PARTNERSHIP

# Consortium Alignment Framework for Excellence

# (CAFE)

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

CRS CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

# PARTNERSHIP

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## SOLIDARITY WILL TRANSFORM THE WORLD

Partnership is fundamental to how CRS sees itself in the world. We believe profoundly that change occurs through our Catholic Church and other local partners, that by sustaining and strengthening local institutions we enhance a community's ability to respond to its own problems. Catholic Relief Services puts its approach to development, emergency relief, and social change into practice through partnerships with a wide array of organizations: local churches and nonprofits, host governments, international agencies, and others.

Our belief that solidarity will transform the world inspires a commitment to right relationships with those we serve, in collaboration with the Catholic Church and other faith-based or secular organizations closest to those in need. We strive for partnerships founded on a long-term vision and a commitment to peace and justice. For more than sixty years, CRS has worked side-by-side with our partners to alleviate human suffering, promote social justice, and assist people as they strive for their own development.

## OUR PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

1. Share a vision for addressing people's immediate needs and the underlying causes of suffering and injustice.
2. Make decisions at a level as close as possible to the people who will be affected by them.
3. Strive for mutuality, recognizing that each partner brings skills, resources, knowledge, and capacities in a spirit of autonomy.
4. Foster equitable partnerships by mutually defining rights and responsibilities.
5. Respect differences and commit to listen and learn from each other.
6. Encourage transparency.
7. Engage with civil society, to help transform unjust structures and systems.
8. Commit to a long-term process of local organizational development.
9. Identify, understand, and strengthen community capacities, which are the primary source of solutions to local problems.
10. Promote sustainability by reinforcing partners' capacity to identify their vulnerabilities and build on their strengths.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


CAFE, the Consortium Alignments Framework for Excellence, began by a conversation between CRS Malawi and CRS headquarters in late 2006. By 2007, CRS Malawi prepared a proposal for a document that would help CRS and its partners work more effectively in consortium.

In May 2008, CRS staff from eight countries joined seven partner organizations to draft the document. CAFE is based on the original documents written at the "Improving Consortium Governance Workshop" held in Salima, Malawi. The participants and the editing team thank CRS Malawi for their excellent hospitality and for providing the venue and logistics that made CAFE possible. Additionally, CAFE would not be possible without the generous support of the United States Agency for International Development's Office of Food for Peace.

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# INTRODUCTION TO CAFE

CAFE is in four primary sections, each building upon the preceding one.

CAFE's core document is **CAFE Standards**. The standards have seven components. These components describe the most essential principles for forming and working in an effective and efficient consortium. The standards, written as operating principles for the consortium, are as follows.

- **Goals** describe the common understanding of the consortium's purpose.
- **Strategy** defines the plans and tactics of the consortium.
- **Structure** provides a framework that organizes resources to support service delivery, accountability, and decision-making.
- **Roles** define the tasks, authority, actions, and expected outputs of consortium members.
- **Process** documents mechanisms that create and support an enabling environment for the consortium.
- **Interpersonal** describes the ideal for individuals and institutions to interact and relate to each other.
- **Learning** elaborates a reflective process resulting in change based in experience and evidence.

Following the standards is the **CAFE Reference Sheet**, which suggests tools and good practices for forming and operating a consortium. The reference sheet also expands upon the standards by offering descriptions of attributes and processes for each standard, elaborating on the characteristics needed by consortium personnel, and defining the features and elements of consortium procedures.

The **CAFE Implementation Guide** presents a timeline of a consortium through pre-consortium planning, formation, proposal design, project approval, and the implementation phases: start up, execution, midterm, closure, and continuation. Each phase has definitions, outputs, conditions, and indicators for success, pitfalls, monitoring checklists, suggestions for tools and best practices.

The **CAFE Glossary** draws upon CRS and colleague organizations to define the terms most commonly used in consortium and in CAFE.

# HOW AND WHY CAFE WAS DEVELOPED

Addressing poverty and injustice is growing increasingly difficult as their causes become interrelated and complex. Among other challenges, conflict, global warming, economic downturn, and HIV/AIDS contribute to, and cause, many of the problems faced by communities across the globe. The scope and scale of the problems and the enormity of the needed response means that traditional approaches to development may be insufficient. More and more, donors, international development agencies, and local organizations are turning to working in consortium to address the interconnected and difficult challenges facing communities around the world.

The goal of consortium-led projects is to enhance impact and assist them to reach their potential. Consortiums, when properly governed, have the potential to produce a sum of overall outputs that is greater than individual organizations working with little coordination. Consortiums offer the opportunity for numerous organizations to increase collaboration, exchange expertise, unify advocacy efforts, and increase overall service delivery and accountability to project participants. However, not all organizations engage in consortium on their own volition, and despite the increase in consortium-managed projects, there is a paucity of information on how to set up and effectively manage consortiums. There is ever increasing pressure from donors to create consortium, which is not expected to abate. Balancing the potential for increased impact through consortiums, the realities of donor pressure, and the needs and identities of multiple organizations present numerous managerial challenges.

CRS Malawi indicated a need for a document to help CRS and its partners work more effectively in consortium; this need mirrored similar requests from other country projects. Under the leadership of CRS Malawi, and with the support of the Institutional Capacity Building grant from the USAID Office of Food for Peace, participants wrote the first draft of CAFE at a May 2008 workshop entitled “Improving Consortium Governance.” CRS headquarters staff with consortium responsibility reviewed CAFE and supplemented the draft with information on the responsibilities and roles of U.S.-based staff.

The Consortium Alignment Framework for Excellence intends to assist Catholic Relief Services and its partners to improve their ability to form strong consortiums that respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and meet donor requirements while strengthening the relationship between them. CAFE addresses the consortium itself, not the project that it has undertaken. The focus of CAFE is to make the managerial, financial, and administrative functions of a consortium effective, efficient, and supportive of project goals, community needs, and donor intent. CAFE does not assist with project or project design, but rather the design and functions of the consortium implementing the project.

CRS Madagascar and Malawi field-tested CAFE as they formed new consortium; CAFE includes their feedback.

# WHEN AND HOW TO USE CAFE

Use CAFE during the consortium development process to check for organizational compatibility and to set the stage for how consortium members will work together during the life of the consortium. There are a number of options for when and how CAFE may be used.

1. In the pre-consortium planning, formation of a consortium, and the proposal design phases, CAFE can be used with the Request for Application (RFA) as a conversation guide between CRS and (potential) consortium members, be they international NGOs or local organizations, to come to agreement on how the consortium might operate, determine whether all partners agree to adhere to the standards, and double-check the feasibility of proposed consortium structures, processes, and approaches. A half-day session for using CAFE is included in this section.

For example, CRS Madagascar used CAFE to form a new consortium. CRS found the standards offered a solid point of reference for discussion with partners and subsequently used CAFE standards to gauge whether the ideas generated for the consortium were appropriate. The regional growth advisor, facilitating the project's development, found CAFE references useful as they helped fine-tune the discussion and helped the consortium members delineate ideas. CRS Madagascar designed the final consortium structure and operating model using CAFE.

2. Use CAFE during the start-up phase to verify the agreements made during proposal development. With consortium staff, consider conducting a start-up retreat to review and commit to the standards. In many consortiums, where the chief of party and other staff were not involved in proposal development conducting a CAFE workshop can help build a cohesive team committed to common standards of operation and accountability. The half-day workshop may be adapted for this purpose. CRS should consider engaging an outside facilitator to conduct the retreat or workshop, enabling consortium members to concentrate fully on the discussion with their colleagues.
3. At midterm and closure, CAFE logically serves as a monitoring and evaluation tool for the consortium itself. While project evaluations will determine whether the intended outcomes have been achieved, CAFE offers consortium members an opportunity for reflection and correction in managerial, financial, and administrative functions of a consortium. At the end of the project, CAFE can be used not only to determine effectiveness and efficiency of the consortium, but as a tool to determine how the consortium may wish to remain in relationship, either as partners or as members of a future consortium.

Included in this manual is a feedback form. Please fill it out and send it by fax or email, as indicated on the form; CAFE editors appreciate your time and effort. The editors will update CAFE in FY 2010 based upon user feedback.

Use the following workshop at the planning or start-up phase and if there is significant turnover during the project, necessitating a "check-in" or recommitment to the standards.

## CAFE INTRODUCTION, HALF-DAY SESSION

### GOAL

To improve consortium governance in order to better serve project beneficiaries.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To conduct a consortium-level assessment against CAFE standards
2. To prepare an action plan to address identified challenges
3. To provide feedback to the CAFE team of editors

### OUTPUTS

1. List of key strengths and challenges facing the consortium
2. Consortium one-year action plan
3. Completed tabulated feedback form

### TIME

4 hours

### MATERIALS

Flipchart, flipchart stand, multicolored markers, tape, clock or timer, notepaper, and pens for participants (as needed).

### DOCUMENTS

Printed session plan; CAFE standards, reference sheets, implementation guide, and glossary; CAFE feedback form.

### PREPARATION

- Make and post the objectives of the workshop on flipchart paper.
- Post seven flipchart papers. Head each paper with the "components" (Goals, Strategy, Structure,

Roles, Process, Interpersonal, and Learning). Each component should then list vertically, in accordance with the number of CAFE standards, the alphabet character for that component. Leave space at the bottom for listing the action points. (see sample flipchart).

