERNATIONAL	9,549
TOTAL	209,436

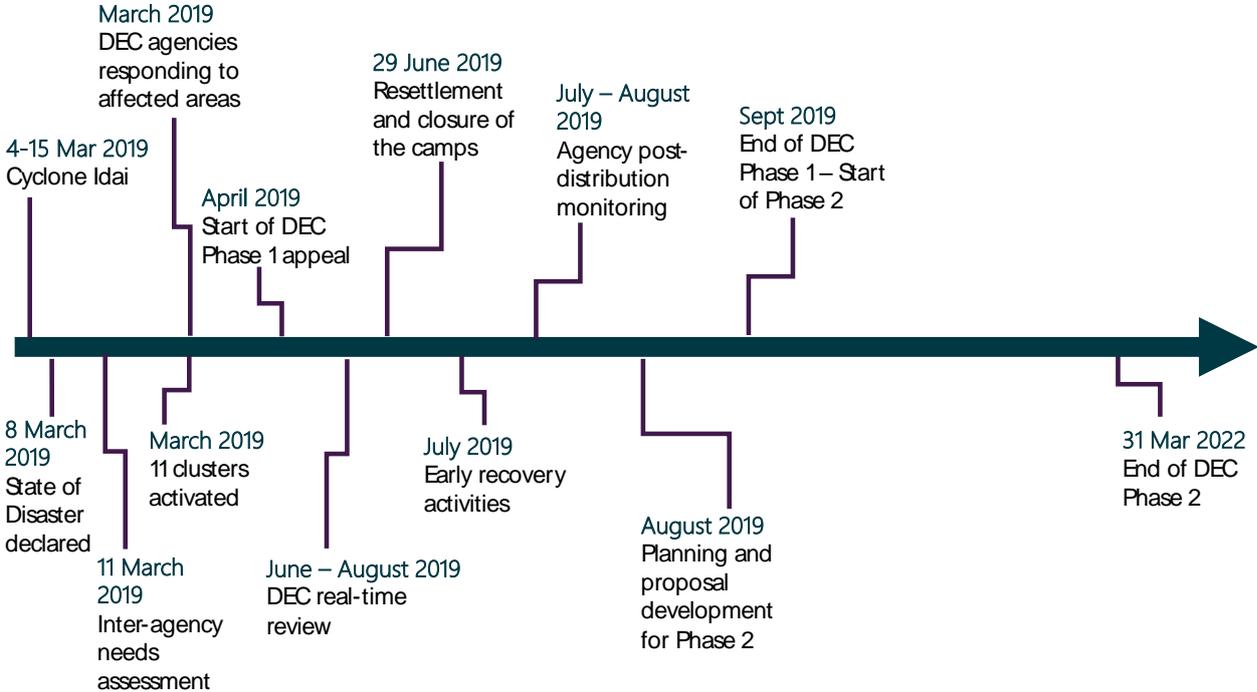
These agencies responded to the disaster in nine of the fifteen Cyclone Idai-affected districts: Nsanje, Chikwawa, Phalombe, Blantyre, Mulanje, Zomba, Machinga and Mangochi in the southern region of Malawi and Balaka in the central part of the country. The map below shows the nine DEC members' areas and sectors of intervention.

Map 1 Map 1 Sectors and areas of intervention of DEC members in Malawi following the cyclone



The Cyclone Idai response began immediately after it made landfall. DEC members were able to use alternative emergency funds to start their operations prior to submitting their plans to DEC. The timeline below shows the major events and milestones during the response in Malawi.

Figure 2. Cyclone Idai Crisis Timeline and DEC Response



1.3. Longer term development efforts

Government-led development efforts are structured around the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III) 2017-2022.²² This strategy defines five key priority areas: i) agriculture, water development and climate change management, ii) education and skills development, iii) transport and ICT infrastructure, iv) energy, industry and tourism development and v) health and population. Potential overlaps of the MGDS III with the Cyclone Idai response mainly concern priority areas one and five.

In addition, Malawi has a multi-faceted social protection policy, the Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) II, that is based on three pillars.²³ The first pillar consists of supporting household consumption via predictable in-kind and cash transfers. The second pillar promotes resilient livelihoods, and the third pillar intends to build a shock responsive social protection scheme. This third pillar however is not fully operational yet, and so the Idai response has not been delivered through the MNSSP.

Prior to the cyclone, three DEC members, namely Concern, Tearfund and World Vision, were operating in Phalombe, Mangochi, Zomba and Machinga Districts. A breakdown of DEC members’ activities in the affected districts that began before the disaster is provided in the table below:

²² Government of Malawi, Malawi Growth Development Strategy (MGDS III) - 2017-2022.

²³ Government of Malawi, Malawi National Social Support Programme II (MNSSP II) 2018 to 2023.

Table 2: DEC Members longer term programming in the affected districts

DEC Member	District/s	Longer term programming in affected area prior to Cyclone Idai
Concern Worldwide	Phalombe	Four-year programme on resilience building through a consortium: farming households training on crop diversification, livestock production, irrigation farming and market access for the farmers.
Tearfund	Mangochi	Resilience building interventions monitoring crisis modifiers indicators and including a contingency plan allocation in case a crisis hit.
World Vision	Zomba and Machinga	WASH, food and nutrition security intervention

II. Review purpose, objectives and scope

The primary purpose of the response review was to instigate a collective, real-time reflection and learning opportunity to inform programmatic adjustments across DEC members' response. The review focused on the initial phase of the response in order to generate lessons that will be applied in real-time for Phase 1, as well as during Phase 2 (month seven onwards) of the members' programmes. The response review also served an accountability function, both to communities and people affected by crisis as well as to the UK public. The review was participatory and aimed to be user-oriented. The target audience for this report includes the affected communities, the UK public, DEC members and their partners, the Government of Malawi and local authorities in Malawi.

A similar review to this one was also conducted in Zimbabwe and Mozambique and a common report will aim to look at lessons across all three countries.

The objectives of this response review were to:

- Draw out key learning and recommendations from the response to date, to inform Phase 2 plans;
- Provide an overview and assessment of DEC member agencies' response so far with a focus on relevance, sustainability, accountability, coordination, adaptability and effectiveness;
- Identify good practices in the DEC-funded humanitarian operations;
- Identify priority areas, gaps, and areas of unmet needs;
- Highlight challenges that may affect implementation and programme quality.

The review focused on the activities and decisions conducted during Phase I of the response, and aimed to cover all DEC members' activities in Malawi.

The review strove to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent is the response relevant and appropriate to the needs and priorities of the target population?
2. How effective is the project in achieving its intended outcomes?
3. How adaptable has the response been so far?

4. How are DEC members ensuring accountability to affected populations?
5. How sustainable and connected to longer-term issues has the Phase I of the intervention been?
6. How are DEC members maximising coordination, partnerships and complementarity with other organisations to achieve the intended response outcomes?

The response review matrix is available in [Annex XI.1](#).

III. Methodology

The review adopted a participatory and use-oriented approach, as there was as much emphasis put on the process as on the final output (i.e. the report). The methodology involved a desk review and inception phase followed by primary data collection in three districts: Nsanje, Chikwawa and Phalombe. The review used Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to collect primary data collection, which was then followed by a learning and feedback workshop. After the workshop, Key Aid analysed the data and drafted the report. The figure below provides an overview of the methodology, while the detailed methodology is available in [Annex XI.2](#).

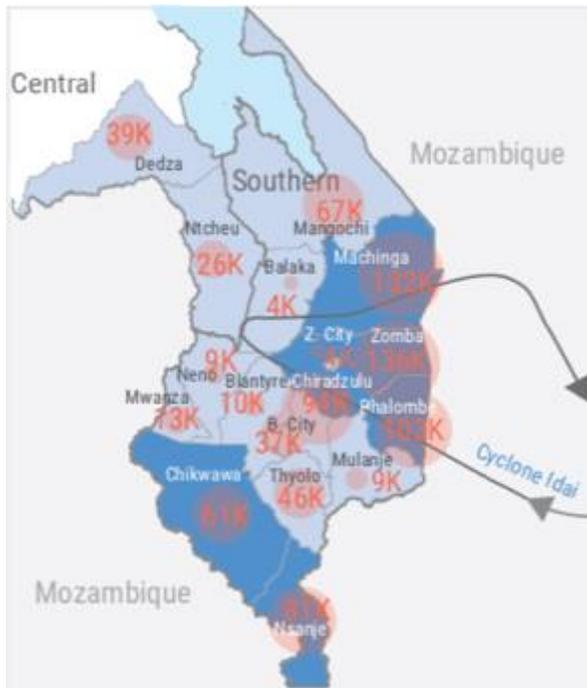
Table 3 Methodology

	Inception report	Desk review
Inception phase & desk review	Briefing with DEC Secretariat (3 June) Review tools development (interview questionnaires etc.)	Comprehensive and structured review of 60 documents (projects information and relevant external documentation)
Data collection	In-country	
	4 July: Country briefing workshop in Lilongwe with 16 participants from 9 organisations	8 FGD with 123 people in total in Nsanje, Chikwawa and Phalombe
	19 July: Learning workshop in Lilongwe with 12 participants from 8 organisations	19 KIIs from 4-26 July 2019 with 7 DEC members, 2 partners, 2 coordinating bodies, government officials and donors
	Total of 142 individuals consulted	
Final report	Data coding and analysis	First draft: 11 August 2019. Final draft: 30 August 2019.
Review limits	Due to time and resources constraints, primary data collection with crisis affected households only took place in Nsanje, Chikwawa and Phalombe and not in Blantyre, Mangochi, Phalombe, Machinga, Zomba, Mulanje, and Balaka.	Only 7 out of the 9 DEC members intervening in country have been interviewed. Interviews with World Vision and Plan International key informants were not held due to time constraints.

IV. The relevance and appropriateness of the response over time

IV.1. Geographical targeting of DEC members' activities

Map 2: Cyclone affected areas in Malawi²⁴



As previously mentioned, DEC members' activities are spread across nine districts: Nsanje, Chikwawa, Phalombe, Blantyre, Mulanje, Zomba, Machinga and Mangochi in the southern part of Malawi and Balaka in the central part of the country.

All those districts have been heavily affected by Cyclone Idai, as shown on Map 2.

The response therefore prioritised those areas most affected by the cyclone'. KIs did not cite inclusion error (areas that were not heavily affected receiving interventions) as a problem of this response.

DEC agencies covered areas that had fewer organisations responding, such as Mangochi, Machinga, Zomba and Phalombe Districts. That generally contributed to a better coverage of the

response and a reduction in the congestion of aid. However, coverage was not only determined by need and number of organisations; DEC members also chose their areas of intervention on the basis of the areas where they had longer term programming. In addition, some areas within districts, such as traditional authority (TA) Makhanga in Nsanje District, where support required the use of boats, had less coverage of support than others. As a result of these two factors, among DEC agencies, Oxfam was the only one responding in TA Makhanga, Nsanje. Similarly, in Mangochi, Tearfund was among the first agencies to respond in the district as roads were cut off to the affected communities.

IV.2. Sectoral priorities

All of the DEC members reportedly used participatory needs assessments to inform their respective sectoral priorities, however only one formalised agency level assessment was shared with the review team. Joining forces, three²⁵ out of the nine DEC members contributed to the Government's Post Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA).²⁶ As the official PDNA report was not

²⁴ Southern Africa, Cyclones Idai and Kenneth Snapshot, OCHA, July 2019.

²⁵ Action Aid, Care International, Save the Children.

²⁶ Government of Malawi, "Malawi 2019 Floods Post Disaster Needs Assessment."

published until the first week of July, it did not provide a list of priorities for the emergency stage of the response, but rather for the recovery phase.²⁷

Two DEC members also conducted assessments specifically looking at the needs of women: CARE at the regional level²⁸ and PLAN International at the country level.²⁹ While the Government-led PDNA had a short section on protection concerns, protection was generally given less attention throughout the whole report. For instance, some sections of the report do not include sex disaggregated data. The DEC members' assessment reports made available to the review team included some protection concerns, but had no protection-specific section.

27% of the programme-related funding was allocated to "CVA," as opposed to a specific sectoral (or multi-sectoral) outcome. It is therefore difficult to confirm the extent to which DEC members' sectoral priorities were aligned with those identified in the PDNA, however district level needs assessments that DEC members conducted show a match between needs expressed by the affected populations and DEC response activities. For example, Islamic Relief's needs assessment in Chikwawa established that the affected people's priority needs were primarily food, seconded by shelter and followed by agricultural inputs and other NFIs such as clothing and beddings. Unsurprisingly, needs prioritisation was highly dependent on the displacement status of the population, as well as the type of settlement in which the intervention was implemented (e.g. camp or not). For example, in camps, households tended to prioritise WASH and health interventions and as such deemed Save the Children's mobile clinics in Nsanje highly relevant.

For the first months of the response, the 2019 Flood Appeal identified the agriculture, food security and education sectors as the priorities. The DEC members' prioritisation aligns with the inter-agency assessment when it comes to food security and livelihoods. As a result of this inter-agency prioritisation, the DEC members' funding in Malawi was largely allocated to livelihoods activities, and seven³⁰ out of the nine DEC members implemented such activities. FGDs, as well KIs with DEC members and Government representatives, confirmed the perception that DEC members' sectoral priorities were relevant to the specific needs at the local level.

Modality wise, a large portion of assistance was delivered using CVA. Acceptance was high among communities and the use of unrestricted cash assistance was consistently considered to be highly relevant, as it provided households with the necessary flexibility to cover their specific needs. This was for example the case during a FGD with an affected community in Alinafe Camp in Chikwawa. However, Christian Aid seems to be the only DEC member that substantiated the decision to use CVA with a market analysis, and it is unclear to what extent market monitoring is included as part of DEC members' regular monitoring.

IV.3. Link between outputs and results

The comparison between the members' intended outcomes and planned outputs demonstrates a logical link between outputs and results, both across sectors and DEC members. The review

²⁷ Department of Disaster Management Affairs, "Malawi: Floods Response Situation Report No. 5," Situation Report (United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator, May 20, 2019).

²⁸ CARE Rapid Gender Analysis, March 2019, Cyclone- and Flood-Affected Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe

²⁹ PLAN, April 2019, Report on rapid gender analysis and MHM assessment, Malawi.

³⁰ All but Age and Save the Children.

team did not find any activities planned that did not logically feed into the intended results. Key informants also agreed that the design of the cyclone response was consistent with its overall goal and objectives.

