

2026

# DREF Guidelines

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The DREF Guidelines 2026 have been developed to complement and support the consistent and effective application of the DREF procedures adopted in June 2025. While the Procedures define the regulatory framework of the mechanism, these Guidelines provide practical direction to support their coherent and sound application across contexts. They translate policy into operational guidance, helping National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies navigate the DREF with clarity and confidence in both anticipatory and response settings.

The evolution reflected in these Guidelines builds on the experience, feedback and leadership of National Societies worldwide. Through their operational practice, innovation and sustained engagement with the DREF, National Societies have continuously pushed the mechanism forward to ensure timely and principled support for people affected by, or at risk of, disasters and crises. Their commitment to strengthening local action has directly informed the improvements consolidated in these Guidelines.

The IFRC Secretariat extends its appreciation to colleagues across country delegations, regional offices and headquarters who support National Societies in accessing and managing DREF allocations. Their continuous engagement, technical guidance and oversight ensure that the DREF remains a trusted and accountable instrument for localised humanitarian action.

Special recognition is extended to the DREF team within the Information Management, DREF and Quality (DRIMQ) portfolio for their sustained efforts in aligning the Guidelines with the 2025 Procedures and ensuring that the content reflects operational realities across contexts. Appreciation is also extended to the colleagues from across the Secretariat and the wider Network who contributed technical inputs and review comments throughout the drafting process.

Finally, sincere thanks are extended to Klaudia Jankowska-Maddison, consultant, for her support in the drafting and revision process. Her commitment, patience and structured approach were instrumental in translating evolving procedural changes into a coherent and practical guidance document.

These Guidelines reflect a collective effort across the Network and represent a shared commitment to strengthening the DREF as a cornerstone of locally led humanitarian action.

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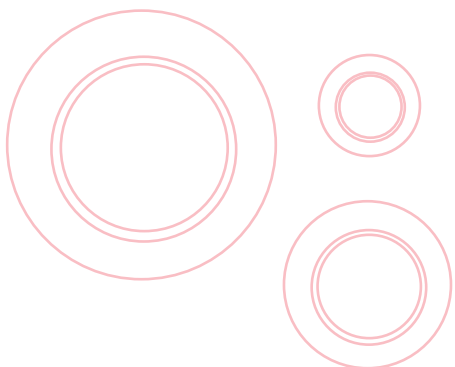
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# DREF GUIDELINES

## **2026**



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

**1**

### **1.1 HOW TO USE THE DREF GUIDELINES**

**2**

## **2. WHAT IS IFRC-DREF?**

**5**

### **2.1 KEY FEATURES OF THE DREF**

**8**

### **2.2 WHEN TO USE DREF?**

**9**

2.2.1 Types of DREF allocations and their applications

10

2.2.2 Comparison of the DREF allocation types

13

### **2.3 HOW TO ACCESS DREF?**

**14**

2.3.1 Eligibility, scope, and access

14

2.3.2 Why is it better to start small and scale up?

16

### **2.4 NATIONAL SOCIETY MECHANISM AND CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS**

**17**

2.4.1 Introduction to the PER approach

18

### **2.5 IFRC GO PLATFORM AND ITS USE FOR DREF**

**21**

## **3. ANTICIPATORY PILLAR**

**24**

### **3.1 WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATORY PILLAR?**

**28**

### **3.2 DECISION TO APPLY FOR FUNDS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**31**

### **3.3 ALLOCATION PARAMETERS UNDER ANTICIPATORY ACTION**

#### **– SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS**

**33**

3.3.1 Early Action Protocol (EAP)

34

3.3.2 Simplified Early Action Protocol (sEAP)

35

3.3.3 Imminent DREF

36

3.3.4 Early action scale-up

37

### **3.4 EARLY ACTION PROTOCOLS AND SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOLS**

3.4.1	General roles and responsibilities	39
3.4.2	s/EAP development and submission process	48
	<i>Eligible activities</i>	48
	<i>Ineligible activities and costs</i>	50
	<i>General budget considerations</i>	51
	<i>s/EAP submission process</i>	53
3.4.3	s/EAP validation and approval process	54
	<i>Simultaneous technical review by IFRC</i>	54
	<i>s/EAP revisions and resubmissions</i>	54
	<i>s/EAP final approval</i>	56
3.4.4	s/EAP implementation	57
	<i>s/EAP project agreement and funds transfer</i>	57
	<i>s/EAP revisions</i>	58
	<i>s/EAP activation</i>	59
	<i>Stop mechanism</i>	62
	<i>Monitoring implementation</i>	64
	<i>Best practices for implementation</i>	64
3.4.5	s/EAP post-activation: revalidation, reporting, and closure	65
	<i>Reporting requirements</i>	65
	<i>Operational learning and revalidation process</i>	70
	<i>Closure</i>	72

### **3.5 IMMINENT DREF 73**

3.5.1	General roles and responsibilities	73
3.5.2	Planning and application	76
3.5.3	Imminent DREF and other forms of DREF allocations	79

3.5.4 Eligible activities and budget considerations	79
3.5.5 Submission process	81
3.5.6 Review, approval, and disbursement	84
3.5.7 Implementation, reporting, and closure	86
<i>Option 1: The National Society does not need to scale up the Imminent DREF</i>	87
<i>Option 2: The National Society transitions the Imminent DREF into a Response DREF</i>	89

### **3.6 SUMMARY OF THE KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE ANTICIPATORY PILLAR** **90**

## **4. RESPONSE PILLAR** **92**

### **4.1 WHAT IS THE RESPONSE PILLAR?** **96**

### **4.2 GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** **99**

### **4.3 DECISION TO APPLY FOR FUNDS – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS** **116**

### **4.4 ALLOCATION PARAMETERS UNDER RESPONSE DREF** **121**

Response DREF	121
Response DREF for Drought-Specific (Slow-Onset) Crises	126
DREF support for Readiness actions	128
DREF grant contribution to Emergency Appeal	129
DREF loan for Red-category emergencies	130

### **4.5 PLANNING AND APPLICATION** **136**

4.5.1 Planning out the operation	136
<i>Context and capacity analysis</i>	136
<i>Operational strategy and objectives</i>	137
<i>Eligible activities</i>	138
<i>Eligible activities under a Drought DREF</i>	139
<i>Workplan and implementation timeline</i>	143
<i>Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)</i>	144
<i>Equity and inclusion</i>	144

4.5.2 Designing a monitoring plan	145
<i>Results-Based Management</i>	145
<i>Coordination, partnerships and approvals</i>	146
<i>Risk management and contingency planning</i>	146
<i>Designing objectives, outcomes, outputs and indicators</i>	147
<i>Designing a monitoring plan</i>	148
4.5.3 Budget considerations and development	150
<i>Budgeting principles</i>	150
<i>Cost categories and eligible budget lines</i>	151
<i>Ineligible costs and common budget pitfalls</i>	153
<i>Procurement and asset considerations</i>	153
<i>In-kind goods donations in DREF operations</i>	154
4.5.4 DREF request submission	155
4.5.5 DREF loan request	160
<b>4.6 REVIEW, APPROVAL AND DISBURSEMENT</b>	<b>161</b>
4.6.1 DREF grant	161
<i>With Emergency Advance Payment</i>	162
<i>Without Emergency Advance Payment</i>	164
4.6.2 DREF loan	166
<b>4.7 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING</b>	<b>167</b>
4.7.1 Launching the operation	167
<i>WBS and PEAR</i>	167
<i>Project Agreement</i>	167
<i>Event launch</i>	168
4.7.2 Monitoring implementation	169
4.7.3 Best practices for implementation	170
4.7.4 Drought DREF - extended implementation timeframes	171
4.7.5 DREF Loan - additional monitoring considerations	173

<b>4.8 REVISIONS, REPORTING, AND CLOSURE</b>	<b>174</b>
4.8.1 Changes and revisions	174
<i>Requesting additional DREF funding</i>	174
<i>Requesting a timeframe extension</i>	175
<i>Requesting a change in operating scope</i>	175
<i>DREF Loan - specific considerations</i>	176
4.8.2 Operational learning	177
4.8.3 Closure and final reporting	178
4.8.4 Drought DREF - additional considerations	181
<b>4.9 SUMMARY OF THE KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE RESPONSE PILLAR</b>	<b>183</b>

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY** **187**

<b>5.1 RISK MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN IFRC-DREF</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>5.2 DEFINING RISK IN IFRC-DREF OPERATIONS</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>5.3 TOOLS AND PROCESSES</b>	<b>193</b>
5.3.1 Risk management tools	193
5.3.2 Operational monitoring and learning process	193
5.3.3 Collaborative risk oversight and assurance	194
<b>5.4 IMPACT ON OPERATIONS</b>	<b>195</b>
5.4.1 Timely allocation of funds and compliance-linked delays	195
5.4.2 Operational efficiency and learning from risk management	196
5.4.3 Financial and reputational consequences of poor risk management	197
<b>5.5 SCENARIOS AND CASE STUDIES</b>	<b>198</b>
Scenario 1: Reduced DREF allocation due to an overdue report	199
Scenario 2: Delayed reporting and its impact on future funding	200
Scenario 3: Ineligibility for DREF allocation due to multiple overdue reports	201
Scenario 4: Procurement delays and ineligible expenditures	202

Scenario 5: Cash transfer programme without adequate risk mitigation	203
Scenario 6: Strengthening risk management through learning	204
Scenario 7: Child Safeguarding Risk	205

## 6. OPERATIONAL LEARNING

207

6.1 LESSONS LEARNED WORKSHOPS (LLW)	209
6.2 IFRC OPERATIONAL LEARNING PLATFORM	213
6.3 DREF OPERATIONAL REVIEWS	214





# 1

# Introduction

The Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) is one of the IFRC's most effective and trusted instruments for enabling timely and principled humanitarian action. Established in 1979 and governed by rules adopted by the IFRC General Assembly in 1985, the DREF empowers National Societies to respond rapidly to crises and act in anticipation of hazards, helping to save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen resilience at the community level.

Today, the DREF stands as a cornerstone of local action with global support, offering fast, flexible, and accountable funding that allows National Societies to act decisively before, during, and immediately after disasters.

These Guidelines are designed to make the DREF more accessible, practical, and easy to navigate. They provide clear explanations of how the Fund works, the processes for accessing and managing allocations, and the responsibilities shared between National Societies and the IFRC. They also integrate the most recent updates to procedures, templates and standards — ensuring that operations are consistent, transparent and results-driven.

The DREF is not simply a funding mechanism; it is a partnership built on trust, efficiency, and the shared goal of delivering humanitarian assistance where it is needed most. By using these Guidelines, we will become better equipped to plan early, act quickly, and operate with confidence, knowing that the DREF is there to help transform readiness into action.

## 1.1 HOW TO USE THE DREF GUIDELINES

**NATIONAL SOCIETIES AND IFRC COLLEAGUES ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE THESE GUIDELINES NOT JUST AS A REFERENCE DOCUMENT, BUT AS A DAILY COMPANION THROUGHOUT THE LIFECYCLE OF DREF-SUPPORTED OPERATIONS — FROM PREPAREDNESS AND PLANNING, TO IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING AND LEARNING.**

The Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) Guidelines are designed to help National Societies, IFRC delegations, and partners understand, access, and implement the DREF effectively.

Depending on your needs and role, you can explore the Guidelines at **three levels of depth**:



## 1. WHAT IS DREF? – OVERVIEW

### PURPOSE:

This section provides a strategic overview of the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF). It explains its purpose, principles, and how it supports National Societies to respond rapidly and act early in crises.

### WHERE TO FIND IT:

See the introduction to **Chapter 1, “What is DREF?”**.

### WHEN TO USE IT:

Use this section when you need to understand the overall purpose of the DREF, its structure, and how it fits within the IFRC’s humanitarian financing tools. It is particularly useful for senior management, donors, and external partners seeking a high-level understanding.

### WHO SHOULD USE IT:

- ▶ National Society leadership and governance bodies.
- ▶ IFRC management and policy teams.
- ▶ Partners and donors who contribute or interact with the Fund.

### YOU WILL LEARN:

- ▶ The origins, principles and strategic ambitions of the DREF.
- ▶ How the “One Fund, Two Pillars” approach works.
- ▶ The DREF’s role in supporting localisation, efficiency, and anticipatory action.



## 2. HOW DOES IT WORK? – PILLARS

### PURPOSE:

This section explains how the DREF operates in practice through its two pillars – the Anticipatory Pillar and the Response Pillar – and their related funding modalities.

### WHERE TO FIND IT:

See the introductions to **Chapters 3** and **4** of the DREF Guidelines.

### WHEN TO USE IT:

Use this section when you need to understand the core principles of the two pillars, how the different modalities apply, and how decisions are made under each pillar.

### WHO SHOULD USE IT:

- ▶ IFRC and National Society technical teams involved in planning and operational design.
- ▶ Regional and country DREF focal points.
- ▶ Partner National Societies supporting early action and response operations.

### YOU WILL LEARN:

- ▶ The key characteristics of an Early Action Protocol (EAP), Simplified EAP, Imminent DREF, Response DREF and DREF Loan.
- ▶ How to transition between modalities (for example, from Imminent to Response DREF).
- ▶ The funding thresholds, timelines, and reporting requirements for each modality.



### 3. HOW DO I IMPLEMENT MODALITIES?

#### PURPOSE:

This section provides step-by-step operational guidance on implementing DREF-funded operations, from planning to reporting.

#### WHERE TO FIND IT:

- **WHEN TO USE DREF?**
- **HOW TO USE DREF?**
- **ALLOCATION PARAMETERS UNDER ANTICIPATORY ACTION:**
  - *EAP*
  - *SEAP*
  - *IMMINENT*
  - *EARLY ACTION SCALE-UP*
- **EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL (EAP) AND SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL (SEAP)**
  - *DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION*
  - *VALIDATION AND APPROVAL*
  - *IMPLEMENTATION*
  - *REVALIDATION, REPORTING, AND CLOSURE*
- **IMMINENT DREF**
  - *PLANNING AND APPLICATION*
  - *SUBMISSION PROCESS*
  - *REVIEW, APPROVAL, AND DISBURSEMENT*
  - *IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING, AND CLOSURE*
- **ALLOCATION PARAMETERS UNDER RESPONSE PILLAR**
  - *RESPONSE DREF*
  - *RESPONSE DREF FOR DROUGHT-SPECIFIC CRISES*

- *DREF SUPPORT FOR READINESS ACTIONS*
- *DREF CONTRIBUTION TO EMERGENCY APPEALS*
- **RESPONSE DREF**
  - *PLANNING AND APPLICATION*
  - *REVIEW, APPROVAL AND DISBURSEMENT*
  - *IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING*
  - *REVISIONS, REPORTING, AND CLOSURE*

#### WHEN TO USE IT:

Use this section during the design and implementation of a DREF operation, including budgeting, procurement, monitoring, reporting, and lessons learned activities.

#### WHO SHOULD USE IT:

- ▶ IFRC Country (or Cluster) Delegations.
- ▶ National Society operational, finance, logistics, and PMER staff.
- ▶ DREF Project Managers and Operations Coordinators.

#### You will learn:

- ▶ How to plan and budget for a DREF operation.
- ▶ Eligibility and ineligibility of costs.
- ▶ How to manage implementation and revisions.
- ▶ Roles and responsibilities across all levels (National Society, IFRC, and partners).
- ▶ Reporting requirements and closure procedures.
- ▶ How to organise Lessons Learned Workshops and link findings to future operations.



# 2 What is IFRC-DREF?

<b>2.1 KEY FEATURES OF THE DREF</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.2 WHEN TO USE DREF?</b>	<b>9</b>
▶ 2.2.1 Types of DREF allocations and their applications	10
▶ 2.2.2 Comparison of the DREF allocation types	13
<b>2.3 HOW TO ACCESS DREF?</b>	<b>14</b>
▶ 2.3.1 Eligibility, scope, and access	14
▶ 2.3.2 Why is it better to start small and scale up?	16
<b>2.4 NATIONAL SOCIETY MECHANISM AND CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>17</b>
▶ 2.4.1 Introduction to the PER approach	18
<b>2.5 IFRC GO PLATFORM AND ITS USE FOR DREF</b>	<b>21</b>

The **IFRC-DISASTER RESPONSE EMERGENCY FUND** (IFRC-DREF, DREF) is the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) **global pooled funding mechanism** that enables rapid, localised anticipatory action and emergency response led by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide. Established in 1979, the DREF is one of the oldest international humanitarian pooled funds dedicated to strengthening local action in small- to medium-scale disasters.

The DREF provides fast, flexible, and predictable financial support, empowering National Societies to act quickly and at scale when domestic resources are insufficient to meet urgent needs.

Since its creation, the mechanism has evolved to reflect the changing nature of humanitarian crises and the increasing importance of acting early. Today, the DREF encompasses two complementary pillars: anticipatory pillar, which enables National Societies to take early measures before a disaster strikes in order to mitigate its impacts; and response pillar, which supports urgent life-saving activities and humanitarian assistance immediately after an event occurs. Together, these pillars ensure that communities at risk receive timely, effective, and locally-led support when it matters most.

IFRC became a pioneer in the humanitarian sector when it established DREF, and it has built over 45 years of experience in providing grants and loans to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. More than 250 million people in crisis worldwide have benefited from DREF support. On average, the DREF supports over 100 responses to small and medium-sized disasters and crises every year.



## 2.1 KEY FEATURES OF THE DREF

**THE DREF IS DESIGNED TO BE FAST, FLEXIBLE, AND RESPONSIVE TO THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES.**

Its flexibility lies in its ability to fund both anticipatory and response operations through a variety of modalities — including grants, loans, and pre-agreed Early Action Protocols — allowing National Societies to act before, during, or immediately after a disaster. This flexibility extends to the scale and scope of operations, accommodating different hazards, contexts, and capacities, whether for sudden-onset emergencies, slow-onset crises such as droughts, or forecast-based early actions. The DREF's speed is underpinned by streamlined procedures and pre-approved protocols, enabling rapid decision-making and swift disbursement of funds once agreements are in place. Accessing the DREF is straightforward: eligible National Societies can submit requests via the IFRC's GO Platform, ensuring a lean and standardised process. Fundamentally, the DREF operates as a resource-based mechanism — it allocates funds based on the identified needs and operational capacity of the requesting National Society, ensuring resources are available where they can make the greatest humanitarian impact.

**IFRC-DREF provides direct support to local action.** In line with the IFRC's commitment to the Grand Bargain, the Disaster Response Emergency Fund is a direct enabler of local humanitarian action. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies—comprised of over 14 million volunteers embedded in the communities they serve—are the sole recipients of DREF funding. In fact, **on average, over 80% of DREF funds are transferred and**

**implemented directly by these local actors**, ensuring that operations are not only fast and tailored to community needs, but also locally owned and accountable.

This model allows National Societies to deliver urgent, life-saving assistance, especially in areas where no other humanitarian actors are present. By channelling resources directly to the frontlines of response, DREF strengthens the agility and sustainability of locally led humanitarian action across the globe.

**Anticipatory action saves lives and enhances the efficient use of resources.** Shifting more resources, capacity, and attention towards acting before a disaster strikes not only protects lives and livelihoods but also makes economic sense. Through the Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF, funding can be set aside in advance and released once a clearly defined trigger, representing a certain level of risk, is met, enabling National Societies to act early and reduce the humanitarian impact of hazards before the event takes place. This support includes funding for prepositioned stock, essential annual readiness activities and early actions ensuring that National Societies are equipped to act quickly and effectively when early warnings signal an impending crisis.

DREF provides a path towards sustainability due to the capacity-building, lessons learned, operational learnings and reviews aspects built from DREF operations. This contributes to building the competencies and capacities of local National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and through them, the local communities.

## 2.2 WHEN TO USE DREF?

Before applying for DREF, National Societies should assess:



**TIMING** – *Is the disaster forecasted, imminent, or has it already happened?*



**NATURE OF THE CRISIS** – *Is it sudden-onset (e.g., earthquakes, cyclones) or slow-onset (e.g., drought, food insecurity)?*



**FORECAST AND DATA AVAILABILITY** – *Is there enough meteorological/humanitarian evidence to justify early action?*



**CAPACITY AND READINESS** – *Does the National Society have sufficient capacity to implement AA measures or emergency response with quality in a rapid yet accountable manner?*



**SEVERITY AND IMPACT** – *Is the event above historical averages or part of a recurring pattern?*



**FUNDING NEEDS** – *Does the operation require pre-agreed, forecast-based funding, or is it immediate anticipatory actions or emergency response?*

### Specific considerations for National Societies in non-ODA recipient countries:

In order to direct DREF funds where they are most needed, National Societies in non-ODA countries which are responding to disasters are highly encouraged to initially seek domestic resources and explore other sources of funding before requesting financial support from the DREF. If a National Society still requires support through a DREF loan or grant facility, the request will have to comply with the applicable DREF Regulations and Procedures.

All DREF allocations require a mandatory joint DREF launch event with donors/diplomatic community led by the National Society and IFRC delegation. This requirement is particularly important in non-ODA contexts, where allocations are subject to increased scrutiny. National Societies are expected to demonstrate domestic resource mobilisation efforts, proactive donor engagement, and strong visibility around the DREF allocation.



## 2.2.1 TYPES OF DREF ALLOCATIONS AND THEIR APPLICATIONS

### ANTICIPATORY PILLAR

#### ▶ *acting before disaster strikes*

Anticipatory action focuses on reducing the impact of a forecasted hazard through early interventions. It is used when scientific data and expert analysis indicate an imminent risk, allowing National Societies to take action before a disaster occurs.

The Anticipatory Pillar is operationalised through two key funding modalities allocated in the form of grants, tailored to varying levels of preparedness, lead times, and National Society capacities:

- ▶ **EARLY ACTION PROTOCOLS (EAPS AND SEAPS)**, which are pre-approved plans that outline a National Society's strategy for acting in advance of specific forecasted hazards.
- ▶ **FULL EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL (EAP)** is a detailed, 5-year plan that outlines a National Society's strategy for acting in advance of specific forecasted hazards. The EAP allows for up to two activations within its implementation timeframe.

- ▶ **SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL (sEAP)**, which offers a streamlined, two-year alternative for National Societies seeking a lighter entry point into anticipatory action. The sEAP allows for one activation only within its implementation timeframe.

- ▶ **IMMINENT DREF**, which is specifically designed for situations where a National Society does not have a pre-approved Early Action Protocol (EAP) or Simplified EAP (sEAP) covering the same hazard and geographical areas but has the opportunity to implement early action in advance of a sudden onset hazard that is clearly on the horizon.



Detailed information about the Anticipatory Pillar can be found in **Chapter 3 of the Guidelines** and **Sections 4 and 5 of the IFRC DREF Procedures**.



## RESPONSE PILLAR

### ▶ *acting immediately after disaster strikes*

The Response Pillar of the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) provides rapid and flexible financial support to National Societies for immediate humanitarian action following sudden or slow-onset disasters. It ensures swift, needs-based, and context-driven emergency response when a crisis exceeds local capacities but does not warrant a full Emergency Appeal\*.

This pillar is operationalised through allocations for operations that are designed to accommodate varying emergency scales, response needs, and timeframes. These include the Response DREF and the DREF Loan.

- ▶ **RESPONSE DREF** provides flexible, rapid funding for small- to medium-scale emergencies triggered by both sudden and slow-onset events in the form of grants.
- ▶ **DREF LOANS** provide immediate funding to National Societies to kick-start and support critical early interventions while an Emergency Appeal is being launched. As of the most recent procedures, DREF Loans are now reserved exclusively for Red category Emergency Appeals, which represent large-scale crises requiring significant international support. These loans serve as bridge financing, enabling rapid mobilisation of resources ahead of donor pledges and ensuring the swift delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance.

- ▶ **DREF GRANT CONTRIBUTIONS** are available for Yellow and Orange categories. These categories are not eligible for loans. National Societies should instead request direct contributions through a grant, following the standard process for standalone DREF allocations. This streamlines access to funding and reinforces the flexibility of the mechanism to support scalable, locally led humanitarian action across all levels of emergency.



Detailed information about the Response Pillar can be found in **Chapter 4 of the Guidelines** and **Sections 6 and 7 of the IFRC DREF Procedures**.



To help National Societies navigate these options, they are encouraged to use the **comparison table** and **decision tree**, which provide a structured step-by-step approach to selecting the most appropriate DREF option based on the specific characteristics of the disaster.

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\* For more information about Emergency Appeal funding, please refer to [this website](#).



**2.2.2 COMPARISON OF THE DREF ALLOCATION TYPES**

	<b>EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL ((EAP</b>	<b>SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL ((SEAP</b>	<b>DREF FOR IMMINENT CRISIS</b>	<b>RESPONSE DREF</b>	<b>DREF LOAN</b>
<b>PRIMARY PURPOSE</b>	Pre-agreed funding for anticipatory actions before a disaster occurs. Intended for two activations within its five-year validity.	Similar to the EAP, a two-year pre-agreed funding alternative for National Societies seeking a lighter entry point into anticipatory action.	Quick allocation; sudden-onset hazards where the risk is clear and imminent. Provides resources for early action and immediate early response activities.	Flexible, rapid funding for small- to medium-scale emergencies triggered by both sudden and slow-onset events in the form of grants.	To provide start-up funding for Red-level emergencies where an IFRC Emergency Appeal is being or has been launched.
<b>TIMING OF ACTIVATION</b>	Based on a pre-agreed lead time for early action.	Based on a pre-agreed lead time for early action.	Maximum 30 days in advance and minimum of 3 days in advance of a hazard.	Within hours/days after disaster strikes.	The loan request should be made at the time of launching the Emergency Appeal or submitting the EA Funding Ask the Secretary General.
<b>TOTAL BUDGET THRESHOLD</b>	CHF 950,000	CHF 220,000	CHF 80,000 (w/o Rapid Response Deployment) CHF 90,800 (w/RRD)	Yellow: up to CHF 500,000 Orange: up to CHF 1,000,000 Red: up to CHF 1,000,000	Red: up to CHF 2,000,000
<b>ELIGIBILITY –TARGETED PEOPLE</b>	At least 10,000 people.	At least 2,000 people.	Not predefined.	At least 100 households (500 people) affected and targeted.	N/A
<b>ELIGIBILITY –COST PER BENEFICIARY</b>	Not predefined.	Not predefined.	Not predefined.	Indicative CHF 150.	N/A
<b>OPERATION TIMEFRAME</b>	5-year lifespan with two activations.	2-year lifespan with one activation	45 days, with no possibility of extension.	Yellow/sudden: up to 6 months Orange/sudden: up to 9 months Yellow/slow: up to 18 months Orange/slow: up to 18 months	N/A
<b>TRIGGER CRITERIA</b>	As established in the protocol.	As established in the protocol.	Imminent high-confidence forecast/expert judgement.	Within hours/days after disaster strikes.	Launched Emergency Appeal; Red category emergency.
<b>RESTRICTIONS</b>	No recovery or long-term preparedness activities.	No recovery or long-term preparedness activities.	No possibility of extension. International procurement is not allowed. Stocks for immediate use and/or replenishment only.	Only covers emergency response; no long-term interventions.	The loan must be reimbursed within six months of the Emergency Appeal launch.
<b>TRANSITION</b>	The operation may transition through a Response DREF allocation.	The operation may transition through a Response DREF allocation.	The operation may transition through a Response DREF allocation (using an Operational Update).	Operations can be scaled up, if needed, through additional allocations or Emergency Appeals (in case of large-scale disasters).	N/A

## 2.3 HOW TO ACCESS DREF?

DREF is a streamlined and flexible funding mechanism designed to enable rapid access to financial resources for National Societies responding to emergencies. Whether acting in anticipation of a disaster or responding to an ongoing crisis, National Societies can access DREF funding through clearly defined application and approval processes. Since 2022, the response and imminent DREF request processes have been fully **digitalised through the IFRC GO platform**, enhancing speed, coordination, and transparency. In contexts where internet connectivity is limited, an offline request form is also available to ensure uninterrupted access. By understanding and following the structured application, review, and implementation process, National Societies can act swiftly and effectively in emergencies, ensuring a timely and impactful humanitarian action.

### 2.3.1 ELIGIBILITY, SCOPE, AND ACCESS

National Societies can apply for funding under two distinct but complementary pillars

- ▶ **ANTICIPATORY PILLAR** – supporting early action to mitigate the impact of a forecasted/imminent hazard before disaster strikes.
- ▶ **RESPONSE PILLAR** – providing financial support for immediate humanitarian response following an emergency.

A National Society may also apply for funding from both pillars in sequence or concurrently to maximise their operational impact. This approach allows NS to initiate early actions when a disaster is forecasted and, if necessary, scale up their response if the impact exceeds local resources.

### STEP 1:

#### Starting with the Anticipatory Pillar

- ▶ During peace time, a NS can work on developing an EAP or a sEAP for a specific hazard which will enable them to implement the early actions when the trigger is reached. If a disaster is forecasted, and the National Society doesn't have a protocol in place, they can apply for funding under the Anticipatory Pillar through an Imminent DREF for an imminent crisis.
- ▶ The pre-agreed trigger mechanism of the s/EAP intends to ensure that early actions, such as evacuations, cash assistance, or livestock vaccination, can be activated in time.
- ▶ This ensures that communities are better prepared and protected, reducing the humanitarian impact of the expected disaster.

### STEP 2 A:

#### Scaling up through the Response Pillar

Following the activation of a protocol or an imminent DREF, should the disaster happen, and cause significant humanitarian impact which exceeds the local resources of the National Society, the National Society can consider a further DREF allocation for response. This can be requested through an Operational Update if it follows an imminent DREF, or through a new response application if it follows the activation of an s/EAP.

If the National Society decides to launch an Emergency Appeal, the allocation from the Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF always remains a grant (even though the other DREF allocations may become a loan).

The Response Pillar allocation allows for expanded interventions such as wider relief distributions, emergency health services, and extended operational timelines.

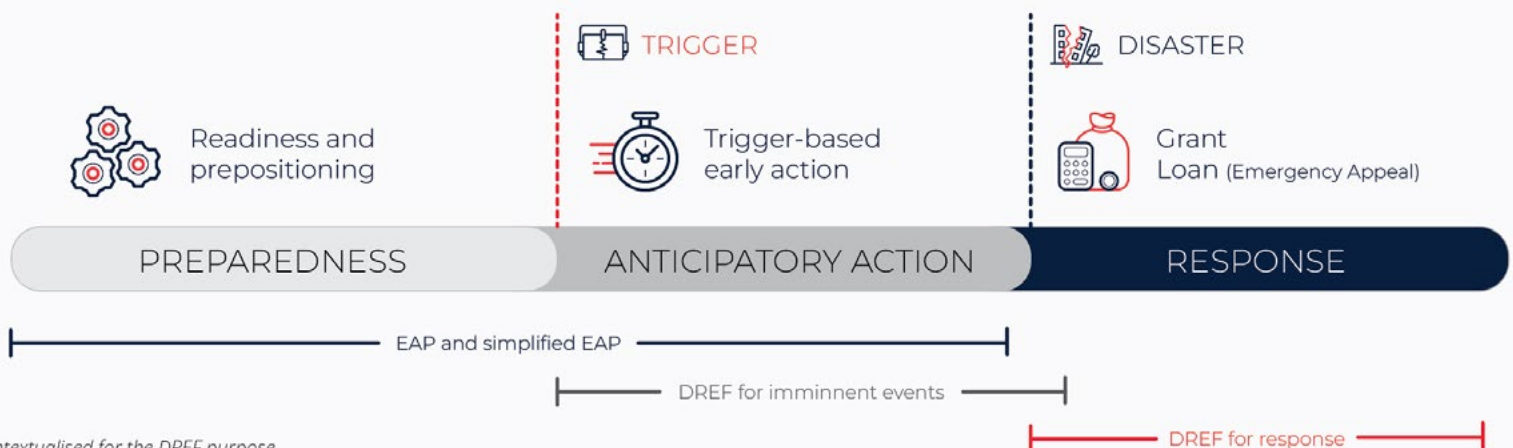
**STEP 2 B:  
Concurrent use of both Pillars**

In certain situations, a National Society may integrate early action elements into a Response DREF operation if different geographic areas are at different stages of impact. For example, during a flooding or drought event, some regions may already be affected and require immediate response, such as emergency shelter or relief distributions, while others are still at risk and could benefit from anticipatory actions like early warnings or evacuations.

- ▶ In these cases, early action activities can be embedded within the Response DREF plan, allowing the National Society to tailor support to different needs across affected and at-risk areas. This approach enhances operational flexibility and ensures that

both proactive and reactive measures are applied where they are most appropriate.

However, National Societies which activated an EAP or sEAP (when triggers are met and anticipatory actions are being implemented), will not be able to integrate early actions into their Response DREF plan as long as it covers the same geographical areas. This is to ensure there is limited risk of double funding for the same activities, considering that if there is an activation, this would mean the relevant peaks have been reached and a response would be more relevant.



*Contextualised for the DREF purpose.  
DREF funds readiness activities, but not general preparedness activities.*

### 2.3.2 WHY IS IT BETTER TO START SMALL AND SCALE UP?

One of the primary benefits is the **efficient use of resources**. Initial funding through the Anticipatory Pillar allows critical early actions to be implemented quickly, without overcommitting funds at a stage when the full impact of a disaster may still be unclear. If the situation deteriorates, additional funding from the Response Pillar can then be requested based on evolving needs and concrete evidence from the field.

The staged strategy also helps to build a stronger case for additional funding. Demonstrating the capacity of the National Society to monitor the evolving risks and implement early actions enhances credibility with IFRC and donors, making it more likely that further allocations will be approved. Funders are more inclined to support scale-up when there is clear evidence that initial efforts were effective and that remaining gaps warrant further investment.

From a **risk management perspective**, starting with a **smaller, targeted intervention reduces operational risk**. Large-scale operations can introduce complex logistics, increase financial oversight challenges, and risk inefficient use of resources. By scaling up gradually, decisions are informed by real-time assessments, which improves both the quality and efficiency of the response.

Emergencies often evolve in unpredictable ways. A smaller initial activation gives National Societies the **agility to adapt as conditions change**. If the disaster does not escalate as anticipated, resources will not have been wasted and can be redirected where they are most needed. The DREF procedures have been designed

to enable rapid scaling up whenever required.

Finally, a phased approach **encourages stronger coordination and continuous learning**. It gives space to align with partners and local actors, and to reflect on early actions before expanding the response. Lessons learned from the initial phase can then be applied to subsequent activities, ensuring a more coherent and impactful operation overall.

While DREF provides critical early and flexible funding, it is important to underline that it is **not intended to fully cover a nationwide response**. Rather, it is a **contribution to the overall humanitarian effort**.



The DREF budget and amount requested must be grounded in clearly identified needs on the ground, matched with the implementation capacity of the National Society, and reflect strong coordination at the national level.

This includes taking into account other available or planned support from the Movement and external partners and stakeholders. A realistic and well-prioritised DREF request not only ensures effective use of limited resources but also supports coherence in response planning, helping to avoid duplication and maximise collective impact.

## 2.4 NATIONAL SOCIETY MECHANISM AND CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DREF

While DREF provides vital financial resources, its effectiveness depends on each National Society's response system's readiness, capacity, and continuous improvement.



To maximise impact, National Societies must establish robust operational structures, maintain clear contingency plans, and adopt effective coordination and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that funds are rapidly and effectively utilised.

National Societies should view DREF as one key component of a broader, comprehensive disaster operational system rather than a standalone solution. To strengthen their ability to act efficiently and at scale, National Societies must:

### 1. INVEST IN OPERATIONAL READINESS

- ▶ Develop and refine contingency plans, emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, ensuring they can assess, plan, and mobilise resources rapidly.
- ▶ Strengthen anticipatory action frameworks, develop Early Action Protocols (EAPs) to conduct forecast-based pre-disaster interventions.

### 2. ENHANCE SUPPORT SERVICES AND COORDINATION

- ▶ Ensure finance, logistics, safety, volunteer management, monitoring and information systems are well-integrated and resilient, allowing for rapid deployment when needed.
- ▶ Improve collaboration with government authorities, humanitarian actors, and Movement partners (IFRC, ICRC, and other National Societies) to streamline anticipatory action and disaster response efforts.

### 3. ADOPT A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- ▶ Regularly review and adapt response mechanisms using tools such as the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) approach, which provides structured self-assessments and capacity-strengthening measures.
- ▶ Incorporate lessons learned from past operations, leveraging post-action reviews, operational learning workshops, and performance monitoring tools.

By integrating DREF funding within a well-prepared and continually improving response framework, National Societies can optimise their ability to deliver life-saving assistance efficiently and enhance their overall disaster preparedness and resilience.

## 2.4.1 INTRODUCING THE PER APPROACH, A FRAMEWORK FOR HOLISTIC CAPACITY BUILDING

A key tool for continuous improvement is the **Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) approach**. This structured, cyclical process enables National Societies to objectively assess, enhance, and sustain their response capacity. The PER approach comprises several key components:

The PER process follows five phases, guiding National Societies through a structured assessment and improvement cycle. This process helps National Societies identify capacity gaps, set clear operational priorities, and guide targeted interventions that enhance overall response effectiveness.



- ▶ **ORIENTATION:** understanding the PER approach and identifying stakeholders.
- ▶ **ASSESSMENT:** evaluating current response capacity, including gaps and strengths.
- ▶ **PRIORITISATION AND ANALYSIS:** identifying critical areas for improvement based on assessment findings.
- ▶ **WORKPLAN DEVELOPMENT:** developing a structured roadmap for capacity-building actions.
- ▶ **ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** implementing changes, monitoring progress, and ensuring accountability.

The Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) mechanism is a cornerstone of continuous capacity improvement for National Societies. Rather than simply outlining a set of process phases, the PER mechanism is organised into six interrelated areas that collectively ensure a holistic evaluation of preparedness and response capacity:

1. **POLICY, STRATEGY, AND STANDARDS:** a strong legal and strategic foundation ensures that National Societies operate within a clear mandate and aligned frameworks:

- ▶ *Legal recognition:* ensuring alignment with national disaster laws and adherence to International Humanitarian Law.
- ▶ *Strategic planning:* defining the NS's role within the national and international response system.
- ▶ *Standards and compliance:* following IFRC and global humanitarian standards to maintain effectiveness and accountability.

2. **ANALYSIS AND PLANNING:** focused on understanding the operational environment risk-informed decision-making is critical for effective disaster preparedness.

- ▶ *Hazard and risk analysis:* identifying key threats and vulnerabilities affecting communities.
- ▶ *Scenario planning:* preparing for multiple emergency scenarios to strengthen response readiness.
- ▶ *Contingency planning:* ensuring structured response frameworks are in place before a disaster occurs.

3. **OPERATIONAL CAPACITY:** this area examines the practical ability of the National Society to act, including its sector-specific intervention capabilities, resource mapping, and early action mechanisms.

- ▶ *Sectoral response expertise:* capacity and experience in e.g. health, WASH, shelter, food security, and cash-based interventions.
- ▶ *Deployment readiness:* mobilisation of surge teams, trained personnel, and community response units.

4. **NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE MAPPING:** rapid identification of needs and available resources to ensure effective emergency interventions.

5. **COORDINATION:** seamless collaboration is essential for efficient and scalable disaster response.

- ▶ *Engagement with Movement partners:* strong coordination with IFRC, ICRC, and other National Societies ensures a harmonised response.
- ▶ *Government and external partnerships:* close cooperation with national disaster management authorities and humanitarian actors enhances coordination.
- ▶ *Information-sharing mechanisms:* establishing clear communication channels for real-time response updates.

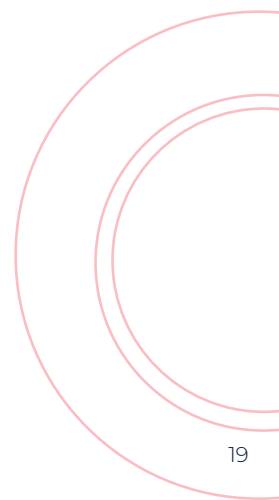
6. **OPERATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES:** this final area underpins the entire response system by ensuring that support functions are robust.

- ▶ *Security management:* implementing risk assessments, security protocols, and staff safety measures to ensure that

operations can be carried out in high-risk environments while safeguarding personnel, volunteers, and assets.

- ▶ *Logistics and supply chain:* managing procurement, warehousing, and distribution of relief items.
- ▶ *Financial management:* ensuring accountability and compliance with IFRC financial regulations.
- ▶ *Monitoring, evaluation, and learning:* establishing performance tracking systems and conducting post-response evaluations to strengthen future operations.

By integrating these six areas, the PER mechanism not only guides immediate response actions but also informs longer-term improvements in planning, coordination, and support services. Its role as the backbone of the PER process ensures that every response is an opportunity for learning and growth, with lessons from each operation feeding back into the system to drive continuous improvement.





## LEVERAGING AVAILABLE RESOURCES

To support National Societies in their early action and response journey, the IFRC and its Network provides technical support, guidance, and structured tools to strengthen operational capacity. These include:

- ▶ **Anticipatory Action Manual: A Red Cross Red Crescent Practitioners' Guide** is a go-to for planning and developing Early Action Protocols. The manual gives a holistic overview of all the steps involved and includes tips, templates and additional resources.
- ▶ **PER resources:** comprehensive guidance, training modules, templates, and process documents aligned with IFRC standards to help National Societies conduct detailed readiness assessments.
- ▶ **Rapid Check Tools and Readiness Check Tools:** designed to be incorporated into NS operational strategies for quick, actionable assessments in anticipation of or response to disasters.
- ▶ **Operational Timeline Toolbox:** Hosted on the IFRC GO platform, this tool provides a structured framework for planning and executing operational activities, ensuring critical response actions are well-organised and tracked.
- ▶ **Technical support & surge resources:** IFRC regional offices and dedicated response teams provide technical assistance, surge role profiles, and an operational toolbox to enhance NS response capacity.

While DREF funding is essential for supporting emergency response and anticipatory actions, the real difference is made when National Societies combine these resources with a well-developed, continuously improving operational mechanism. We urge every National Society to use the PER approach and the associated tools - including rapid checks, readiness checks, and the Operational Timeline Toolbox - as a roadmap for capacity building. This ensures that when disaster strikes, you are not only ready to respond, but also poised to deliver high-quality, timely humanitarian assistance that saves lives and sustains communities.

**NATIONAL SOCIETIES ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO PROACTIVELY REQUEST SURGE SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED.**



Mobilising surge capacity, whether in the form of technical expertise, coordination support, or specialized response personnel, can significantly enhance the quality, speed, and scale of your operations. Requesting surge is not a sign of weakness, but a strategic move that reinforces your capacity to deliver timely, effective and accountable humanitarian assistance. Various resources related to the minimum emergency preparedness actions can be found [here](#).

## 2.5 IFRC GO PLATFORM AND ITS USE FOR DREF

**IFRC GO** is the IFRC's emergency operations platform. It is designed to facilitate real-time data sharing, coordination, and decision-making during humanitarian emergencies. The platform provides access to – among others – field reports, operational updates, emergency appeal information, and Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) applications, ensuring that all key actors within the Membership have a common operational picture. GO is a central hub for disaster information, allowing National Societies, IFRC teams, and partners to collaborate efficiently, enhance situational awareness, and respond faster to crises.

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION THROUGH GO

GO enables the Membership to share information and submit field reports, which are vital for ensuring timely and coordinated response efforts. Field reports help create a shared operational picture that allows decision-makers to allocate resources effectively and ensure that assistance reaches those in need as quickly as possible. These reports serve multiple purposes:

- ▶ providing early alerts about potential emergencies,
- ▶ documenting unfolding crises and their impact,
- ▶ facilitating coordination among Membership partners and external stakeholders,
- ▶ informing resource mobilisation, including DREF requests and emergency appeals.

By submitting timely and accurate field reports and other updates, responders ensure that their situation is visible to the right actors, leading to better support, faster decision-making, and improved humanitarian outcomes. **GO acts as a live information exchange platform**, making updates from the field accessible to IFRC regional and global teams supporting emergency response coordination, National Societies managing operations and seeking assistance, partner organisations that require up-to-date data for collaboration, and donors or other stakeholders who may want to track response efforts.

GO also provides **collaborative work features** that enhance the efficiency of information sharing and application processes. While real-time simultaneous editing is not available, the platform offers application sharing, export functionalities, and offline import options, ensuring that National Societies can effectively work together, even in challenging conditions and low-connectivity environments.

**For DREF applications, GO includes an Excel import document that allows teams to collaborate externally.** This file can be uploaded to a shared cloud platform, enabling multiple contributors to review and refine the application before submission. Once finalised, the completed document can be imported back into GO, streamlining the submission process.



## RESOURCES AND TEMPLATES AVAILABLE ON THE GO PLATFORM

The GO Platform provides a range of structured resources and templates to support National Societies in preparedness and response efforts. These tools ensure that emergency situations are documented, analysed, and acted upon efficiently, facilitating better coordination within the Movement. To access the below-mentioned resources, navigate to “Respond” in the top left corner of the main page of the platform.

### FIELD REPORTS AND EARLY WARNING TOOLS

- ▶ *Field Reports (Emergencies)*
  - ▶ Used to provide real-time updates on an ongoing or unfolding crisis.
  - ▶ Includes details such as disaster type, affected areas, casualties, situational analysis, and ongoing response activities.
  - ▶ Essential for ensuring timely resource mobilisation and coordination within the IFRC and partner organisations.
- ▶ *Early Action Field Reports (Early Warning)*
  - ▶ Designed for forecasted events, allowing National Societies to document potential disasters before they occur.
  - ▶ Includes risk analysis, early warnings, and planned anticipatory actions.
  - ▶ Helps ensure that preparedness measures and early interventions are in place before a crisis escalates.

- ▶ *Flash Updates (Early Warning)*
  - ▶ Concise, short form reports that provide immediate updates on unfolding crises.
  - ▶ Focus on key situational information, actions taken, and next steps.
  - ▶ Used to quickly inform partners, donors, and stakeholders about the evolving situation.

### DREF APPLICATION PROCESS

- ▶ *DREF applications (currently available on GO: Imminent DREF and Response DREF (including assessment only form))*
  - ▶ Used by National Societies to request funding from the DREF.
  - ▶ Includes details such as the type and scale of the emergency, planned activities, targeted populations, and budget breakdown.
  - ▶ Offline version can be used for collaborative work.
  - ▶ Can be pre-filled using data from Field Reports.
  - ▶ In the case of imminent DREF, the form in GO includes the contractual agreement when exported.

### REPORTING AND CLOSURE

- ▶ *Operational Update*
  - ▶ Issued during the implementation phase of a DREF-supported operation.

- ▶ Includes progress against planned activities, challenges encountered, changes in context or scope, and any necessary revisions to the original plan or budget.
- ▶ Required for all operations with a timeframe of more than six months or when a revision, extension, or additional allocation is needed.

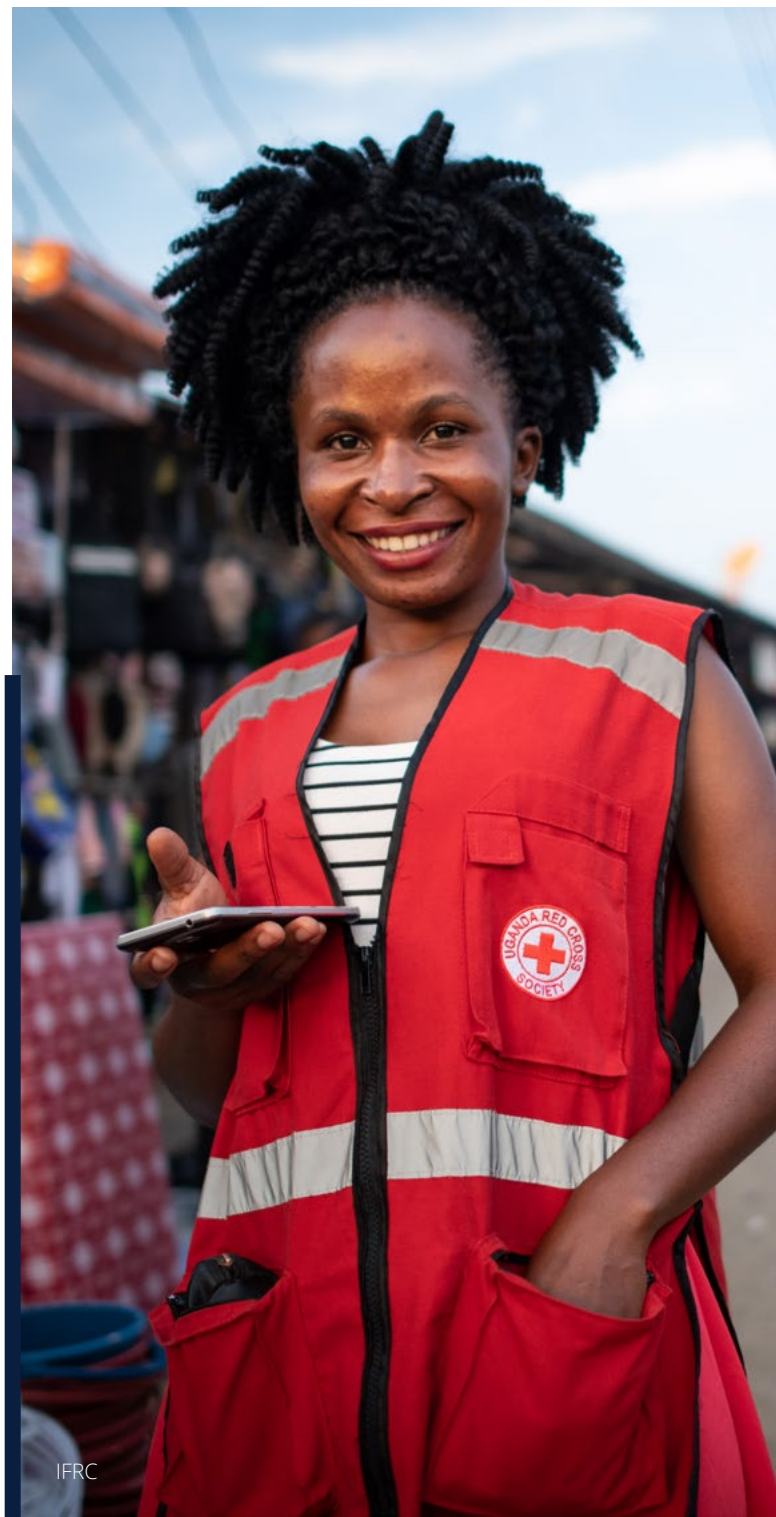
▶ *Final Report*

- ▶ Documents the successes, challenges, lessons learned, and any recommendations for future actions.
- ▶ Feeds into the Operational Learning Platform, contributing to institutional learning across the Movement.
- ▶ Acts as the official closure document for the DREF allocation.
- ▶ Mandatory report submitted within three months of the end of the operation's implementation timeframe.

As the development of these guidelines coincides with the ongoing enhancement of the GO platform, users should note that additional features and tools are being progressively introduced to support DREF processes. Future updates will include, among others, functionalities for Early Action Protocols (EAPs), expanded translation options, and new monitoring resources to strengthen implementation and reporting. National Societies are therefore encouraged to regularly consult the GO platform for the latest developments, ensuring they make full use of the most up-to-date resources available

to request and manage DREF-funded operations.

If a National Society experiences any technical issues when using the GO Platform, they should immediately contact their regional DREF focal point for assistance.





# 3 Anticipatory Pillar

<b>3.1 WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATORY PILLAR?</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.2 DECISION TO APPLY FOR FUNDS – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.3 ALLOCATION PARAMETERS UNDER ANTICIPATORY ACTION – SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>33</b>
▶ 3.3.1 Early Action Protocol (EAP)	34
▶ 3.3.2 Simplified Early Action Protocol (sEAP)	35
▶ 3.3.3 Imminent DREF	36
▶ 3.3.4 Early action scale-up	37
<b>3.4 EARLY ACTION PROTOCOLS AND SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOLS</b>	<b>39</b>
▶ 3.4.1 General roles and responsibilities	39
▶ 3.4.2 s/EAP development and submission process	48
<i>Eligible activities</i>	48
<i>Ineligible activities and costs</i>	50
<i>General budget considerations</i>	51
<i>s/EAP submission process</i>	53
▶ 3.4.3 s/EAP validation and approval process	54
<i>Simultaneous technical review by IFRC</i>	54
<i>s/EAP revisions and resubmissions</i>	54
<i>s/EAP final approval</i>	56

▶ 3.4.4 s/EAP implementation	57
<i>s/EAP project agreement and funds transfer</i>	57
<i>s/EAP revisions</i>	58
<i>s/EAP activation</i>	59
<i>Stop mechanism</i>	62
<i>Monitoring implementation</i>	64
<i>Best practices for implementation</i>	64
▶ 3.4.5 s/EAP post-activation: revalidation, reporting, and closure	65
<i>Reporting requirements</i>	65
<i>Operational learning and revalidation process</i>	70
<i>Closure</i>	72

### **3.5 IMMINENT DREF** **73**

▶ 3.5.1 General roles and responsibilities	73
▶ 3.5.2 Planning and application	76
▶ 3.5.3 Imminent DREF and other forms of DREF allocations	79
▶ 3.5.4 Eligible activities and budget considerations	79
▶ 3.5.5 Submission process	81
▶ 3.5.6 Review, approval, and disbursement	84
▶ 3.5.7 Implementation, reporting, and closure	86
<i>Option 1: The National Society does not need to scale up the Imminent DREF</i>	87
<i>Option 2: The National Society transitions the Imminent DREF into a Response DREF</i>	89

### **3.6 SUMMARY OF THE KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE ANTICIPATORY PILLAR** **90**



## 3.1 WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATORY PILLAR?

The **ANTICIPATORY PILLAR** of the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) enables National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to act before a disaster strikes. By providing pre-approved plans and budgets during peacetime, National Societies can implement anticipatory or early action activities, based on pre-agreed triggers, that aim to reduce or mitigate the humanitarian impacts of predictable hazards on at-risk communities.

Traditionally, humanitarian assistance was triggered only after a disaster had already caused damage. This often resulted in delayed response, increased human suffering, and greater financial costs. In contrast, anticipatory action allows the humanitarian system to shift from a reactive to a proactive model, responding to predicted disasters rather than waiting for the consequences to unfold.

The Anticipatory Pillar is built on the concept of anticipatory action. It is an approach that uses scientific forecasts, expert judgment or analysis for weather and non-weather-related hazards, combined with risk and vulnerability data, to identify likely humanitarian impacts before a hazard strikes. Based on this information, early action plans are developed in advance. These plans specify which actions will be taken, by whom, and when, based on clearly defined forecast thresholds known as triggers. Once a trigger is met, funds are automatically released, ensuring that protective early actions are not delayed by funding constraints.

The types of actions are varied and depend on the hazard and context. In advance of floods, this may mean using cash for work to clear storm drains, using sandbags to protect homes and critical infrastructure, early harvesting of mature crops, covering wells and latrines to prevent contamination, providing plastic bags to protect critical

documents and then when the floods are imminent, a National Society may evacuate at-risk communities and their livestock.

More examples of eligible activities can be found under **Section 3.4.2**.

Anticipatory action is a no-regrets approach. Even if the forecast changes, meaning that the event may not have the anticipated impact, initial early actions aim to build community resilience. Material from a shelter kit, for example, might be repurposed or used for general repairs. Community-based hygiene promotion will give community members the knowledge and tools for good hygiene practices. Because people can use unrestricted cash for whatever they choose, households will find a use for it no matter how the situation unfolds. By continuing to monitor the forecast or context and by having a stop mechanism, a National Society can stop doing high impact activities, such as evacuation of people and their livestock, if the hazard will not materialise.

The Anticipatory Pillar is operationalised through two key funding modalities (Early Action Protocols and Imminent DREF), tailored to varying levels of preparedness, lead times, and National Society capacities:

▶ **FULL EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL (EAP)**

is a detailed, 5-year plan that outlines a National Society's strategy for acting in advance of specific forecasted hazards. The EAP includes:

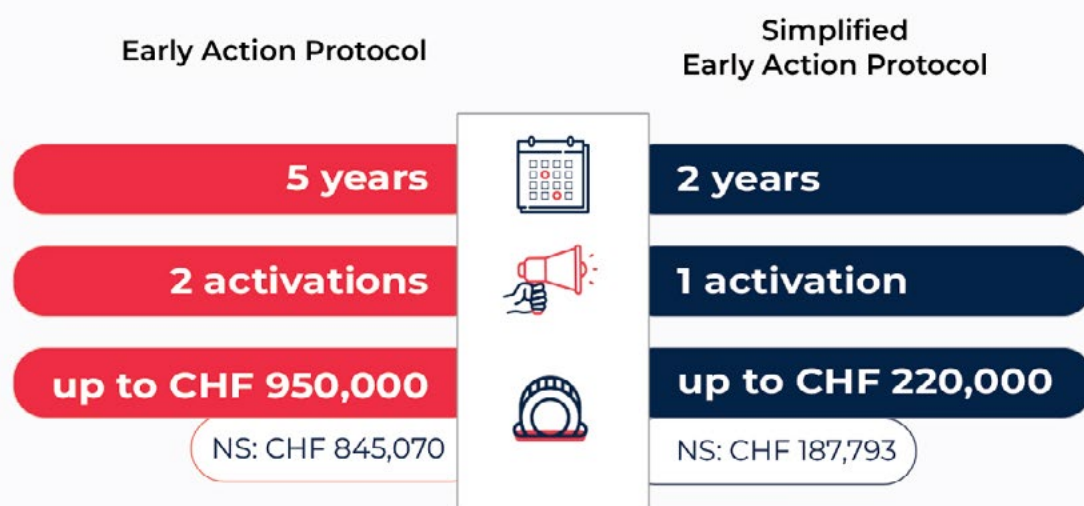
- ▶ A detailed analysis of the hazard and risk profile.
- ▶ A clear and concise trigger statement, based on a menu of forecasts, which includes the lead time for early action and stop mechanism (for lead time longer than three days).
- ▶ Selection of early action activities, supported by a Theory of Change, that will reduce and mitigate the impact of the hazard.
- ▶ Roles and responsibilities of all actors in terms of trigger monitoring and implementation of early action activities.
- ▶ A detailed budget covering annual readiness activities, stock required for early action, and early action activities.
- ▶ Evidence of the National Society's capacity to implement the early action activities.

This modality offers predictability and a robust framework for anticipatory action, supporting stronger coordination between National Societies, IFRC delegations, and partners.

▶ **SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL (SEAP)** offers a simplified 2-year alternative for National Societies seeking a lighter entry point than an EAP. While based on the same principles as the Full EAP, the sEAP includes:

- ▶ A basic hazard profile, including a summary of the hazard's historical impacts.
- ▶ A clear and concise trigger statement, which includes the lead time for early action.
- ▶ Selection of early action activities that will reduce and mitigate the impact of the hazard.
- ▶ A budget, annual readiness activities, stock required for early action, and early action activities.
- ▶ Roles and responsibilities for all relevant actors, in terms of trigger monitoring and implementation of early actions.
- ▶ An overview of the National Society's capacity to implement the early action activities.

The simplified approach also enables flexible funding access for smaller-scale foreseen disasters and helps build institutional capacity ahead of a potential full EAP.



- ▶ **IMMINENT DREF** is specifically designed for situations where a National Society does not have a pre-approved Early Action Protocol (EAP) or Simplified EAP (sEAP) but has the opportunity to implement early action in advance of a hazard that is clearly on the horizon.

the National Society has had no time or resources to formalise a pre-approved protocol. It is also an entry point for a National Society that is still in the process of developing an s/EAPs or has an EAP in place which covers a higher scale of disaster.

This modality is intended exclusively for sudden-onset disasters where the risk of disaster is clear and imminent, but where the window to act is extremely limited. It enables National Societies to implement critical early action and early response actions when:

- ▶ A disaster has not yet occurred, but is highly likely to happen in the near future based on reliable forecasts or early warnings; or
- ▶ A disaster has begun to unfold, but has not yet reached its peak impact, and there remains a short lead time to mitigate the worst effects.

Imminent DREF should not be a replacement for longer-term anticipatory planning. Rather, it serves as a critical stopgap in situations where

---

All modalities require close coordination between National Societies, IFRC Delegations, and local partners to ensure smooth activation and implementation.

The s/EAPs provide greater predictability through pre-approved protocols, with pre-agreed trigger/s and budget for readiness activities such as salaries of key staff as well procuring stock well in advance, which is prepositioned, ready whenever it is needed. The Imminent DREF is available for a National Society that does not have a pre-agreed protocol in place but can implement early action in advance of a hazard and immediately after a disaster.

s/EAPs require preplanning, which is done in peacetime, for a future event, whereas the Imminent DREF provides funding when an event is already on the horizon.

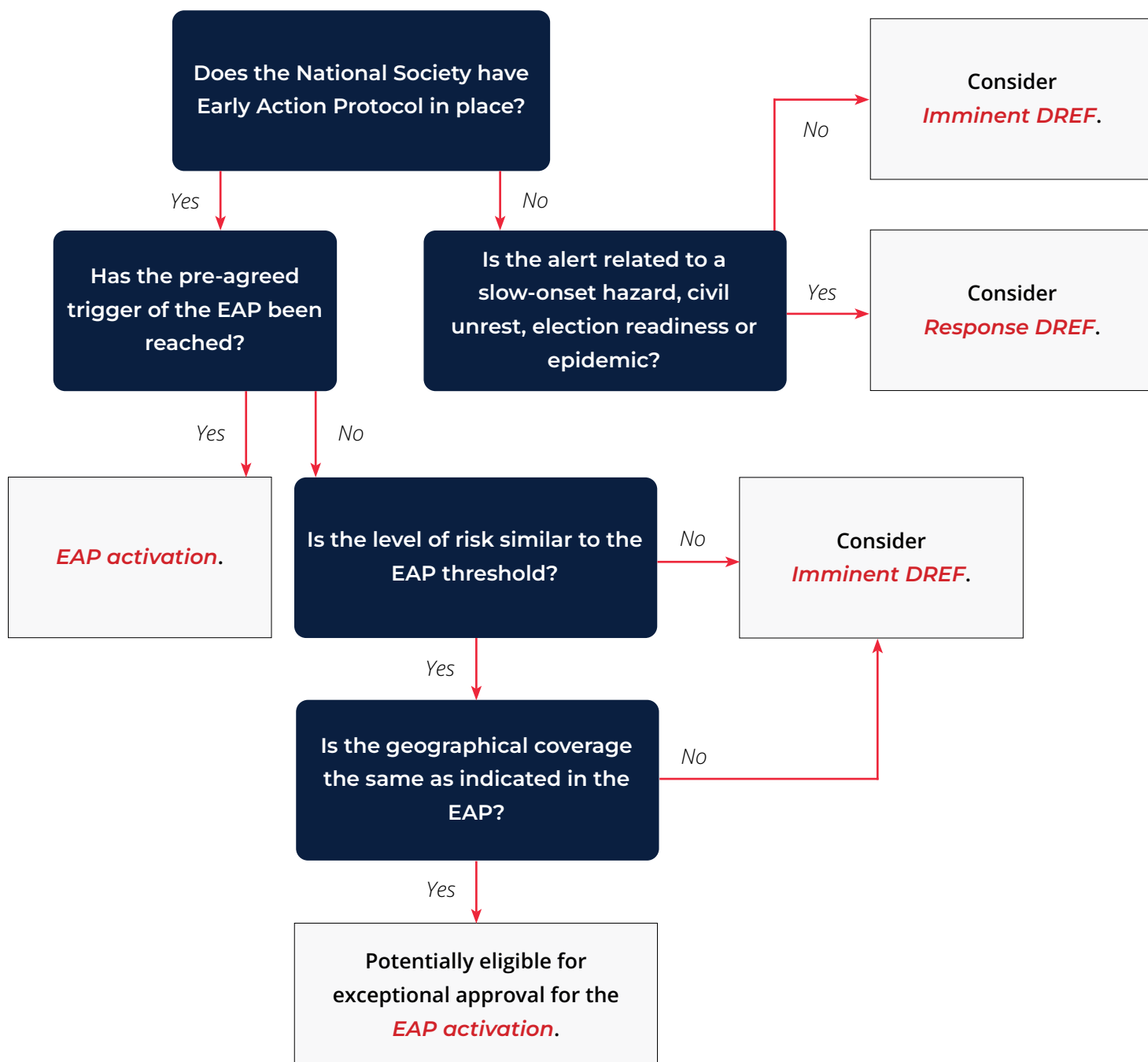
### 3.2 DECISION TO APPLY FOR FUNDS - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Deciding to apply for funds under the Anticipatory Pillar requires careful consideration to ensure that resources are used effectively. National Societies must evaluate their organisational and operational capacity, and the time and resources available against the specific

requirements and modalities available within the Anticipatory Pillar.

To facilitate the decision-making process, a simplified decision tree was created. Please note that this tree is for guidance purposes only, and National Societies should always coordinate with their Delegations and DREF Focal Points. Additionally, the decision is guided under the consideration that both the National Society and the hazards are eligible for DREF.

#### ► Alert has been issued



## GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED:



### Does the National Society have access to resources to develop an EAP?

A National Society may need technical and financial support to develop a full EAP. Developing an EAP takes time, potentially months or longer, however, it is the most robust protocol, giving a National Society access to pre-approved funding for annual readiness, stock, as well as funds for two activations.



### What are the options if the National Society does not have sufficient resources and/or data to develop an EAP?

If a National Society doesn't have access to resources, it can develop a simplified EAP independently. The sEAP will give them access to pre-approved funding for readiness, stock and early action. A National Society may also opt to develop an sEAP, if there is insufficient data to meet the criteria for a full EAP, if they wish to address an event of a smaller scale than the full EAP or if they are working on a new type of hazard for which the anticipatory action approach is still evolving.



### What are the options if an event is on the horizon, but the National Society does not have a pre-approved protocol?

If the event is already on the horizon and warnings have already been issued, and a National Society does not have a preapproved protocol, then a National Society can request an imminent DREF allocation to do early actions in advance of the foreseen disaster.



### 3.3 CHOOSING THE RIGHT FUNDING MECHANISM

A National Society must match their needs to the appropriate DREF modality based on the scale of the hazard, the lead time available, and the level of organisational and operational readiness.

To help a National Society navigate the options within the Anticipatory Pillar, this comparison table provides a simplified overview of each modality's key features and requirements. Detailed descriptions of the Early Action Protocol, simplified Early Action Protocol, and Imminent DREF can be found further down in this section.

FEATURE	FULL EAP	SIMPLIFIED EAP	IMMINENT DREF
Immediate response	No	No	Yes
Lifespan	5 years	2 years	45 days
Trigger	Pre-agreed in the protocol	Pre-agreed in the protocol	No trigger
Minimum target	10,000 people	2,000 people	Not predefined
Timeframe for action	Based on a pre-agreed lead time for early action	Based on a pre-agreed lead time for early action	Maximum 30 days in advance of a disaster and 15 days immediately following the disaster
Total budget threshold	CHF 950,000	CHF 220,000	CHF 80,000 (w/o Rapid Response Deployment) CHF 90,800 (w/RRD)
Budget thresholds for a National Society	CHF 845,070	CHF 187,793	CHF 75,000
Prepositioning activities	Yes, stock directly related to early action can be prepositioned up to 5 years	Yes, stock directly related to early action can be prepositioned up to 2 years	No; stock must be distributed immediately within the operational timeframe
Readiness activities	Annual	Annual	None
Early action	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Annual reports</li> <li>▶ Activation report (if triggered)</li> <li>▶ Final report (if activated twice, second activation report serves as final report)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Annual reports</li> <li>▶ Activation report (if triggered)</li> <li>▶ Final report (if not triggered)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Final report or ops update if the operation transitions to response</li> </ul>

### 3.3.1 EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL (EAP)

The **EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL (EAP)** is the “plan” that guides timely and effective implementation of early action based on a danger threshold which demonstrates a high likelihood of potential humanitarian impact on vulnerable communities.

More information about the EAP can be found [here](#).

**PURPOSE:** a comprehensive funding instrument supporting anticipatory action for weather and non-weather-related hazards with impact-based triggers for extreme events with sufficient lead times and predictable patterns.

**EAP TIMEFRAME:** valid for 5 years once approved.

**COVERAGE:** ideally, the EAP has national coverage, however, it may also be localised coverage, depending on the context.

**SCALE OF EVENT:** the EAP must target events that historically have had significant demonstrable humanitarian impact.

**TRIGGER MECHANISM:** based on predictions and a predefined thresholds that activate early actions in advance of a foreseen disaster (e.g. cyclone wind speed above 150 km/h; or rainfall predictions for the next 72 hours exceeding 300 mm).

- ▶ Triggers are established during the EAP development process and validated through consultation with experts.
- ▶ Triggers are very context-specific and are based on a menu of available forecasts.
- ▶ For more information on triggers, visit the [trigger database](#) on the Anticipation Hub.

Once the trigger is reached, the National Society can immediately start implementing the early actions and request the early action fund transfer from the IFRC Delegation.

**TOTAL BUDGET:** capped at CHF 950,000 (with two activations).

**COMPONENTS:** the EAP covers three components readiness, prepositioned stock and early actions:

- ▶ **PREPOSITIONED STOCK ACTIVITIES:** two-time (double) stock allocation; prepositioning activities aim to ensure that the National Society has the stock or materials required to implement the early action when the trigger is reached. The first procurement should be done as soon as possible after EAP approval, and the second procurement should be done as soon as possible following the first activation, in preparation for a potential second activation.

- ▶ **READINESS ACTIVITIES:** annual capacity building actions, such as simulations and training, salaries for staff, etc., which are done throughout the EAP lifespan, ensuring the National Society has adequate capacity to implement the early action.
- ▶ **EARLY ACTION ACTIVITIES:** implemented within the lead time between the trigger and the hazard's impact, ensuring timely assistance. This should be budgeted twice, to take into account the double activation.

### 3.3.2 SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL (sEAP)

The **SIMPLIFIED EAP (sEAP)** is an additional pathway for a National Society to access pre-agreed funding from the Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF. The sEAP is “medium-term” (2 years instead of 5 years) funding alternative for a National Society who:

- ▶ does not have a partner to support the development of a full EAP and/or may not have sufficient historical data or a robust trigger model to meet the criteria for a full EAP, or
- ▶ wishes to address an event of a smaller scale than the full EAP or
- ▶ is working on a new type of hazard for which the anticipatory action approach is still evolving.

More information about the sEAP can be found [here](#).

**PURPOSE:** a more accessible and lighter version to enable a National Society. Also applicable for weather and non-weather-related hazards.

**SEAP TIMEFRAME:** valid for 2 years once approved.

**COVERAGE:** ideally, the sEAP has national coverage, however, it may also be localised coverage, depending on the context.

**SCALE OF EVENT:** the sEAP is not meant for events of seasonal average but must target events that historically have had demonstrable humanitarian impact.

**TRIGGER MECHANISM:** similar to the full EAP, an sEAP needs a clear and concise trigger statement with an identified forecast or expert judgement and threshold; however, less evidence is required, so it may suit hazards where there is less data available.

**TOTAL BUDGET:** capped at CHF 220,000 (with one activation).

**COMPONENTS:** the sEAP allows National Societies to access pre-approved funding for readiness and prepositioned stock as well as funding for early action activities – same as the EAP. Based on this experience, a National Society can use the sEAP as a stepping stone, while it works on developing a full EAP.

### 3.3.3 IMMINENT DREF

**IMMINENT DREF** is meant for sudden-onset disasters only and can be used in the context where a disaster has not started to unfold, but has a high likelihood of happening, or a disaster which has started to unfold and has not reached its full impact yet. An imminent DREF has a short and simple request template and a quick approval process, but requires strong decision-making processes to ensure timely implementation.

More information about Imminent DREF can be found [here](#).

**PURPOSE:** enables rapid access to anticipatory funds for immediate early actions in advance of a disaster as well as early response to a disaster with short lead time (e.g., within days or weeks).

**CONNECTION WITH S/EAP:** an imminent DREF cannot be requested if the National Society has an approved sEAP for the same hazard covering the same geographical area. However, an imminent DREF may be requested if the National Society has an active EAP for the same hazard for a higher scale event or in a different geographical area (i.e. if the trigger of the EAP won't be reached but there is a high likelihood that an event will take place and will cause humanitarian impact at a lower threshold) or if the National Society has an sEAP for the same hazard but covering a different geographical area.

**OPERATING TIMEFRAME:** 45 days, with no possibility of extension.

**TRIGGER MECHANISM:** no pre-agreed trigger; decision is driven by high-confidence forecasts or expert judgement of an imminent event (e.g. a government or national/regional weather agency issues a severe weather alert for a specific area with high certainty).

**TOTAL ALLOCATION THRESHOLDS** capped at:

- ▶ CHF 80,000, if Rapid Response Personnel (RRP) is not requested. In this case, the Imminent DREF does not include an allocation for IFRC direct costs, it is solely for the National Society.
- ▶ CHF 90,800, if Rapid Response Personnel (RRP) was requested. In this case, the Imminent DREF includes IFRC direct costs for deployment of Rapid Response Personnel.

**COMPONENTS:** no readiness and prepositioning activities as the focus is entirely on immediate early action.

- ▶ **EARLY ACTION ACTIVITIES:** activities which will prevent or mitigate the expected impact of the disaster. Early action activities are time-sensitive and must be implemented rapidly in advance of the hazard. National Societies may include items procurement for immediate use, or replenishment. Early action should be at least 75% of the budget.

- ▶ **EARLY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES:** only if the disaster has unfolded, and for activities in the first hours and days following the impact of the disaster. Early response should be at most 25% of the budget.

Activity threshold structure, based on the guidance and cost eligibility, should look like this:

Imminent DREF <small>without RRP</small>		Imminent DREF <small>with RRP</small>	
Transfer to NS	75,000.00	Transfer to NS	75,000.00
Financial charges	117.37	RRP support costs	10,000.00
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>75,117.37</b>	Financial charges	258.22
IFRC indirect costs	4,882.63	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>85,258.22</b>
<hr/>		IFRC indirect costs	5,541.78
<b>total DREF funding</b>	<b>CHF 80,000.00</b>	<b>total DREF funding</b>	<b>CHF 90,800.00</b>

RRP = Rapid Response Personnel

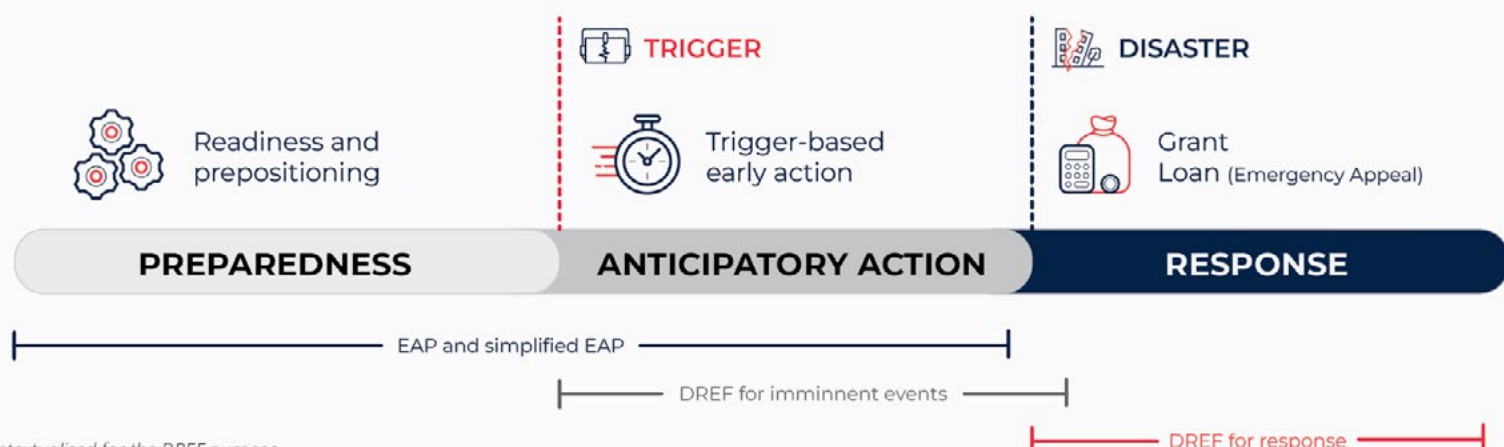
Note: "Financial charges" are the IFRC financial charge for transferring funds to a National Society.

### 3.3.4 EARLY ACTION SCALE-UP

**A National Society can access funding support for the same event from both Pillars (Anticipatory and Response) of the IFRC-DREF.** This allows it to respond more effectively when early action is done, yet the magnitude of the disaster exceeds the coping capacity of communities and international resources are required to address the needs arising.

In such a case, a National Society may have an allocation from the Anticipatory Pillar for early action activities, and once the disaster materialises, may request a DREF allocation from the Response Pillar or decide to launch an Emergency Appeal for response activities (or both).

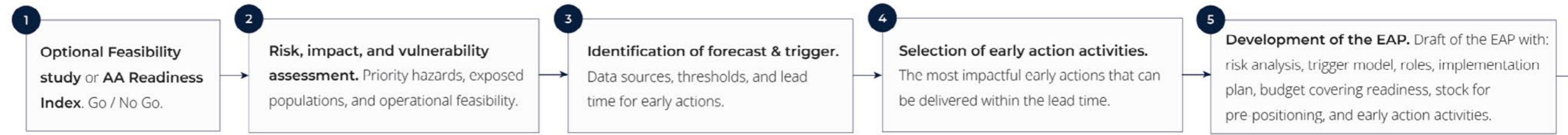
The s/EAP and budget can also serve as a foundation for developing scalable emergency response plans. The pre-established analysis, such as impact, vulnerability, and triggers, enables a swift and well-informed scale-up of activities.



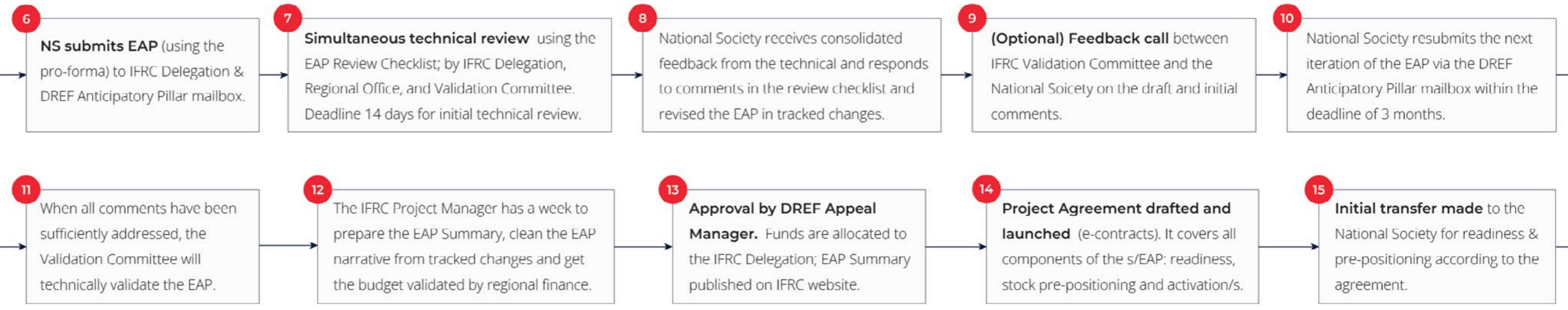
# EAP DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS



## Design & set-up



## Submission, review & approval



## Readiness & monitoring



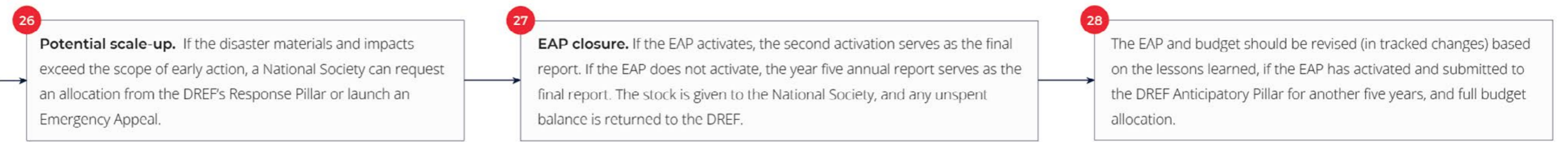
## Activation loop (repeatable twice for a full EAP)



→ After the second activation, IFRC Project Manager adjusts ERP by adding a new activation report and cancels surplus annual reports and adjusts the EAP end date to take into account the activation timeframe and any ongoing financial commitments. →



## Escalation (if needed) & closure



## 3.4 EARLY ACTION PROTOCOLS AND SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOLS

### 3.4.1 GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure smooth activation and avoid delays when a trigger is met, it is important that all relevant stakeholders are meaningfully involved during the development and maintenance of an s/EAP. This helps avoid setting up parallel systems or encountering issues around permissions and roles and responsibilities at the time of activation.

This section presents a high-level summary of the responsibilities of each actor during the s/EAP lifecycle.



For more detailed guidance on each phase, please refer to the relevant sub-sections within this chapter. For additional resources on step-by-step guidance on developing a s/EAP, please consult the ***Anticipatory Action Manual: A Red Cross Red Crescent Practitioners' Guide***. General information about the s/EAP can be found in the ***IFRC DREF Procedures***.

## NATIONAL SOCIETY

### s/EAP DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION

- The National Society Project Manager should register interest in developing an s/EAP by sending a message to the DREF Global Team and the IFRC Delegation via [DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org](mailto:DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org).
- Draft a comprehensive EAP, including risk and hazard analysis, triggers, budget, early actions, as well as the stock and annual readiness activities required for early action activities. Alternatively draft a sEAP focusing on an above-average hazard which has historically had demonstrable humanitarian impact.
- For a detailed overview on developing an s/EAP, consult the ***Anticipatory Action Manual: A Red Cross Red Crescent Practitioners' Guide*** (available in French, Spanish and Arabic).
- Submit the s/EAP for technical review and funding from the IFRC-DREF's Anticipatory Pillar via ***DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org***.

#### ***The initial simultaneous review by the Validation Committee will take 14 days.***

Following this, the National Society will have 3 months to address comments: providing detailed written response in the review checklist and in tracked changes in the narrative s/EAP.

*Note:* If the protocol is significantly below standards and requires much work which might take more than 3 months, the Validation Committee will close the application and ask the National Society to rework on it and submit a new version as a new application after improvement of the protocol.

Once submitted, the Validation Committee will take one week to review the next versions of the s/EAP. Based on the responses provided by the National Society, the Validation Committee may decide to:

- ▶ Technically validate the s/EAP
- ▶ Technically validate the s/EAP with conditions
- ▶ Have supplementary questions, based on the responses/edits made by the National Society.

The National Society will have one month to respond to the supplementary questions.

*Note:* if after several iterations, the comments from the Validation Committee are not yet properly addressed and the protocol is still not considered up to standard, the Validation Committee might decide to close the application and request the National Society to rework on the comments and submit a new version as a new submission after improvement.



**Example:** The National Society develops an EAP for cyclones, using historical wind-speed data and forecasts from the national meteorological office as well as internationally generated tracking maps. The trigger is set at 150 km/h sustained wind speeds within 72 hours of landfall. The plan includes prepositioning shelter strengthening kits, as well as annual readiness activities such as refresher training for staff and volunteers and a simulation exercise of an activation. Early actions include deploying evacuation teams to disseminate early warning and

support the evacuation of vulnerable people. In the 72 hour lead time, at-risk houses strengthened, with support from local carpenters, in advance of the cyclone making landfall.

## PROJECT AGREEMENT

- Once the s/EAP is technically validated by the Validation Committee and approved by the DREF Appeal Manager, the National Society signs the project agreement with the IFRC.

The project agreement covers both the readiness and stock as well as the early action. In case of an activation no further project agreement is required. The project agreement also outlines the schedule for the transfer of funds as well as reporting dates.



**Example:** The first tranche of funds should be transferred to the National Society 10 days after the signing of the project agreement.

## STOCK PREPOSITIONING AND ANNUAL READINESS

- Procure and preposition stock required for early action activities (e.g., shelter strengthening kits, sandbags for flood-prone areas etc.) immediately after project agreement signature.
- Conduct annual readiness activities as outlined in the approved s/EAP during the five-year EAP lifespan or the two-year sEAP lifespan.



**Example:** The National Society prepositions shelter strengthening kits in three key warehouses located in cyclone-prone areas. Volunteers are trained annually in evacuation protocols and early warning dissemination.



**Example:** The National Society procures and prepositions emergency items, 5,000 sandbags and water pumps are stored in a local warehouse. Refresher training for first responders is organised.

## TRIGGER MONITORING AND ACTIVATING THE S/EAP

- Monitor forecasts and activate early actions based on pre-agreed triggers (such as rainfall thresholds or wind speeds, etc.).
- If the pre-agreed trigger is not reached, but the National Society has evidence that the disaster of a similar scale is imminent, the s/EAP might activate based on exceptional approval. The

National Society should provide as much supporting information as possible to justify the activation. Exceptional approval will be based on case-by-case basis.

- The National Society coordinates with government stakeholders in advance of the hazard season to ensure smooth implementation of early actions. This may include joint planning, readiness activities, kick-off meetings, and lessons learned exercises. Government actors may also be invited to participate in community-specific simulations and drills, strengthening coordination and preparedness at all levels.



**Example:** The National Society monitors tropical storm formations via the National Meteorological Service as well as international-generated tracking maps. When wind speeds exceed 150 km/h, they launch early warnings, support evacuation, community clean-up of potential debris, and reinforce homes with storm-proofing materials in advance of the cyclone making landfall.



**Example:** The National Society monitors the rainfall trigger. Once the trigger has been met, after heavy rainfall warnings, volunteers distribute sandbags to homes in at-risk areas.



**Example:** During peacetime, the National Society collaborates with the Ministry through regular coordination meetings and joint activation simulations. When a cyclone alert is officially issued by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the National Society works closely with them to support dissemination of early warning messages and evacuations.

- Announce the activation of an s/EAP via the activation template, share the activation with the DREF Operations Project Manager along with the request for payment for the early action activities.
- Implement planned early actions reducing or mitigating the impact of the hazard for at risk communities within the lead time.



**Example:** The National Society monitors tropical storm formations via the National Meteorological Service as well as international-generated tracking maps. When wind speeds exceed 150 km/h, they launch early warnings, support evacuation, community clean-up of potential debris, and reinforce homes with storm-proofing materials in advance of the cyclone making landfall.



**Example:** The National Society monitors the rainfall trigger. Once the trigger has been met, after heavy rainfall warnings, volunteers distribute sandbags to homes in at-risk areas.

### REPORTING AND LEARNING

- Produce annual reports (narrative and financial) on the procurement and prepositioning as well as readiness activities according to the reporting schedule in the Project Agreement and shares with the DREF Operations Project Manager.
- If the s/EAP is activated, then the

National Society needs to complete an activation report, the date of this report is scheduled for two months after the end of the activation timeframe.

- All relevant National Society leadership, staff and volunteers participate in the post-activation Lessons Learned Workshop to identify successes, challenges and recommendations for future activations.
- The National Society, with support from the IFRC, will produce a Lessons Learned report.
- If the s/EAP comes to the end of the operational timeframe (five years for an EAP or two years for an sEAP) without an activation, the National Society should produce a Final Report (narrative and financial) according to the reporting schedule in the Project Agreement and share it with the DREF Operations Project Manager.



**Example:** The National Society submits annual reports listing actions they undertook in relation to their readiness. After a Category 4 cyclone makes landfall, the National Society conducts a post-activation review and lessons learned workshop. They assess how well the prepositioned shelters held up and adjust the future EAP strategy based on lessons learned.



**Example:** The National Society submits timely annual reports, outlining progress against planned stock prepositioning and readiness activities. Once the floods sEAP activated, the National Society conducts a lessons learned workshop, to assess the quality and effectiveness of the operation.

## REVISION OF THE s/EAP AND RESUBMISSION

- After the activation of a sEAP or the second activation of the EAP, or after the end of the lifespan without an activation, the National Society, with support from the IFRC Delegation can revise the original s/EAP narrative (in tracked changes).
- Once revised, the National Society focal point can resubmit to the IFRC-DREF via [DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org](mailto:DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org) for a full round of funding and another five years for an EAP or two years for a sEAP.

## | IFRC

### TECHNICAL SUPPORT, REVIEW AND VALIDATION

- The IFRC regional Anticipatory Action focal point provides technical support to the National Society on the development of an s/EAP. IFRC Delegation works closely with the National Society on the development of the s/EAP.
- IFRC technical and support services at the delegation, region and DREF Global Team participate in a simultaneous review of the s/EAP, ensuring that the protocol meets technical standards and that the National Society has the capacity to do the early action in the lead time.
- The DREF Operations Project Manager assists the National Society, with support from the regional Anticipatory Action focal point and/or the regional Operations Coordinator, to address comments arising from the technical review.

- Once the s/EAP is technically validated, the DREF Operations Project Manager prepares the documentation for approval from the DREF Appeal Manager (including clean s/EAP narrative, prepares the EAP summary and gets the budget validated by the IFRC Regional Head of Finance).
- The DREF Operations Project Manager should ensure that the EAP summary or the sEAP narrative and budget is published on the IFRC website (published as report type: DREF/EAP Summary).



**Example:** The IFRC regional team reviews an sEAP submission for cyclones in the Pacific, ensuring triggers align with scientific forecast models.



**Example:** IFRC-DREF approves an sEAP for floods. Once the trigger has been met, the DREF Operations Project Manager, along with IFRC Delegation Finance, automatically transfers the early action budget, for example, CHF 80,000, to the National Society.

### FUNDING AND OVERSIGHT

- The DREF Operations Project Manager should include stock (for the first activation) and the year one readiness in the bimonthly cash forecast, when the s/EAP is close to being technically validated.
- Once the s/EAP is approved by the DREF Appeal Manager, IFRC Geneva Secretariat IM and Finance opens

dedicated codes (MDR and P) on Ready and allocates the full budget to the IFRC delegation.

- The DREF Operations Project Manager sets up the WBS in IFRC's Ready system.
- The IFRC Appeal Manager shall initiate the Project Expenditure Approval Request (PEAR).
- The DREF Operations Project Manager drafts the project agreement (PA) using the DREF Anticipatory Pillar PA Template. The DREF Operations Project Manager can use this guidance to fill out the PA template.
- Once drafted the DREF Operations Project Manager gets the documentation signed by the NS and the IFRC Representative (noting the size of the budget and the contract matrix signoff thresholds). Once signed the contract is uploaded in e-Contracts and a copy is shared with the IFRC DREF global team.
- The DREF Operations Project Manager initiates the transfer of funds (Year one readiness and Stock) and supports the implementation of annual readiness activities, and the procurement and prepositioning of stock required for the early action, with support from logistics colleagues, if required.



**Example:** As the National Society's sEAP for a heat wave nears technical validation, the DREF Operations Project Manager includes both the year one readiness funding and stock costs for the first activation in the bimonthly cash forecast. Once the DREF Appeal Manager approves the sEAP, the IFRC Geneva Secretariat's IM and Finance teams open the MDR and P codes in IFRC's Ready

system, allocating the full budget to the delegation.

The IFRC DREF Project Manager proceeds to set up the WBS in Ready and the Appeal Manager initiates the PEAR to authorise expenditure. Using the DREF Anticipatory Pillar Project Agreement (PA) Template, the Project Manager drafts the PA, ensuring all details align with the approved sEAP and budget.

After securing signatures from the National Society and IFRC Representative—based on contract thresholds—the signed PA is uploaded to e-Contracts, and a copy is shared with the IFRC DREF Global Team.

With the agreement in place, the Project Manager initiates the fund transfer for year one readiness and stock prepositioning, and coordinates with logistics colleagues to support procurement and implementation of readiness activities.

## ACTIVATION

- Once the pre-agreed trigger is reached, the DREF Operations Project Manager leads/supports (depending on the allocation of roles and responsibilities in the activation SoP) drafting the Activation Notification template and shares it with regional focal points and the Global DREF Team.
- Upon activation, the DREF Operations Project Manager and the IFRC delegation finance facilitate the immediate transfer of funds for early action activities.
- The DREF Operations Project Manager and the IFRC Delegation Finance

facilitate the immediate transfer of funds for early action activities.

- The DREF Operations Project Manager ensures that the IFRC regional PMER publish the activation template on the IFRC website within 24 hours of activation (published as report type: DREF/EAP Activation).
- The DREF Operations Project Manager (and relevant technical sector leads and support services at the delegation level) supports the implementation of the early action activities.
- If this is the first activation of sEAP or the second activation under a full EAP, then the DREF Operations Project Manager needs to update Ready/ERP to reflect the new activation timeframe, add an activation report and delete any redundant annual/final reports.
- For EAP, the DREF Operations Project Manager supports the National Society to prepare for the second activation of a full EAP, including the procurement and prepositioning of the stock required for the second activation and continues with annual readiness.
- For EAP, the DREF Operations Project Manager continues to support the National Society to monitor the forecast for the second activation and supports the National Society with the second activation once the pre-agreed trigger is reached.
- Note, an activation may be possible even if the pre-agreed trigger is not reached; however, additional information may be required to justify and request an activation with exceptional approval. This needs to be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

**Note:** an activation may be possible even if the pre-agreed trigger is not reached; however, additional information may be required to justify and request an activation with exceptional approval.



**Example:** When the pre-agreed trigger for a cold wave is reached, the DREF Operations Project Manager supports with the drafting/ finalising of the Activation Notification template and shares it with regional focal point and the Global DREF Anticipatory Pillar Team (<mailto:DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org>). Together with Delegation Finance, the Project Manager ensures the immediate transfer of funds for early action activities.

The activation notification template is published on the IFRC website within 24 hours, and the Project Manager, alongside technical and support teams, assists the National Society in implementing early actions.

If this is the first activation of an sEAP, the Project Manager should arrange to update Ready/ERP, adjusting the timeframe, with a new end date based on the activation timeframe and schedules the due date for the activation report, and cancels any surplus annual/final reports.

If this is the first activation of a full EAP, then the Project Manager should arrange to update Ready/ERP with an activation report, three months after the activation timeframe. Once the activation report and the lessons learned workshop report have been submitted/cleared, then the Project Manager can process the second allocation and National Society can request the funds

for stock prepositioning. The Project Manager should support the National Society with restocking in advance of a second activation and continue to support implementation.

If this is the second activation under a full EAP, the Project Manager should arrange to update Ready/ERP, adjusting the timeframe, with a new end date based on the activation timeframe and schedules the due date for the activation report, and cancels any surplus annual/final reports.

- Once revised, the DREF Operations Project Manager supports the National Society to resubmit to the IFRC-DREF via [DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org](mailto:DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org) for a new round of funding.



**Example:** A dedicated DREF Operations Project Manager supports the National Society, regularly monitoring the implementation of early action activities. The IFRC PMER team provides support to monitoring and evaluation activities, including post distribution monitoring and the lessons learned workshop.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- The DREF Operations Project Manager supports the monitoring of the forecast in advance of an activation (as outlined in the activation SoPs).
- Monitor implementation and support with the annual report, updating on progress in terms of prepositioned stock and annual readiness activities (published as report type: DREF/EAP Update).
- The DREF Operations Project Manager and IFRC PMER coordinates post-distribution monitoring and organises a post-activation Lessons Learned Workshop within the three-month activation timeframe.
- Based on the recommendations emerging from the Lessons Learned Workshop, the DREF Operations Project Manager assists the National Society to immediately make any necessary updates (in tracked changes) to the sEAP following the first activation and to the full EAP following the second activation.



## OTHER ACTORS

If any external actors, such as government agencies, NGOs, or technical partners, will play a role in implementing or supporting the s/EAP, their specific responsibilities should be clearly defined in formal agreements, such as Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or other partnership documents. When developing an s/EAP, the National Society should:

- ▶ List all external actors and Movement partners involved in the development of the s/EAP, including national, regional, and local stakeholders.
- ▶ Indicate which organisations/community representatives participate in any existing technical working groups related to anticipatory action in their country.
- ▶ If non-Red Cross Red Crescent actors are involved in implementing the s/EAP, briefly describe their role and reference the formal agreement document (e.g. MoU) that defines this collaboration.

## PARTNER NATIONAL SOCIETY

(if involved in the development, maintenance or activation process)

- Provide financial and technical support in the development of an s/EAP.
- Supports the Host National Society to bridge the gap between forecasting agencies. Supports the coordination of Technical Working Groups.
- Collaborate with the Host National Society on readiness and early action activities. Noting that in some situations, a Partner National Society may be part of the Project Agreement, if they have a financial role in the s/EAP maintenance or activation.

If the Partner National Society is part of the Project Agreement, then the Partner will need to report on funds spent as part of the s/EAP.



**Example:** Red Cross, a partner National Society, provides funding and technical support for the development of an EAP.

**Example:** Red Crescent has a delegation based in the National Society's Headquarters. The X Red Crescent has a local bank account and has funds available to front fund the early action activities until the DREF funds arrive in the country. This arrangement is formalised as part of the Project Agreement.



### 3.4.2 S/EAP DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

The development of a s/EAP should follow the step-by-step guidance provided in the *Anticipatory Action Manual: A Red Cross Red Crescent Practitioners' Guide*, which outlines the full lifecycle of an EAP.



**IMPORTANT:** AT THIS TIME, THE IFRC-DREF DOES NOT FUND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN S/EAP.

#### ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

When developing a Protocol, activities are grouped into three key categories: Readiness, Prepositioning, and Early Action\*. These categories help ensure that the National Society is well-prepared, stocked, and ready to act quickly once the trigger is reached.

#### READINESS ACTIVITIES

Readiness activities are carried out annually in order to keep the National Society prepared to implement early actions effectively. Readiness costs should reflect ongoing needs to maintain operational readiness and be distributed over the full two-year for an sEAP or five-year lifespan of an EAP.

For example, annual readiness activities might include:

- ▶ Reasonable salary contribution for National Society and IFRC staff supporting the readiness, prepositioning of stock and the activation.

- ▶ Refresher training for volunteers and staff.
- ▶ Coordination meetings with government or technical agencies.
- ▶ Development and translation of early warning messages.
- ▶ Simulation exercises of an activation.
- ▶ Identify and sign contract with Financial Service Provider for cash early action.
- ▶ National Society administrative costs, maximum 5% of the total budget.
- ▶ Monitoring visits.

In the budget template, readiness activities should be coded to **Readiness** (cell drop down column C) and the **YEAR\_#** (cell drop down column E), noting that costs need to be budgeted one row per year (i.e. if the salary is planned for five years, then it should be budgeted across five rows and coded YEAR\_01 to YEAR\_05 accordingly).

#### PREPOSITIONED STOCK ACTIVITIES

Prepositioning means having essential materials in place before an activation, especially those that require time to procure. Prepositioned stock should have a minimum two-year (sEAP) or five-year (EAP) shelf life and may include warehousing, transport, and insurance costs.

Prepositioning of stock ensures a faster response when a trigger is met. For example, prepositioned items might include:

- ▶ Stock such as shelter kits for reinforcing homes, sandbags to protect infrastructure, tarpaulins to cover water sources, clean tools to clear drains, etc.

\* For population movement-related protocols, please refer to [these documents](#).

- ▶ Logistics, insurance and warehousing costs related to the prepositioned stock.
- ▶ Printing and prepositioning IEC materials required for hygiene promotion outreach.
- ▶ Equipment for promoting early warning messages.
- ▶ Volunteer personal protective equipment (PPE).

**Important:** Some items (for example, some food, medicines or seeds) may not have a shelf life of two or five years for s/EAP, respectively, and therefore, may not be eligible for prepositioning. Rather, the National Society should engage a framework agreement with suppliers and procure these items quickly as part of the early action activities, and/or provide cash so that people targeted can purchase these items themselves, when the trigger is reached (or discount the activity if this is not feasible).

Prepositioning is a one-time activity for a **sEAP** and should be done immediately following the approval. In the budget template it should be budgeted in year one.

For the **EAP**, the first round of stock procurement and prepositioning should be budgeted in year one, **YEAR\_01** (cell drop down column E) under **Pre-Pos Stock 1** (cell drop down column C). This procurement should be done as soon as the EAP is approved. When the EAP activates, the National Society can request the second allocation for stock for the second activation after the end of the activation timeframe (normally three months following the activation, when the lessons learned workshop has been facilitated). In the budget, the second round of prepositioning should be budgeted under

**Pre-Pos Stock 2** (cell drop down column C ) and **Activ\_02** (cell drop down column E), but it will be available and can be accessed following the first activation.



According to the IFRC-DREF Procedures, purchase of assets/equipment of up to CHF 10,000 are eligible for a National Society under EAP. Purchase of assets/equipment are not eligible for a National Society under an sEAP or an imminent DREF. Purchase of assets are not eligible for the IFRC.

## EARLY ACTION ACTIVITIES

Early action activities are implemented in the lead time, that is, the window between the trigger and the hazard impact on at-risk communities. The aim of early action is to prevent or mitigate the impact of a disaster. For example, it is not enough to distribute cash in advance of the peak of a flood, but people targeted with cash need to be able to safely use it in advance of the disaster.

Because early actions often need to be carried out within a short lead time, especially for sudden-onset events, it is recommended to select fewer, well-targeted activities.

Also under early action, a National Society can include activities and costs such as volunteer debriefings, post-activation monitoring, and lessons learned workshops, as well as volunteer insurance. These activities can be carried out in the activation timeframe. For example, early actions might include:

- ▶ Evacuating people or livestock in advance of accumulating volcanic ash.
- ▶ Early harvesting of mature crops in advance of floods.
- ▶ Distributing cash or vouchers in advance of a range of hazards.
- ▶ Strengthening shelters in advance of a tropical cyclone.
- ▶ Sandbagging homes and key infrastructure in advance of floods.
- ▶ Monitoring costs up to maximum 5% of the total budget.
- ▶ Volunteer insurance.

For the **sEAP**, in the budget template, early action activities should be **budgeted only once under Activation 1** (or Activ\_01 in the cell drop down). For the **EAP**, in the budget template, **early action activities should be budgeted twice**: for the first activation under Activation 1 (or Activ\_01 in the cell drop down) and for the second activation under Activation 2 (or Activ\_02 in the cell drop down). The amount for both activations should be the same.

**For an sEAP, early action activities should be at least 35% of the total budget, for a full EAP early action activities should be 35% of the budget for the first activation.** (this can be checked in the budget tab 'Summary by Year').

For more information on selecting early action activities, please see the chapter "Selecting Early Action" in the **Anticipatory Action Manual: A Red Cross Red Crescent Practitioners' Guide**.

For more examples of early action activities, you can explore the **Early Action**

**Database** on the Anticipation Hub.

#### INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND COSTS

- ▶ Costs related to the development of an s/EAP.
- ▶ Readiness activities/costs that are not directly related to the implementation of early action activities.
- ▶ General disaster preparedness activities or longer-term resilience building activities (such as eVCA or annual vaccination campaign).
- ▶ Activities and costs not associated with the s/EAP or are already budgeted under National Society or IFRC ongoing/annual programmes.
- ▶ Response, recovery and rehabilitation interventions.
- ▶ National-level disaster management or capacity building not related to the specific s/EAP and Red Cross Red Crescent branches not covered by the s/EAP.
- ▶ Stocks not related to the implementation of the early actions.
- ▶ Purchase of assets/equipment of over CHF 10,000 for a National Society.
- ▶ Assets/equipment for IFRC are not eligible.



## GENERAL BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

A budget for an EAP with two activations should adhere to the following caps:

- ▶ **Total budget threshold:** capped at CHF 950,000 (with two activations).
- ▶ **Funding for National Society** activities shall be maximum of CHF 845,070.
- ▶ **Early Action:** minimum 35% of the budget for each round of activation. Early action should be developed for one activation and then duplicated for the second round of activation.
- ▶ **Readiness:** maximum 35% of the budget for one activation. Whenever readiness exceeds 35%, the National Society will need to justify this as part of the technical review process.
- ▶ **Stock:** should be developed for one activation and then duplicated for the second round of activation.
- ▶ **Readiness and stock:** combined, should not exceed 65% of one activation.
- ▶ **IFRC Delegations:** can budget up to a maximum of CHF 50,000 including IFRC indirect costs/CHF 46,948 exclusive of IFRC indirect costs to support IFRC delegation activities related to the overall management of the EAP.
- ▶ **Budget calculations for two activations:** The budget template 'Summary by Year' tab automatically calculates the proportion of readiness, stock and early action for the first activation and for the second activation (as long as the budget tool is completed correctly).

If you want to calculate the proportions manually, then use the following calculations:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{READINESS \% (MAX 35\%)} &= \\ &= (\text{READINESS} * 100) / (\text{READINESS} + \\ &\quad \text{STOCK TRIGGER 1} + \text{EA TRIGGER 1}) \end{aligned}$$

Or

$$\begin{aligned} \text{READINESS \% (MAX 35\%)} &= \\ &= (\text{READINESS} * 100) / (\text{READINESS} + \\ &\quad \text{STOCK TRIGGER 2} + \text{EA TRIGGER 2}) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{EARLY ACTION (MIN 35\%)} &= \\ &= (\text{EA TRIGGER 1 COSTS} * 100) / \\ &\quad (\text{READINESS} + \text{STOCK TRIGGER 1} + \text{EA} \\ &\quad \text{TRIGGER 1}) \end{aligned}$$

Or

$$\begin{aligned} \text{EARLY ACTION (MIN 35\%)} &= \\ &= (\text{EA TRIGGER 1 COSTS} * 100) / \\ &\quad (\text{READINESS} + \text{STOCK TRIGGER 2} + \\ &\quad \text{EA TRIGGER 2}) \end{aligned}$$

At the time of initial submission of the budget, the percentages for each round of activation should be the same, i.e. a duplication. Following the second round of activation, the EA and stock can be changed, however the % may differ, but still must reach the cap of 35%.

**COMBINED, READINESS AND STOCK (MAX 65%) = ((READINESS + STOCK TRIGGER 1)\*100) / (READINESS + STOCK TRIGGER1 + EA TRIGGER 1)**

A budget for an sEAP should adhere to the following caps:

- ▶ **Total budget threshold:** capped at CHF 220,000 (with one activation).
- ▶ **Funding for National Society** activities shall be maximum of CHF 187,793.
- ▶ **Early Action:** minimum of 35% of the total budget.
- ▶ **Readiness and stock:** maximum combined 65% of the total budget; whenever readiness exceeds 35%, then a National Society will be requested to reduce it and will need to justify this as part of the technical review process.
- ▶ **IFRC Delegations:** up to a maximum of CHF 20,000 including IFRC indirect costs/CHF 18,793 exclusive of IFRC indirect costs to support IFRC delegation activities related to the overall management of the sEAP.





## COMPARISON OF THE EAP AND SEAP'S BUDGET COMPONENTS

COMPONENT	EAP (5 YEARS)	SEAP (2 YEARS)
Max budget for HNS and IFRC Delegation	CHF 950,000	CHF 220,000
Stock	Yes; stock directly related to early action can be prepositioned up to 5 years.  Following the first activation, a second allocation for stock can be requested for a potential second allocation.	Yes, stock directly related to early action can be prepositioned up to 2 years.
Readiness activities	Annual	Annual
Stock and readiness	Max 65% for each round of activation	Max 65% of the total budget
Early action	Min 35% for each round of activation	Min 35% of the total budget
M&E budget	Up to 5%	Up to 5%
NS overhead costs	Up to 5%	Up to 5%
IFRC indirect costs (PSSR)	6.5%	6.5%

### S/EAP SUBMISSION PROCESS

The submission of a s/EAP is the result of close coordination between the National Society and the IFRC Delegation, with support from the Regional Office and, where relevant, a Partner National Society. Throughout the process, the IFRC Regional Anticipatory Action Coordinator and the IFRC Delegation play a key role in guiding the National Society on technical requirements, review timelines, and documentation standards.

#### REGISTERING THE S/EAP WITH IFRC AND SUBMISSION FOR TECHNICAL REVIEW

To formally begin the development process, the DREF Operations Project Manager should help the National Society register the s/EAP with the IFRC-DREF team by sending the proforma cover message to:

- ▶ The IFRC Delegation,
- ▶ The DREF Global Team at:  
***DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org***.

### 3.4.3 s/EAP VALIDATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

The review and approval process for IFRC-DREF funding requests is designed to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with IFRC standards. Every National Society applying for funding must undergo a structured validation process.

#### SIMULTANEOUS TECHNICAL REVIEW BY IFRC

The technical review process is conducted simultaneously across multiple IFRC levels (Delegation and Regional Office, Geneva, and Validation Committee) using the **EAP checklist** or **sEAP checklist**.

Once the s/EAP has been officially submitted to the Delegation and **DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org**, the DREF Global Team will open a new folder and share the link with the regional DREF focal point who will share with the IFRC delegation (including the DREF Operations Project Manager) and regional colleagues. Simultaneously the DREF Global Team will share the link to the same folder with reviewing members of the Validation Committee.



**The Validation Committee** is made up of representatives from IFRC secretariat and representatives from American, Australian, British, Danish, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finnish, French, German, Guatemala, Kenya, Myanmar, Mozambique, Netherlands, Swedish Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, the 510 Initiative and the Red Cross Livelihoods Centre.

The simultaneous review of a s/EAP takes 14 days, using a standardised checklist to ensure the request complies with the quality criteria:

- ▶ Has a robust risk analysis and trigger model.
- ▶ Outlines realistic and feasible early actions.
- ▶ Meets financial and operational feasibility criteria.
- ▶ Promotes early action activities that will reduce or mitigate the impact of a hazard.

#### s/EAP REVISIONS AND RESUBMISSIONS

At the end of the review period, the DREF Global Team returns the checklist with consolidated feedback to the National Society. The National Society has three months to **respond to the comments in the checklist** and update the narrative in tracked changes, as well as update the budget, if required.

If any of the checklist comments require clarification or if support is needed to address the comments, the National Society can request an **optional feedback call** with the Validation Committee members who reviewed their protocol. This request can be made to **DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org**. The DREF Global Team will then organise the call in coordination with the Validation Committee and the delegation.

Beyond the three-month period, **if the National Society hasn't submitted a revised version of the s/EAP, the first submission is cancelled, requiring a new application.**



## EXAMPLES OF COMMON ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED DURING THE TECHNICAL REVIEW PROCESS

ISSUE	HOW TO AVOID IT
Incomplete application documents	Ensure all required documents (narrative, budget, checklist) are submitted in full and follow the latest <b>IFRC templates</b> .
Unrealistic triggers or vague triggers	Work with IFRC technical experts or with reference centres (RCCC or 510/NLRC) to develop trigger thresholds, ensure that the trigger statement is clear and concise, with clear thresholds.
Budget not aligned with IFRC financial regulations	Ensure the budget follows DREF cost caps and allocations.
Lack of coordination with IFRC or government partners	Engage IFRC Delegations and national and local authorities in the development process and ensure that the National Society has the mandate to act in advance of a hazard.
Lack of data provided to justify the trigger model	Engage technical partners early to access forecast records and impact data; use historical event analysis to strengthen justification.
IFRC operational matrix and budget are not aligned	Ensure close coordination between technical, operations, and finance staff from the NS and the IFRC delegation during drafting; review both documents side-by-side before submission to check consistency in activities and costing.

Once the application has been resubmitted to the **[DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org](mailto:DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org)**, the IFRC-DREF Global Team shares it with the Validation Committee members, the IFRC Regional office, and the IFRC Delegation to check if the comments have been properly addressed. **IFRC-DREF Global Team allocates a maximum of seven days for this second review.**

Based on the review of the documentation submitted, the Validation Committee may vote to technically validate the s/EAP, technically validate with conditions that need to be met before approval, or if the Validation Committee considers that comments haven't been addressed properly, the Validation Committee may request the National Society to provide more information in advance of technical

validation. In this case, the revision and resubmission process repeats; however, the National Society will only have a limited timeframe (usually 1 month) to provide further justification or clarification before resubmitting the s/EAP, budget and review checklist. The timeframe is always specified in an email sent by the DREF Global Team.

At this stage, the DREF Operations Project Manager should include the year 1 readiness and the stock in the bimonthly cash forecast; this way, when the s/EAP is approved, the IFRC Delegation will have the cash available to transfer to the National Society.

## S/EAP FINAL APPROVAL

Once the s/EAP has been technically validated by the Validation Committee, the DREF Operations Project Manager has seven days to prepare the final documentation, by:

- ▶ cleaning the narrative of the tracked changes,
- ▶ getting the budget validated by IFRC Regional Finance Unit, and
- ▶ drafting an EAP Summary (only for the full EAP, not required for sEAP).

***Note these steps should be initiated simultaneously, rather than sequentially.***

When the documentation is ready, the DREF Operations Project Manager or DREF Focal Point should send the package to the DREF Global Team via ***DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org***, along with the confirmation of the names of the IFRC DREF Operations Project Manager and the IFRC Appeal Manager.

The DREF Global Team reviews the final documentation, prepares the allocation request and the s/EAP e-signature, gets them signed by all relevant parties and sends to the DREF Appeal Manager for approval. Upon approval by the DREF Appeal Manager, the operation is created in Ready, the codes are opened, and the funds are allocated to the codes.

A briefing for the IFRC DREF Operations Project Manager and the IFRC Delegation supporting the maintenance and activation of an s/EAP is mandatory. The briefing will go over the next steps in the process and ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear moving forward. The DREF Operations Project Manager should contact the regional DREF focal point to arrange this briefing.

See Section 4.3 of the ***IFRC DREF Procedures***.



### 3.4.4 S/EAP IMPLEMENTATION

#### S/EAP PROJECT AGREEMENT AND FUNDS TRANSFER

Once the s/EAP is approved, the DREF Operations Project Manager is responsible for initiating the implementation process without delay. This includes setting up the internal project structure, formalising the funding arrangement, and initiating the transfer of funds to the National Society.

##### **Step 1: Setting up the Project Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and initiating the Project Expenditure Approval Request (PEAR)**

- ▶ The DREF Operations Project Manager is responsible for converting the National Society's budget into the Work Breakdown Structure in IFRC's Ready System.
- ▶ Simultaneously, the IFRC Appeal Manager initiates the Project Expenditure Approval Request to ensure financial authorization.

##### **Step 2: Project Agreement (PA)**

- ▶ The DREF Operations Project Manager prepares the Project Agreement with the National Society. This agreement outlines the activities and costs to be implemented by the National Society (and any involved Partner National Society, if applicable).
- ▶ The s/EAP project agreement covers the readiness, stock, as well as the activation (one or two times) of the s/EAP. It outlines the budget tranches and transfer schedule and covers the working modality - Working Advance, Cash Transfer, or Fund Transfer.

- ▶ The project agreement also includes templates for narrative and financial reporting (if applicable), and a reporting schedule.
- ▶ Once reviewed and signed by all parties in line with the E-Contract approval matrix, the signed agreement will be uploaded to E-Contract, which will automatically sync with IFRC's Ready System.



s/EAPs have dedicated project agreement templates. Project Agreement templates and guidance for preparing them can be found [here](#).

##### **Step 3: Payment transfer to the National Society**

As soon as the Project Agreement has been successfully signed, uploaded and registered in the IFRC system (e-Contracts), the DREF Operations Project Manager initiates the payment request according to the agreed disbursement schedule in the Project Agreement.

Funds for Year 1 readiness and stock should already be forecasted during the validation process in the bi-monthly cash forecast by the IFRC Delegation.

## S/EAP REVISIONS

Once an s/EAP is approved, it may still need to be updated to reflect changing circumstances or operational needs. Revisions may relate to the geographical focus, changes in the trigger or source of forecast, the scope of the intervention or to adjustments in the budget.

### **Changes in operating scope**

If the operating context changes (e.g. shifts in risk, intervention strategy, or operational feasibility), the s/EAP's narrative and budget may need to be revised. Depending on the size and scope of the changes, these could be agreed by the regional DREF focal points or the DREF Global Team. In cases where the original scope is re-examined, a more in-depth review may be required, which may include the Validation Committee.

- ▶ The regional DREF focal point and DREF Global Team will initially assess the scale of the proposed changes and decide what level of information and documentation is required, and the appropriate level of sign off for the changes.
- ▶ If additional funding is required, it must be requested as part of this approval process.
- ▶ The Project Agreement with the National Society may be formally amended to reflect the revised scope and consider any funds already transferred or reported.
- ▶ Changes are formalised via an operations update, which is published on the IFRC website (published as report type: DREF/EAP Update).



**Example:** In year three, of a five-year EAP, the National Met Services launches a new forecasting product that has better skill and accuracy than the GLoFAS model, which was originally selected. The National Society would like to change the forecast source from GLoFAS to the new forecast model produced by the National Met Service. This is an example of a change that would need to be reviewed and agreed by the Validation Committee.

### **Budget adjustments**

Variances to budget lines can go +/- 10% without formal changes. Changes to the approved budget can be made at any time. Initially the National Society and DREF Operations Project Manager should discuss the potential changes with the regional DREF focal point. The strategy should be outlined in an email for the provisional approval by the DREF AA Global Team. Once a provisional approval has been secured, the National Society, with support from the DREF Operations Project Manager, should prepare a revised detailed budget, using the correct budget template.

Budget adjustments must respect the budget caps for s/EAP budgets, that is:

- ▶ Readiness activities cannot exceed 35% of the total budget for a s/EAP or 35% for each round of activation for an EAP.
- ▶ Readiness and stock cannot exceed 65% of the total budget for a s/EAP or 65% for each round of activation for an EAP.
- ▶ Early action activities need to be at least 35% of the total budget for a s/EAP or at least 35% for each round of activation for an EAP.

- ▶ The overall budget cannot exceed CHF 950,000 for an EAP or CHF 220,000 for an sEAP.

If the scope remains the same, and budget changes stay within the allowable thresholds by activity block or cost category, then:

- ▶ The revisions can be approved at Country or Regional level, without needing Headquarters approval.
- ▶ The DREF Regional Focal Point and the Regional Head of Health, Disasters and Crisis will share the revised EAP and budget with the DREF Global Team.
- ▶ The Project Agreement will be updated accordingly, based on previously disbursed and reported funds.



**Example:** If inflation causes an increase in transportation costs for prepositioning emergency stocks, budget adjustments can be made to reflect the updated prices.

### Annual Reporting

Each year, a National Society should report on progress against planned annual readiness and stock procured and prepositioned through an annual narrative and financial report. If things are all on track, then this will trigger the release of the next tranche of annual readiness funding. If things are not on track, then the National Society should explain the reasons why and remedial action which will be taken.

The annual report also provides an opportunity to adjust activities and costs in line with operational realities.

The annual report, narrative and financial should be posted by regional PMER on the IFRC public website (published as report type: DREF/EAP Update).

### S/EAP ACTIVATION

#### --- IF S/EAP IS TRIGGERED

Assumptions for the s/EAP activation:

- ▶ The s/EAP in place has been approved by the DREF Appeal Manager.
- ▶ The signoff and the allocation have been completed.
- ▶ The Project Agreement for the s/EAP has been signed.
- ▶ The annual readiness activities and the one-off stock prepositioning activities have been completed.

When the trigger is reached, the DREF Operations Project Manager or the National Society Project Manager shares the Notification of Activation with the DREF Global Team ([DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org](mailto:DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org)) using the **EAP Activation template** or **sEAP Activation template**. The DREF Operations Project Manager, along with IFRC Finance, initiates the payment transfer to the National Society, based on the schedule outlined in the Project Agreement and the National Society's request for payment.

Because timing is critical, the Head of Delegation must prioritise cash availability to ensure the payment is made promptly and in line with the country's cash disbursement authorisation process. If there are any issues, such as insufficient funds, disbursement thresholds, or sanctions, the situation will be managed

according to IFRC Treasury guidelines.

**ACTIVATING BASED ON THE PRE-APPROVED TRIGGER:** If the s/EAP is triggered using the pre-approved trigger, then once the threshold is reached, the National Society can immediately start doing the early action, knowing that the DREF funds will be transferred as soon as possible.

**ACTIVATING BASED ON A DIFFERENT TRIGGER OR SOURCE OF FORECAST:** If the National Society or DREF Operations Project Manager sees that the forecast or the expert judgement for the pre-agreed trigger is not functioning as anticipated, it is **possible to activate the s/EAP based on a different set of information. Such an activation requires exceptional approval.** The National Society should provide as much evidence as possible to the DREF Global Team to justify the activation. Depending on the evidence provided, the activation needs to be approved by the DREF Appeal Manager and/or the Validation Committee. The National Society needs this approval before starting early action and the activation should only be published (published as report type: DREF/EAP Activation) once this approval has been given.

When the s/EAP is triggered, either for the first for a sEAP or second time for a full EAP, the DREF Global Team will coordinate with the IFRC Information Management and Quality Team to revise the official end date, including the activation timeframe, in the IFRC Ready system. The DREF Operations Project Manager should check that the timeframe has been modified correctly and arrange for an activation report to be scheduled, three months after the end of the activation timeframe and cancel any unnecessary annual reports in the IFRC Ready system.

The activation timeframe is usually three months, inclusive of the lead time; however, for s/EAPs for slow onset disasters, the operational timeframe may be longer.

For example, for a drought s/EAP, the lead time may be 5 months; in that case, the activation timeframe is 5 months. For a sudden onset disaster, with a lead time of 7 days, the activation timeframe will be 3 months (inclusive of the lead time). The activation timeframe will be agreed on a case-by-case basis at the time of s/EAP approval.



#### **HOW THE TIMEFRAME IS ADJUSTED:**

- ▶ The new end date will usually be set to 3 months after the activation date, aligned to the end of that month.
- ▶ This updated activation timeframe allows the National Society to do post-distribution monitoring, the lessons learned workshop, and to finalise all financial and legal obligations related to the activation.
- ▶ At the time of activation (first activation for an sEAP or second activation for an EAP), the National Society should inform all suppliers and contractors that the activation terminates the s/EAP and any ongoing contracts. Should the termination clause of an ongoing contract go beyond the activation timeframe, ongoing payments can still be honoured up to a maximum of 12 months from the activation date. In this instance, the National Society should inform the DREF Operations Project Manager of these commitments, provide a copy of the contract/s and the termination letter/s with companies/suppliers or staff members (this documentation needs to be shared

with the IFRC-DREF global team). The DREF Operations Project Manager will take this into account when changing the end date on IFRC's Ready.

- ▶ The new end date cannot exceed the original s/EAP end date. If early actions extend beyond the current s/EAP timeframe, the end date can be adjusted to match the completion of those actions, following a request from the National Society via an Operations Update.



### Examples of extensions to the activation timeframe:

- ▶ 1. A full EAP is approved on 25 February 2025, with an operational timeframe of five years, and at the time of approval, is due to end on 28 February 2030. The EAP is for a sudden-onset flood hazard with a seven-day lead time.
- ▶ If the EAP activates on 2 April 2027, the activation timeframe will be adjusted to 31 July 2027, which is 3 months, inclusive of the 7-day lead time. The activation report will be scheduled for 31 October 2027, which is when the activation narrative and financial report should be published on the IFRC website.
- ▶ 2. Similarly, a simplified EAP is approved on 1 November 2026, with an operational timeframe of two years, and at the time of approval is due to end at 30 November 2028. The sEAP is for a slow-onset drought hazard with a three-month lead time.
- ▶ If the sEAP activates on 10 January 2027, the activation timeframe will be adjusted to include the three-month activation timeframe, 30 April 2027. The activation report will now be scheduled for 31 July 2027. The annual reports will be cancelled on ERP, and the readiness and stock prepositioning activities will be included in the activation final report.
- ▶ 3. A full EAP is approved on 12 March 2028, with an operational timeframe of five years, and at the time of approval, is due to end on 31 March 2033. The EAP is for a sudden onset cold wave hazard with a five-day lead time.
- ▶ The EAP activates for the first time in 2029, the National Society does the early action activities within the lead time, they do all PDM and facilitate the lessons learned workshop and pay creditors within the activation timeframe. The National Society completes the activation report, and it is published on the IFRC website.
- ▶ The National Society restocks with household items and continues to do readiness activities. The annual reporting schedule continues as outlined in the project agreement.
- ▶ If the EAP activates on 2 December 2032, the activation timeframe will be adjusted to include the three-month lead time, inclusive of the five-day lead time on 31 March 2032. The activation report will now be scheduled for 30 June 2032. However, the National Society has a contract with a warehouse supplier, which needs 9 months' notice to terminate. When the EAP activates on 2 December 2031, the National Societies gives notice to the warehouse supplier, and the activation timeframe can be extended to 30 September 2032, in order to pay out the notice period.
- ▶ The National Society should share the copy of the contract with the warehouse supplier and a copy of the termination letter with the IFRC Project Manager and IFRC-DREF Global Team. This commitment should be reported in the final activation report (final narrative and interim financial) and will be followed by a final financial report, which should report on the funds paid to the warehouse provider.



### Example: Adjusting the plan after the first activation

National Society X had an Early Action Protocol (EAP) for cyclones. They activated it when forecasts showed a strong storm coming and carried out early actions like pre-positioning relief items and training volunteers.

After the first activation, they realised a few things could be improved. Some of the items they had stored—like hygiene kits and tarpaulins—weren't the best for local needs. Prices had also changed a lot because of exchange rate shifts.

Before the next activation, they wanted to make small updates to fix these issues. They decided to replace some items with better options and adjust the budget slightly. These changes should be discussed and agreed in principle with the regional DREF focal point. Once agreed, the changes can be announced in two ways:

- ▶ By sending an Operations Update before the next activation, or
- ▶ Including the changes in the Activation Report.

The adjustments were small, based on learning, and didn't change the overall plan. This helped them be better prepared for the next cyclone activation while keeping everything aligned with the approved EAP.

### STOP MECHANISM

When there is an activation, the National Society and IFRC should continue to monitor the forecast, and if it changes, then early action should be stopped using the “stop mechanism”. A stop mechanism is an agreed threshold, that if the forecast should change and the hazard will no longer materialise as anticipated, will stop early action activities.

For example, a 7-day forecast on Day 1 indicates high risk of heavy rainfall which triggers the activation of early action, however a new 7-day forecast is released on Day 3 which shows that the risk has significantly decreased, and the trigger level is no longer reached. If distributions were planned to start on Day 4, and have not started, then the activation should be stopped as the items are no longer needed at this stage and can be kept for a future activation.

A stop mechanism may be beneficial in situations where a forecast or context may change since continuing with the early action activities may be confusing for local communities if they are no longer at risk. For example, continuing to evacuate people or animals when the track of the cyclone has changed and no longer poses a risk.

At the time of activation of an s/EAP, the National Society and IFRC should stop doing annual readiness and cancel any procurement of stock not already in place. Rather, the National Society and IFRC should now focus on implementing the early action activities within the lead time. Any balance of funds for stock or readiness is returned to the IFRC-DREF at the following Activation Report.

**Within 24 hours of activation**, an official Activation Notification template must be published on the IFRC's public website (published as report type: DREF/EAP Activation). This document informs donors and partners that the trigger has been met, and early actions have begun.

**Within 3 months following the end of the activation timeframe**, an Activation Report must be published on the IFRC website (published as report type: DREF/EAP Activation Report for the first activation of an EAP, or DREF/EAP Final Report for the first activation of an sEAP or a second activation of a full EAP). This report should provide a summary of the early actions implemented, including the financial report, and highlight any outstanding commitments or obligations that extend beyond the activation timeframe for the first activation of an sEAP and the second activation of an EAP.

Once activated, **National Societies can scale up with a response operation**, based on the magnitude of the disaster, with an additional allocation from the IFRC-DREF (in which case they should complete a response DREF request on GO) or with an Emergency Appeal. If the National Society decides to launch an Emergency Appeal, the allocation from the Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF always remains a grant (even though the other DREF allocations may become a loan).

### --- IF S/EAP IS NOT TRIGGERED

If the trigger threshold is never met, and the s/EAP will not activate within the s/EAP timeframe then the s/EAP will close.

The DREF Operations Project Manager has overall responsibility for managing the closure and reporting process. In this case:

- ▶ A Final Report must be prepared, submitted and published within three months of the end of the sEAP's activation timeframe (published as report type: DREF/EAP Final Report).
- ▶ Once the DREF Operations Project Manager confirms the closing of the operation, the Regional Finance and Administration shall set the project code to FROZEN in the IFRC's Ready system, thereby preventing any further expenditure bookings. They shall review the transactions against budget, ensure adherence to procedures.
- ▶ Unused funds are returned to the IFRC-DREF, and the project and appeal codes are closed.
- ▶ Any stock items purchased through the EAP become the property of the National Society or are formally handed over if not yet in their possession.



Additional information can be found in Sections 4.3-4.7 of the **IFRC DREF Procedures**.

## MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION

Effective monitoring is essential to all DREF operations.

Under an s/EAP, the National Society and the IFRC Delegation have access to annual readiness resources to develop a monitoring plan, develop or adapt tools (such as post-distribution monitoring surveys) and train staff and volunteers, as well as clarify roles and responsibilities. These steps should be taken in advance of the activation of a s/EAP.

The minimum requirement post activation is post-distribution monitoring and a Lessons Learned Workshop.



For more information about monitoring implementation, see chapter on Designing a MEAL plan in the *Anticipatory Action Manual: A Red Cross Red Crescent Practitioners' Guide*.

## IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Feedback from affected people is one of the most valuable forms of operational monitoring. National Societies should implement CEA mechanisms such as community meetings, suggestion boxes, hotlines, or social media channels to gather real-time input.

The feedback should be collected in a timely manner following the activation and early action lead time and used in the Lessons Learned Workshop along with the post distribution monitoring to inform the next iteration of the s/EAP. This supports relevance, transparency, and community trust. More information about working with community feedback can be found [here](#).

## BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There are several practices that can significantly improve coordination, visibility, and operational success during implementation:

### ► Kick-off meetings

Every operation should begin with an internal kick-off meeting involving National Society leadership, IFRC Delegation staff, technical advisors, and key partners.

### ► Develop an implementation plan

For readiness activities and prepositioned stock, working back from the hazard season, tracking key milestones will help a National Society and IFRC Delegation ensure that the s/EAP is ready to be activated when the trigger is reached.

### ► Develop an activation Standard Operating Procedure

Outlining roles and responsibilities, from the monitoring the trigger, through to activation and implementation of early action activities. This SOP is a key document, given the often-short lead time. It is recommended that annually, at the start of the hazard season, a National Society simulates an activation to test that everyone is aware of the content of the s/EAP, the SOP, and their role in the activation and the implementation of early action activities.

### ► Online workspaces

Use digital platforms (e.g. SharePoint) to centralize documents, updates, and reports. This enhances collaboration, reduces duplication, and improves access to real-time information.

### ► Progress reviews

Regular check-ins using the implementation plan for annual readiness activities as well as

procurement processes and monitoring tools help track implementation, identify bottlenecks, and adjust where needed. Consider doing an activation simulation and readiness meeting at the start of the hazard season, so everyone is clear on their roles and responsibilities during an activation.

► **Integrating CEA**

Community engagement should not be a separate activity, it must be embedded into all components of the operation, from targeting and messaging to delivery and complaint handling.



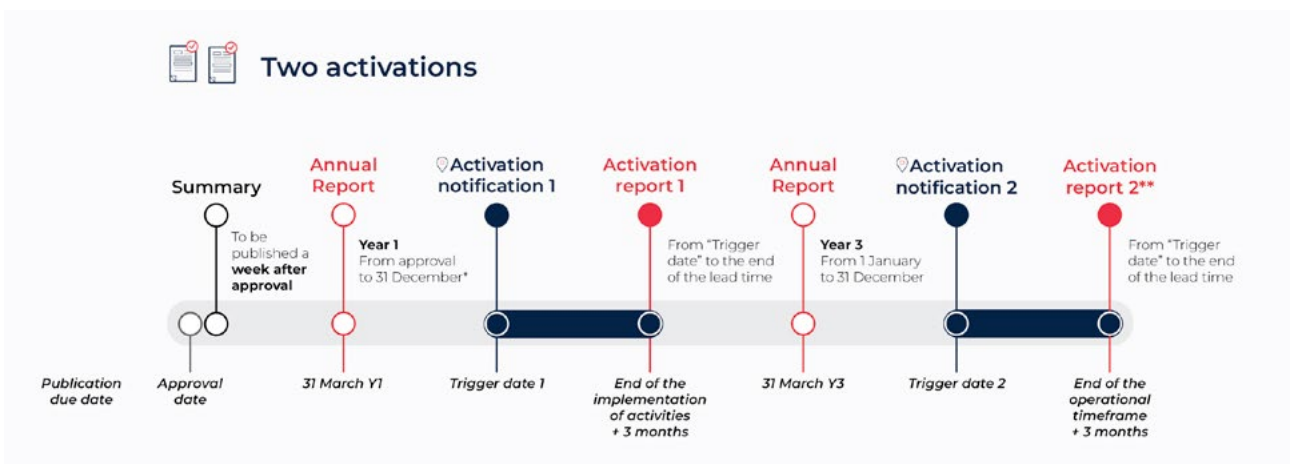
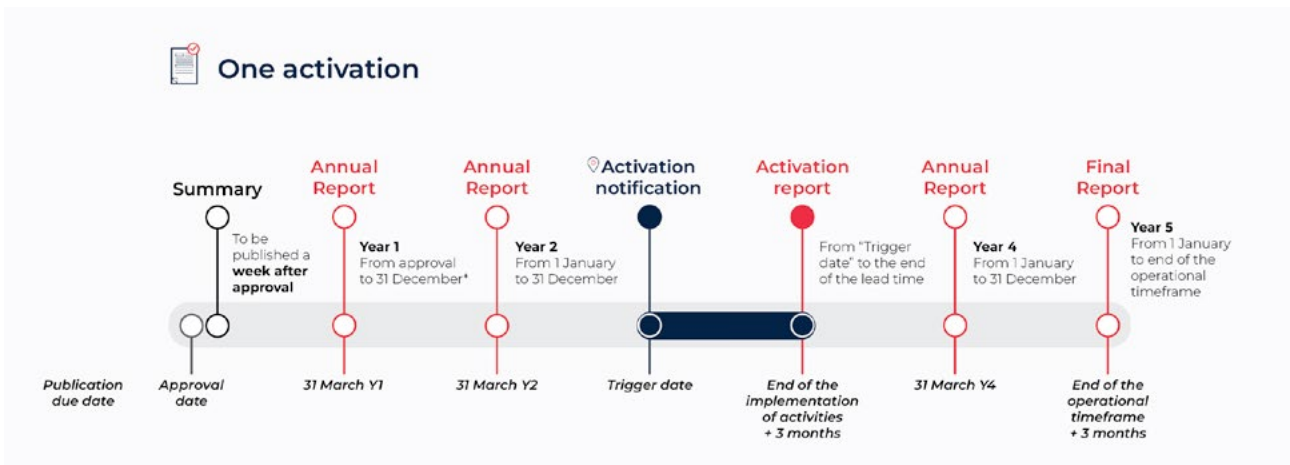
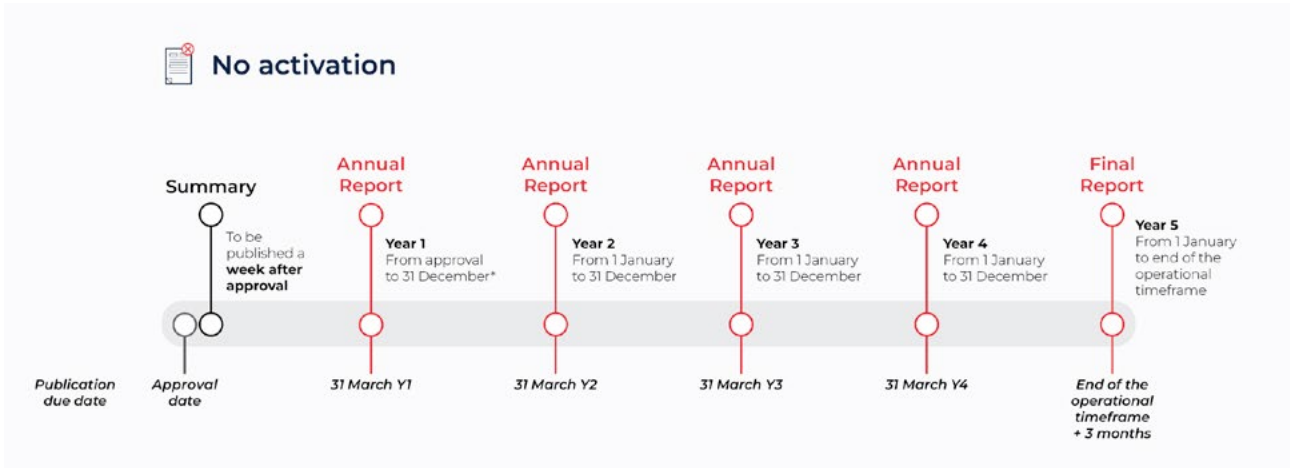
### 3.4.5 s/EAP POST-ACTIVATION: REVALIDATION, REPORTING, AND CLOSURE

#### REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Clear and timely reporting is essential to demonstrate how funds have been used, track progress against planned activities, and ensure transparency with donors and partners. The reporting requirements for s/EAPs include both annual progress reports, activation reports or final reports if the s/EAP is not activated.

TYPE OF REPORT	TYPE OF DOCUMENTS	WHEN IT'S REQUIRED	IFRC PUBLISHING DEADLINE	PUBLISHING NAME
EAP Summary	Narrative & Budget	PM develops the EAP Summary after technical validation and submits the EAP package for final approval by DREF Appeal Manager. EAP Summary gets published after approval.	Immediately after EAP (only) has been approved.	DREF/EAP Summary
Annual Report	Annual Report Narrative & Financial	s/EAPs Annual Report on funds used for readiness and prepositioned stock activities throughout each calendar year.	3 months after calendar year closing	DREF/EAP Update
Operations Update	Narrative (& budget and or financial report – depending)	Revisions of s/EAPs via Operations Update at any time through the active period. Depending on the changes, may be accompanied by a financial report or a revised budget.	As required	DREF/EAP Update
Final Report	Narrative & Final Financial	Non-activated s/EAPs concludes with a Final Report informing on overall activities of the entire lifespan of the s/EAP. The final narrative report (year 5 EAP or year 2 sEAP) becomes the final report.	Within 3 months of s/EAP end date	DREF/EAP Final Report
Activation Notification	Narrative	When an s/EAP trigger has been reached, PM submits the Activation Notification to signal the start of Early Actions implementation.	Immediately when s/EAP trigger has been reached	DREF/EAP Activation
Activation Report	Narrative & Interim Financial	1st EAP Activation - Reporting should cover the early action activation for the first activation of a full EAP.	Within 3 months after 1st EAP activation operation closing	DREF/EAP Activation Report
Activation Final Report	Narrative & (Final / Interim*) Financial	sEAP / 2nd EAP Activation - If the sEAP is triggered for the first time, or the EAP is triggered for the second time, then an Activation Final Report covers the activation plus any readiness since the last annual report.  *In cases where there are commitments beyond ops timeframe, Financial Report would be an Interim Report.	Within 3 months after activation operation closing	DREF/EAP Final Report
Additional: Final Financial Report	Updated Narrative & Final Financial	If commitments are ongoing after the end of the operational timeframe, it should be flagged to the Global DREF team and reported in the DREF/EAP Activation Final Report and will be followed by a Final Financial Report.	Within 3 months of calendar year closing	DREF/EAP Final Report

## TIMELINE OF THE REPORTING PROCESS FOR AN EAP





**Note:** The summary should be published as DREF/EAP Summary and include the budget for publication

All Annual reports are published as DREF/EAP Update and should include narrative and financial reports

Final report \*\*\* is financial only (since these commitments, have been outlined in the narrative of the Final Activation Report).

\* If the approval is in Q4, the first annual report is the remaining months +12 months = year1 (it goes until the end of the following year).

\*\* Acts as final report when all the expenses are closed within the operational timeframe

\*\*\* If there are contractual commitments going beyond the operational timeframe. These commitments should not go beyond 12 months from the activation date.



## **Annual reporting**

Each year, the National Society must submit an annual report (published as report type DREF/EAP Update), covering both **narrative and financial reporting** on readiness and stock prepositioning activities.

- ▶ The reporting deadline is set out in the Project Agreement and is based on the date the s/EAP was approved.
- ▶ Annual reports must be submitted by the National Society to the IFRC Delegation. The final version will be reviewed by Regional PMER and published on the IFRC's public website by the end of March of the following year.
- ▶ If the s/EAP was approved after 30 September, the first annual report may be postponed to the following year.
- ▶ The next instalment of readiness funding is conditional on submission of the annual report.
- ▶ For the final year of the s/EAP, the annual update is replaced with the DREF/EAP Final Report (see below).

In addition to scheduled annual reports, an operations update (published as report type DREF/EAP Update) should also be issued:

- ▶ Following major revisions to the plan or budget.
- ▶ After an activation, to reflect any changes made to the original s/EAP (including a no cost extension to the activation timeframe).

## **Reporting after activation**

**s/EAP Activation** announces the activation of a protocol. The Activation Notification should be published (published as report type: DREF/EAP Activation) within 24 hours of the s/EAP being triggered to notify donors and partners (see Activation and implementation section).

**An Activation Report** should be prepared by the National Society after an activation. For the first activation of an sEAP or for the second activation of an EAP, the activation report is treated as a 'final' report. The report should be submitted to the IFRC delegation within 2 months of the end of the activation timeframe and published within 3 months of the end of the operational timeframe (published as report type: DREF/EAP Activation Report for the first activation of an EAP or DREF/EAP Final Report for the first activation of an sEAP or the second activation of a full EAP). This includes:

- ▶ A narrative summary of actions implemented.
- ▶ A financial report.

## ACTIVATION REPORT

### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### SUMMARY (MAXIMUM ONE PAGE)

- ▶ Provide a summary of the general context of the hazard in the country.
- ▶ The targeted population, the impacts addressed, date when trigger was reached.
- ▶ Forecast used and lead time, deviation from original/initial trigger, etc, and any development that directly affected the humanitarian situation.

#### SUMMARY OF EAP IMPLEMENTATION

- ▶ Host National Society - summarise the early action taken by the National Society.
- ▶ Red Cross Red Crescent Movement - summarise the actions by Partner National Societies and the IFRC to support this EAP implementation.
- ▶ Overview of non-Red Cross Red Crescent actors in country - include (if pertinent) the actions to support the implementation of the EAP conducted in coordination with other actors (Government at local, subnational and national levels; UN agencies, Meteorological Institution; Civil Protection/Defence; etc.).

#### DATE NATIONAL SOCIETY REQUESTED THE EARLY ACTION FUNDS, AND THE DATE NATIONAL SOCIETY RECEIVED THE EARLY ACTION FUNDS

- ▶ These dates give an accurate snapshot of the time it takes to get funds to the NS HQ, from request to receipt.

#### CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- ▶ Describe any challenges faced when implementing the early actions, corrective measures taken if any and lessons learned for future interventions.

#### DATE OF THE IMPACT OF THE HAZARD/ DISASTER

- ▶ If the hazard materialised, please provide the date of impact. This will help to understand the planned vs actual lead time for early action.

#### IMPLEMENTATION (PER SECTOR, INCLUDING NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES)

- ▶ Fill out the indicators table based on information collected during implementation. Make sure that variances from targets are explained. Also note what proportion of early activities were done in advance of the impact, or peak of the impact of a hazard.
- ▶ Ensure to provide evidence of the numbers mentioned, through activity reports, monitoring reports, distribution reports, satisfaction surveys and lessons learned reports amongst others. These documents should be archived by the project manager/delegation PMER in a shared folder and made available in the event of an audit or review.
- ▶ Provide details on implementation of each planned activity with a focus on impact of the achievements. Inform on relevant persisting needs at the end of the operation.
- ▶ Highlight sector specific challenges and lessons learned in the dedicated sections.
- ▶ Ensure successes are highlighted.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

- ▶ Provide variances explanation for all variances of +-10% against the latest approved DREF budget. Variances are based on the consolidated figures based on National Society and IFRC execution.

## Reporting after a non-activation

At the end of the s/EAP operational period (5 years for a full EAP or 2 years for an sEAP), the National Society must submit a **Final Report**. This includes:

- ▶ A full narrative account of the final year's readiness and repositioning activities.
- ▶ A final financial report, including any unspent balances.
- ▶ The National Society's financial report detailing how funds were used.

The **final report must be published on the IFRC website within three months** of the s/EAP's end date (published as report type DREF/EAP Final Report). As this deadline refers to publication, the National Society should ensure the report is shared well in advance with the IFRC Delegation and Regional PMER team, leaving sufficient time for review, feedback, and any necessary revisions before publication.

All financial transactions must be completed before the report can be published. Any outstanding balances must be returned to the IFRC-DREF as part of the closure process.

## OPERATIONAL LEARNING AND REVALIDATION PROCESS

Once a s/EAP has been triggered and evaluation data has been collected, it's essential to reflect on the overall performance of the activation. This is a key opportunity to assess not just the early actions themselves, but the broader Anticipatory Action system - how well the trigger worked, whether the plan was feasible, to what extent the early action was done in advance of the hazard.

### Lessons Learned Workshop (LLW)

A structured learning workshop is one of the most effective ways to bring together all those involved in the activation, National Society teams, IFRC colleagues, technical partners, volunteers, and others, to share experiences and improve future performance. The s/EAP has a suggested lessons learned workshop methodology, which aims to be engaging and participative. While the methodology is optional, the DREF Global Team would like all LLW reports to answer key questions and follow the same structure.

The LLW is an opportunity to reflect on what worked, what didn't, and what needs to change in the s/EAP. Key questions to guide this process include:

### Trigger mechanism

- ▶ *Did the trigger activate as expected?*
- ▶ *Were the assumptions and data used to design the trigger still valid?*
- ▶ *Is there new data or improved forecast products that could refine the trigger model?*



## Implementation of Early Actions

- ▶ *Were activities carried out within the intended time window between forecast and impact?*
- ▶ *Did the financial resources match the actual needs?*
- ▶ *Were funds received in time to carry out the actions?*
- ▶ *Were the early actions effective in reducing the identified impact?*
- ▶ *Should any early actions be revised or replaced?*
- ▶ *What operational challenges emerged during activation, and how can these be addressed?*

## Coordination with government and other actors

- ▶ *Did it go smoothly?*
- ▶ *What can be improved, if any blockages delayed the implementation of the early actions?*

The workshop should be held within the operational timeframe, otherwise, costs related to it will not be eligible. The output of the lessons learned workshop is a lessons learned workshop report, which should follow the standard format, answering some standard questions. Most importantly, the report should include recommendations for improving future activations, updating the s/EAP. When completed, the lessons learned workshop report should be shared with the Global DREF Team.

The lessons learned workshop can also include several additional days in order to work on updating the s/EAP in tracked changes with several of the key

recommendations generated from the lessons learned workshop. The s/EAP can then be resubmitted to the IFRC-DREF for another round of funding (see section 9.5 below).



More information about the s/EAP lessons learned workshop methodology can be found in ***this link***.

## REVALIDATION PROCESS

After an s/EAP has activated (once for a simplified EAP and twice for an EAP) and early actions have been implemented, the National Society should review and revise the originally approved s/EAP, in tracked changes, to ensure it remains effective for future use and improved from the experience gained during the past activation(s). The revalidation process follows the same steps as the original submission.

Revalidation is based on what was learned during the activation, drawing on post-distribution monitoring, the lessons learned workshop, taking into account changes in the operating context and any other review or evaluation completed within the activation timeframe.

Based on the Lessons Learned Workshop, the National Society should select the key recommendations and update the originally approved s/EAP (in tracked changes) and budget to reflect the necessary changes. Note that if the activation went largely as planned, then the s/EAP can be quickly revised immediately after the lessons learned workshop (ideally, it could be done consecutively to the lessons learned

workshop (ideally, it could be done consecutively to the lessons learned workshop with the same participants) and resubmitted explaining the changes made. If there were issues that may take longer to address, the National Society can make the essential changes and resubmit the s/EAP, explaining what further improvement will be addressed as part of the annual readiness activities under year 1.

When revising, the National Society should use **track changes** in the document so that edits are easy to identify, and clearly justify any adjustments to early actions, triggers, or budget lines. Once the revised s/EAP is ready, it needs to be:

- ▶ Submitted to the **IFRC Delegation**.
- ▶ Shared with the **DREF Anticipatory Pillar** at: [DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org](mailto:DREF.anticipatorypillar@ifrc.org).
- ▶ Supported by the completed proforma cover message to formally initiate the revalidation process.

The updated submission is reviewed using the standard quality criteria and the s/EAP Checklist, just like the original version.

## CLOSURE

Once the Protocol has reached the end of its operational period, the **DREF Operations Project Manager**, supported by their **Finance Officer**, is responsible for monitoring final implementation and spending. Before the Final Report can be published, the following conditions must be met:

- ▶ All expenses must be fully accounted for.

- ▶ There must be no outstanding commitments or pending financial provisions.
- ▶ Any unspent funds must be returned to the IFRC-DREF.

The DREF Operations Project Manager uses the three-month reporting window to ensure that the National Society has reported accurately on how the funds were used, in line with the Project Agreement.

Once the project is ready for closure, the **Regional Finance and Administration team** will:

- ▶ Mark the project code as FROZEN in the IFRC's Ready system, stopping any further financial transactions.
- ▶ Review financial transactions to ensure they match the approved budget and follow all procedures.
- ▶ Prepare and submit a standard closure report to the DREF Operations Project Manager, DREF Appeal Manager, DREF Regional Focal Point, Regional PMER, and Finance Business Partnering Unit.
- ▶ After the Final Report is published, initiate the return of any remaining funds and officially close the project and appeal codes.



Dedicated checklists to guide the National Society and IFRC teams through each step of the activation phase is available [here](#).

## 3.5 IMMINENT DREF

### 3.5.1 GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Successful implementation of an Imminent DREF relies on well-coordinated roles and clear responsibilities across all levels, from National Societies initiating the request to the IFRC Delegation, Regional and Global Operations, and IFRC-DREF Team. Each actor plays a critical role in ensuring that early actions are launched in a timely, efficient, and accountable manner.

Detailed information about Roles and responsibilities can be found under **“Roles and responsibilities”** in the Guidelines and Section 10 of the **IFRC-DREF Procedures**.

#### | NATIONAL SOCIETY

##### PLANNING AND SUBMISSION

- Submit an Imminent DREF Request, using the standard template, which includes the plan, budget, and optional request for Rapid Response Personnel. Signs and submits the request at least 3 days before expected impact (up to one month in advance), however, when the event has a high likelihood of manifesting.
- Split the budget into a minimum of 75% for early action and up to 25% for early response.
- Attach or reference a valid Bank Letter confirming banking details to avoid delays in disbursement.



**Example:** A National Society in a country with active volcanoes receives reports from the national geological institute and international seismic monitoring systems indicating that a major eruption is highly likely to occur within days. The National Society prepares an Imminent DREF Request, allocating 80% of the CHF 75,000 to early actions such as evacuation support for at risk communities and their livestock, setting up temporary shelters, and distributing protective equipment, from stocks in the National Society's own warehouse, in high-risk zones. The remaining 20% is reserved for immediate needs such as first aid and awareness raising of where to find support (including Restoring Family Links and PGI) for displaced people in the first 48 hours post-evacuation, should the eruption materialize.

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- Begin implementation immediately upon approval, with a maximum timeframe of 45 days, with no possibility for extension.
- Ensure that early actions and early response activities are implemented according to the approved plan (using the published version, not the application document, since changes in the activities might be requested in the approval email).
- Manage funds strictly according to the allocated budget.



**Example:** A coastal country faces an imminent threat from a tropical storm forming offshore. The National Society does not have an existing EAP or sEAP for floods caused by tropical cyclones/storms, so

instead the National Society prepares an imminent DREF request, including a Rapid Response Personnel, requesting a total allocation of CHF 90,800. In advance of the tropical cyclone/storm, the National Society implements early action activities to mitigate the risk of floods by providing early warning messages for at-risk communities, cleaning storm drains and covering latrines and wells in low lying flood-prone areas. Ahead of the floods, while the roads are passable, the National Society 1. drops supplies at communities who don't want to evacuate 2. supports the evacuation of at-risk communities. As the floods start to materialise, the National Society continues to provide immediate assistance to people in evacuation shelters and replenishes stock used in early action/early response within the 45-day window.

- ▶ The National Society may work closely with government agencies and local stakeholders to access real-time hazard data and coordinate outreach to at-risk communities.
- ▶ During implementation, the National Society may also coordinate directly with local authorities and technical agencies to align early action efforts and ensure community needs are met effectively.



**Example:** When the national meteorological agency issues an alert for severe flooding, the National Society uses this early warning to initiate early actions. National Society collaborates with the local authorities to disseminate alerts, organise shelters, and support evacuations in high-risk areas.

## REPORTING AND CLOSURE (OR SCALE UP TO RESPONSE)

**Scenario 1:** The disaster does not materialise or materialises but with low impact.

- Submit a Final Report (narrative and financial) within 2 months of the end of the operation.
- Return any unspent balances to the IFRC-DREF.

**Scenario 2:** The disaster materialises with high impact and the National Society needs international financial support to assist the affected population.

- Submit a request for an additional DREF allocation for response via an operations update. The budget cap of the 2nd allocation should include the 1st imminent DREF allocation.



**Example:** A National Society implements an imminent DREF after receiving warning of imminent, severe flooding. Volunteers clear storm drains, distribute sandbags using the National Society's existing tools and stock, and support evacuations. The impact of the flooding exceeds the local coping capacity and submerges several communities. The National Society quickly assesses the expanded needs and requests an additional allocation from the IFRC-DREF (via an Operations Update) to scale up and respond to arising needs including emergency shelter, health services, and access to clean water. The same project and appeal codes are used, and the response DREF operation builds on the early actions already carried out.

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT, REVIEW AND VALIDATION

- Support the National Society in drafting and submitting the imminent DREF request through the Delegation, Regional Operations Manager and Regional DREF Focal Point.
- The Regional Logistics Team checks and confirms the feasibility of the procurement within 45 days. This must be done before the submission of the imminent DREF request.
- Review and validate the request (DREF Global Team with contribution from IM, Logistics and Operations Coordinator); providing a decision to Go or No Go within 24 hours by the DREF Appeal Manager.
- Support the implementation of early actions/early response and its monitoring.



**Example:** Ahead of a projected heatwave, the National Society receives support from the IFRC Country Delegation to prepare an Imminent DREF request. The Regional DREF Focal Point reviews the submission, and the DREF Global Team validates and approves it within 24 hours. The appeal and project codes are opened, enabling rapid fund disbursement. The imminent DREF application document serves also as the project agreement as it is signed, in advance, by the IFRC and the National Society.

## FUNDING AND OVERSIGHT

- The Finance Business Partnering Unit opens the project code, and processes income allocation.
- The DREF Operations Project Manager sets up the WBS in IFRC's Ready system, uploads the signed request to E-Contract, and initiates the CHF 75,000 payment for the National Society.



**Example:** Following approval of an imminent DREF allocation for severe cold wave, the IFRC Operations Project Manager sets up the budget structure in the Ready system and uploads the agreement to E-Contract. The Finance team processes the allocation, ensuring CHF 75,000 quickly reaches the National Society for urgent distribution of the National Society's existing winter supplies.

## CLOSURE

- Review and freeze the project budget, coordinate financial reconciliation and initiate fund return, and ensure the Final Report is only published once all transactions are accounted for.

**Scenario 1:** The disaster does not materialise or materialises but with low impact.

- Ensure the final report is published on the IFRC website.

**Scenario 2:** The disaster materialises with high impact and if the National Society needs international financial support to assist the affected population.

- Support the submission and publication of an Operations Update, as well as the processing of the 2nd allocation and accompanying documents using the same project and appeal codes.
- At the end of the operational timeframe, following the subsequent DREF allocation/s, supports the development of a final narrative and financial report, The final report is published three months after the end of the operational timeframe by IFRC Regional PMER.



**Example (scenario 1):** After successfully completing early actions ahead of a cold wave the National Society submits its final report within the 2-month deadline. The IFRC DREF team reviews the finances, freezes the project code, and facilitates the return of any unspent funds. The operation's final report is then published on IFRC's public website, enabling the formal closure of the operation.

### **3.5.2 PLANNING AND APPLICATION**

Planning for an Imminent DREF operation begins with the receipt of an alert for a forecastable sudden onset hazard. Given the rapid and short-term nature of this funding mechanism, the better and more organised a National Society is, the more efficiently funds will be available, and the more effective early action will be. The National Society must have the capacity to act quickly, supported by credible data to justify the imminent risk. A simplified approach is appropriate, with the emphasis on immediate, time-sensitive interventions that can mitigate the impact before and immediately after the disaster strikes. To facilitate the decision-making process, a simplified decision tree was created – you can access it [here](#).

For more information, please refer to the ***IFRC's Contingency Planning Guide*** and information on ***Preparedness for Effective Response***.



## GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED:



### Is the event sudden onset?

Imminent DREF is designed for sudden-onset events, such as heatwave, floods, or volcanic eruptions. Some hazards typically considered slow onset, like population movement, may also escalate rapidly. For this reason, the eligibility decision is made on a case-by-case basis.

For example, a sudden surge in cross-border displacement due to unexpected political violence or a disaster in a neighbouring country could create an urgent humanitarian situation requiring immediate early action. In such cases, imminent DREF may be appropriate, provided there is a clear and credible alert indicating a rapidly developing emergency.



### Is the event imminent (maximum 1 month before the expected result)?

Imminent DREF is designed for sudden onset events that are forecasted to occur soon, typically within days or weeks depending on the hazard. The request must be submitted no earlier than one month before the expected impact, and no later than three days prior and must be based on a forecast or expert judgement with a high likelihood that the event will materialise. Note that a seasonal forecast is not sufficient justification for an imminent DREF allocation.



### Does the National Society have the capacity to run the operation quickly?

The Imminent DREF is purposely streamlined, with a simplified application process and limited funding to allow for fast mobilisation. It requires rapid implementation within a strict 45-day window, with no possible extension. This demands strong operational readiness and fast decision-making. Application should be developed in close coordination with the IFRC Delegation and Regional Office; all actors need to work on it together from the very beginning until the point of submission to the IFRC-DREF for approval, and through to implementation.

The National Society must already have the systems, staff, and volunteer networks in place to immediately implement early actions.



## Does the National Society require Rapid Response Personnel (Surge) support?

Imminent DREF allocation is CHF 80,000 without surge personnel, or CHF 90,800 with surge personnel.



## Is there sufficient information to justify early action?

Reliable forecast, hazard monitoring, and impact risk analysis are essential to justify early actions. This ensures that funds are used responsibly and that actions are timely, targeted, and relevant.

### Example: Imminent DREF Go/No-Go Decision

National Society sent an Imminent DREF request for expected floods about a month away. Their plan included activities like household evacuations, water distribution, and emergency shelter kits. Most of these were early response activities, not early actions.

Because the DREF requires that most of the budget (at least 75%) be used for early actions, the plan didn't meet the criteria. The DREF team gave a No-Go decision, but they also shared feedback and advice. They suggested the National Society focus more on early actions, such as clearing drainage channels, pre-positioning sandbags, and training volunteers to support early warnings.

A week later, the National Society submitted a new version of the plan. This time, they clearly separated early actions from early response, adjusted the budget, and improved the timing. The DREF team approved it with a Go decision.

This showed that a No-Go doesn't always mean rejection—it can be a chance to improve the plan and get approval quickly once issues are fixed.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ The Go / No-Go approach ensures rigour and timeliness but allows for constructive resubmission when issues can be resolved swiftly.
- ▶ Early engagement and transparent feedback between the DREF team and National Societies are essential for improving proposal quality within short timeframes.
- ▶ The Imminent DREF remains a learning mechanism; its success depends on both rapid decision-making and flexibility to enable effective early action.

### 3.5.3 IMMINENT DREF AND OTHER FORMS OF DREF ALLOCATIONS

- ▶ An Imminent DREF cannot be requested if the National Society has a simplified Early Action Protocol (sEAP), whether active or already triggered, for the same hazard and covering the same geographical area. It also may not be used to scale up or supplement early actions already triggered under an s/EAP.
- ▶ However, an Imminent DREF can be requested if the National Society has an active EAP for the same hazard with a higher threshold, and a new, reliable alert indicates a hazard at a lower scale would have humanitarian impact, i.e. when the EAP trigger has not been reached but early action is still warranted.
- ▶ If a further DREF allocation is requested for a response, or an Emergency Appeal is requested after an imminent DREF, the imminent DREF allocation will be included in the respective total allocation.
- ▶ The emergency advance payment for response cannot be granted following an Imminent DREF since the Imminent DREF already includes a provision for immediate response activities.

### 3.5.4 ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The Imminent DREF is designed to support urgent, time-sensitive interventions in anticipation of a forecasted hazard. Its focus is on immediate early action. As such, prepositioning of stock or long-term preparedness activities are not eligible. Similarly, no international procurement is eligible, and all items must be purchased locally.

The budget must be split into two distinct components:

#### | **Early Actions**

These are activities that aim to prevent or mitigate the expected impact of a hazard before it occurs or before the peak of the impact occurs. They are time-critical and must be implemented quickly, typically within days of receiving a reliable alert. Examples of early action depend upon the hazard, but may include:

- ▶ Distribution of protective materials (e.g. masks, tarpaulins).
- ▶ Deployment of volunteers to at-risk areas.
- ▶ Community-based early warning dissemination.
- ▶ Supported evacuation of at-risk communities (and their livestock and livelihoods assets).
- ▶ Setting up temporary safe spaces or shelters.
- ▶ Clearing storm drains, sandbagging, digging ditches or constructing dikes.

**AT LEAST 75% OF THE TOTAL BUDGET MUST BE ALLOCATED FOR EARLY OR ANTICIPATORY ACTION.**

The early action can be initiated immediately upon signature of the Imminent DREF and allocation requests by the DREF Appeal Manager.

**| Early Response**

These activities are permitted **only if the disaster unfolds within the operational timeframe of the imminent DREF** (45 days from the approval day), and they must be implemented in the first hours and days after the impact. They are strictly limited to life-saving interventions.

Examples include:

- ▶ Emergency search and rescue.
- ▶ First aid and casualty evacuation.
- ▶ Evacuation to hospitals or safe areas.
- ▶ Rapid needs assessments.

**NO MORE THAN 25% OF THE TOTAL BUDGET MAY BE USED FOR EARLY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES.**

**OVERVIEW OF THE IMMINENT DREF BUDGET COMPONENTS**

COMPONENT	IMMINENT DREF
Fixed total budget amount	CHF 80,000 (w/o Rapid Response Deployment) CHF 90,800 (w/Rapid Response Deployment)
NS implementation budget	CHF 75,000
Rapid Response Deployment	CHF 10,000
Prepositioning	No prepositioning; stock must be immediately distributed in the operational timeframe
Early action	75% of the budget
Early response	25% of the budget
IFRC indirect costs (PSSR)	6.5%; total budget minus NS implementation budget
IFRC implementation costs	Only Rapid Response Deployment (CHF 10,000)

### 3.5.5 SUBMISSION PROCESS

The National Society initiates the Imminent DREF request process by submitting an Imminent DREF Request, using the online template available on the **GO platform**. This template is a multi-purpose form that serves as the application for funding, the Project Agreement, and cash request. The template for the submission request includes the following:

- ▶ Risk analysis and expected date of impact (based on real-time forecasts and evidence that the event is imminent).
- ▶ List of proposed activities.
- ▶ Budget breakdown per block (sub-total for early action and sub-total for early response only), ensuring that 75% of the budget is for early action and 25% for early response and compliance with the fixed CHF 75,000 limit.

To be eligible for consideration, the completed request must meet the following approval deadlines:

- ▶ **Earliest:** one month before the expected impact of the hazard.
- ▶ **Latest:** three days before the expected impact.

The **IFRC Delegation** and the **Regional Office** play a critical coordinating role in the development of a DREF request. The Delegation is expected to actively facilitate collaboration between the National Society and relevant regional technical colleagues throughout the preparation process to ensure that all technical inputs are gathered and reviewed before the application is finalised. When this coordination happens effectively, the request can be submitted promptly once ready, with no further

delays. However, if involvement of the Regional Office is left until the end, the application may face additional review steps and unnecessary delays at a critical time for the operation.

If stock will be procured as part of the imminent DREF request, the Regional Logistics Team conducts an assessment and confirms feasibility of procurement within the 45-day operational timeframe. This step must be completed before the submission of the imminent DREF application. Once the template is finalised, the **Head of Delegation and the National Society Representative** are responsible for signing and submitting the request via email to the **DREF Regional Focal Point**, copying at minimum:

- ▶ DREF Operations Project Manager\*
- ▶ DREF Operations Appeal Manager\*
- ▶ Country (Cluster) Delegation Finance Officer
- ▶ Regional Health, Disasters, Climate and Crisis
- ▶ Regional Finance and Administration

\*If not yet designated, the Head of Delegation or Regional Health, Disasters, Climate and Crisis focal point should appoint the DREF Appeal Manager and DREF Operations Project Manager at the time of submission.

When submitting, the Head of Delegation should also indicate in the email whether **treasury capacity is in place to process the payment** upon approval.

To act as a substitute for a formal Project Agreement, the Imminent DREF Request must be supported with a valid Bank Letter, confirming the National Society's banking details. This Bank Letter may be:

- ▶ Submitted earlier as part of disaster preparedness efforts and held on file by the Head of Delegation, who will attach it when submitting the request, or
- ▶ Annexed to the Imminent DREF Request at the time of application.



**Important:** missing or inconsistent banking information (e.g., discrepancies between the Bank Letter and the account details listed in the request) may lead to significant delays in the disbursement of funds.

**Important:** before submitting an Imminent DREF Request, the contractual section of the template must be fully completed and signed. If, after approval, minor changes are requested, such as updates to the narrative, there is no need to re-sign the contract. The original signed agreement remains valid and binding, even if adjustments are made to the application content.

## INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

The following information forms the core content of the application and provides the basis for internal review and approval. Each component must be clearly presented to ensure the request can be assessed efficiently and effectively. These requirements are aligned with the internal DREF review checklist, used by the DREF Global Team to assess the quality, relevance, and feasibility of the proposed intervention.

### RISK ANALYSIS AND JUSTIFICATION FOR EARLY ACTION

Likelihood of the hazard: evidence from forecasting tools, early warning systems, historical trends, or scientific assessments that the hazard is imminent (expected within 1 month).

#### ▶ Expected impact

A description of the anticipated humanitarian consequences if early action is not taken. This should include reference to the population at risk and the likely scale of impact.

#### ▶ Sources of information

All risk and impact assessments should be supported by reliable data sources (e.g. government agencies, IFRC monitoring systems, humanitarian partners).

#### ▶ Timeliness for action

The rationale should demonstrate that there is adequate lead time to implement meaningful early actions before the hazard strikes.

## PROPOSED ACTIONS AND BUDGET RATIONALE

### ▶ Alignment with impact

Early action should directly address the most critical risks identified in the risk analysis.

### ▶ Effectiveness

Activities should be practical, targeted, and likely to mitigate the projected impact on vulnerable communities.

### ▶ Early response

If included, early response activities must be clearly linked to immediate post-impact needs (e.g. first aid, search and rescue) and must not exceed 25% of the total budget.

### ▶ 75/25 rule compliance

At least 75% of the budget must be allocated to early action, with a maximum of 25% for early response.

### ▶ Feasibility

All proposed activities must be realistically implementable within the 45-day timeframe.

## *Procurement and financial information*

### ▶ Procurement feasibility

If items are to be procured, the application should clarify that these are for immediate distribution or for replenishment of supplies used during early action and can be completed within 45 days.

### ▶ Bank information

Complete and accurate bank details must be provided or attached via a valid Bank Letter. Discrepancies or missing data may delay fund disbursement.



### 3.5.6 REVIEW, APPROVAL, AND DISBURSEMENT

Unlike s/EAPs, which require up-front planning and are pre-agreed funding, imminent DREF is requested when the event is on the horizon. Therefore, the imminent DREF follows a rapid approval process.

Once the Imminent DREF Request has been received by the DREF Regional Focal Point, the DREF Regional Focal Point establishes a dedicated SharePoint folder to store all related documentation and share the access link with the DREF Global Team. The Regional Focal Point is also responsible for completing the DREF Allocation Request Form. Upon receipt, the DREF Global Team will review the submission in coordination with the Information Management and Operations Coordinator Teams, as well as technical experts where needed, and validate the application's content within 24 hours, if eligible.

**TECHNICAL REVIEW:** if needed, the sector focal point (from the Regional Office or relevant global technical leads) will review and provide feedback on sector-specific components of the request. This will include:

- ▶ Assessing whether the proposed sectoral interventions are appropriate, relevant, and aligned with the impact analysis.
- ▶ Confirming that the application sufficiently justifies the sector's involvement.
- ▶ Suggesting refinements, additional activities, or noting if no changes are needed.

It is important to note that once the imminent DREF request is approved, the DREF Global Team may request minor changes to be considered by the National Society and the Delegation prior to publication (for example, this may include wording that does not align with IFRC policy or amendment to proposed activities, if one of the proposed actions is not eligible). These refinements are part of the quality assurance process and must be addressed promptly but should not delay the transfer of funds to the National Society.



## COMMON REASONS FOR REQUEST DELAYS OR REJECTIONS (EXAMPLES)

COMPONENT	IMMINENT DREF
Incomplete application documents	<p>Ensure all required documents are submitted in full:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Imminent DREF application template completed by the National Society (signed and with correct bank account details),</li> <li>2. Checklist completed by the logistics regional team and the regional DREF Focal Point,</li> <li>3. Allocation request prepared by the Regional DREF Focal Point.</li> </ol>
Request based on an “above-average” seasonal forecast	In such a case, there is insufficient evidence that the hazard is imminent. The National Society should consider applying when there is a forecast of a high likelihood of the hazard materialising.
Imminent DREF request includes resilience-building or longer-term preparedness activities.	Do not include those types of activities in the submitted Imminent DREF request – these activities are not eligible.
Budget cap not met	Ensure the lump sum for early actions represents at least 75% of the total budget and that early response activities do not exceed 25% of the total budget.
Lack of coordination with IFRC or government partners	Engage IFRC Delegations before submitting a request.

Following validation, the DREF Global Team will compile and submit the following documents to the DREF Appeal Manager:

- ▶ The completed Imminent DREF Request (signed and including bank details)
- ▶ The Bank Letter
- ▶ The DREF Allocation Request
- ▶ The checklist
- ▶ The risk one pager (provided by IFRC-DREF Accountability and Compliance)

The DREF Appeal Manager must approve or reject the request and authorise the **release of funds (if approved) within 24 hours** by signing the DREF Allocation Request. No additional Project Agreement is required.

**ADDITIONAL APPROVAL** from the Under Secretary General for National Society Development and Coordination (USG NSDC) is required in the following cases:

- ▶ The Imminent DREF Request is submitted outside the required timeframe (i.e. not within one month to three days before expected impact).
- ▶ The National Society is officially suspended.
- ▶ The National Society is experiencing an institutional crisis\*.

When such an additional approval is needed, the **Director of Disaster, Climate and Crisis (DCC)** will also be informed and copied in the communication.

Once approved, the **DREF Global Team** will share the decision with all relevant parties, including Headquarters, Regional Office, Delegation, and Geneva Finance. Following this:

- ▶ The Information Management and Quality Team will open the Appeal Code and create/update the appeal details in the IFRC's Ready.
- ▶ The Finance Business Partnering Unit will open the Project Code and allocate the approved funds from the Anticipatory Pillar to the new operation.
- ▶ The Delegation will immediately initiate the transfer of the funds to the National Society.
- ▶ The National Society can immediately start implementing their activities.

Within one working day of approval, the Imminent DREF Request must be published on the IFRC public website. