Lead Agencies: Action Aid and CAFOD **Consortium Members**: Tearfund, Christian Aid, Concern, Oxfam **Budget:** £4,876,636
Countries of operation: Bangladesh, DRC, Kenya, Pakistan and Ethiopia **Timeframe:** 3 years

Where and how did this project originate?
This project was developed in response to the 2010 recommendation from the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) for a 'New Humanitarian Business Model' that places civil society, national NGOs and community organisations 'at the centre of humanitarian action and reform efforts'. It builds on research conducted by Start Network members since 2012 that demonstrates the importance of local actors in humanitarian response for four reasons: 1) they are present with disaster affected communities 2) they have local access, knowledge and acceptance, 3) they are first responders in a crisis 4) the international system is more and more stretched. This project goes one step further by developing alternative models for capacity building that are partner-driven, supporting national level collaborative platforms, and documenting and sharing learning with humanitarian agencies for further adaptation.

Brief description
The vision is to support local actors to take their place alongside international actors in order to create a balanced humanitarian system that is more responsive and accountable to disaster affected communities. This project will strengthen local and national organisational capacity for decision making and leadership in humanitarian response. It will link local to national organisations, and at the same time influence international organisations to promote the role of local and national actors. The project will be implemented in 5 countries and will demonstrate through an effective learning and documentation process how this approach can make national responses faster, better quality and more effective.

Why is collaboration fundamental to the success of this project?
Collaboration will enable this project to deliver at a lower cost, and to avoid duplication and competition. It is also fundamental to ensure that the platforms developed as part of this project have a wider membership, greater credibility and influence. Furthermore, a collective approach to developing local partner capacity and disseminating best practice will ensure a coherent approach and prevent multiple demands on partners.

What change does this project envision to achieve?
The project envisions four changes:
1. Stronger national organisations to deliver emergency preparedness & response and in 5 countries
2. National organisations are better represented and have a stronger voice in relevant humanitarian platforms and networks in their countries
3. START Network agencies (INGOs) recognise and respond to national organisations' voice and agency
4. Evidence of good practice in strengthening local organisations' humanitarian capacities and their role/ influence in humanitarian action is documented and shared beyond the project

What are the key activities associated with this project?
Partners will self-select and assess their capacity gaps in a process facilitated by the Start Network. Organisational competency frameworks will be agreed, and partners will develop learning resources, support mechanisms and training programmes informed by annual self-assessments. At the national level the project will build on existing networks as national platforms, and provide support to organisations on effective representation within them. The project will support these platforms to have more representative and accountable governance structures, it will build awareness of funds and ability to access them, and it will facilitate the development of emergency preparedness plans. The project will also document learning through case studies, evidence-gathering working groups and workshops, and advocacy activities.

How will this project make a difference to people affected by crisis?
This project will make a difference to people affected by crises through enabling local organisations to improve the speed, quality and effectiveness of their humanitarian preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation.