



# Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) A Practical Guide

1



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Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises
2. Enable healthy and safe living
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace

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## Foreword

As you are reading this introduction, allow me to congratulate you for your commitment to meaningfully assist those individuals and families in the community who need our RC/RC most. I trust that you have already embarked on a quest to discover how you and your local Red Cross or Red Crescent branch/committee could do more, do better and reach further in contributing to your local community. And rightfully so. Every National RC/RC Society is expected to deliver relevant and sustained services to its community and those services are primarily delivered by **local RC structures**. These structures, branches or committees, need a strong identity, committed volunteers and a variety of essential capacities in order to succeed in their efforts.

The BOCA process provides an excellent understanding of the capacities and skills needed and allows you to understand how well these are present within a given branch or committee. It helps you to identify which competencies need more attention in order to further improve the overall performance of a local branch. It thus provides you with an excellent starting point and strong direction all along your journey to success.

BOCA stands for Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment. It follows the OCAC self-assessment approach which focuses on your RC/RC Society as a whole but BOCA has specifically been shaped to better understand how local RC structures can gain in strength, relevance and sustainability. It consists of the BOCA self-assessment tool, a training package to prepare future facilitators and a set of practical guidelines for facilitators who accompany an assessment in a given branch. While we have tried to make the training module and guidelines as straightforward and self-explanatory as possible, you may still be in need of some extra clarification or advice. Don't worry. You will find the IFRC secretariat and its delegations ready to assist you in this important exercise.

BOCA is the result of the fruitful collaboration of a group of NS development practitioners who defined, field-tested and improved the process. Our sincere thanks go to them and to the branches who volunteered to being the virtual 'guinea pigs' during the pilot phase. Our special thanks also goes to the Netherlands Red Cross who have pioneered, promoted and nurtured the process at its inception. Without the sustained efforts and enthusiasm of all those friends and colleagues, the initiative would have never come to maturity.

Now it is up to you to grab the process and make it yours. Adapt and fine-tune it to fit your specific working environment and above all, use it widely. We wish you the best of success in building your branch or committee into a strong, relevant and respected humanitarian actor. And kindly keep us updated on your experience and success. We stand ready to support you!

**Roger Bracke**

Manager

National Society Development, Coordination and Support  
IFRC, Geneva





# Acknowledgment

The development of the Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) tool and the accompanying guide for BOCA Facilitators were initiated by the Netherlands Red Cross with many different resource persons from various National Societies jointly contributing to its development and completion.

The process started in early 2011, when initiatives were taken to further improve the Branch Capacity Assessment (BCA) tool and field-tested. Inspired by the OCAC tool, the BCA tool received a major face-lift and was renamed the Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA). Fundamental adjustments were made and it was decided to develop a supplementary Facilitator's Guide to support the use and roll-out of the tool. Key steps in this process were the pilot testing of the tool at various stages of development in selected branches of the Uganda Red Cross and the Malawi Red Cross from 2013 and tested by many National Societies for their branch development journeys.

However as more and more BOCA exercises were conducted,<sup>1</sup> the weaknesses of the BOCA Guide and its accompanying tool were highlighted and the BOCA was subsequently upgraded through the revision of the Guide and related tools in May 2016 during a Writeshop.

Many people from the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have contributed to the development of the BOCA and its revision, including Ian Steed, Roger Fischli, Alex Torres, Bhavesh Sodagar, Kum Ju Ho, Lak Mony Rasmey, Md. Adith Shah Durjoy of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Oola McWalter, Mohammad Taib Yosufzai from Afghanistan RC, Christopher Cotten and Jane Wachira from American RC, Md. Kamrul Hassan from Bangladesh RC, An Vanderheyden from Belgium RC, Lucy Morris and Shahina Bahar from British RC, Balthazar Bacinoni from Burundi RC, Nhek Siphon from Cambodia RC, Anna Høybye and Christina Rasmussen from Danish RC, Gebrie Alebachew Belete from Ethiopia, Hastings Kandaya, Patrick Phiri and Charles Makhuyula from Malawi RC, John Lam from Malaysian RC, Khin Myo Myat Thein from Myanmar RC, Frank Dewez from Netherlands RC, Anne Merete Bull from Norwegian RC, Eva Augustin from Swedish RC, Levi Byaruhanga and Richard Amadro from Uganda RC, Fortune Molungu from Zambia RC and Elias Hwenga from Zimbabwe RC.

A special thanks to Uganda Red Cross and Malawi Red Cross and different National Societies for hosting the pilot testing and for assisting with time-consuming coordination and logistics. An appreciation also goes to all the branch representatives of the National Societies who shared their strengths and weaknesses.

We hope that this BOCA tool will be an easy-to-use document that will help National Societies and their branches all over the world to become stronger for the benefit of vulnerable people on the ground.

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<sup>1</sup> See para 1.8 and Annex 4



## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>BCA</b>	Branch Capacity Assessment
<b>BOCA</b>	Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment
<b>DRCE</b>	Disaster Response Capacity Evaluation
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of Red Cross
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>NHQ</b>	National Headquarters
<b>NSD</b>	National Society Development
<b>OCAC</b>	Organisational Capacity Assessment Certification
<b>OD</b>	Organisational Development
<b>PMER</b>	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
<b>PNS</b>	Participating National Societies
<b>PoA</b>	Plan of Action
<b>RCRC</b>	Red Cross/Red Crescent
<b>RMS</b>	Resource Management System
<b>SAF</b>	Safer Access Framework
<b>STAR</b>	System for Transformation And Results
<b>ToF</b>	Training of Facilitators
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference







## Purpose and audience for this guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide practical support to any National Society which is interested in understanding and in enhancing the capacity of its branches to deliver effective services to vulnerable people. It provides both an introduction to the Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) tool, as well as a practical, step-by-step guide to enable National Societies to introduce it within their own organisations. The main audiences for this guide are:-