*Sample Flipchart, Components*

**GOALS**

A)

B)

C)

**ACTION POINTS**

- Make and post one flipchart with the heading "Rating scale" and "1 = the standard is rarely reached; 2 = the standard is sometimes reached; 3= the standard is usually reached; 4= the standard is almost always reached; and 5=the standard is exceeded"

*Sample Flipchart, Rating Scale*

**RATING SCALE**

**1** = the standard is rarely reached

**2** = the standard is sometimes reached

**3** = the standard is usually reached

**4** = the standard is almost always reached

**5** = the standard is exceeded

- Photocopy Handouts 1 and 2, "Consortium Alignment Framework for Excellence—Standards" and "CAFE Standards Feedback Questions," for each participant. (These may be found in at the end of the manual.)

- Make and post one flipchart with the heading "Key reflection questions": "1) Where is the consortium currently with regard to each standard? 2) Where do they think the Consortium could be in one year with regard to each standard? 3) What does the consortium need to do to achieve the one year vision?"

*Sample Flipchart, Key reflection questions*

**KEY REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1) Where is the consortium currently with regard to each standard?

2) Where do they think the Consortium could be in one year with regard to each standard?

3) What does the consortium need to do to achieve the one year vision?

- Make and post a flipchart with the heading "Factors and examples of success"

- Make and post a flipchart with the heading "Activities to advance the standards"

- Make and post one flipchart with the heading "Top three priorities"

- Make and post a flipchart with the heading "Feedback on CAFE"

## FACILITATOR

Ideally, an external facilitator with strong strategic thinking and training skills who is a member of neither the consortium nor any of the consortium member organizations. Alternatively, can be a staff member of the consortium with recognized facilitation skills who is recognized as balanced and fair.

## PRE-SESSION ACTIVITIES

Schedule a half-day workshop with the consortium members. The participants are the advisory board members, consortium management unit members, and the NGO member directors. Ideally, the senior management of each NGO should be invited.

## ACTIVITIES

1. **Introduction and objectives** (10 minutes)
   a. Conduct a warm up and introduction exercise appropriate to the level of familiarity within the group.
   b. Read the objectives and link session activities to the overall goal.
   c. Provide background information on CAFE.

2. **Instructions and tool review** (10 minutes)
   a. Distribute the CAFE Standards (including ratings)
   b. Explain the CAFE Standards. State that there are seven components listed vertically, and each component has several standards. Explain that each standard is a statement of a level which the consortium should achieve.

3. **Standard comprehension, reflection, and rating** (20 minutes)
   a. Distribute the handout with CAFE standards and the rating scale.
   b. Ask participants one by one to read aloud each standard going around the room.

c. Instruct each participant to respond individually to three main questions:
   i. Where is the consortium currently with regard to each standard? (circle the best number on the scale)
   ii. Where do they think the consortium could be in one year with regard to each standard? (place a check mark next to the best number on the scale)
   iii. What does the consortium need to do to achieve the one-year vision? (jot down some ideas that will be discussed in plenary)

**4. Data collection** (10 minutes)

a. Call the plenary attention to the seven flipcharts on the wall, each headed with a component and its corresponding standards.
b. Explain that the group will tabulate and analyze the data the data in plenary.
c. Instruct the participants to use a marker and note their responses on the flipcharts for each component and standard.
d. After ranking all standards and component, participants may return to their seats.

**5. Data analysis** (110 minutes)

a. Ask the plenary to review the data and discuss the following questions:
   i. What standards are the highest rating? (circle the top 2)
   ii. What standards have the lowest rating? (circle top 5)
   iii. What standards have the greatest diversity? (circle top 5)
   *(there should be up to 12 standards circled)*
b. Ask the participants to explain their highest ratings.
   i. What examples does the consortium have to support this data?
   ii. What factors permitted the consortium to meet or exceed the standard?
   iii. Try to identify quickly what led to this situation and write the responses on the flipchart headed "Factors and examples of success".
c. Ask the participants to explain the lowest and greatest diversity of ratings.
   i. What examples does the group have to support this data?
   ii. For the diverse responses, explore the reasons why there is a divergence.
   iii. What factors permitted the consortium to meet or exceed the standard?
   iv. What can be done to advance this standard? (write the planning under the flipchart headed "Activities to advance the standards").
   Note: Avoid conversations that assign blame. Document the ideas on the appropriate flipchart.
d. Summarize the list of standards and overall trends.

**6. Prioritization, action planning, and budgeting** (60 minutes)

a. Summarize the discussion from the previous step and explain that not all changes are doable at the same time and thus the group will now prioritize, plan, and budget.
b. Ask the participants to vote for their top three among the 10 lowest/highest diversity rated.
c. Instruct the group to go to the flipcharts and place three votes. Ask the group to consider the following criteria: the lowest ratings; what resonates most; the current status and direction of the consortium; what is already planned (to avoid prioritizing that which is already planned for). Ultimately, their selections should respond to the question, "*If we were to advance three standards in the next year, which would make the biggest difference*?"
d. Tabulate the totals and list the top three on a separate flip chart headed "Top three priorities."
e. Ask the group to reflect on the suggested actions that would advance the component and standards and suggest milestones to monitor the process along the year. Write those milestones and potential dates on the flip chart.
f. Ask the group to assign quickly estimated resource needs for each of the three priorities.
g. Finally, ask the group to assign a person or committee to carry the process forward.

**7. Summary and feedback** (30 minutes)

a. Summarize the group's overall commitments, and thank them for the invaluable input. Explain that the process until now focused on the actual use of the CAFE tools; however, they are also part of the process review, and their candid input is greatly appreciated.
b. Hand out the CAFE Feedback Form, and in plenary ask the questions to the group. Focus on keeping the conversation around the 80/20 principle, or *what limited number of changes could make the biggest impact on the use of the tool?*
c. Document the overall changes on a flip chart headed "Feedback on the CAFE".

**8. Conclusion** (10 minutes)

a. Summarize the mini-workshop and thank them for the time for this reflection. Explain that a very short summary report of the workshop will be provided.

**9. Contribution to CAFE** (at a later date)

a. Compile the feedback from the participants.
b. Please send the feedback to Sarah Ford, sford@crs.org or Christopher Michael Reichert, crsreichert@gmail.com. You may fax the feedback to Sarah at +1-410-234-3178 if you prefer.

# CAFE STANDARDS

As noted early, CAFE's core document is **CAFE Standards**. The standards are inspirational, asking consortium members to think and act as a committed collective of individuals and organizations dedicated to the project, its beneficiaries, and to each other. While recognizing that all consortium members are ultimately accountable to their home organizations, CAFE asks that members strive to keep the needs and concerns of the consortium in the forefront of their minds. The standards describe a high level of function and purpose for the consortium, recognizing that flexibility in their application is realistic. Using the standards to form, monitor, and evaluate the consortium helps to establish and maintain operating principles, strengthen structure, resolve conflict, and ensure that consortium managerial, financial, and administrative systems support project participants and outcomes. All consortium components: goals, strategy, structure, roles, process, interpersonal, and learning are intended to be mutually reinforcing.

| **COMPONENT**<br>*(Aspect of consortium)* | **STANDARDS**<br>*(Measurable, clear, and concise statement of a desired state.)* |
|---|---|
| **1. Goals**<br>*Describes the common understanding of the consortium's purpose.* | **The consortium has:**<br>a) a common vision for the consortium, understood and agreed to by all levels of each agency (e.g., country, regional, headquarters)<br>b) common criteria for excellence in internal consortium management: programmatic, financial, and managerial<br>c) accountability for service delivery to communities and/or project participants, compliance to donors, and to each other |
| **2. Strategy**<br>*Defines the plans and tactics of the consortium.* | **Consortium leadership has mutually agreed to:**<br>a) appropriate financial, administrative, and managerial systems, based on consortium needs and each agency's strengths<br>b) appropriate technical approaches, based on assessed need, aligned with community, national, and donor goals<br>c) a contingency plan to address unforeseen shocks to the project or to the consortium |
| **3. Structure**<br>*Provides a framework that organizes resources to support service delivery, accountability, and decision-making.* | **Consortium structures:**<br>a) guarantee and support efficiency and effectiveness at all levels of consortium in governance, project, and financial management<br>b) are documented by a formal and mutually agreed-to organizational chart representing all levels of the consortium and of each agency<br>c) respond to the needs and requirements of project participants and donors<br>d) create synergy by capitalizing on member organizational structures and ensure a high level of participation within the consortium |
| **4. Roles**<br>*Defines the tasks, authority, actions, and expected outputs of consortium members.* | **Consortium roles are:**<br>a) based on the capacities of each agency and the needs of the consortium<br>b) linked with their associated responsibilities in a mutual reinforcing process<br>c) based on consortium needs and assigned based on assessed capacity to maximize service delivery<br>d) account for each member's non-negotiable organizational value or policy statements<br>e) agreed to at all levels of each agency (country, regional, headquarters) and formally documented |
| **5. Process**<br>*Documents mechanisms that create and support an enabling environment for the consortium.* | **The consortium has mutually agreed to:**<br>a) an operations manual documenting administrative, financial, and human resource processes and procedures to remain in compliance with host nation law and donor requirements<br>b) an accountability-based performance evaluation process that balances performance with resources<br>c) conflict resolution, communication, and decision-making protocols that reinforce transparency and accountability at all levels of the consortium |
| **6. Interpersonal**<br>*Describes the interactions between individuals and institutions.* | **Consortium staff, policies, and procedures:**<br>a) respect the human dignity of each person (consortium members, project participants, stakeholders, and other) without regard for organization, job responsibility, or personal identity<br>b) conduct consortium business in a transparent, timely, and respectful fashion<br>c) work to build a consortium based on trust and mutual respect, consistently modeling and supporting positive interpersonal behavior<br>d) when representing the consortium, put the needs and identity of the consortium ahead of individual organizational needs |
| **7. Learning**<br>*Elaborates a reflective process resulting in change based in experience and evidence.* | **The consortium:**<br>a) allocates sufficient resources to monitoring, evaluation, learning, and knowledge management systems<br>b) supports staff in learning, change, and innovation<br>c) creates and sustains a culture that continually improves its management practice from lesson learned, both failures and successes |

# CAFE REFERENCE SHEETS

The reference sheet accompanies CAFE standards, expanding the characteristics needed by consortium personnel, and suggesting tools and good practices for each component. The reference sheets may be most useful to the prime and an external facilitator as they plan the initial steps in forming a consortium, at the mid-project and final consortium evaluation. Neither the tools nor the good practices are exhaustive, and they should be complemented with the tools and practices of other consortium members.

| COMPONENT | ATTRIBUTES & PROCESSES | TOOLS | GOOD PRACTICES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Goals**<br>*The consortium has:*<br>a. *a common vision for the consortium, understood and agreed to by all levels of each agency (e.g., country, regional, headquarters)*<br>b. *common criteria for excellence in internal consortium management: programmatic, financial, and managerial*<br>c. *accountability for service delivery to communities and/or project participants, compliance to donors, and to each other* | • A **mutually agreed-to, transparent, and rigorous process** should be **negotiated** and used to identify the implementing agencies, based on the **demonstrated** technical, managerial, and financial capacity of each agency. The consortium may wish to consider **vertical and horizontal complementarity** (sectoral versus geographical) to capture different consortium members' structure<br>• The **common** vision for the consortium, is ideally **negotiated** and **agreed to** by each agency at all levels, **including but not limited** to the country program, subregional, regional, and headquarters offices The **vision** for the consortium should **respect the diversity** among consortium member agencies<br>• The consortium should **define and agree** to all of the common criteria for **excellence** in management, programming, and financial management The criteria should be **formalized with a written agreement** at the onset, reviewed, **and updated** on a **mutually agreed-to schedule**<br>• A review of **principles, values, and missions** of each consortium member may serve as the basis of a joint statement committing to **accountability** to communities and/or beneficiaries, donors, and to each other<br>• Goals are set at the **highest level and** describe the **desired state,** condition, or situation. They **resonate** with donor, participant, and host country priorities and are **mutually agreed-to** by all parties | • One-on-one dialogue<br>• Organizational capacity assessment<br>• Task analysis at the structure level<br>• Reports: technical, financial, baseline, annual, evaluation<br>• Performance Indicator Tracking Table (PITT), agency performance scorecard<br>• Livelihood analysis<br>• Stakeholder analysis<br>• Project orientation<br>• Teaming agreements<br>• List of management, finance, and organizational development consultants<br>• Integral Human Development framework, concept, and users guide<br>• Catholic social teaching | • Annual retreat/reflection with external facilitation<br>• Midterm survey before the actual mid point in the project<br>• Proven participatory processes for advisory body |

| COMPONENT | ATTRIBUTES & PROCESSES | TOOLS | GOOD PRACTICES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2 Strategy**<br>*Consortium leadership has mutually agreed to:*<br>*a. appropriate financial and managerial approaches, based on consortium needs and each agency's strengths*<br>*b. technical approaches, based on assessed need, aligned with community, national, and donor goals*<br>*c. a contingency plan to address unforeseen shocks to the project or to the consortium* | • Strategies should **align** with broad consortium member strategies and lead to **clear, mutually agreed-to** results framework at strategic objective (SO) level<br>• The technical approach should be **appropriate, country specific**, and based on assessed need<br>• The technical approach must also lead to **high quality programming**<br>• The **documented** and **agreed upon** financial and managerial approaches should **support project impact**<br>• The contingency plan should be **periodically updated** to address unforeseen events, e.g., emergencies or changing context<br>• Consortium approaches should be based on **need**, not resource oriented | • Sustainability plan<br>• Exit or closure plan<br>• Review of midterm evaluation<br>• Closure checklist<br>• Evaluation tools<br>• ProPack II<br>• CAFE standards and implementation guide<br>• Regular formal and informal meetings with donor, communities, government, consortium members, and other stakeholders<br>• Request for assistance (RFA) and donor requirements<br>• Detailed implementation plan (DIP)<br>• approved budget | • Review lessons learned from previous experiences, e.g., C-SAFE, I-LIFE<br>• Cross learning among consortium members on service delivery in technical areas<br>• Install an M&E system that flags potential areas where delivery might be affected and then take appropriate action<br>• Present lessons learned and approaches at symposia<br>• Examples of protocols, standard operating guidelines, score card on performance<br>• Meet with donor to review standards and requirements, expectations |

| COMPONENT | ATTRIBUTES & PROCESSES | TOOLS | GOOD PRACTICES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3 Structure**<br>*Consortium structures:*<br>*a. guarantee and support efficiency and effectiveness at all levels of consortium in governance, program, and financial management*<br>*b. are documented by a formal and mutually agreed-to organizational chart representing all levels of the consortium and of each agency*<br>*c. respond to the needs and requirements of project participants and donors*<br>*d. create synergy by capitalizing on member organizational structures and ensure a high level of participation within the consortium* | • Consortium member organizations' structures **create synergy** by taking the best from each and combining to a greater whole, reduces duplication<br>• Each level of structure is **well defined and understood by all**<br>• Structure is **linked to systems** to **ensure accountability**<br>• Structures are **adaptable to change** (program quality, administration, capacity, etc)<br>• Structures support **quick, efficient and effective processes**<br>• Structures are designed to **ensure efficient and effective** service delivery<br>• Structures are designed to **support** goals and strategies<br>• Elements of structure are **determined by the scope of project** (size, resources, etc) and the scope of the **consortium**<br>• Are kept **simple** and **flexible**<br>• **Mutually agreed-to** definitions and organizational chart | • Organizational assessment tools<br>• Organizational design tools<br>• Organizational charts<br>• Definitions of efficiency and effectiveness<br>• Request for assistance (RFA) and donor requirements<br>• Detailed implementation plan (DIP)<br>• Approved budget<br>• CRS financial management tools and systems | • Review structures from other consortium<br>• "Shortest path to a decision" as guide<br>• Periodic reviews of how structure facilitates work, learning, communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution<br>• Midterm and final evaluation of structure and participation<br>• Review lessons learned from previous experiences, e.g., C-SAFE, I-LIFE |

| COMPONENT | ATTRIBUTES & PROCESSES | TOOLS | GOOD PRACTICES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **4 Roles**<br>*Consortium roles are:*<br>*a. based on the capacities of each agency and the needs of the consortium*<br>*b. linked with their associated responsibilities in a mutual reinforcing process*<br>*c. based on consortium needs and assigned based on assessed capacity to maximize service delivery*<br>*d. consistent with each member's non-negotiable organizational value or policy statements*<br>*e. agreed to at all levels of each agency (country, regional, headquarters) and formally documented* | • Roles and responsibilities are based on the documented and **mutually assessed capacities** of each agency and the needs of the consortium<br>• The assessment should also be **ongoing** and **transparently reassessed** periodically **with appropriate action taken** as staffing, organizational capacity **evolves**<br>• Roles should be **clear, simple, logical, straightforward**, **documented,** and defined in a **transparent** fashion<br>• Threshold issues identified through a **due diligence process**, means comparing individual agency **strategies, missions, and values**<br>• Consortium members at **all levels** (HQ, region, country program, etc.) of each organization **understand and agree-to** roles and responsibilities<br>• Roles are **jointly** and **transparently monitored** through established performance tracking systems<br>• Roles are **formally agreed-to** and **documented** (MOU, teaming, agreements)<br>• Roles and responsibilities are **based on project needs**, not dependent on individuals | • Consortium member organizations' management structures<br>• Consortium organizations performance evaluation systems<br>• Examples of roles from other consortium<br>• Role and responsibility descriptions from other consortia<br>• Consortium members' policy and organizational values statements<br>• Donor regulations | • Mutual assessment of needs in order to develop roles<br>• Review each organization's management processes and performance evaluation system to determine synergy and/or conflicts for the consortium<br>• Conduct ongoing assessment of roles as staff and/or capacity change<br>• Formal review of roles annually or as needed<br>• Review roles when there is a change in the project<br>• Develop roles in manner to betterment of consortium, not individual organizations<br>• Role and responsibility descriptions from other consortia<br>• Succession planning and orientation for new hires during project implementation |

| COMPONENT | ATTRIBUTES & PROCESSES | TOOLS | GOOD PRACTICES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **5 Process**<br>*The consortium has mutually agreed to:*<br>*a. an operations manual documenting administrative, financial, and human resource processes and procedures to remain in compliance with host nation law and donor requirements*<br>*b. an accountability-based performance evaluation process that balances performance with resources*<br>*c. conflict resolution, communication, and decision-making protocols that reinforce transparency and accountability at all levels of the consortium* | • Processes are **transparent**, **mutually agreed to, respected** and **utilized** by all consortium members<br>• The operations manual is **adhered to by all members**, and **reviewed and updated** on an **agreed-to schedule**<br>• The **process** for conflict resolution is **clear** and **adhered to by all members**<br>• **Procedures and processes** assist the consortium to remain in **compliance** with donor requirements<br>• The **transparent and accountability-based** performance evaluation process includes a **clearly articulated process** to link performance with resources<br>• **Clearly defined** communication and decision-making protocols **reinforce transparency and accountability** at **all levels of the consortium**<br>• Financial management **tools, processes, and procedures** are **mutually agreed-to** and **well understood** by all consortium members<br>• A **process** articulates the **shortest path to a decision** within **all levels of the consortium** (e.g., country, regional, headquarters)<br>• Processes are **linked** to systems and levels of **responsibility** and **authority**<br>• Processes are **flexible** to changing environments | • Documented processes and operations manuals from member organizations<br>• Financial management, program management, human resource management manuals from each agency<br>• Organizational design tools<br>• Definitions of terms used | • Commonly agreed, well detailed and documented processes formed for:<br>• Conflict resolution<br>• Decision making both at headquarters and at local levels<br>• Data and financial management<br>• Performance evaluation: transparent performance based on evaluation and accountability<br>• Communication (transparency and accountability)<br>• Process to allocate resources linked to performance/ achievements |

| COMPONENT | ATTRIBUTES & PROCESSES | TOOLS | GOOD PRACTICES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **6 Interpersonal**<br>Consortium staff, policies, and procedures:<br>a. *respect the human dignity of each person (consortium members, project participants, stakeholders, and other) without regard for organization, job responsibility, or personal identity*<br>b. *conduct consortium business in a transparent, timely, and respectful fashion*<br>c. *work to build a consortium based on trust and mutual respect, consistently modeling and supporting positive interpersonal behavior*<br>d. *when representing the consortium, put the needs and identity of the consortium ahead of individual organizational needs* | • All functions are conducted **transparently, equally,** and **without bias**<br>• Decisions and communications information sharing are **transparent at all levels**<br>• Definitions, systems, and remedies are **mutually agreed to**<br>• Consortium leadership is committed to **gender equity**<br>• Consortium leadership is committed to **staffing that reflects the composition of the nation**<br>• Conflict resolution procedures include an **appeal process**<br>• Definitions of **respect, trust, dignity**, etc., are **developed and agreed to** by consortium staff | • Human resource standards from each consortium member and from other consortia<br>• CRS values-based behavior<br>• Host government employment law and applicable equal opportunity law<br>• Catholic social teaching<br>• Conflict resolution procedures<br>• Consortium code of conduct | • Grievance procedures<br>• Communication protocols<br>• Training for consortium staff in:<br>  • Working across cultures and/or in diverse settings<br>  • Communication<br>  • Conflict resolution<br>  • Working with differently-abled people<br>  • Gender<br>• Recognition in performance appraisals for strong interpersonal and/or partnership skills<br>• Remedies and sanctions exist for inappropriate or disruptive behaviors<br>• Detail values based behavior for the consortium |

| COMPONENT | ATTRIBUTES & PROCESSES | TOOLS | GOOD PRACTICES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **7 Learning**<br>*The consortium:*<br>*a. allocates sufficient resources to monitoring, evaluation, learning, and knowledge management systems*<br>*b. supports staff in learning, change, and innovation*<br>*c. creates and sustains a culture that continually improves its management practice from lesson learned, both failures and successes* | • Failures are not punished but **refocused into learning opportunities**<br>• Sharing is as **horizontal** as possible, with managers and subordinates allowed equal opportunity to **share knowledge and learning**<br>• **Appropriate** technology is leveraged to **maximize** learning systems<br>• The consortium ensures that they plan, allocate resources, and **conduct** evidence-based **research, periodic assessment, and evaluations** to facilitate and ensure **credibility**<br>• Learning and knowledge management systems and processes are **mutually agreed-to and updated to reflect best practices** | • Learning sections of M&E Standards and Support tool<br>• ProPack II<br>• "CRS as a Learning Organization" and similar documents from other consortium members<br>• Definitions of learning, knowledge management, innovation, knowledge communities, communities of practice<br>• Storytelling, most significant change, after action reviews, and other knowledge documentation, learning, and monitoring/evaluation tools<br>• Technology appropriate to location, culture, capabilities, and resources, including shared drives, intranet-connected computers, telephones, text messaging, Twitter<br>• Collaboration and connection platforms/tools: email lists, intranets, virtual meetings | • Meeting times with necessary financial and human resources are planned for critical reflection events (peer assists, mentoring, after action reviews, etc)<br>• Training in learning and knowledge management<br>• Training in documentation<br>• Communities of practice internal to the consortium as well as external<br>• Monitoring and learning data used to make decisions<br>• Recognition in performance appraisal and other opportunities for rewards for sharing<br>• Documenting and disseminating "good practices" and "lessons learned" internally and externally<br>• Consortium leaders and managers demonstrate regularly how learning is used to make decisions |

# CAFE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The **CAFE Implementation Guide** serves as a companion to project development documents. CRS staff should use the implementation guide as a reference point throughout the life of the consortium, assisting CRS staff members forming and working in consortium a means to ensure consortium managerial, financial, and administrative systems support project participants and outcomes. The implementation guide is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Each consortium should adapt the activities in accordance with the needs, structure, and policies of their consortium.

As the **CAFE Implementation Guide** focuses on the *consortium*, not the project, or the proposal, readers should refer to the **ProPack I, Project Design and Proposal Guidance** and **ProPack II, Project Management and Implementation Guidance**, for designing appropriate project interventions. The **Technical Application Guidance** manual (TAG), serves as a reference for proposal development. Project activities are referenced in the implementation guide only when they directly relate to the functions and purpose of the consortium.



| | | TIMELINE OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION STAGES | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | PRE-CONSORTIUM PLANNING | **RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS**<br>This section defines what takes place at this stage of consortium development. It includes descriptions of the types of activities, identifies who is responsible, and lists anticipated outputs. | **CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS**<br>These columns describe how to measure progress toward the desired outputs of this stage of consortium development, and illustrate what works and what to avoid. | **LEARNING**<br>This section lists materials created by CRS and partner organizations—manuals, guidance, processes—that can assist a consortium at this phase. Many CRS tools are useful throughout the life of a consortium and may be introduced to partners as best practice. |
| 2 | FORMATION OF CONSORTIUM | | | |
| 3 | PROPOSAL DESIGN | | | |
| 4 | PROPOSAL APPROVAL OR REJECTION | | | |
| 5 | IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: START UP | | | |
| 6 | IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: EXECUTION | | | |
| 7 | IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: MID-TERM | | | |
| 8 | CLOSURE | | | |
| 9 | CONTINUATION | | | |

# 1. PRE-CONSORTIUM PLANNING

| RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS | | | CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS | | LEARNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Indicators of Success** | **Pitfalls (what not to do)** | **Tools and Best Practices** |
| The stage where preliminary exploration and consultation to identify consortium members takes place, before the announcement of the RFA. Typically, the process is led by one agency (which may be accepted later as the prime) or by a group of like-minded agencies or by the prime of an existing consortium. | **ALL**<br>• Study the RFA<br>• Identify potential consortium members<br>• Identify the goal, opportunities, risks, and strategic issues of the consortium<br>• Conduct a preliminary evaluation of partners' organizational structure, strengths, and commitment to the consortium<br>• Review the teaming agreement<br>**PRIME**<br>• Determine level of transparency consortium members are willing to allow<br>• Check the efficiency ratio of potential consortium members<br>• Determine the capacity to contribute cost share<br>**SUBRECIPIENTS/PARTNERS**<br>• Determine commitment to partnership and collaboration on the part of the prime and other subrecipients<br>• Identify resources needed<br>• Identify staff available and/or needed<br>**HQ**<br>• Check experience of potential consortium members with other country programs<br>• Establish and/or maintain contact with donor agency | • Identified prime<br>• Identified potential consortium members<br>• Clearly stated opportunities, risks, and strategic issues<br>• Common vision understood and agreed by each organization, at all levels<br>• Demonstrated complementarity of organizations (technical and financial capacity)<br>• Potential consortium members read and agree to CRS's teaming agreement | • Industry leaders and high quality partners join the consortium<br>• Demonstrated complementarity of agencies<br>• Transparent, rigorous, and natural process leads to the identification of partners, prime, and chief of party<br>• Decisions and communications information sharing are transparent at all levels<br>• Efficient decision-making | • Beginning consultations and discussions after the release of the RFA<br>• Allowing the initiator of the consultation process to dominate the process<br>• Choosing an RFA coordinator with no marketing or interpersonal skills to identify partners<br>• Allowing power struggles to dominate the discussions<br>• Allowing any organization to become the prime by default | • Partner profiles<br>• Technical Application Guidance manual (TAG)<br>• PTS (Project Tracking System)<br>• Teaming agreement<br>• CRS partnership principles<br>• After-action reviews<br>• One-on-one dialogue and group discussions with consortium members<br>• "Shortest Path to a Good Decision" methodology |

# 2. FORMATION OF CONSORTIUM

| RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS | | | CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS | | LEARNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Indicators of Success** | **Pitfalls (what not to do)** | **Tools and Best Practices** |
| The stage where the consortium is finalized. | **ALL**<br>• Share vision, missions, values, and organizational cultures with each other<br>• Using CAFE standards, discuss the managerial, financial, and administrative procedures for the consortium<br>• Conduct relationship building activities to strengthen the consortium<br>• Design appropriate technical approaches that lead to high quality programming<br>• Determine resource sharing procedures<br>• Sign the teaming agreement<br>**PRIME**<br>• Signed teaming agreement with letters of commitment<br>• Agreed upon plan for consortium formation<br>**SUBRECIPIENTS/PARTNERS**<br>• Agreed-to role in finance, management, and administration of the consortium<br>• Agreed-to consortium structure, goals, roles, and processes<br>**HQ**<br>• Records on partners and donors updated<br>• Establish a relationship with consortium members at HQ, as necessary | • Documented commitment to excellence in management, programming and accountability to communities and beneficiaries, donors and each other<br>• Geographical targets identified<br>• Agreed-to resource sharing procedures documented<br>• All consortium members have a signed copy of the Teaming Agreement | • Good interpersonal relationships demonstrated by open communication and decision-making processes<br>• Demonstrated coordination<br>• Budget distribution based on partner capacity, with information on budget assignment communicated to partners before teaming agreement<br>• Consortium members agree that functions are conducted without bias | • Lack of continuous dialogue at each step of design<br>• Lack of knowledge of potential partners<br>• Choosing project areas based on consortium member convenience rather than need<br>• Delaying discussions of managerial, financial, and administrative procedures until grant award | • Teaming agreement<br>• CRS organizational assessment tools<br>• CAFE standards<br>• CRS Partnership reflection manual<br>• CRS Financial management assessment tools |

# 3. PROPOSAL DESIGN

| RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS | | | CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS | | LEARNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Indicators of Success** | **Pitfalls (what not to do)** | **Tools and Best Practices** |
| The stage where the prime leads the process to develop and submit the proposal to the donor | **ALL**<br>• Develop a timeline for project design and proposal development<br>• Identify consultants<br>• Identify how consortium members will participate in the design<br>• Identify and select the appropriate tools used by consortium members in designing proposals<br>• Conduct assessment to align project with community and national goals, donor intent<br>• Fit elements of structure to the scope (size, resources, etc) of the project<br>• Develop and agree to roles, responsibilities, and processes in participatory manner<br>• Develop and agree to project strategies and results framework<br>• Develop and agree to a monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan<br>**PRIME**<br>• On-going consultation with consortium members<br>• Consortium structure builds on member organizations structures to create synergy<br>**SUBRECIPIENTS/PARTNERS**<br>• Agreed-to role in proposed project implementation<br>• Consult previous project documents and evaluations<br>**HQ**<br>• Establish contact with headquarters staff of consortium members involved in proposal development, as appropriate<br>• Maintain contact with donor | • Proposal is developed according to donor requirements and with the active involvement of all consortium members<br>• The consortium is demonstrably stronger because of working together in a participatory manner on the proposal | • Members of the consortium feel ownership of the proposal<br>• The proposed consortium has a simple, easy to use structure<br>• The consortium's structure is linked to systems to ensure accountability, ensures a high level of participation, and responds to project participants and donor requirements<br>• Strategies align with broad agency strategies and lead to clear results framework at strategic objective level<br>• Roles are assigned based on assessed capacity | • Prime makes unilateral decisions<br>• Assuming, rather than verifying, that all consortium members are in agreement with roles, responsibilities, project approach, and other proposal components<br>• Not carefully reviewing the RFA with all consortium members | • Proven governance structures<br>• Establish an advisory body<br>• Hire consultants to assist design proposal<br>• Compilation of tools used or developed by member organizations<br>• Livelihood analysis<br>• Stakeholder analysis<br>• Previous evaluations<br>• TAG<br>• RFA<br>• ProPack I and ProPack II |

# 4. PROJECT APPROVAL OR REJECTION

| RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS | | | CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS | | LEARNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Indicators of Success** | **Pitfalls (what not to do)** | **Tools and Best Practices** |
| The stage where the donor accepts or rejects the submitted proposal. | **ALL**<br>• Communicate acceptance or rejection to communities and host government, as appropriate<br>• If approved, agree to immediate next steps in the start-up phase<br>• Conduct an after-action review or other evaluative session to determine factors that led to success or failure of the proposal and share the results with all relevant stakeholders<br>• Determine whether consortium group will continue to collaborate and potentially submit a new proposal should the opportunity arise<br>**PRIME**<br>• Communicate with the donor regarding proposal acceptance or rejection<br>• Meet with consortium members review feedback from donor<br>• If approved, sign the pre-approval letter and contracts as appropriate<br>• If rejected, complete any necessary paperwork for all agencies and/or donors<br>**SUB-RECIPIENTS/PARTNERS**<br>• Assist in communicating acceptance or rejection to communities and host government, as appropriate<br>• Share the results of the after action review with all relevant stakeholders<br>**HQ**<br>• Contact headquarters of consortium members to share lessons learned if rejected<br>• Contact headquarters of consortium members to determine continued collaboration and communication if accepted<br>• File appropriate paperwork with Finance, Legal, and Public Resource departments | • Pre-approval letter<br>• Contracts<br>• Results of donor feedback and after action review | • Good initial working relationship established within the consortium<br>• Plan to remain in communication and potential collaboration despite losing the proposal | • Neglect to debrief with all consortium members<br>• Neglect to solicit feedback on the proposal from the donor<br>• Neglect to debrief with communities, officials, and/or local partners who have assisted in proposal development | • Communication protocol with consortium partners, donors<br>• After action reviews<br>• Action plans for continued collaboration<br>• TAG<br>• ProPack I and II<br>• Win Loss Database<br>• Consultant and TDY databases<br>• Update CRS CVs and Chief of Party records |

# 5. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: START UP

| RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS | | | CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS | | LEARNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Indicators of Success** | **Pitfalls (what not to do)** | **Tools and Best Practices** |
| The stage, after the approval of proposal, where details of structure, strategies, roles, responsibilities, and processes are initiated. | **ALL**<br>• Define each level of structure in detail and develop corresponding systems<br>• Hire staff<br>• Fine tune roles, responsibilities, and systems by establishing standard operating guidance, service delivery, and appropriate protocols<br>• Develop performance management system for consortium staff<br>• Establish a schedule for tracking consortium performance<br>• Develop and sign additional documents including agreements, contracts<br>• Develop a clear written learning strategy and diversified learning systems<br>• Develop and conduct training in project implementation, management, and learning based on designed systems to promote uniformity and learning from each organization<br>• Develop the DIP (detailed implementation plan)<br>• Inform and involve appropriate regional and headquarters staff<br>• Identify exit strategies for the end of project<br>**PRIME**<br>• Completed documentation (e.g., contracts, subagreements)<br>• Share financial information as appropriate<br>• Identify resources for start up in the case of delay in donor funding<br>**SUBRECIPIENTS/PARTNERS**<br>• Subagreements, protocols developed and signed<br>• Hire personnel<br>**HQ**<br>• Review agreements for compliance<br>• Communicate award to CRS leadership, OSD, and PQSD | • Documented process whereby consortium members and implementing partners reviewed the proposal and CAFE standards<br>• Detailed implementation and M&E plan<br>• Consortium knowledge management system<br>• Agreed-to continuous management improvement processes<br>• Signed agreements, contracts, and documents<br>• Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) are signed with consortium members | • Agreements are signed and on time<br>• Roles support goal, strategy, and structure and are clear, distinct, and documented to maximize service delivery<br>• Roles and responsibilities are understood and agreed to at all internal levels of each organization<br>• Systems, protocols and operating guidelines are agreed upon, simple, and user friendly<br>• Key personnel are in place | • Delay start up<br>• Delays in hiring staff<br>• Lack of orientation for staff, failing to use CAFE standards as an orientation tool<br>• Roles are dependent on individuals<br>• Begin implementation without protocols in place<br>• Insufficient attention to external factors that influence project start up, including political and economic changes<br>• Allow slippage in adherence to timelines in preparation of budgets, reports, or implementation | • ProPack II<br>• Project proposal<br>• Examples of protocols, standard operating guidelines, score card on performance from consortium members<br>• Program orientation event<br>• CRS values-based behavior<br>• CRS agreement templates |

# 6. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: EXECUTION

| RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS | | | CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS | | LEARNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Indicators of Success** | **Pitfalls (what not to do)** | **Tools and Best Practices** |
| The stage where project activities carried out and the consortium is managed to support project implementation. | **ALL**<br>• Hold advisory board or senior coordinating body meetings<br>• Implement conflict-management procedures as needed<br>• Document good practices and learning<br>• Conduct performance reviews<br>**PRIME**<br>• Resolve issues in the management of consortium<br>• Provide oversight to the consortium management unit<br>• Monitor performance<br>**SUBRECIPIENTS/PARTNERS**<br>• Ensure coordination and communication across consortium members and technical or geographic concentration<br>• Bring financial, managerial, or administrative issues to the attention of the prime and/or consortium management unit<br>• Provide input for donor reports on programmatic, financial, and administrative functions<br>**HQ**<br>• Provide compliance and technical support to the consortium<br>• Maintain contact with donor and consortium member's headquarters offices<br>• Represent the work of the consortium at meetings, conferences, and other event in the absence of consortium staff | • Advisory board that addresses consortium functions and program quality<br>• Effective and efficient consortium management unit<br>• Staff coached in their roles<br>• Technical and financial reports to the donor are on time and complete | • Continued funding from donor to prime to consortium members<br>• Timely and high quality reports from consortium members and to donor<br>• Performance reviews are on time, transparent, mutually agreed to, and evidence-based<br>• The consortium management unit is held accountable for its role and responsibility by the prime<br>• Conflicts are addressed in a timely fashion<br>• Communication from all consortium members is consistent and transparent<br>• Consortium takes appropriate action based on M&E system data | • Waiting for the midterm to address consortium challenges<br>• Not monitoring performance regularly<br>• Not adhering to agreed systems (e.g., meetings, roles, processes)<br>• Members give less priority to the consortium after the approval of funding<br>• Turnover of staff due to poaching within consortium<br>• Lack of orientation on consortium framework to new staff<br>• Neglecting to have periodic dialogue with donors<br>• Key positions remain vacant for a long period of time<br>• Lack of periodic critical reflection on progress<br>• Accountability assessment mechanisms are erratic | • CRS monitoring and evaluation standards<br>• ProPack II<br>• Monitoring task implementation by the prime is generated from task analysis in the structure level<br>• Integration of monitoring in regular implementation<br>• Cross learning among consortium members on service delivery in technical areas<br>• Annual retreat or reflection with external facilitation<br>• CRS partnership reflection manual |





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# 7. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: MIDTERM

| RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS | | | CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS | | LEARNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Indicators of Success** | **Pitfalls (what not to do)** | **Tools and Best Practices** |
| The stage where a formal evaluation of the consortium takes place. Ideally, it is at the midterm, however, many of the activities of this stage could be ongoing or annual. A midterm evaluation of project activities may take place at the same time. | **ALL**<br>• Agree to the scope and scale of the consortium evaluation with all members<br>• Identify consultants as needed<br>• Evaluate managerial, financial, and administrative procedures and practices<br>• Reflect on structure, roles, responsibilities, systems, and processes<br>• Review changing scenarios or shocks (fund, context, learning from implementation etc.) and consortium responses<br>• Identify and develop a protocol for sharing good practices<br>**PRIME**<br>• Prepare a checklist to monitor implementation of recommendations<br>• Solicit donors' views<br>**SUBRECIPIENTS/PARTNERS**<br>• Involve project staff and project beneficiaries in consortium evaluation<br>• Develop action plans that monitor implementation of recommendations<br>• Identify and share good practices<br>**HQ**<br>• Conduct an evaluation of headquarters-level consortium communication and coordination, as appropriate<br>• Share good practices with peer organizations, donors, and the public | • Reports<br>• Recommendations for change<br>• Redefined roles, processes, strategies and systems | • High levels of participation in evaluation<br>• Change is managed effectively<br>• Management, finance and administration are evaluated against CAFE standards and consortium agreements<br>• Consortium performance is reflected in successful project implementation<br>• Positive feedback from the donor | • Design without end use in mind<br>• Not conducting the midterm or conducting too late to make meaningful corrections<br>• Not involving all consortium members in the evaluation<br>• Inadequate ownership of evaluation findings<br>• Slow and/or nonsystematic approach to implementation of change | • Budget, time, and space for allocated for the evaluation<br>• Focused evaluations<br>• CAFE standards<br>• CRS financial assessment tools<br>• CRS organizational capacity assessment tools<br>• CRS M&E standards<br>• ProPack II |

# 8. CLOSURE

| RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS | | | CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS | | LEARNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Indicators of Success** | **Pitfalls (what not to do)** | **Tools and Best Practices** |
| The stage where the conclusion of the project is initiated, leading to cessation of project activities and the end of contractual relationship with each other and the donor. | **ALL**<br>• Develop a timeline for closure of project, finance, assets, and administrative functions<br>• Identify consultants for the final evaluation of the project and the consortium<br>• Identify members' involvement in final evaluation<br>• Implement previously designed exit strategies<br>**PRIME**<br>• Closeout financial, management, administration, and programmatically after subrecipients<br>• Conduct official closure meetings with donors, national government, and other in country stakeholders<br>**SUBRECIPIENTS/PARTNERS**<br>• Closeout financial, management, administration, and programmatically first<br>• Involve project staff and project beneficiaries in final consortium evaluation<br>• Conduct official closure meetings with communities, local government, and other local stakeholders<br>**HQ**<br>• Closeout financial, management, administration, and programmatically last<br>• File any appropriate reports<br>• Involve consortium headquarters staff in consortium evaluation | • Final evaluation with review of the midterm evaluation reports<br>• Lessons learned documentation<br>• End of project report, lessons learned and/or case studies published | • Members willing to work with each other in the future<br>• Clear closure plan and tools<br>• Sustainability of activities<br>• Satisfied donor and communities<br>• Cleared out audit | • Not assigning resources for closure<br>• Burning bridges<br>• Lack of commitment to continue a relationship post-consortium<br>• Lack of sustainability plan<br>• Lack of documentation<br>• Lack of reflection | • Midterm consortium evaluation<br>• Conduct a end-of-project symposium on consortium management<br>• Document consortium practice as a partnership case study<br>• Consortium closure checklist<br>• Pro Pack II |

# 9. CONTINUATION

| RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS | | | CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS | | LEARNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Indicators of Success** | **Pitfalls (what not to do)** | **Tools and Best Practices** |
| The stage where consortium members continue their relationship after the closure of project implementation.<br>This stage includes preparing for potential follow up consortiums. | **ALL**<br>• Define the parameters of an ongoing voluntary relationship, including communication, decision-making, and involvement of different levels of each agency<br>• Conduct a partnership reflection process as necessary | • Informal MOU or agreement to continue working together<br>• Plan for future collaboration<br>• Regular formal or informal meetings among consortium members | • Commitment of private or other resources to continue relationship<br>• Development of unsolicited proposal to meet identified needs<br>• Meetings of members to maintain relationships<br>• Responding jointly to future RFA<br>• Applying learning from past experiences<br>• Influencing donor strategic direction | • Abandoning some consortia members<br>• Dwelling on any negative past<br>• Ignoring lessons learned<br>• Consortium members seen as an exclusive club<br>• Limiting membership to current partners only<br>• Limiting innovation | • Institutional memory transitioned to changing personnel<br>• CAFE implementation guide and standards<br>• Formal and informal meetings<br>• CRS partnership reflection manual |

# GLOSSARY

**ACCOUNTABLE/ACCOUNTABILITY** The notion that consortium members are responsible for using the project's results to check that their project is on track towards achieving the strategic objectives; the capacity and responsibility of an agency, institution, or government to justify and explain its actions as well as the right of the public to get a full explanation of the rationale for these actions.

**ALLIANCE** A formal association between communities, organizations, or other groups to achieve a particular aim, in which they may contribute resources and share risks; often associated with social mobilization, a broad organizational learning agenda, and/or advocacy for social change.

**ASSESSMENT/CAPACITY ASSESSMENT** A process undertaken as part of consortium design to determine the strengths and constraints of each member organization.

**AT ALL LEVELS OF EACH AGENCY** Depending upon the organization may include all host country offices (capital, regional, field), as well as other branches of the organization: subregion, region, or headquarters.

**AWARD AGREEMENT** An agreement made between CRS and the project donor. Award Agreements may also be called grant agreements, cooperative award agreements, or a Transfer Authorization (for Title II projects).

**BENEFICIARY/BENEFICIARIES** A person or person in the project zone who receive the benefits, or proceeds, of the project; beneficiaries are oftentimes project designers and implementers.

**BEST PRACTICES** The processes, practices, and systems identified in public and private organizations that performed exceptionally well and are widely recognized as improving an organization's performance and efficiency in specific areas. Successfully identifying and applying best practices can reduce business expenses and improve organizational efficiency in consortium or organizations. *(See good practices)*

**CAPACITY ASSESSMENT** Carried out as a part of project design and during detailed implementation planning to measure the ability of CRS, partners, and the community to implement a particular Project Strategy and related Activities.

**CHANGE MANAGEMENT** Activities involved in defining and instilling new values, attitudes, norms, and behaviors within an organization that support new ways of doing work and overcome resistance to change; building consensus among customers and stakeholders on specific changes designed to better meet their needs; and planning, testing, and implementing all aspects of the transition from one organizational structure or business process to another.

**CHIEF OF PARTY** Person responsible for the overall implementation of the project; responsible for the management and financial health of the project and/or consortium.

**COALITION** Formal or informal groups or organizations working together towards common ends, engaging in group action or advocacy, normally time-limited and with specific social change goals.

**COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL** A set of suggestions, regulations, or rules that governs how information is to be exchanged between members of the consortium, based on hierarchy, information needs, or other identified criteria.

**COMMUNITY/COMMUNITIES** The aggregate of persons with common characteristics such as geographic, professional, cultural, racial, religious, or socioeconomic similarities; can be defined by interest in particular problems or outcomes or other common bonds; the project area of action, and the people within the area.

**COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE** A group of practitioners with similar functions and using similar tools that works together over a period of time; linking learning to performance, develop their own operating processes, and evolve over time; membership is based on interest and leadership based on expertise.

**COMPLIANCE** Consortium members acting according to agreed-to and accepted standards; when a consortium member fully meets the requirements of laws, rules and regulations of the contract; performance according to standards.

**CONSORTIUM** An association of independent organizations usually formed to undertake a specific project that requires skill and resources, which are not fully possessed by any of the participants individually; organizations that operate in collaboration according to a formally stated agreement, and in recognition of their enhanced ability to compete for resources as a formal association.

**CONTINGENCY PLAN** An alternative for action if things don't go as planned or if an expected result fails to materialize.; a plan for responding to the loss of system

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Thanks to the following websites and CRS documents for their assistance in this glossary: ProPack I and ProPack II; CRS Europe/Middle East Social Change Glossary; Google; USAID; U.S. General Accounting Office; Canada Business Services; National Association of County and City Health Officials; Ohio State University; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; GlobalGiving; Businesswords.com; Special Libraries Association; Canadian Council on Social Development; World Bank; International Institute for Sustainable Development; Defense Technical Information Center; Grantsmanship Center; Beyond Intractability; Aspiration; Case Western Reserve University; Low-Level Radiation Campaign; Princeton University; Indian Institute of Management Bangalore

use due to a disaster such as a flood, fire, computer virus, unexpected departure of key staff, etc.; the plan contains procedures for emergency response and post-event recovery.

**CONTINUOUS MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PROCESS** Applying organizational learning to the financial and program management of the consortium in order to improve organizational quality and performance; focuses on improving project outcomes, donor and beneficiary satisfaction through constant and incremental improvements to management processes.

**CORE SUBRECIPIENT** May be a national or international NGO, which has a major role in managing, and implement significant portions of the project; depending on total project value, a consortium may have several core subrecipients and serve as members of the consortium management team. *(See Secondary subrecipient)*

**DECISION-MAKING PROTOCOL** Normally includes arriving at a common understanding of an issue and potential solutions. Achieving clarity on decision-making and who will make the decisions, and the establishing a schedule for resolving the issue or making decisions.

**DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (DIP)** A set of updated schedules, plans, targets and systems that have sufficient detail to permit smooth and effective project implementation. It is completed after a project proposal is approved and funded and before implementation begins. DIPs may be done on an annual basis or for the life of the project. If done for the life of the project, the DIP is still revised and updated annually.

**DUE DILIGENCE** Investigating the performance of an investigation of an organization or person, or the performance of an act with a certain standard of care; the use of agreed-to lenses to analyze financial audits, program evaluations, and other forms of data collection from local, national, and international experts verifying that the individual/organization can be trusted to deliver on promises.

**EFFECTIVE** Producing or capable of producing an intended result or having a striking effect; able to accomplish a purpose; meeting or exceeding project, financial, or managerial requirements.

**EFFICIENT** Being effective without wasting time, effort, or expense; able to accomplish a purpose; functioning effectively; producing the desired result with the least waste; a process that produces the required product or service at the lowest cost.

**EVALUATION** A periodic, systematic assessment of a project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact on a defined population; draws from data collected during monitoring as well as data from additional surveys or studies to assess project achievements against set objectives.

**EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH** Aims to achieve the appropriate balance of sound theory and relevant empirical evidence to make decisions.

**FINANCIAL CAPACITY** Represents available organizational resources and relationships – both internal and external – that enable individual organizations to pursue their missions and fulfill their roles; ability to generate and administer funds; the instruments and mechanisms that structure the relationship between the organization and funder.

**GOAL** A term for the longer-term, wider, development change in people's lives or livelihoods to which the consortium's project will contribute.

**GOOD PRACTICES** The processes, practices, and systems identified in public and private organizations that are believed to have improved a consortium's performance and efficiency in specific areas; does not have the same level of scrutiny or burden of proof as best practices. *(See best practices)*

**GOVERNANCE** The planning, influencing and conducting of the policy and affairs of an organization, consortium, or project.

**HUMAN DIGNITY** Demonstrating that all human beings possess intrinsic worthiness and deserve unconditional respect, regardless of age, sex, health status, social or ethnic origin, political ideas, sexual orientation, religion, or other visible or invisible characteristics.

**IMPLEMENTING AGENCY** Reputable, well-qualified and established local, national, and/or international organizations situated in the project area/country; capable of setting up projects and establishing a participatory management structure and durable relations with communities; capable of managing financial resources.

**INNOVATION** A new creation, process, or service resulting from study and experimentation; the process of making improvements by introducing something new; the process of converting knowledge and ideas into better project implementation, new or improved products, or and services that are valued by the community.

**INTERMEDIATE RESULTS** Expected changes in behaviors by participants in response to the successful delivery of outputs.

**INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION** People sending messages, from sender to receiver, through direct and indirect verbal and nonverbal communication.

**LEARNING** *See Organizational Learning*

**LESSONS LEARNED** Knowledge or understanding gained by a positive or negative experience.

**MANAGEMENT CAPACITY** Represents available organizational systems, structures, and relationships – both internal and external – that enable individual organizations to pursue their missions and fulfill their roles; ability to manage people and processes; the instruments and mechanisms that structure the relationship between the organization and community and civil society.

**MISSION** Brief statement of the purpose of an organization; a clear and succinct representation of the enterprise's purpose for existence.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)** A document reflecting mutual understanding of the parties about why each has entered into the consortium, expectations and how the parties will engage one another, developed through a process of discussion and negotiation.

**MUTUAL RESPECT** Being treated with consideration and esteem and treating people similarly; having a regard for other peoples' feelings; treating one another with dignity.

**MUTUALLY REINFORCING PROCESS** System that allows challenges to be comprehensively addressed in a framework of interlocking responses to address a consortium concern or problem, a means of operating in which one aspect of an organization's functions are supported and reinforced by another.

**NETWORK** An interconnected system of people or organizations that work collaboratively to increase communication, connections, or to advance development objectives.

**NON-NEGOTIABLE ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE OR POLICY STATEMENTS** Positions of a member organization that are fundamental to their identity and cannot be changed to accommodate the consortium's roles, processes, or structure; values, legal, or policy issues that an organization or consortium determines to be of such significance to the consortium or consortium members that these issues should be addressed prior to the other issues.

**OBJECTIVES HIERARCHY** The vertical arrangement of different levels of objective statements in a results framework and proframe; one objective level is seen as the means to achieving the end which is the next higher-level objective.

**OPERATIONS MANUAL** Outlines systems, structures, and strategies to be used in managing the consortium; accounts for the development of operational procedures so that they can be passed on to subsequent project staff; contains critical organization information and step-by-step instructions for key operations procedures.

**ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT** A process to measure the capacity of an organization (e.g., structure, resources and staffing) to carry out a proposed project.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY** The ability of organizations to undertake their work; to achieve their missions, bring their visions to life, and fulfill their roles; influence public policy; and delivering programs, services and activities.

**ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT** Is the long-term process of improving the performance and effectiveness of human organizations to meet better their goals. This may involve incorporating new structures, systems, policies, capacities, tools and business practices, among other changes.

**ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING** Is the application and institutionalization of learning that comes out of organizational experiences, reflecting an organization's continuous quest to do business more efficiently and effectively toward greater impact on the organization's strategic objectives.

**PARTNERSHIP** Is a relationship, based on common values and principles, and sustained by shared goals and resources, which results in a positive change in people's lives.

**PERFORMANCE EVALUATION** Frequent feedback to staff from managers, or from prime to subcontractors, in a supportive way that ensures a common understanding of the job, enhances performance and retains staff.

**PERIODIC ASSESSMENT** On-going process of evaluating performance based on a variety of mutually agreed-to criteria.

**PROFRAME** "Project or Program Framework", a planning tool to assist project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

**PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS** *See Beneficiary*

**PROJECT** A unique venture with a beginning and an end, undertaken by people to meet established goals within defined constraints of time, resources, and quality.

**PRIME** Lead organization in the consortium, under whose name the proposal is submitted and to whom the donor makes the award; has overall programmatic and financial responsibility for project outcomes.

**PROCESS** A procedure or a particular course of action intended to achieve a result; a naturally occurring or designed sequence of changes; method of doing something, involving steps or operations which are usually ordered and/or interdependent.

**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT** The process of developing a quality improvement plan linked to an organization's strategy, goals, and objectives in order to improve or increase the effectiveness of a program.

**RESULTS FRAMEWORK** An organigram that gives a snapshot of the top three levels of a project's objectives hierarchy in a way that makes it simple to understand the overarching thrust of the project.

**RISK** The cumulative effect of the chances of uncertain occurrences, which will adversely affect project objectives; the degree of exposure to negative events and their probable consequences.

**ROLE** The function or actions and activities assigned to, required, or expected of a person or group.

**SCOPE** The bounded set of verifiable end products, or outputs, which the project team undertakes to provide to the project sponsor. The required set of results or products with specified physical or functional characteristics.

**SECONDARY SUBRECIPIENT** May be a national or international NGO responsible for site-specific implementation under the management of the prime or a core subrecipient. While possessing expertise and community acceptance, may not have sufficient managerial, financial, or technical capacity to serve as a core sub. May also be an international NGO in large awards. *(See Core subrecipient)*

**SERVICE DELIVERY** The manner in which beneficiary or community needs are met; the types of assistance offered under the project, in line with donor requirements and host country priorities.

**SHOCKS** External factors that influence all other elements of the consortium's project implementation, financial systems, or management structures.

**SOCIAL CHANGE** Is a long-term, value-driven, and participatory process, aiming to move societies towards justice, solidarity, and peace; strategies target attitudes, behaviors, relationships, systems, and structures.

**STAKEHOLDER** One who has a stake or interest in the outcome of the project or one who is affected by the project, could be the sponsor, donor, community, or individual beneficiaries.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (SO)** The central purpose of the project described as the noticeable or significant benefits that are actually achieved and enjoyed by targeted groups by the end of the project.

**STRATEGY/STRATEGIES** The process by which a consortium envisions its work and develops goals, objectives, and action plans to achieve that future.

**STRUCTURE** The structure and/or hierarchy of an organization and how its component parts work together to achieve common goals.

**SYNERGY** The simultaneous joint action of separate parties which, together, have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects; the combination of factors which each multiply the effects of the other(s) rather than merely adding to them.

**TECHNICAL CAPACITY** The ability of consortium members to furnish the technical expertise appropriate to project requirements; the ability of project personnel to implement the requisite technical knowledge.

**THRESHOLD ISSUES** Issues that must be addressed before further action may be taken.

**TRANSPARENT** An open, clear, and unambiguous process that encourages the participation and/or awareness on the part of all consortium members of policies, procedures, decisions made, and other factors key to project success.

**TRUST** Reliance or certainty in a person or organization based on experience; believing in the honesty and reliability of others; confidence in a person or plan.

**VALUES** Core beliefs of a person, social group, or organization; in which they have an emotional investment; general guiding principles that are to govern all activities; provide a basis for action and communicate expectations for participation.

# CAFE Feedback

Dear colleagues,
The editors of CAFE would appreciate your feedback on the utility and clarity of the CAFE manual and its individual components. We intend to revise CAFE based on user feedback. Please ask participating consortium members to fill out this form. You may send the responses by email or fax to Sarah Ford (sford@crs.org fax, +1-410-234-3178) or by email to Christopher Michael Reichert (crsreichert@gmail.com.) Thank you very much for your feedback.

**Are the following complete, and if not, what would you add?**

a) CAFE Standards

b) Reference Sheets

c) Implementation Guide

**Are the following clear, and if not, how should the wording be modified?**

a) CAFE Standards

b) Reference Sheets

c) Implementation Guide

**How has or could CAFE be of use to your consortium?**

**What could be done to further the dissemination and uptake or use of CAFE?**

**How does CAFE complement other resources in your possession? Please list those resources and tools.**

**What references or supporting documentation would you suggest to support the comprehension, and use of, CAFE?**

## CAFE Half-day workshop, Handout 1

*All consortium components: (Goals, Strategy, Structure, Roles, Process, Interpersonal, and Learning) are intended to be mutually reinforcing.*

| **Component** *(Aspect of consortium)* | **Standards** *(Measurable, clear, and concise statement of a desired state.)* | **Rating Scale**<br>**1** = the standard is rarely reached<br>**2** = the standard is sometimes reached<br>**3** = the standard is usually reached<br>**4** = the standard is almost always reached<br>**5** = the standard is exceeded |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Goals** *Describes the common understanding of the consortium's functions.* | **The consortium has:**<br>a) a common vision for the consortium, understood and agreed to by all levels of each agency (e.g., country, regional, headquarters) | |
| | b) common criteria for excellence in internal consortium management: programmatic and financial | |
| | c) accountability for service delivery to communities and/or project participants, compliance to donors, and to each other | |
| **2. Strategy** *Definitions of the plans and tactics of the consortium.* | **Consortium leadership has mutually agreed to:**<br>a) roles and processes based on the capacities of each agency and the needs of the consortium | |
| | b) appropriate technical, financial, and managerial approaches, based on assessed need, and aligned with community and national goals | |
| | c) a contingency plan to address unforeseen shocks to the project or to the consortium | |
| **3. Structure** *The framework that organizes resources to support service delivery, accountability, and decision-making.* | **Consortium structures:**<br>a) guarantee and support efficiency and effectiveness at all levels of consortium in governance, project, and financial management | |
| | b) are documented by a formal and mutually agreed-to organizational chart representing all levels of the consortium and of each agency | |
| | c) respond to the needs and requirements of project participants and donors | |
| | d) create synergy by capitalizing on member organizational structures and ensure a high level of participation within the consortium | |
| **4. Roles** *Definition of the tasks, authority, actions, and expected outputs of consortium members.* | **Consortium roles are:**<br>a) linked with their associated responsibilities in a mutual reinforcing process | |
| | b) based on consortium needs and assigned based on assessed capacity to maximize service delivery | |
| | c) account for each member's non-negotiable organizational value or policy statements | |
| | d) agreed to at all levels of each agency (country, regional, headquarters) and formally documented | |

| **Component** *(Aspect of consortium)* | **Standards** *(Measurable, clear, and concise statement of a desired state.)* | **Rating Scale**<br>**1** = the standard is rarely reached<br>**2** = the standard is sometimes reached<br>**3** = the standard is usually reached<br>**4** = the standard is almost always reached<br>**5** = the standard is exceeded |
|---|---|---|
| **5. Process** *Documented mechanisms, which create and support an enabling environment for the consortium.* | **The consortium has mutually agreed-to:**<br>a) an operations manual documenting administrative, financial, and human resource processes and procedures to remain in compliance with host nation law and donor requirements | |
| | b) an accountability-based performance evaluation process that links performance with resources | |
| | c) conflict resolution, communication, and decision-making protocols that reinforce transparency and accountability at all levels of the consortium | |
| **6. Interpersonal** *Describes the ideal for individuals and institutions to interact and relate to each other.* | **Consortium staff, policies, and procedures:**<br>a) respect the human dignity of each person (consortium members, project participants, stakeholders, and other) without regard for organization, job responsibility, or personal identity | |
| | b) conduct consortium business in a transparent, timely, and respectful fashion | |
| | c) work to build a consortium based on trust and mutual respect, consistently modeling and supporting positive interpersonal behavior | |
| | d) put the needs and identity of the consortium ahead of individual organizational needs when representing the consortium | |
| **7. Learning** *Elaborates a reflective process resulting in change based in experience and evidence.* | **The consortium:**<br>a) allocates sufficient resources to learning and knowledge management systems | |
| | b) supports staff in learning, change, and innovation | |
| | c) creates and sustains a culture that continually improves its management practice from lesson learned, both failures and successes | |

## CAFE Half-day workshop, Handout 2

### CAFE Standards Feedback Questions

Please send these feedback forms to Sarah Ford (sford@crs.org) or Christopher Michael Reichert (crsreichert@gmail.com.) Thank you.

Are the CAFE standards complete, and if not, what standards would you add?

Are the CAFE standards clear, and if not, how should the wording be modified?

How will these standards be of use to your consortium?

How will your consortium and NGO hold itself accountable to the standards?

How do these standards compliment other resources available to you? Please list those resources.

What references or supporting documentation would you suggest to support the comprehension, and use of, these standards?

Since 1943, Catholic Relief Services has had the privilege of serving the poor and disadvantaged overseas. Without regard to race, creed, or nationality, CRS provides emergency relief in the wake of natural and manmade disasters. Through development projects in fields such as education, peace and justice, agriculture, microfinance, health, and HIV and AIDS, CRS works to uphold human dignity and promote better standards of living. CRS also works throughout the United States to expand the knowledge and action of Catholics and others interested in issues of international peace and justice. Our programs and resources respond to the U.S. bishops' call to live in solidarity—as one human family—across borders, over oceans, and through differences in language, culture and economic condition.

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The Consortium Alignment Framework for Excellence (CAFE) assists Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its partners to improve their ability to form strong consortiums that respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and meet donor requirements while strengthening the partner relationship. The focus of CAFE is to make the managerial, financial, and administrative functions of a consortium effective, efficient, and supportive of project goals, community needs, and donor intent. CAFE was developed by CRS staff and partners working together, with input from headquarters staff.

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