Specific activities were not only aligned with the expected outcomes, but also with the cluster requirements. For example, in TA Nkhulambe of Phalombe District, the affected communities benefited from cash and agricultural inputs in the form of short cycled seeds and drought tolerant crops. Concern Worldwide in parallel promoted the use of organic and semi-organic manure, as recommended by the Livelihoods Cluster.

V. Effectiveness of the project in achieving its intended outcomes

V.1. Achievement of outcomes

The response review was mainly qualitative and did not focus on quantitative M&E data, which would have allowed for a more definitive judgment on the achievement of outputs and outcomes. Yet, key informants from DEC agencies were confident that the planned outcomes are being realised. Discussions with affected communities provided qualitative information on their satisfaction with the services they received from DEC members.

Feedback from the affected communities during the review indicated that health needs were well addressed through the provision of mobile clinics that were available and accessible in most camps. Save the Children, who provided mobile clinics in Nsanje, Phalombe, Balaka, and Zomba Districts for health service delivery, confirmed that their planned health outcomes in Phase 1 have been met.

Women in TA Tengani in Nsanje receiving CSB support from Christian Aid also expressed satisfaction with the visible effects of the CSB on the health status of their children under five years old.

Livelihood interventions have started, but have not yet yielded results. For example, a FGD with male farmers in TA Nkhulambe in Phalombe where Concern Worldwide was implementing a livelihoods intervention have just replanted seedlings in their gardens and are now waiting for the next harvest.

In the WASH sector, informants highlighted the contribution of the pre-existing water point committees, which they felt was an important factor of success. For instance, communities and KI respondents in TA Benje Nsanje confirmed that volunteers from the community were readily available to carry out water treatment and disinfection across the designated latrine facilities and water points in the camps. Communities and key informants also mentioned that water treatment products were readily available. Findings from Chagambatuka camp in Chikwawa however, reported that the camp was crowded and that sanitation facilities were inadequate, and did not afford enough privacy for men & women. Across the evacuation camps, WASH facilities, including latrines, were reportedly segregated for males and females, and beneficiaries in

Tengani and Benje in Nsanje District mentioned that there was adequate lighting in the camps and no security concerns at night.

In the early stages of the response, Islamic Relief provided support in the Chikwawa District evacuation camps. They also later provided iron sheets, nails and plastic sheeting as part of the shelter recovery phase. Other non-DEC agencies provided shelter assistance through distributing tents in camps in other districts. Communities in TA Makhuwira in Chikwawa where Islamic Relief provided the shelter support expressed their appreciation for the early recovery items, but also highlighted that they needed for more support for resettlement to repair and construct strong houses after losing their livelihoods and assets. General feedback on shelter from Nsanje was that family-specific tents that other non-DEC agencies provided were not adequate and that the majority of the displaced population were housed in large open rooms, such as classrooms and churches.

In terms of addressing protection issues, Tearfund and AGE/MANEPO noted that they carried out distributions during the day to ensure the safety of the beneficiaries. AGE/MANEPO also pointed out that they changed their original distribution approach of using one central location where beneficiaries from multiple camps were supposed to gather and collect their relief items. Instead, the agency started going to where the affected populations were located and conducting distributions at those specific sites. This approach reduced the distances the affected population had to travel, which made the support more accessible to vulnerable groups such as older persons, women and people with disabilities.

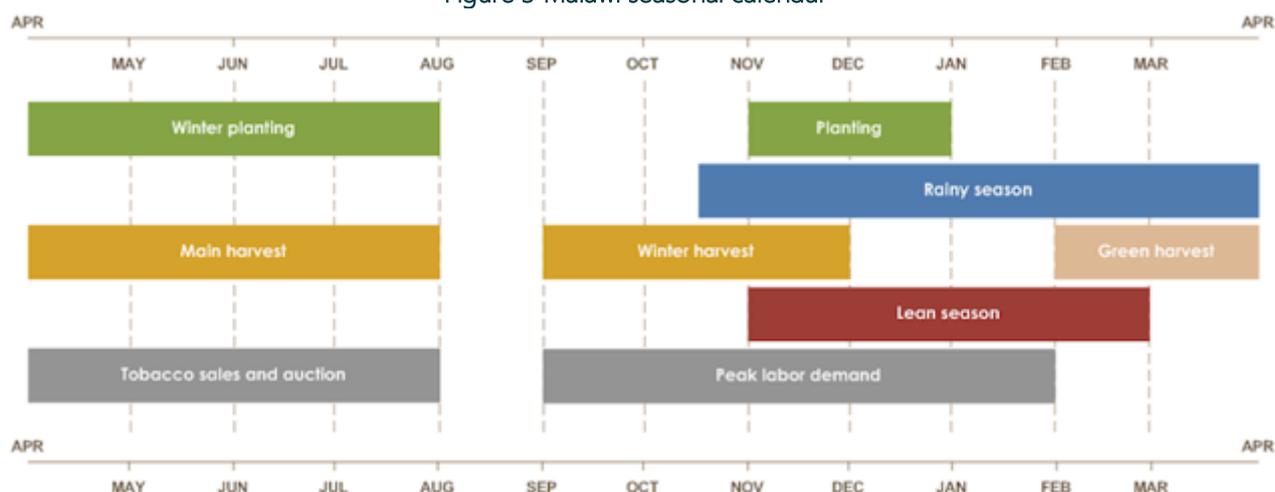
Save the Children addressed protection issues through awareness campaigns in Zomba and Phalombe Districts. The campaigns used radio jingles, drama and training sessions aimed at the committees on child protection. Safe delivery kits and mobile clinics ensured the protection of vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant and lactating women, even in hard to reach areas. Save the Children also provided safe spaces and health services such as malaria testing and treatment to women and children. Plan International implemented protection activities for the affected population through raising awareness on gender-based violence and providing safe spaces for the youth and children in the displacement camps.

V.2. Timeliness and quality of the response

The timeliness of the response was dependent on the location and the modality used. There was a general consensus among the communities that food and WASH interventions were provided in a timely manner (i.e. within the same week of the disaster occurring) in the camps. One of the main factors that contributed to the timeliness of this basic needs support was that organisations were able to use their own core funds to start activities and procurement, and then be reimbursed by DEC afterwards.

Outside of the camps, the timeliness of the response was dependant on the flood water levels. Some areas were still flooded after the start of the response, while others became flooded during the response. For example, Concern reported that they had to wait until the water levels reduced before doing seed distributions. Seeds distribution for winter planting was however provided in time for the planting period and farmers expect to benefit from the harvest between September and December 2019, provided they have a good season.

Figure 3 Malawi seasonal calendar³¹



Agencies also reported having to wait for the Cash Working Group’s decision about the amount to distribute. The Cash Working Group has been operational in Malawi since 2017. It convened on 26 March 2019, and decided to conduct a rapid market assessment. As such the Cash Working Group was only able to provide guidance on distribution amounts in April 2019.

Unsurprisingly, organisations working in less-accessible areas took more time to start their activities. In Nsanje, Phalombe and Mangochi Districts, flooding washed away a number of bridges and roads, rendering the areas inoperable. In Nsanje, Oxfam had to use alternative means of transportation, such as boats and airlifting, to reach affected populations.

Procurement delays were also a factor. Concern Worldwide faced delays in procuring agricultural inputs such as seeds, due to quality control requirements (e.g. germination tests, etc.). Christian Aid also experienced procurement delays as suppliers from Blantyre and Lilongwe cities were overwhelmed. Other agencies were also getting their supplies from Blantyre while responding in remote and far districts such as Nsanje.

Stakeholders and affected communities deemed the quality of the items provided to be appropriate, convenient and of good quality. This included items such as food aid, corn soya blend (CSB) for children under five years old, drought tolerant seeds, agriculture inputs and equipment, and iron sheets. Women in Nsanje found the CSB to be of good quality, as evidenced by their children’s improvement in nutrition levels. Iron sheets and plastic paper were deemed an improvement in shelter materials, as most households before the floods had grass thatched houses. Communities in Nkhulambe, Phalombe noted they received seeds (potato, beans and vegetables) and treadle pumps for irrigation through farming groups, which they considered valuable given the nature of the agriculture-related livelihoods activities in the area.

Oxfam also noted some delays in finding locally skilled workmanship, as the quality of labour to undertake rehabilitation and construction of sanitation facilities and water points was poor. To overcome this challenge Oxfam decided to train community masons. This delayed the construction of the water points and latrines, but increased the positive effects of the response by transferring skills to the local community.

³¹ FEWSNET.

V.3. Adaptability of the Response

Key informants mentioned that the flexibility of DEC funding was instrumental for programmes to be sufficiently adaptable and agile to be able to quickly respond to changes in the context.

When the Government of Malawi announced the closing of all camps by 30 June, the response became characterised by the changing needs of crisis affected households who had to move from camps back to their homes in a short amount of time. Their return led to a number of emerging needs such as shelter, WASH and livelihoods that were beyond the scope of the life-saving interventions that were provided in the camps. Agencies such Oxfam, Islamic Relief, AGE/MANEPO and Christian Aid mentioned that through their continued follow-ups, consultations and engagement with the community during post distribution monitoring activities, they were able to rapidly identify and respond to those changing needs.

Most of the DEC members reported they were quick to switch into recovery mode and re-designed their interventions to suit community needs. In Chikwawa for instance, Islamic Relief started providing households with shelter construction start-up materials comprised of iron sheets and nails. In Nsanje, Oxfam supported the rehabilitation and reconstruction of family latrines for returning households. In Phalombe, Concern Worldwide intensified its livelihood support to returnees by providing agricultural tools and inputs including drought resistant winter crops.

The flexibility of DEC funding also allowed agencies to shift modalities. Tearfund in Mangochi and Islamic Relief in Chikwawa both changed from vouchers to cash grants so that households could access closer markets and traders.

V.4. Factors influencing the project's success

The post-Cyclone Idai intervention in Malawi presented certain peculiarities that either hampered or facilitated the success of the response. The issues in the table below were highlighted by the interviewed DEC members. The experience and expertise of the respective DEC members that are pivotal to the response's success have not been included, as these are constitutive elements of the response (e.g. more than influencing factors).

Figure 4: Blocking and facilitating factors

	Facilitating factor	Blocking factor
Internal factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community-based approach and community participation - Working with local partners - Working with pre-existing community structures (WASH committees and Village Civil Protection Committees [VCPCs]) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High turnover of international staff
External factors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quick closing of camps and rushed return of households - Elections in May led to violent protests and increased insecurity - Evacuation centres located in schools, which further disrupted education

Out of the nine DEC members responding to Cyclone Idai, three already had long-term development projects in the cyclone affected areas. This pre-existing presence and knowledge was one of the key success factors of the response. Team synergies did not necessarily materialise as part of programme design, but the emergency response teams were able to draw upon experienced support teams.

Village Civil Protection Committees (VCPC) and early warning systems played a key role during the floods as they alerted the communities to move to the nearest evacuation points using whistles, phone calls and megaphones. Members of Khope VCPC in Nsanje mentioned that the committee had to alert the community about the intense rains and tell them to evacuate to nearby evacuation structures in their area. The VCPC then continued to monitor the situation as rains and floods persisted.

Discussions with the District Social Welfare Office for Nsanje indicated that the organisations' support for the affected population inadvertently led to affected populations from neighbouring Mozambique migrating to camps in Malawi in search of refuge and assistance. This reportedly led to congestion and low levels of support in some camps, such as the camp at Bangula in Nsanje. This issue was also mentioned by the affected communities at Khope camp in Tengani, Nsanje, who noted that the camp's resources were not adequate since it had to cover people from both Malawi and Mozambique. Similarly, according to key informants from Christian Aid, the Marka community in Nsanje is near the border with Mozambique and was reported to have beneficiaries from both countries.

VI. Accountability to the affected population

Accountability is a key element of any DEC-funded intervention, as all DEC members have agreed to an Accountability Framework.³² As part of their organisational commitments towards accountability, all DEC members use the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability³³ (CHS) to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. This helps to ensure the timeliness of support and continuous communication, feedback and address mechanisms, while also using learning to improve and adjusting interventions accordingly.

Among the nine DEC members operating in Malawi, Christian Aid, Concern, Islamic Relief, Oxfam and Tearfund are CHS certified; Save the Children and Plan International are independently verified; and Age International and World Vision have completed the CHS self-assessment.

VI.1. Communities involvement in the response

In line with their CHS commitments, DEC members have established thorough measures to ensure community participation across the project cycle. As mentioned in [Section IV](#), the views of crisis affected households were taken into consideration in the assessment phase through

³² https://www.dec.org.uk/sites/default/files/PDFS/dec_accountability_framework_-_explained.pdf.

³³ <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>.

(mostly) gender segregated need assessments. The DEC member implementation team shared several examples of community participation during the review:

- All of the DEC partners held (or are continuing to hold) FGDs and/or meetings with community members to discuss the design of activities, the choice of modality and the content of the kits distributed. One organisation even conducted door-to-door consultations for those crisis affected households that are less mobile.
- WASH interventions relied in pre-existing water committees, which provided such committees with further capacity building opportunities. This is likely to increase the sustainability of the WASH-related outcomes.
- In camps, DEC members worked through Camp Committees, and outside of camps they worked through the VCPCs. These committees' role was to consistently engage communities throughout the response.

How much real or perceived decision-making power community members wield is unclear, but some of the organisations placed a significant focus on community engagement and ensuring a participatory response. Having people from the community engaged in the design and delivery (via leaders and volunteers' involvement) makes the process consultative, but this should be balanced with the risks linked to the potential or perceived bias it may create. This is particularly a concern for Camp Committees; key informants reported that some of the members of new Camp Committees did not clearly understand their roles in the camps in Nsanje District, which weakened their ability to correctly engage with their communities.

The vast majority of FGD participants knew why they had been selected for assistance and were aware of the targeting criteria, e.g. selecting the poorest and those whose shelters had been damaged in the cyclone.

VI.2. Knowledge of feedback and complaint mechanisms

All interviewed DEC agencies mentioned they had established at least one feedback and reporting mechanism that covered all their projects and areas of response. At the time of the review, DEC members were exploring setting up multiple feedback channels, as not all members had this in place. Agencies so far have mostly used in-person help desks at distribution sites, complaint boxes and informal complaint raising via VCPC and team members. Concern also had an operational toll-free number that existed before Cyclone Idai that was used for the response.

Complaint boxes raise the issue of literacy and equal accessibility across gender and people with mobility challenges. The overall literacy rate in Malawi is 62%; it is 70% among men but only 55% among women.³⁴ Face-to-face complaints can be effective and quick but are not confidential, and crisis affected households may not feel confident registering a complaint through this medium.

Lastly, Save the Children has also put in place a child-friendly complaint and feedback mechanism through children protection committees.

³⁴ UNESCO 2015.

Most of the Focus Groups had at least one participant who knew at least one way to share feedback or raise a complaint. The majority of the complaints DEC agencies received were about targeting and delays in the distribution.

The review uncovered multiple examples of DEC members taking action based on the feedback and complaints they received. The communities in Chikwawa, TA Makhuwira acknowledged during the FGDs that agencies such as Islamic Relief were available to respond to their enquiry and took action when required. In Nsanje District, the targeting process yielded some inclusion errors in which fake names were submitted to receive aid, but Christian Aid promptly corrected those errors based on feedback they received. Furthermore, the committee that had done the initial selection was dismissed and another one was elected.

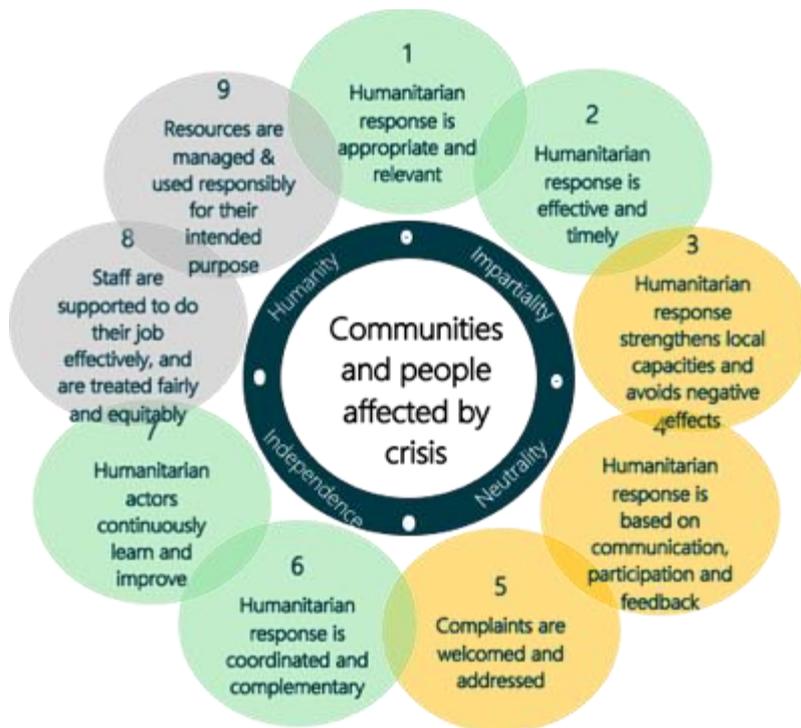
Christian Aid's support in Nsanje targeted affected communities in the displacement camps and different interventions targeted specific populations. For instance, CSB targeted affected households with under five year olds, pregnant and lactating women, while CVA targeted every affected household. Tearfund's targeting was done based on selecting the most affected households that included older persons (OP), people with disabilities (PWDs), and women-headed households. Furthermore, the communities were involved in targeting, and worked with the agency to verify names. Concern Worldwide held consultation meetings with the entire community about the selection of farming households, based on the criteria of having farms and houses that were damaged. Lastly, Islamic Relief provided their support to all the affected households in its areas of operation.

VI.3. Review against the CHS

Cyclone Idai disrupted communication infrastructure and limited physical access to affected communities. As such, it made it more complicated to deliver an accountable response, especially outside of the camps. DEC members tried to adapt their communications efforts to the areas' traditional channels. Save the Children for instance shared messages on protection issues through radio jingles and drama in the affected communities in Zomba and Phalombe. Christian Aid displayed all the items each beneficiary was expected to receive during a distribution on posters so beneficiaries could see what they were entitled to.

In addition, and in line with DEC members' organisational commitments towards the CHS, safeguarding and accountability were given significant attention. All interviewed agency team members reported to have been trained on humanitarian principles, CHS and their respective organisation's code of conduct. Furthermore, Islamic Relief and Christian Aid also took the initiative to sensitise the communities of the expected conduct of agency staff. Christian Aid shared leaflets of what was expected of staff and its code of conduct in the local dialect.

Figure 5: CHS commitments



The following figure has been developed based on the official CHS representation to provide a qualitative assessment of DEC members' performance against the quality criteria developed for each CHS commitment. The colours have been changed in order to represent which standards need the most attention, based on the findings of this review. The standards that appear to have been the least met, according to the consultants' judgement, are in yellow. The standards that appear in grey are those that were not assessed during the review.

VII. Sustainability and connectedness of the response

Due to their historical presence in Malawi, DEC members were able to draw on their knowledge of the country's long-term needs to design an emergency response that was linked to a long-term plan. This was especially highlighted by affected households and local authorities who noted the added value of DEC members' longer-term presence when compared to others that "come in for the emergency response and go."

Phase 1 was meant to be an emergency response and was designed as such. It primarily focused on basic needs coverage, but also already included a strong livelihoods focus, thus paving the way to early recovery. As such, DEC member organisations were already including some considerations for long-term needs in the emergency response.

Looking at livelihoods, Concern in Phalombe, Islamic Relief in Chikwawa, Christian Aid in Nsanje and Chikwawa and Tearfund in Mangochi provided agricultural inputs during the Phase 1 of the response as households were returning to their land. The seeds provided were short cycled seed crops and drought tolerant.

With regards to shelter, Islamic Relief already started supporting affected households with materials such as with iron sheets and nails to construct and/or rehabilitate standard resilient houses. Age/MANEPO has a similar plan for the next phase of the response as households continue to return to their homes.

In the health sector, Save the Children provided mobile clinics during Phase 1 of the response, and plans to focus Phase 2 on psychological interventions for community recovery; supporting the construction of sanitary facilities, capacity building of village health committees to ensure

health and sanitation practices are followed, and to strengthen systems so that they are able to handle such crises in the future.

To construct and rehabilitate WASH infrastructure in Makhanga and Nsanje, Oxfam hired and built the capacity of local artisans (water point committees and masons). This helped transfer knowledge to the community that will remain beyond the response.

Finally, looking at the use of CVA, humanitarian actors, including DEC members, are currently exploring how to further engage with the government's social protection programmes. A good illustration of this willingness is the attempt by the Cash Working Group (co-chaired by Concern Worldwide) to liaise with the Social Protection Technical Working Group.³⁵

DEC members are also now looking at how to connect crisis affected households with their pre-existing, longer-term programmes. For example, Concern Worldwide and Tearfund are considering integrating cyclone affected farmers in their longer-term projects. The projects include resilience building through crop diversification, irrigation farming, livestock production and market access. Similarly, Save the Children is considering extending their Village Savings and Loans (VSLs) activities to cyclone affected areas.

Unsurprisingly, there were no disaster risk reduction activities included in Phase 1, but DEC members are currently discussing how to integrate them into Phase 2.

The environment is a particularly relevant cross-cutting issue when looking at cyclone responses, as the destruction of infrastructure following a cyclone may increase pollution levels in the atmosphere and water.³⁶ However, in general humanitarian actors do not prioritise environmental concerns in their responses. Malawi is no exception, and most key informants did not have information on the environment impact of the response (i.e. how their activities affected the environment). The assessments reviewed also did not discuss the environmental impact of the response. Concern Worldwide however did share a good practice they implemented, which was to use cardboard boxes and jute sacks to package kits in an effort to reduce plastic waste.

