THE APPROACH TO REAL-TIME LEARNING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT IN EU-REINTEG PROGRAMMING
(JSC, SDSC and EIDACS consortia)

The primary audience for this document is the 3 EU-REINTEG consortia for which ReDSS is the learning partner: the Jubaland Solutions Consortium (JSC), the Enhancing Integration of Displacement Affected Communities in Somalia (EIDACS) consortium and the Somaliland Durable Solutions Consortium (SDSC). The document is also relevant to ReDSS member agencies and other actors implementing solutions-focused programming. The document has been prepared following a ReDSS/EU-REINTEG learning workshop held on 28 March, 2018. It outlines the following:

- The rationale for prioritizing real-time learning and adaptive management in solutions-focused programs such as EU-REINTEG.
- ReDSS learning principles and the centrality of adaptive management.
- The focus of collaborative real-time learning for the JSC, SDSC and EIDACS consortia. This section outlines specific commitments for learning identified during the March 28 workshop (see section 3).
- Approaches to capturing and applying real-time learning.

The EU-REINTEG program is an initial entry point for ReDSS support to real-time learning and adaptive management. In the coming months, ReDSS will expand this support to other ReDSS member agencies implementing solutions focused programming, including the Danida-funded DSP program.

1. Why should real-time learning and adaptive management be prioritized in solutions-focused programming?

Adaptive management “is characterized by a flexible, exploratory approach in the face of uncertainty and complexity”1. It is a process of testing different approaches/activities, monitoring, getting feedback and – crucially – making adaptations if necessary.

An adaptive programme learns, has opportunities to use that learning to adjust and actually adjusts.

Adaptive management uses 1) context analysis and 2) program reflection and monitoring to adapt and improve implementation.

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1 Bond (2016). Adaptive Management: what it means for CSOs
i. **Understanding the context**: The search for durable solutions takes place in complex, fluid environments. The extent to which a context is conducive to durable solutions is dependent on numerous, often constantly changing variables, including the legal and policy environment; conflict/disaster dynamics; the actors involved (and not involved) in addressing displacement; the vulnerabilities, capacities and needs of displacement-affected communities; and levels of social cohesion. Solutions-focused programs need to be aware of these changes in context, and have an in-built flexibility to adapt in order to remain effective and appropriate.

ii. **Understanding what works/what does not in programming**: Solutions-focused programs should carve out space for reflection on what is working and what is not in terms of program approaches and interventions. This process of identifying lessons learned and good practices can help us to understand our strengths and weaknesses, and what can be improved in terms of advancing durable solutions for displacement-affected communities. Crucially, this process should lead to actual adjustments in how programming is implemented. Although ReDSS and other actors have helped to establish principles for solutions-oriented programming, learning on how to operationalize these principles is often not captured.

### REAL-TIME LEARNING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT IN SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED PROGRAMMING

**CONTEXT ANALYSIS**: What barriers and opportunities for advancing solutions exist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal and policy frameworks</th>
<th>Actors and architecture</th>
<th>Vulnerabilities, needs and capacities</th>
<th>Conflict/disaster dynamics</th>
<th>Other contextual factors...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**ANALYSIS OF INTERVENTIONS**: Do our interventions contribute to solutions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What works and what does not?</th>
<th>How did our interventions contribute towards durable solutions?</th>
<th>What changes should be made to our interventions?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What could be improved?</td>
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</table>

**APPLYING AND DISSEMINATING LEARNING**: How can our learning benefit ourselves and others?

- **RE-INTEGRATION level**: It can enable adaptive management and continuous improvement among implementing agencies.  
- **Somalia level**: It can help to inform the response to displacement more broadly in Somalia through ensuring the practical application of durable solutions principles.  
- **Regional/global level**: It can contribute to a global body of knowledge on how best to program in displacement-affected communities.
2. **Real-time learning and adaptive management are central to the work of ReDSS**

ReDSS’ support on learning for the RE-INTEG partners is guided by its learning strategy that has four key elements:

- **Collaborative:** to ensure learning is generated and grounded in a collaborative and collective process.
- **Adaptive:** to embed an adaptive learning approach where strategies and activities are designed assuming change is inevitable and learning approaches are used for ongoing adaptation.
- **Iterative:** to promote the use of iterative decision making to continuously adapt durable solutions approaches.
- **Locally-led:** to enable a context-specific and problem-oriented approach to learning to adapt strategies and activities for improved programming and policies for durable Solutions.

Adaptive learning is at the centre of this strategy: the aim is to be flexible and responsive to changing contexts and needs, doing more of what works and less of what does not work.

Furthermore, one of the objectives of ReDSS Strategy 2018-2020 is “To capture and strengthen real-time collaborative learning on durable solutions across different sectors, contexts and actors...informed by the priorities of displacement affected communities”.

3. **Collaborative, real-time learning on the EU-REINTEG program (JSC, EIDACS and SDSC consortia) will be solutions-focused, and specific to the core elements of solutions programming identified by ReDSS member agencies.**

In particular, learning will be focused around 3 of the core elements of solutions programming identified by ReDSS member agencies:

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>National, regional and local authorities have the primary responsibility for</strong> helping the displaced to achieve solutions, and must be supported to play their leadership and coordinating role.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Community engagement is critical</strong> to make solutions lasting, locally relevant and supportive of social cohesion.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Area-based approaches,</strong> that define an area as the main entry point (rather than a sector or target group), must be adopted when responding to forced displacement.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

At the 28 March ReDSS/EU-REINTEG learning workshop, participants broke out into 3 groups and identified what good practice looks like under each of these 3 core elements. This good practice is shown in the table below:
## GOOD PRACTICE FOR SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED PROGRAMMING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>GOVERNMENT/DUTY BEARER ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>AREA-BASED APPROACHES</th>
<th>CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and support existing DAC structures as a priority, rather than creating new structures</td>
<td>Support coordination within and between government entities</td>
<td>Adopt a multi-sectoral, integrated approach in DACs. Allow the approach to be driven by community priorities rather than sectors.</td>
<td>Embed ongoing context analysis (inclusive of stakeholder mapping/analysis) into programming, and use this analysis to inform implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support DACs to develop their own vision/priorities, which guide design, implementation and adaptation of programming</td>
<td>Engage multiples levels of government: link local priorities, policies and planning to regional/national-level and vice versa</td>
<td>Target support on the basis of needs and vulnerabilities, rather than focusing on specific population groups</td>
<td>Create/support space for dialogue and joint planning between duty bearers and DACs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish 2-way processes for sharing regular feedback on programming and other information</td>
<td>Fit programming in with existing government structures/entities, rather than creating new advisory groups/committees</td>
<td>Work collaboratively with key stakeholders to develop collective outcomes for addressing forced displacement</td>
<td>Plan for our exit strategy, through supporting local actors to take ownership of solutions planning and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage DACs in reflection on 1) changes in context, and 2) what is working and what is not in terms of programming</td>
<td>Engage government structures/entities in coordination with other implementing agencies</td>
<td>Maximize synergies through partnerships: leverage the expertise of others and avoid duplication. This entails making adequate time and resources for coordination.</td>
<td>Share lessons learned/good practice with other key stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor community engagement processes to the particular context and allow the approach to be driven by the preferences of the community</td>
<td>Work collaboratively with government to identify their capacity enhancement needs</td>
<td>Align our interventions with any local level planning pertaining to displacement/development/solutions</td>
<td>Ensure organizational systems, including project management tools, and ways of working facilitate adaptive management and empower staff to capitalise on the flexibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The SDSC, JSC and EIDACS partners agreed upon the following commitments at the workshop:

1. **To adopt this good practice throughout implementation; and**

2. **To have a workshop in October 2018 to reflect on what has been learned vis-à-vis these areas of good practice.** Key questions to consider will be:
   i. What went well (in relation to the good practice identified above)?
   ii. What went not so well?
   iii. What could be improved?
   iv. Based on this experience, what suggestions/recommendations could be made:
      - For RE-INTEG partners?
      - For other durable solutions stakeholders in Somalia?
      - For other durable solutions stakeholders regionally/globally?

Ahead of the planned reflection and learning workshop in October 2018, EU-REINTEG partners will capture and document learning against each of these areas of good practice. Methods for doing this will vary from project to project, but some possible approaches are detailed in the next section. The October 2018 workshop will also provide an opportunity for partners to discuss the most effective methods for capturing and applying learning.

4. **Possible methods for identifying and applying lessons learned**

A number of possible methods and approaches can be used in combination to identify and capture learning:

i. **Community engagement:** Program design processes must be driven by community priorities. During implementation, displacement-affected communities (DACs) must be central to the learning process. Both “proactive” (actively soliciting feedback from DACs) and “reactive” (establishing channels for DACs to provide feedback/make complaints when they wish) approaches can be used. Proactive methods include focus group discussions, community meetings, surveys and individual interviews, as well as active engagement in project monitoring. Reactive methods may involve establishing/strengthening partners’ networks within the DACs (inclusive of age, gender and other diversity factors) and establishing feedback mechanisms. Specific indicators to measure community engagement and ownership may also be incorporated into project logframes.

ii. **Testing/piloting:** Flexibility can be built into program design and workplans to enable field teams to pilot and test different approaches and activities, which can later be scaled up or down depending on their effectiveness and how they have been received by the displacement affected community.

iii. **Field staff observations:** “Soft” data sources, such as field staff observations can be very useful in informing learning. To leverage the knowledge of frontline staff, there must be open communication within and between program teams, frontline staff must be empowered to share their knowledge, and team meetings must allow space for discussions on changes in context and lessons learned. Agencies should invest in strengthening staff capacity to engage and listen openly.
iv. **Analysis and utilization of monitoring data:** Regular monitoring helps us to understand project progress and project successes and failures. Although the focus is often on monitoring to meet donor requirements, monitoring data should also be used to inform forward implementation and adaptation of existing activities. ReDSS are supporting the JSC, SDSC and EIDACS to implement a common outcomes monitor framework, which will improve the quality and utilization of outcome-level data.

v. **Submission of lessons learned case studies:** A proposed template for submitting lessons learned case studies is provided in the annex to this document. The template is intended to capture detailed information about an individual “action” rather than a project in its entirety. Templates could either be completed directly by EU-REINTEG partners, or by ReDSS with information from EU-REINTEG partners. ReDSS would then be responsible for analyzing, storing and disseminating lessons learned case studies.

vi. **Lessons learned reflection sessions:** These sessions work by bringing a project team together periodically (quarterly or biannually) to discuss projects in an open and honest fashion. Lessons learned reflection sessions should focus on:
   1) Identifying project success and failures;
   2) Understanding how changes in context are affecting project implementation;
   3) Documenting learning for internal and external dissemination; and
   4) Identifying which project interventions and approaches should be adjusted, scaled up or scaled down based on the above.

vii. **External sources of information** should also be considered. These might include solutions analyses, context analysis, assessments and surveys conducted by other actors.

5. **Understanding contextual changes as part of adaptive management**

As highlighted above, programs should have the flexibility to be adapted not just on the basis of what works and what does not, but also on the basis of changes in the operational context. Some of the key contextual issues to monitor are listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal and policy environment</th>
<th>Changes in....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laws, policies and regulations pertain to IDPs/refugees/returnees and durable solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The incorporation of displacement and solutions into policies and plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The government’s capacity and incentives for implementation of the above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile of displacement affected community</th>
<th>Changes in....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development status of the displacement-affected area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population numbers within displacement-affected communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of displacement (i.e. its length, whether it is still ongoing;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2 The table is an abridged version of the “Environmental Analysis” chapter of the ReDSS Solutions Framework Guidance Manual.

whether it was sudden or not), location of displacement (i.e. rural/urban, in camps/dispersed etc.), and other dynamics

- Needs, vulnerabilities and capacities
- Intentions and preferences of IDPs/refugees/returnees vis-à-vis durable solutions, including short, medium and long-term plans
- Dynamics of conflict and disaster within displacement-affected community.