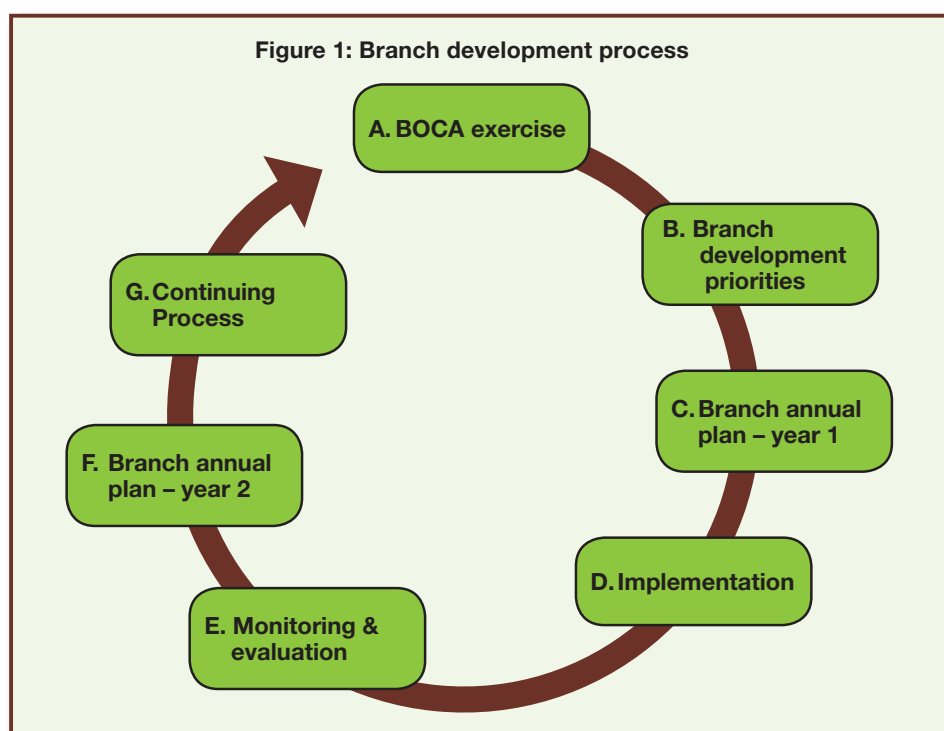
- Governance & Senior Management;
- OD Adviser/BOCA Focal Person for Branch Development; and
- Staff/volunteers responsible for training BOCA Facilitators and coordinating assessments of organisational capacity at Branch level.

## Part I – Introduction to BOCA

### 1.1. What is a Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA)?

Branches are the pillars of every National Society. They are the service arms of the organization in the community, that respond directly to the needs of the most vulnerable especially in times of disasters and other emergencies. It is important that branches continually assess and develop their capacity to be able to rise above the humanitarian challenges of saving lives and preventing human suffering. Strong branches are also the key to a well-functioning National Society.

BOCA is a self-assessment tool developed for branches of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to identify and assess their strengths, limitations and challenges in relation to a wide range of organisational capacities. It can be used as the first step in a branch development process since it is focusing on basic capacities, structures and conditions that are widely understood as being the core of what a branch needs to be able to function and perform well. Please see below the Branch Development Process in Figure 1.





BOCA has 3 objectives:-

- a. To refresh local vulnerability analysis and a complementary appreciation of the organizational capacities of the branch and how it is currently performing;
- b. To reach a consensus on priorities for branch enhancement;
- c. To develop an operational plan to strengthen and sustain its services delivery capacity and resilience of the communities.

BOCA is not about testing or examining the branch, but rather to identify – through a **self-assessment exercise** – the current capacity of the branch, and agree on areas for further enhancement. It can inspire the branch to work harder for the improvement of their branches after going through the process and understanding more clearly which areas need attention and gathering momentum on how to collectively address the issues that arise. Additionally, the process can also support branches to create an important line of sight back to the overall National Society operational plans and implement strategy by collecting and aggregating branch development plans in a realistic and efficient manner.

The BOCA is related to the OCAC (Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification) tool of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in the methodology and format and in that it supports National Societies to identify what is required to become strong and sustainable service providers. Please refer to **Annex 1 – Comparison Between BOCA, OCAC and Other Assessment Tools**. This is underpinned by the National Society development framework which highlights the important role a National Society plays in its domestic context with a focus on relevance, accountability, legitimacy and sustainability.

What the OCAC does at national level, the BOCA intends to do at branch levels: to assess the essential fundamentals and organisational competencies at branch level; to discover opportunities for development and growth; additionally it also provides an opportunity to formulate concrete Capacity Development priorities in order to do more, to do better and to reach further – all creating value to cope with the existing and future vulnerability in the communities they serve.

The BOCA exercise must be carried out in all branches over the country, facilitated by trained BOCA Facilitators and with participation of a wide range of representatives from across the branch to ensure objectivity on assessing a wide range of capacities and expertise. This will also encourage a lively and interesting exchange of views and arguments for a solid consensus on issues. They are referred to as the **self-assessment team**. (see para 1.5.1.5)

It is suggested that the BOCA is done every two to three years. This will enable the branch to identify its current level of organisational capacity, compare the progress made in relation to earlier BOCA exercise, and work out new priority activities for development.

## 1.2. Why is BOCA important and what are the advantages of using it?

There are 167,000 branches of the Red Cross/Red Crescent around the world, and 121,000 in Asia Pacific alone. The BOCA process can be a truly transformational one, because it forces National Societies to stop and reflect on their fundamental principles, including the principle of humanity, and the importance of responding to the needs of communities, which everyone else has forgotten. This process asks National Societies to think about what they can do with their own resources – they don't have to wait for someone else's support.



The fact that BOCA is done close to community-level is very important, and serves as a catalyst to revitalise National Societies and to promote national humanitarian action and bottom-up development.

A big advantage of the BOCA is that it recognises that there are likely to be existing Branch development processes and tools within a National Society, and can be integrated into these. Another is that it enables National Societies to develop an overview of the capacity of its branches, and to develop coordinated plans to support their on-going development.

## 1.3. How does it work?

### 1.3.1. Principles

The beauty of BOCA lies on two broader foundations which are **participation and ownership**.

There is a need for **participation** of Branch in the BOCA exercise that would increase the **ownership** of the processes and results. BOCA is driven by the full participation of branch staff, volunteers, governance and management. As all of them are from that particular area, they will have more understanding on their local context, their operational and management aspects as well as service delivery requirement based on their community need. It is important to highlight that the BOCA Facilitators will be the one to support the assessment process but the assessment will be done by the branch participants as they know their branch better than you.

Branches have an important role to play in contributing to the growth of their National Society and hence, BOCA is an undertaking that calls for strong branch commitment and ownership of the output in realising the developmental and capacity building objectives. At the same time all the branches of a National Society collectively can contribute to the National Society's strategic planning and BOCA can be use as a vehicle. By doing this the branch can have more ownership on their own plan as a well as on the overall National Society's strategic planning and development.

In order to implement BOCA, you will need to train a pool of BOCA Facilitators from within your National Society. This is because most National Societies have many branches (example, in India there are more than 600), so it's not possible for one person to facilitate BOCA in each branch within a short space of time. Instead you will need to develop and train a team.

Hence, the participation and engagement of BOCA Facilitators would require full commitment and dedication, and the development of BOCA Facilitators which contributes to the overall National Society development process.

### 1.3.2. Process

- a. The BOCA process can be initiated by National Society leadership or the OD/BOCA Focal Person with the support of the leadership;
- b. That person will then need to enlist external support from the other National Society that have already done BOCA and/or Federation;
- c. Execution of further preparatory and post BOCA works are carried out as defined in **Annex 3 – Checklist for Organizing BOCA Facilitators Training.**



### 1.3.2.1. Training of BOCA Facilitators (ToF)

The training takes 6 full days; 3-day practice and preparation followed by a 2-day hands on experience in the field (pilot BOCA) and 1-day wrap-up and development of BOCA exercise schedule. The training is conducted by individuals who have experience of facilitating several BOCA exercises at field level.

### 1.3.2.2. Preparation and Contextualization of the BOCA process

This process involves: translation, adaptation of the terminology, simplifying and contextualizing the process and looking at alignment with existing tools and processes to ensure greater harmonization; and identification of trainers and facilitators. This is undertaken by the National Society at HQ level and selected branches together with the IFRC and can come before or after the ToT. Please refer to **Annex 3 – Checklist for Organizing BOCA Facilitators' Training**.

### 1.3.2.3. BOCA implementation

Trained BOCA Facilitators will conduct the BOCA exercise with the self-assessment team in each branch. It normally takes two full days or sometimes even longer, depending on the time put into the development of action plans. The exercise takes place in all the branches over the country according to the schedule agreed earlier in the ToF or in an agreement on the BOCA Facilitators' team. The outcome should be included in a branch's annual plan.

### 1.3.3. BOCA Tools

The BOCA resources for BOCA Facilitators Training, as well as the BOCA exercise include the following:-

- a. *Introduction to Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA): A Practical Guide* (**Principle Document**)
- b. *BOCA Training of Facilitators (ToF) Step by Step Guide* (**Attachement X**)
- c. *Guide for BOCA Facilitators* (**Attachement Y**)
- d. *BOCA Matrix* (**Attachement Z**) and *Explanatory notes to BOCA Matrix*
- e. *BOCA Introductory Slides (ToF)* (**Annex 16**)

## 1.4. What is the difference between BOCA and other Assessment Tools?

Normally, a National Society undertaken OCAC chose BOCA but not necessarily should follow each other. The OCAC is targeted at the whole National Society level that deals with broader issues like sustainability, service delivery gap, emergency operation, identify/clarify strengths and weaknesses; contribute to wider National Society organisational strengthening process. There might be questions from participants on other assessment tools like Safer Access Framework (SAF), Disaster Response Capacity Evaluation (DRCE), and System for Transformation and Results (STAR) and how these link with BOCA or differ from BOCA. In such cases you can refer to the comparison table of these tools for more details in **Annex 1 – Comparison Between BOCA, OCAC and Other Assessment Tools**.

## 1.5. Who needs to be involved in the BOCA process and how can you encourage Head Office/Branch participation?

Within the National Society, the BOCA process should involve National HQs and Branch level staff and volunteers. The different levels of officials who may be involved are:-





- a. **Secretary-General** who needs to liaise with the Governance for acceptance and approval to embark on the implementation of BOCA Program;
- b. **National OD/BOCA Focal Person** who shall primarily be the main driver for the planning, implementing and post BOCA exercise activities;
- c. **Branch Director/OD/BOCA Focal Person** who shall be responsible for supporting all planning, implementation and post BOCA activities at the Branch level.

### 1.5.1. Roles

#### 1.5.1.1. OD/BOCA Focal Person in a National Society

OD/BOCA Focal Persons will be assigned by the National Society leadership and the roles could be:-

- a. Closely liaise with the Secretary-General on all matters relating to BOCA Program;
- b. Co-ordinate with all the Branches' BOCA Focal Persons on the preparation and implementation of BOCA at the Branch level;
- c. Establish a pool of BOCA Facilitators within the National Society and provide input updates and support to sustain the Facilitators;
- d. Ensure funding is made available to implement and sustain the BOCA program;
- e. Initiate all necessary preparations for the implementation of BOCA Program.

An awareness of the BOCA tools and the mechanics of the assessment should be effectively disseminated and properly engaged with the right level of leadership at National HQ and Branch level. This can be achieved at the initial stage through dialogue or orientation session. Highlighting the potential benefits and advantages that a National Society/Branch could derive from participation in BOCA could motivate the leadership especially from success stories of National Society development.

#### 1.5.1.2. BOCA Trainers

BOCA Trainers are those that train BOCA Facilitators in the ToF. They are the experienced and competent BOCA Facilitators who have completed at least 3 BOCA exercises in the field. They must have strong knowledge and skills on BOCA Facilitators guide, BOCA Matrix, toolkit materials and facilitation approach together with his/her strong engagement in Branch capacity development interventions. BOCA Trainers are also the members of National Society BOCA Facilitators' team to conduct BOCA exercises at their own branches.

#### 1.5.1.3. BOCA Lead Facilitators

The Lead Facilitator liaise closely with the National OD/BOCA Focal person and Branch Focal Person in coordinating the planning and execution of BOCA exercise to be carried out in the Branch. The Lead Facilitator is not the chairperson of the assessment team.

Among other roles, the Lead Facilitators shall be responsible for the following:-

- a. Familiarize with the Branch operational context from the Annexes receive from the Branch and discuss with team members;
- b. Distribute tasks among team members on reporting, documentation and logistics;
- c. Create an atmosphere in which all participants can participate freely;
- d. Ensure time management of BOCA exercise;
- e. Ensure diversity of BOCA participants through discussion and agreement with branch;
- f. Prepare and submit BOCA report at the conclusion of the BOCA exercise;
- g. Confirm/re-confirm the dates and times of the BOCA exercises at the branches.



#### 1.5.1.4. BOCA Facilitators

Candidates for BOCA Facilitators training are drawn from the different sectors and services of the National HQs and Branches. After completion of the Facilitators training and accredited as BOCA Facilitators, they shall be responsible for facilitating BOCA exercises in all the branches of the National Society. They should be experienced in facilitation of different events and are involved in organisational and/or branch development activity within their National Society. They can be from Headquarters as well as from branches. However, a Facilitator cannot facilitate the BOCA exercise in the Branch he or she is from. They ensure a full understanding of the process and the BOCA tool by the assessment team members. Usually BOCA Facilitators team, for facilitating each exercise, comprises 2-3 members led by a Lead Facilitator.

Among the roles of Facilitators are:-

- a. Listening actively to participants;
- b. To ensure clarity of the process and issues;
- c. To facilitate consensus and decision making;
- d. Ensure to work as a team throughout the BOCA exercise;
- e. Explain the BOCA objectives;
- f. Guide participants through the BOCA exercise;
- g. Clarify all steps and exercises of the BOCA;
- h. Clarify arguments by asking for examples or justifications;
- i. Seek clarifications to ensure shared understanding.

#### 1.5.1.5. BOCA self-assessment team

The BOCA self-assessment team is composed of diverse representatives of different layers of a branch: Governing Board/Executive Committee members, management staff, technical staff, volunteers and staff (if applicable), but also different locations, sectors and genders. They are the responsible members to assess their respective branches, identify priorities and develop action plans facilitated by the BOCA facilitating team and should commit the time to do this proactively and effectively. The diversity and representation from all levels in the self-assessment team are very crucial for successful conduct of BOCA. The recommended number of participants is between 8 and 15 but can change depending on the size, level and structure of the branches and type of decision-making and desired level of participation and ownership. Participants can be identified through a combination of self-nomination or depending on the size of the branch through another selection process.

### 1.6. BOCA outputs and users

The outputs from BOCA are the updated branch information, the inventories, the operational context of the branch and the consensus matrix which identify organisational strengths and weaknesses (deficits) as well as the branch development plan.

These would provide an organization-wide trend which is useful for the formulation of national strategic planning and development for the National Society. Similarly, the understanding of the organisational strength & weaknesses at the Branch would be useful to the Branch in the formulation of prioritised planning to increase capacities.

At the international or regional level, IFRC could gauge the trends in the issues, challenges or concerns to establish platform or initiative to address such trends at a global environment.



The different BOCA outputs can be useful to certain specific users in different aspects as follows:-

BOCA Output	Users	How is the output being used
Branch information, Inventories, Branch Operational Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOCA Facilitators</li> <li>• NHQ support/service departments</li> </ul>	To understand the Branch asset, financial operational information in relation to the BOCA exercise
	Programme Manager/team/department	Programme planning & implementation
Consensus Assessment Matrix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment Team</li> <li>• OD/BOCA Focal Persons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To prioritize Branch development planning</li> <li>• Loading into RMS</li> </ul>
	Programme Manager/team/department	Linking branch priorities and identifying gap for programme/services improvement
Branch Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branch Management</li> <li>• Programme Manager/team/department</li> </ul>	Developing capacities and service delivery
	Movement partners	Participating National Society Support
BOCA analysis report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary General</li> <li>• NHQ Strategic Planning Formulation team</li> <li>• Programme Manager/team/department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Planning &amp; NS Development</li> <li>• Policy development</li> <li>• Systems &amp; procedures development</li> <li>• Improve resilience programming</li> </ul>
	NHQ OD department	To develop branch development framework
	NHQ/Branch service delivery unit (Programme)/department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better planning and sustainability of services</li> <li>• Strengthening trained/skilled volunteers network</li> </ul>
	NHQ/Branch support service unit/department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced internal support</li> <li>• Resource Mobilization</li> </ul>

**Table 1: Different BOCA outputs, users and usage**

## 1.7. How was BOCA developed?

The process of developing the BOCA tool and the accompanying guides started in early 2011, when initiatives were taken to further improve the Branch Capacity Assessment (BCA) tool. Inspired by the Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) tool, the BCA tool received a major face-lift and was renamed the Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment (BOCA). Fundamental adjustments were made and it was decided to develop a supplementary Facilitator's Guide to support the use and roll-out of the tool. Key steps in this process were the pilot testing of the tool at various stages of development in selected branches of the Uganda Red Cross and the Malawi Red Cross in 2013.

As more and more BOCA exercises were conducted, there were recommendations for updating the BOCA materials. The BOCA was subsequently upgraded through the revision of the Guide and related tools in May 2016.

This initial initiative of the Netherlands Red Cross has now become a tool of choice for the Federation and for branch development in hundreds of branches around the world.

## 1.8. Which National Societies have adopted BOCA so far, and who can I contact for advice?

BOCA has become a tool of choice to drive branch development in many National Societies already. If you need any help or advice introducing the BOCA process within your National Society, and/or with the conduct of the BOCA Facilitators Training, then there is a list of National Societies with contact points which have already implemented BOCA in their respective National Societies in **Annex 4 – (Resource contact and BOCA Implementation in NS)** whom you can contact.



## Part II – Implementation of BOCA in National Society

### STEP

## 1 Initial Preparations (responsibility of OD/BOCA Focal Person)

Investing time in the initial preparations for introducing BOCA is crucial to its success, as it requires senior management buy-in, and time to develop internal HR capacity to facilitate the BOCA process across multiple branches.

### 1.1. The BOCA checklist

Review the *Checklist for Organizing BOCA Facilitators Training* (**Annex 3**) of this guide, and begin by getting support from NHQ to accept and to commit to implement BOCA. A BOCA 1-page Hand-out is available in **Annex 5** to support this.

Then form a BOCA organising committee. Review this checklist with them – you may need to add or delete some tasks. Start to work your way through the tasks, and mark them as done once they have been completed.

If you are facilitating another National Society, send this checklist to the OD/BOCA Focal person that is organizing the BOCA Facilitators Training. Thereafter, monitor the progress of tasks/actions taken in the checklist. This is the time when you will appreciate “ticking the box” because a task is already done.

### 1.2. Critical preparations

Although these are already included in the checklist, there are a number of critical preparations which are important to note as the OD/BOCA Focal Person.

#### 1.2.1. Review, adaptation and translation of BOCA tools and resources

Many National Societies might have their existing or previous branch capacity assessment tools. In such cases the existing or previous tools should be reviewed to see the linkage, similarities or dissimilarities of that tool with BOCA. The National Society then merge their tool with the BOCA. Such harmonizing may take place by incorporating the new elements from their existing tool to the BOCA matrix or by deleting the elements which are no longer relevant.

The translation of the finalized BOCA matrix is another step towards the harmonization.

Early efforts should be made to adapt and translate all BOCA tools and resources to the National Society system and context. Adaptation means integrating the BOCA process in your existing processes of assessing your branches, which should not be taken for granted, ignored, nor totally replaced by BOCA. DO NOT simply replace your current branch assessment with BOCA. Aim to integrate or merge as integration and adaption will facilitate a shorter time span to understand the tool and give better result.





Refer to the story box on how Cambodia Red Cross Society and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society merged their current practices with BOCA matrix.

Merging BOCA with existing NS branch assessment tools	
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society	Cambodia Red Cross Society
<p>The BDRCS has an existing Unit Assessment tool. Though it was not consistently used, the BDRCS Units are somehow familiar with the tool and the contents of the tool are quite similar to the BOCA matrix. However, the BDRCS assessment tool simply identifies weaknesses and does not provide indication as to the degree of weakness or strength nor ideas on how to address such. BDRCS organized a “writeshop” composed of diverse members. The objectives were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Merge the BOCA and the BDRCS Unit assessment tool;</li> <li>2. Translate the merged tool into the national language.</li> </ol> <p>BDRCS successfully merged the BOCA and the BDRCS Unit assessment tools. This was also successfully translated into local language by the writeshop participants.</p>	<p>The CRC has an existing tool called “Characteristics of Well-functioning Branch” that is being used as a key tool in their branch development program. However, this tool has not been updated for the past 10 years. This tool is very familiar with the branches of CRC. However, while the tool identifies weaknesses, it does not provide indication as to the degree of weakness or strength, nor suggestions on how to address weaknesses.</p> <p>CRC through the OD team, with the support of an Australian Red Cross volunteer, incorporated ALL ELEMENTS of the CRC “Characteristics of Well-functioning branch” into the BOCA. These were distributed across the different topics, and further spread into the various indicators for each topic.</p> <p>So, while the BOCA seems new to the branches, it also looks familiar as a significant number of elements of their previous process is clearly integrated.</p>

**Table 2: Merging BOCA with existing National Society assessment tools**

Adaptation also means adjusting the BOCA matrix to the contexts of your National Society. It means incorporating within the matrix your policies and procedures that guide the branch. This actually makes it easier for your branch to understand what is being assessed. Below is an example of an adaptation:-

Before adaptation	After adaptation
<b>Topic 23, Column D, Indicator 1</b>	<b>Topic 23, Column D, Indicator 1</b>
Branch reports, approved by the branch Governing Board, are submitted in a timely manner to the NS Headquarters according to the NS requirements”	Branch <i>monthly</i> reports, approved by the <i>Branch Executive Committee</i> , are submitted every <i>10th day of the following month</i> .

**Table 3: Example of adaptation of BOCA matrix to the context of a particular NS**

While the process of adaptation may not be an easy task, it is very doable. However, investing time in this exercise will definitely make implementation easier as your BOCA Facilitators are clearly guided and the branch BOCA assessment teams have a clearer understanding of what is being assessed.

Finally, it's better to do the translation by the National Society staff and/or volunteer instead of doing it by external sources like consultant. The reason being that; the translation will be of better quality and accuracy based on a common understanding of the technical terms used in the context of National Society. Additionally this will create the in-depth understanding, and ownership on the matrix.



### 1.2.2. Budgeting for BOCA – National Budget

When your National Society has agreed and accepted to the implementation of BOCA as an organization-wide program, it is imperative that a budget has to be planned for to cater for the procurement of material, logistical and other support services. The budget for training Facilitators needs to come from NHQ. A template for the *Budgeting of NS BOCA Program – National Budget* can be found in **(Annex 6)**.

However, the budget for running BOCA exercise itself needs to be funded by the respective Branch (refer to STEP 3 section 3.3 below).

### 1.2.3. Choosing your participants for BOCA Facilitators' Training

The number of branches in the National Society is a factor to consider in determining the number of participants. It should be not so many that it's difficult to handle, but, also not too few that you are not actually able to create a substantial pool of facilitators. Between 12 and 20 participants may be enough. Participants should be drawn from across the National Society with consideration of different service sectors, locations and gender. In simple terms, ensure diversity!

There is also the option to select participants from across boundaries and potentially from other National Society in the region to participate in or observe this process as this will help to develop a diverse group of facilitators and increase take up of BOCA in other National Society. To make the Training of Facilitators a success, you should lobby for support from the National Society, stakeholders as well as other NS within reach.

Prospective participants should possess:-

- Good understanding of the National Society
- Facilitation skills
- Strong listening skills
- Good communication including strong written communication skills
- Dynamic and good time management

### 1.2.4. The pilot branches

There should be at the minimum of 3 and maximum 4 pilot branches where the participants could do field practice. These should be pre-arranged and ensure that all the guidelines in conducting a BOCA exercise is followed.

The National OD/BOCA Focal Person should ensure the selected pilot branches prepare the following:-

- i. Step No. 12 & 13 in Checklist for Organizing BOCA Facilitators Training at Annex 3
- ii. **Annex 7a:** Branch Information Sheet
- iii. **Annex 7b:** Branch Activity and Financial Context
- iv. **Annex 7c:** Branch Inventory of Assets

It is important to have an agreement between the National HQs and the selected pilot branches before the BOCA exercise take place. This is critical to ensure all necessary preparations to secure attendance.



### 1.2.5. The BOCA training team

It would be ideal to have three (3) trainers in this Training which should be identified & secured early: 1 Lead trainer and 2 co-trainers. During the field exercise, the three facilitators will each observe one specific branch.

### 1.2.6. The venues

Try to be as modest as you could in your choice of the venue for the training of facilitators. The venue should have enough room for multiple working groups.

The venue for Branch BOCA exercise could be held in branch office, community hall, school building and not in any expensive hotel or venue. Emphasize that in actual practice, no branch should be hindered from undertaking BOCA due to lack of funds. The minimum costs of undertaking the BOCA should be just the mobilization expenses of the BOCA Facilitators.

## STEP 2 Training of BOCA Facilitators (responsibility of BOCA Trainers)

The BOCA Facilitators training should be simple and straightforward. At the end of the training, what is expected is that the participants should be able to facilitate a BOCA exercise in any branch of their National Society.

The BOCA Training of Facilitators (ToF) Step by Step Guide in **Attachement X** provides the BOCA Trainers with daily guidance in facilitating the training. The training has been structured as six full days rather than a series of half days or shorter sessions and includes practical BOCA field exercise in branches. We recognize that it can be challenging to bring participants together for this duration of time but in our experience it's the most effective use of participant's time considering travel time and cost.

A sample of the BOCA Training of Facilitators Program is in **Annex 2**.

Below is the summarized program outline of the BOCA Training of Facilitators:

Days	Subject
Day 1	Introductions and practice
Day 2	Practice, practice and more practice
Day 3	Final practice and travel time to branches
Day 4	Branch BOCA day 1
Day 5	Branch BOCA day 2 and travel back to main venue
Day 6	Lessons learned, planning and wrap-up

**Table 4: Summarized outline of BOCA training of facilitators**



STEP

## 3 Planning for BOCA Implementation (responsibility of OD/BOCA Focal Person)

### 3.1. Establishing a database of BOCA Facilitators

The HQ OD/BOCA Focal Person should establish a database of BOCA trained Facilitators based on the submitted report.

### 3.2. BOCA master schedule and planning

Within a week of the BOCA Facilitators training, the OD/BOCA Focal Person should facilitate that a memo (official circular) to all branches shall be issued from the Sec-Gen's office. This should include:-

- a suggested BOCA master schedule for all branches over the next 12 months
- details of the Facilitation team assigned to the respective branches
- an outline of who needs to participate and how much time is required

Then the Lead Facilitators should coordinate with the branches and re-confirm dates.

### 3.3. BOCA implementation budget

A working budget should be prepared to cater for all necessary expenditure required for the implementation of the BOCA program for approval by the Sec-Gen/Branch. The budget should cover for transport and travelling, accommodation and meals for the Facilitators while conducting the BOCA exercise in the branches. Prudent effort must be made to secure the most economical advantage for all the logistical support.

Lead Facilitators should submit their budget (**Annex 10: Template for Working Budget of BOCA Exercise in Branches**) to the National OD/BOCA Focal Person as a requisition for funding to conduct the BOCA exercises at the branches assigned/allocated.

As much as possible, expenses on meals, refreshment and other incidental costs for conduct of BOCA exercise in a branch should be borne by the respective branch or at the minimum the cost is shared with National HQs.

STEP

## 4 Final Preparations and BOCA Implementation (responsibility of BOCA Facilitators)

It is important that before the BOCA exercise, the facilitators know what expertise and support can be made available from headquarters and elsewhere (the resource pool) to facilitate the follow-up on branch capacity development.

### 4.1. Final Preparations

a. Send Branches well in advance of the BOCA exercise the following documents:-

- Branch Information Sheet (**Annex 7a**),
- Branch Activity & Financial Context (**Annex 7b**),
- Branch Inventory of Assets (**Annex 7c**) and
- BOCA Matrix (**Attachement Z**).





NB: It should be stressed that the branch doesn't need to complete the BOCA Matrix (Attachement Z) in advance, but it is just for information. But, the Annexes 7a, 7b, 7c need to be completed in advance and returned to the Lead Facilitator a week before the actual BOCA exercise.

They should also stress that BOCA will only be used by the branch to decide on how it wants to further develop itself – it is neither a judgment nor an exam. BOCA is not about any new funding. Scoring high or low will not bring any immediate financial advantage or disadvantage to the branch. It is purely an exercise for the branch to identify ways to develop itself, with support from other parts of the National Society where appropriate, to do more, do better, and reach further. As a result of the BOCA process, National Society branches can significantly improve in terms of governance, management, volunteer recruitment and development, service delivery and funding.

- b. A strong communication mechanism to be established between Branches and Lead Facilitators with the introduction letter of Secretary-General. If needed, pre-visit of the Lead Facilitators/HQ staff to branches prior to BOCA should be arranged.
- c. A OD/BOCA Focal Person within the National Society should be appointed who helps the coordination process with the facilitators.
- d. The Secretary-General's letter to the Branches should include the following instructions for organizing BOCA:-
  - i. Clear objective and concept of BOCA (including process, pictures, contents);
  - ii. Reinforce rationale of why National Society should be undertaking this process;
  - iii. Introduction of facilitators and Role of Lead facilitator and its co-facilitators;
  - iv. BOCA timeframe (tentative);
  - v. Assessment team composition (gender, diversity, ensuring participation);
  - vi. Logistics (if necessary);
  - vii. Ownership and commitment to what comes out of the process.
- e. OD/BOCA Focal Person to submit request to Finance Department for release of funds as in the approved budget for facilitating BOCA exercise.
- f. Lead Facilitators' preparation before BOCA (in coordination with the OD/BOCA Focal Person):-
  - i. Build communication channel between the branch and Assessment team and ask for a OD/BOCA Focal Person of the branch on BOCA Exercise;
  - ii. Practice with team members led by Lead Facilitator;
  - iii. Allocate tasks among facilitating team members:
    - Reporting: Submission of signed reports to HQ (within a week of the BOCA exercise) and leave 1 copy for the branch at the end of day 2 of BOCA exercise;
    - Facebook uploading;
    - RMS upload (BOCA scoring and priority);
    - Logistics (i.e. stationary, travel etc.);
    - Selection of most relevant case studies (look at the **Annexes 11a, 11b & 11c** to see the options for case studies).

## 4.2. BOCA implementation

This is when the BOCAs take place and the magic happens! The implementation should follow the master schedule. Any changes to the master schedule dates need to be coordinated among



the branches and respective Lead Facilitators and also inform the OD/BOCA Focal Person and/or Branch OD/BOCA Focal Persons.

Please follow the 'Guide for BOCA Facilitators' in **Attachement Y** for conducting the BOCA exercise.

It is important to note that the assessment process is based on a combination of **trust** and **evidence**. Topics which are scored from A-C will be taken on trust. However, topics scoring D and above will require the Branch to provide written evidence to demonstrate how they meet that level (e.g. in the form of a copy of written policies, notes from meetings etc).

## STEP

# 5 Monitoring BOCA Implementation

## 5.1. BOCA reports

Immediately after a BOCA has taken place, the Lead Facilitator must submit hard copies of the BOCA report in Annex 12 – BOCA Reporting Template to the National HQs and Branch Office for information and review. They should also upload a copy of the Report in the Resource Management System (RMS) if available. This report will be used to monitor against the BOCA master schedules.

## 5.2. BOCA certificates

Once a Branch has completed the BOCA, the National HQs OD/BOCA Focal Person should prepare and award the branch a BOCA completion certificate signed by the Secretary-General and/or President. A sample of the BOCA Certificate for Branches is in Annex 13a.

Facilitators who successfully completed the BOCA Facilitators Training and had conducted a branch assessment shall be awarded the Certificate for Facilitators (see sample in Annex 13b).

## 5.3. Monitoring and follow up of BOCA implementation process

The BOCA reporting and monitoring mechanism should link with the National Society existing monitoring mechanism from branch to NHQ. If no mechanism exists, to the minimum, the OD/BOCA Focal Person should facilitate monitoring every six months of the BOCA through progress report.

Monitoring and following up on the implementation of Branch Development Plan of Action (PoA) is the most important part of BOCA process. Successful implementation of any PoA depends to a great extent on proper and effective monitoring and progress tracking system. There is no difference for BOCA process. Branches have to have a simple but an effective system to monitor and follow up the progress on the implementation of BOCA action plan on a regular basis and to take appropriate measures to keep the implementation of planned actions on track. Likewise, it is also important for HQ to keep the momentum through regular follow up and monitoring of the progress and by providing possible, relevant technical support. National Society Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) team may provide technical support in developing the monitoring and progress tracking system that is consistent with National Society context.



### 5.3.1. Monitoring and progress tracking by Branch itself

It is very important that branches have some system for monitoring and follow up on implementation of their development plan. The following system may be applied:-

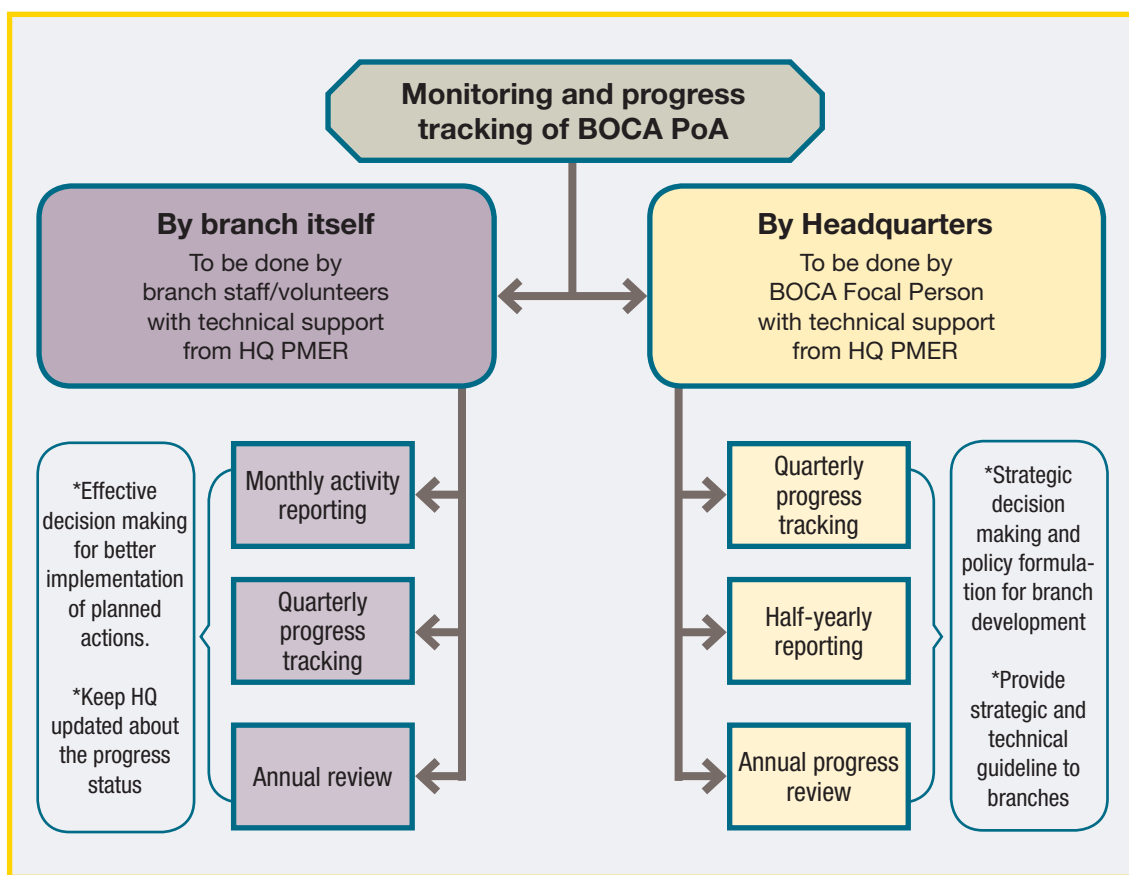
- ⇒ **Monthly/Quarterly Activity Reporting:** Monthly/Quarterly activity report of Branch should capture implementation status of BOCA PoA. Monthly/Quarterly Activity Reporting Template (Annex 14b) can be used in this regard. Branch Officer should be responsible for compiling this report to be submitted to Branch governance.
- ⇒ **Quarterly Progress Tracking:** Branch may maintain a simple database for tracking the progress of BOCA PoA implementation on a regular basis (may be at least once in a month) to compare target and achievement of the PoA. Template for Progress Tracking of BOCA PoA by Branch (Annex 14a) can be used for collection of data and filled out template to be shared with OD/BOCA Focal Person at Headquarters including other relevant persons.
- ⇒ **Annual review:** At the end of the year an annual review of implementation of PoA should be conducted. The review will come up with an Annual report narrating status of achievement, challenges for implementation and recommendation for next year. The report should be shared with Branch governance, management and relevant department at Headquarters.

### 5.3.2. Monitoring and progress tracking by NHQ

HQ may design a simple monitoring and follow up mechanism to keep track on all the implementation of PoA of the branches. The following process can be followed:-

- ⇒ **Quarterly progress tracking (database):** There will be a simple database at HQ level which will be updated on a quarterly basis to track progress of implementation of BOCA POA of all Branches. The database updating will be based on the filled out progress tracking template from the Branches. **Annex 14c** can be adopted to create the database. For collection of progress related data on a quarterly basis from all the branches, the pool of BOCA Facilitators may be utilized. Data can be collected, stored and managed by separating the Branches into divisional or provincial level.
- ⇒ **Half yearly progress report:** Based on the data from quarterly progress tracking, a report can be produced on a six monthly basis capturing the implementation status of Branch Development Plan of all Branches. The report may also include the challenges and recommend possible measures to overcome them. The report should be published and disseminated at different levels of HQ and Branches. OD/BOCA Focal Person should coordinate this reporting process.
- ⇒ **Annual Progress Review:** At the end of the year HQ should review the implementation status of PoA of all branches by analysing the data from the Database. A comprehensive report based on this review finding may be produced to be shared with National Society and Branch Governance and Management for decision making.

The diagram below shows the monitoring and progress tracking process of BOCA at a glance:



## STEP

# 6 Analysing BOCA Results

## 6.1. Initial analysis

The OD/BOCA Focal Person shall analyse the BOCA findings with smaller group to familiarise with the questions, themes and trends that are coming out from the assessment.

## 6.2. Mid-point analysis

Once more than 50% of branches have conducted BOCA exercise, the OD/BOCA Focal Person shall organize group meeting to analyse the BOCA findings. This is to review the combined results from the BOCA process so far. A range of participants from different Branches but also from different departments at National HQs should be invited, but the total number of participants should not exceed 15 persons. Otherwise it may be expensive and difficult to manage.

The Analysis meeting should present the combined results from all the BOCA exercises conducted so far.

The OD/BOCA Focal Person should have done statistical presentation of all the BOCA findings on a spreadsheet. This will be a consolidation of **Annex, 7a, 7b & 7c** and the results of scoring in the BOCA matrix. It would be better if you can circulate the findings prior to the meeting period.

Here are some key questions which could be used to initiate discussion and analysis of the results:-



- a. What findings stood out for you?
- b. What surprised you?
- c. What concerned you?
- d. What are the common Branch strengths and weaknesses?
- e. Which topics have been prioritised for development?
- f. Where are the biggest regional differences? Why do you think this is?
- e. What needs to happen to improve Branch capacity at national level including any identified policy gap that needs to be addressed?
- f. Are there opportunities for some Branches to mentor others?
- g. What are our next steps?

Then create an analysis workshop report including a note of any themes coming out across the country and any action points.

### 6.3. Final analysis

There need to be a final analysis when all the BOCA exercises are completely done in a National Society. Follow the processes as described in **Attachment ZA** entitled “National Society Guide in Conducting BOCA Analysis”.

## STEP 7 Possible Use of BOCA Results

The Analysis Meeting is likely to result in a National Branch Development Plan. It may also result in the realisation that there's a need for better reporting systems, in order to track the progress of the Branch Development Plans over time.

It is also likely to result in a realisation that there's a need for better planning and budgeting, resource mobilisation plan – both at Branch but also at National level. This might include the need for consolidated national budgets and plans and clarity of the resource mobilisation plans and roles between the National and Branch level.

### 7.1. Planning and budgeting

- a. The Branch Activities & Financial Context in Annex 7b from the BOCA Facilitators' Guide would serve as a resource for your planning and budgeting.
- b. Following your BOCA process, you have priority activities and capacity building areas identified from the Priority Activity Plan (Branch PoA) in Annex 15a). These should be reflected in your new Plan and Budget (see Annex 15b – Example of Priority Activity Planning (Branch PoA)
- c. The budget for the Priority Activity Plan (Branch PoA) should be reflected in Annex 7b for the current and following year. See Annexes 15b and 7b/1 for examples.
- d. It is essential to fully involve finance personnel/staff in this Planning & Budgeting exercise.
- f. Here are some reflection for you to consider in your new plan and budget:-
  - i. How much is the “Administration Cost” weight against the total budget? In case it being high (generally speaking 30% is an acceptable standard), it may need consideration to set a standard percentage as a maximum for Administration Cost;





- ii. If you have been conducting planning and budgeting in the previous years, compare your previous year's budget line by line with the previous years' expenditures. How much have you been able to use? If the expenditure rate was low, and this year you are also planning to conduct the same amount of the activity, you might want to consider re-setting your planned budget in a realistic figure.

## 7.2. Resource management planning

- a. Plan and budget first, or resources first? This is a very fundamental question. With your new plan and budget clearly established, you would be contemplating on how you would resource it.
- b. Here are some issues to reflect when making your resource mobilisation plan. Again, you can capitalize the information from Annex 7b "Branch Activity and Financial Context".
  - i. What was your identified balance of income and expenditure from the BOCA?
  - ii. How much would your income be if you solely calculate your own (branch) initiatives and local partners? What percentage would this cover out of the total income?
  - iii. Are there programmes that could generate income for you? If yes, don't forget to put it as your income.
  - iv. Now let's plan the activities that could generate income for your own branch. Set an aim to each resource mobilization (RM) activity, and plan to meet the budget you have earlier developed.
  - v. But also see how much "expenditure" each of your RM activity itself would be requiring. If your "expenditure" is too high compared to what you are aiming to generate, you might want to reconsider your activity.

Therefore, it will be important to identify the common issues among branches and find out mechanism to support those issues.

### STEP

## 8 Updating BOCA

In order to track progress over time, Branches should aim to redo BOCA every 2 to 3 years, depending on the National Society strategy and available resources.

## The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
[www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org) Saving lives, changing minds.