VIII. Coordination and complementarity

DEC is a membership-based organisation that does not want to create an additional layer of coordination among its members. The real-time review (RTR) workshops were the first occasions DEC members had to meet and discuss as DEC in Malawi since the start of the response. However, and primarily thanks to DEC funding mechanisms, there is a certain level of trust among DEC members that allows for informal information sharing. Where DEC members' interventions overlapped in the same district or camp, organisations were able to ensure that they were generally complementary and they created bilateral synergies. For instance, Tearfund and Christian Aid held bilateral meetings to iron out issues on overlapping interventions in Chikwawa. Through existing working relationships and interactions through the clusters, agencies reportedly shared information and undertook joint planning. For instance, AGE/MANEPO and Islamic Relief

³⁵ Minutes of the Cash Working Group (CWG) Meeting – 25th June 2019.

³⁶ H.Juillard and J.Jourdain, 2018, Earthquake lesson paper, ALNAP.

reported to have a good work relationship in their similar geographical areas. This informal information sharing was especially important in Malawi where coordination faced some delays.

In Malawi, the Cyclone Idai response is coordinated by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) through the Principal Secretary (PS) in the Office of President and Cabinet (OPC). All the main clusters are active in-country (shelter, WASH, protection, agriculture and food security). The response is coordinated at both the district level through the district councils and the national level through the line ministries. Interviewed District Social Welfare Officers and DEC agencies reported that DEC members had good attendance at the coordination meetings.

Beyond the DEC members, coordination of the response faced some delays. For example, the 4W matrix was distributed after organisations had already started implementing activities on the ground. Response planning occurred at the partner level without comprehensive knowledge of other agencies in the same area, so by the time agencies met in clusters and submitted their 4Ws, there was already some duplication. This led to some organisations having to change their interventions' geographical and thematic scope. An example is when Concern Worldwide had to switch their activities to another TA in Phalombe District. The late set-up of the coordination architecture not only led to some duplication, but also meant that other areas (such as Nsanje) received less attention. This is not a DEC-specific issue and DEC members demonstrated a high level of flexibility to adjust, as evidenced by the above example of Concern Worldwide switching to another TA in Nkhulambe.

The Cash Working Group in Malawi is co-chaired by WFP and Concern Worldwide. It has been in existence since 2017, but it has not been as active as it could have been in the response. Its work plan for 2019 was endorsed at the end of June 2019 and at the time of writing the review, the 4W report was not yet completed. Similarly, the standard operating procedures (SOP) and coordinated market assessment tools were still being drafted. This resulted in different agencies, including DEC members, providing different cash amounts in the various districts. Thus, while the Cash Working Group eventually announced the average amount per household should be 25,200 Malawian Kwacha (MWK), Concern Worldwide was already providing 20,000 MWK to its beneficiaries in Phalombe, Save the Children was providing 16,400 MWK and Islamic Relief was giving 21,200 MWK.

IX. Conclusion

The cyclone response presented unique challenges: physical access was difficult in the first few days and infrastructure destruction hampered communication. Overall, DEC members' response to Cyclone Idai can be considered a success, in so far that it provided a flexible source of funds that allowed members to adapt their responses quickly to changing circumstances, address the most relevant needs of targeted communities, and build accountability to affected populations into the response.

The Phase 1 response to Cyclone Idai in Malawi presents a great opportunity to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus and to operationalise the New Way of Working.³⁷ What DEC members have done organically to increase coherence between humanitarian and development

³⁷ https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/NWOW%20Booklet%20low%20res.002_0.pdf

actions should be capitalised on and systematised going into Phase 2. The long-lasting presence of DEC members in Malawi is an asset that can be built on so that crisis-affected households not only get back on their feet, but also become integrated into longer-term resilience projects.

DEC members' global organisational commitments to the CHS cascaded down to the country level. The intended level of community participation in the response was high from the start and aligned with the CHS commitment. However, it should be further increased over time, and particularly after the first few weeks of the response when the urgency of the needs requires swift action.

Cross-cutting issues such as gender and protection were incorporated at all stages of the response, but environmental considerations should be more strongly considered. There is a high likelihood that environmental disasters will hit Malawi again in the coming years, whether it be a drought in a coming agriculture season or another cyclone. Preparing for possible future disasters would help strengthen the gains made in this response and potentially protect people from the worst effects of another disaster.

X. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings above, suggestions for DEC members to further strengthen their response to Cyclone Idai and future programming include:

X.1. Assessment and design

Recommendation 1: Ensure joint analysis for Phase 2 design

As most of the DEC members responding to Cyclone Idai or their partners have on-going or long-term programmes, they should conduct a joint analysis to inform the design of Phase 2.

Both development and humanitarian teams should aim for a set of commonly agreed results to reduce needs and future risks, while increasing resilience. The Phase 2 logical frameworks or theories of change should be aligned with those of the on-going and long-term programmes to the greatest extent possible. Vice versa, longer-term programmes should also align their objectives with those of humanitarian disaster preparedness projects when feasible.

Recommendation 2: Identify important environmental considerations

DEC members are encouraged to consider the environmental impact of their response and incorporate environmental considerations into their livelihoods, WASH, and shelter activities. Furthermore, as the Cyclone Idai response is transitioning into early recovery, DEC members' plans need to incorporate Building Back Better and Greener into their activities. A first step could be mapping the potential environmental effects of the response.

Recommendation 3: Further build on existing social protection schemes to deliver humanitarian cash assistance

Via the Cash Working Group, co-chaired by a DEC member, organisations could further explore the extent to which humanitarian cash assistance can build on the existing social protection

schemes and their underlying operational systems.³⁸ Several pilots have been implemented during the lean season and early recovery response, using existing social protection schemes. These, however, have yet to be scaled up. The Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR) that serves as the database for the social cash transfer programme is also being gradually updated across the country and may be useful in future crisis response.

X.2. Implementation

Recommendation 4: Be cash ready

DEC members should ensure the choice of modality is rooted in a comprehensive situation analysis and when conditions permit, strive to use unconditional, unrestricted cash assistance.

DEC members have already used unconditional and unrestricted cash during the Cyclone Idai response. Yet, they could explore expanding the grant amount to also cover shelter and non-food related needs. Restricted assistance can be considered when specific objectives need to be met, for example nutrition.

Moving forward, DEC members are encouraged to prepare for delivering cash assistance prior to a crisis by mapping the available and accessible payment delivery mechanisms and Financial Service Providers operating in the country. A good place to start is the mapping of financial service providers and assessment of bottlenecks and barriers to e-payments conducted in 2019 by the Economic Planning and Development Department of the Ministry of Finance for the Social Cash Transfer Programme. In addition, a good practice to replicate from Concern Worldwide is to have a framework agreement in place to deliver cash grants for different programmes.

Furthermore, the Cash Working Group could in the future further advocate for market assessments as part of disaster preparedness, and support members with capacity building and harmonised tools.

Recommendation 5: Analyse, use and support markets, including the labour market

³⁸ The growing literature on this topic has identified different ways in which social transfer programmes and systems can be leveraged to support humanitarian cash assistance. An output of DFID’s research programme (Oxford Policy Management (2018) ‘Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis Report’, OPM) has been to develop a ‘typology’ of potential approaches. In contexts where such social protection programmes already exist, three main ways of working have been identified:

Vertical expansion: temporarily increasing the benefit value or duration of the benefit provided on an existing social protection programme, for all or some of the existing beneficiaries (end-users). This can be done via an adjustment of transfer amounts, or through the introduction of extraordinary payments or transfers. The extra support is provided as an integral part of the existing intervention.

Horizontal expansion: temporary inclusion of new, disaster affected, beneficiaries (end-users) into a social protection programme. This could be done via the extension of the programme’s geographical coverage to underserved areas, an extraordinary enrolment campaign to rapidly enrol those who fit programme criteria and who have been affected, or modification/relaxation of eligibility criteria to allow more people to benefit.

Piggybacking: using a social protection programme’s administrative framework or systems to deliver assistance, but running the response programme separately. This could be the use of a specific programme’s beneficiary list, national registries or databases of households underpinning social protection programmes, a particular payment mechanism, or social protection staff.

There is growing consensus in the humanitarian sector on the need to be aware of local economies and local markets, and hence to be 'market sensitive.' Market assessments should form an integral part of the situation analysis. This can be done prior to the crisis, especially in areas that are prone to disasters. Market functionality forms a pivotal element of cash feasibility and the market systems to assess can be determined on the basis of the key needs (e.g. food and shelter) that are likely to be affected by a future drought or flood.

Beyond analysing markets, DEC members that have long-term programmes that aim to support value chains are encouraged to look at supporting markets beyond livelihood objectives. Market support intervention is an approach that aims to improve the situation of crisis-affected populations by providing support to critical market systems on which the target population relies for goods, services, labour or income. By strengthening key market systems after or prior to a crisis, households prone to disaster would be better able to cover their needs or access labour and income generating activities during a future flood or drought. The CaLP market support interventions in humanitarian contexts tip sheet³⁹ can be a good resource for implementing such market system strengthening activities.

Recommendation 6: Advocate with the Government of Malawi to establish emergency evacuation centres in flood prone areas

Because there were no adequate pre-identified evacuation centres, the majority of the displaced households ended up in makeshift camps or in schools, further disrupting education. DEC members are encouraged during their upcoming disaster risk reduction interventions to coordinate with the government to pre-identify and set up evacuation centres. DEC members can use their respective expertise to ensure those centres are accessible and safe to all groups.

X.3. MEAL

Recommendation 7: Use DEC membership as an opportunity for horizontal learning, joint risk assessment and exploring better alignment of programme design

As previously stated, DEC is a membership-based organisation that does not want to create an additional layer of coordination among its members. Yet, being part of DEC creates a certain degree of trust among its members that could be capitalised on to improve the effectiveness and accountability of the assistance delivered.

Given the opportunity during this review to share successes and challenges, DEC members expressed the wish to do so more frequently. Being conscious of further overburdening the teams, one option is to meet on an ad hoc basis, either on a specific theme or a project cycle step. This learning workshop should be a safe space where partners can learn from each other but also plan together. This would be an especially appropriate opportunity to build on each other's strengths and area of expertise. Age International, for example, could share good practices on how to ensure adequate mainstreaming of the ageing component in humanitarian programming. Even if this has not been brought up as an issue in Malawi, studies continue to

³⁹ <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/guidelines/calp-crs-tip-sheet-web.pdf>

show that older men and women are among the worst affected during an emergency and also take longer to recover than people of the other age groups.⁴⁰

DEC membership could also be an interesting forum for a joint risk assessment. Risk appetite will always be organisation specific, but risk assessment and discussion around mitigation measures can be done collectively among organisations who share a sufficient level of trust. One area to pay particular attention to is the risk of shifting the power dynamics within communities by relying too much on communities for targeting, etc.

As Phase 1 will be coming to an end in September, members could meet and plan for Phase 2, particularly to coordinate procurement, standardise the referral processes, and conduct joint-market and other assessments as needed.

Recommendation 8: Increase the number of complaints and feedback mechanisms offered by each organisation based on community preferences and needs

Agencies should use multiple methods of getting feedback from communities based on community preferences and needs. The diversity of mechanisms ensures that affected communities can choose the mechanism that best suits the type of feedback they have. In the mix of feedback mechanisms, at least one should be confidential, such as a toll free number or suggestion box. This is important for when communities have sensitive issues to share or fear victimisation and backlash. Confidential mechanisms should be set up early on in the response.

Finally, all DEC members⁴¹ should include questions on complaint and feedback mechanisms' use and type of responses received in their post-distribution monitoring and other assessments.

Recommendation 9: Integrate market monitoring as an integral element of the regular monitoring framework

Given that flooding destroyed a large portion of the maize crop in the south, food prices may further rise in some areas. To monitor the appropriateness of the modality used and the transfer value, DEC members should integrate market monitoring as a regular part of their monitoring activities. As a minimum, market monitoring should look at the prices of the key commodities and services crisis affected households' access with their cash grants (or those procured in-kind by DEC members). To support with setting up price monitoring, DEC members can use the [MARKit](#) guidance.

⁴⁰ Global Protection Cluster, 2018, Protecting older people in emergencies.

⁴¹ Some members, like Concern, already do.

XI. Annexes

XI.1. Review framework

Based on consultation with DEC members and common practice for real-time reviews, as per ALNAP’s Guide on ‘Real-time evaluations of humanitarian action’, Key Aid used the following review matrix. The matrix shows the broad areas of inquiry and sub questions. Given the qualitative nature of the review, instead of having hard indicators and measurements, Key Aid used data analysis points. The data analysis points reflect the type of data and analytical points that Key Aid focused on in grouping response parameters and to reach conclusions.

Table 4: Review Framework

Review questions	Sub question	Possible leaning points for Phase 2	Data source	Data Analysis points
1. To what extent is the response relevant and appropriate to the needs and priorities of the target population?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was the response design consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives? - To what extent are the members’ Phase 1 plans in line with the needs and priorities of those affected (including the needs of some specific target groups such as women, people with disabilities or the very poor)? -What assessments were carried out prior to provision of services? -Where any needs expressed in the assessments not met and why? - Have protection concerns been adequately considered in the design of assistance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature, content and scope of assessments to conduct - Information on emerging needs and priorities of affected communities - Existing gaps in services/needs of affected communities - Targeting of particular population groups or needs - Process for prioritizing and coming up with needs for affected communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the projects’ ToC (if available); - Review of the methods used to assess beneficiaries’ needs; - Interviews with DEC members and implementing partners, and FGDs with project beneficiaries confirm that the intervention is in line with their needs and priorities, including specific target groups; - Interviews with DEC members and implementing partners, and FGDs with project beneficiaries show how their needs are changing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparison of needs as expressed by beneficiaries in FGDs and assessment reports with support provided by the DEC members - Comparison of needs of particular groups with provisions put up by DEC member agencies. - Analysis of the changing needs of beneficiaries/target communities as time progresses - Analysis of seasonal timelines and livelihood profiles of target/affected areas with support provided and planned by DEC agencies

Review questions	Sub question	Possible leaning points for Phase 2	Data source	Data Analysis points
			and give insights on how Phase II could adapt to those changes; - KII with DEC members and implementing partners show that protection issues were considered at design stage and how they are being addressed	
2. How effective and efficient is the project in achieving its intended outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent are the activities of DEC members achieving and/or are likely to achieve their intended outcomes? - Are the activities being delivered in a timely and qualitative manner? - What are likely to be some of the major factors influencing achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? -Did the project meet any unexpected and unforeseen issues during implementation? -What, if any, were the unintended effects? 	- Identify challenges to achievement of results that can be addressed going into Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of timelines to determine any potential gap between the response initial timeline and the current timeframe; - Interviews and FGDs with project beneficiaries shed light on some the visible outcomes with their community; - KII with DEC members and implementing partners show that the main threats to the programme were identified and that mitigation measures are in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparisons of planned outcomes with situation obtaining on the ground - Review of response timeline and needs versus project delivery timelines - Assess trends and issues affecting project performance
3. How adaptable has the response been so far?	-What changes in approaches, targeting or other programming issues, if any, did the	- Address any identified structural challenges to adapting programming	- Key informant interviews with project personnel with knowledge on project plans	- Analysis of changes in the context and operating environment

Review questions	Sub question	Possible leaning points for Phase 2	Data source	Data Analysis points
	<p>project make since the beginning of the response?</p> <p>-How are beneficiary needs now changing? And how the response adapted to those changes?</p> <p>-What challenges did DEC members face in trying to make any programme adaptations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address any identified internal challenges to adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus group discussions with affected communities to understand the changes in needs and the external environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysing how the programmes responded to changes in the operating environment and affected community needs - Identify any internal or structural challenges to adapting programmes
4. How are DEC members ensuring accountability to affected populations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent are the views of crisis-affected people (including specific target groups) considered in response design and implementation? - What mechanisms exist and are being used for prompt detection and mitigation of unintended negative effects? - How compliant is the response to the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and other guidelines on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and what areas require further attention? -What challenges did the response come across in meeting the CHS or safeguarding crisis affected households? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address any identified accountability deficiencies going forward - Suggest measures for Advocacy on external context specific issues that affect accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of secondary data and KII with DEC members and implementing partners provide evidence that the views of target population were taken into consideration; - Review of the complaint and accountability mechanisms in place; - Interviews and FGDs with project beneficiaries confirm that they are aware of those mechanisms and are able to use them if necessary; - Review of secondary data and KII with DEC members and implementing partners explain how the response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparison of mechanisms put in place by DEC members with the humanitarian standards and PSEA guidelines - Analysis of the knowledge by target communities of the existence of these mechanisms - Analysis of the use of complaints, feedback and other accountability mechanisms by target communities - Assessments of the structural and context issues that posed challenges to DEC members in implementing accountability and protection agencies

Review questions	Sub question	Possible leaning points for Phase 2	Data source	Data Analysis points
			is in line with the CHS and PSEA;	
5. How sustainable and connected to longer-term issues has the phase I of the intervention been?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What existing longer-term programming by DEC and non-DEC members was happening in the areas? - To what extent are Phase 1 programme plans taking into account the medium or longer-term priorities and needs of those affected? - To what extent have members considered how any positive effects might be maintained in the future, after the DEC response? - What environmental impact and other longer-term impacts is the present response likely to have? -Which environmental impact of programmes was considered at design stage, and how? -Are there any possible negative impacts of the support provided by the agencies? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform changes/modifications to current programming to be more in line with longer term issues - Identify medium to longer term plans/priorities that can go into phase two programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of National Policies and KII with development and governmental actors in the country highlight the various longer-term development issues faced by the country; - Analysis of secondary data and KII show that local capacities are being built; - KII with DEC members and implementing partners, development and governmental actors in the country show how the response fit within the longer-term dimensions; - KII with DEC members and implementing partners, development and governmental actors in the country demonstrate how the response took environmental considerations into account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seasonal context analysis for a normal year versus the cyclone year to assess how the cyclone affected normal livelihoods and other household operations - Asses the longer-term development needs expressed by communities - Asses how current programming is in line with these priorities and needs - Assess how cyclone response is building on existing development efforts - Assess whether target communities will be able to continue enjoying the benefits of the support they are currently getting after project end - Investigate any sequencing and layering of activities/interventions

Review questions	Sub question	Possible leaning points for Phase 2	Data source	Data Analysis points
6. How are DEC members maximising coordination partnerships and complementarity with other organisations to achieve the intended response outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent is the response coordinated and complemented with the efforts of other stakeholders (including implementing partners, local actors, civil society, local authorities and government, humanitarian and development actors and new actors e.g. private sector, civil society)? -Are there specific coordination efforts between DEC members for assessment, geographical targeting and response design? - What internal coordination problems have DEC members faced and how have they been addressed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address any identified coordination problems/issues - Promote any coordination good practice - Advocate for any new or changed coordination mechanisms (broadly and within DEC members programming) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the processes and policies in place to select implementing partners; - KII with DEC members and implementing partners show light on some of the coordination issues faced, if any; - KII with relevant in-country stakeholders confirm that the response is delivered in coordination with other initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inventory of current coordination platforms and mechanisms - Assessment of challenges and success stories of coordination - Analysis of any evidence of coordination in targeting geographical areas and thematic areas of response - Assess if and how programmes across organisations are completing each other

XI.2. Detailed methodology

The Real-Time Review (RTR) of the Cyclone Idai Response in Malawi was conducted between 1-26 July 2019 using a qualitative data collection approach through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and a literature review of key project documents. The in-country review in Malawi commenced with an inception meeting with DEC agencies that was held in Lilongwe on 4 July 2019 at Ufulu Gardens. It served to discuss the real-time review's focus and the initial discussions on the response with agencies to get members' buy-in into the review, and to improve the utilisation of the RTR report's findings and recommendations. The meeting also guided the following field data collection, which occurred in the sampled districts of Nsanje, Chikwawa and Phalombe with community members and various stakeholders.

Data was collected through FGDs with selected community members representing men, women, adolescent girls and older persons in Nsanje, Chikwawa and Phalombe Districts. A total of eight FGDs were conducted: three with men, three with women, one with adolescent girls and one mixed with older men and older women. A total of 134 community members were consulted through FGDs.

Table 5 Number of Focus Group Discussions

District	Location	Females	Males	Total
Nsanje	TA Mbenje (older persons)	9	7	16
	TA Tengani	14	-	14
	TA Tengani (Khope camp)	13	8	21
Chikwawa	TA Makhuwira	-	14	14
	TA Makhuwira	18	-	18
	TA Maseya (adolescent girls)	16	-	16
Phalombe	TA Nkhulambe	-	11	11
	TA Nkhulambe	13	-	13
Total		83	40	123

A total of 19 KIIs were conducted with personnel from seven DEC agencies (four with Oxfam, one with Islamic Relief, two with Concern Worldwide, one with Christian Aid, two with Tearfund, four with Save the Children, and one with AGE/MANEPO), three government stakeholders (District Social Welfare Officers and Assistant Social Welfare Officer for Nsanje and DSWO for Chikwawa) and one local stakeholder (Chief, Traditional Authority Mbenje, Nsanje). One KII interview was conducted remotely through a telephone interview, and all the other KIIs were conducted in person in Lilongwe, Blantyre and Nsanje.

Table 6 Key Informants Malawi

Country	Key Informant type	Planned	Actual
Malawi	DEC members	15	6
	Local partners	3	1
	Coordination bodies	2	2
	Local government representatives	2	1

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	Others (nurses, AREX officials, Headmaster)	0	5
Total Malawi		22	15

XI.3. Bibliography

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