### The response to forced displacement

Changes in...

- Key actors responsible for and/or involved in addressing displacement
- Mechanisms for coordination and planning
- Strategies and plans for addressing displacement
- Development plans/strategies for the displacement-affected community

### Social cohesion

Changes in...

- Attitudes of host population/media/local and national government towards IDPs/refugees/returnees and vice versa
- Relations between the displaced/returnee population and the host population/local institutions

### Other contextual factors

Any other relevant changes in the environment....

### 6. Key resources: real-time learning and adaptive management

For further reading, some key resources are listed below:

- USAID- multiple resource on adaptive management can be found by visiting the [USAID Learning Lab](http://www.usaid.gov).
**ANNEX I: DRAFT LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES TEMPLATE**

This template has been designed to capture lessons learned and good practices from the projects of 3 EU-REINTEG consortia (JSC, EIDACS and SDSC), for which ReDSS is the learning partner. The form is intended to capture detailed information about an individual “action” rather than the project in its entirety. An “action” might include:

- An individual project activity (e.g. raising awareness of HLP rights);
- A set of project activities around a particular theme (e.g. efforts to increase access to HLP rights); or
- An approach (e.g. an approach to community engagement, or an approach to partnering with local organization/institutions).

The form is used as part of a wider process to understand what works and what does not in solutions-oriented programs. Examples submitted should be relevant to the ReDSS core elements of solutions programming (see question 1 below). Partners can submit as many forms as they wish at any time during the implementation period.

1. **WHICH REDSS CORE ELEMENT OF SOLUTIONS PROGRAMMING IS THIS ACTION RELEVANT TO?** Chose at least one option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ReDSS Solutions Programming Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Working collectively toward solutions with multiple stakeholders (humanitarian, development, human rights, peace-building)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Supporting the capacity and incentives of government actors to undertake their responsibility to lead and coordinate durable solutions efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Adopting an area-based approach that defines an area as the main entry point (rather than a sector or target group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Supporting the safe and meaningful involvement of displacement affected communities in the search of durable solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Contributing to existing plans and strategies that have a focus on solutions and/or area-based development (or supporting the development of new plans and strategies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Generating and disseminating evidence of what works in terms of advancing solutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- **Title of Action:**
- **Period covered:**
- **Location (of implementation):**
- **Date submitted:**
- **Author:**
- **Agency/consortia:**
3. **OVERVIEW OF CONTEXT AND CHALLENGE BEING ADDRESSED BY THE ACTION (1/2 TO 1 PAGE):**
Responses should try to address the following:
- What was the gap, in terms of durable solutions, that you were trying to address with this action?
- What was the context? (camp/out-of-camp/urban; rapid onset/protracted; natural disaster/conflict/other; affected population group: refugee/IDP/returnee/host community/stateless/other)
- What result was the action intended to achieve?
- Who were the beneficiaries/target group of the action?

4. **OVERVIEW OF THE ACTION (1-2 PAGES):**
Responses should try to address the following:
- Describe the action undertaken
- How were other actors (e.g. representatives of local government and displacement affected communities) involved in the action?
- What worked well? What positive changes did this action have on helping people to achieve a durable solution? (Include any changes specific to age, gender, displacement status of other diversity factor)
- Were you able to measure the changes described above? Include any relevant data.
- What didn’t work so well? What would you do differently next time?

5. **BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE OF UNDERTAKING THIS ACTION, WHAT SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD YOU MAKE FOR THE FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUR PROGRAM/PROJECT? (1/2 PAGE MAXIMUM)**

6. **BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE OF UNDERTAKING THIS ACTION, WHAT SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD YOU MAKE FOR OTHER DURABLE SOLUTIONS ACTORS? (1/2 PAGE MAXIMUM)**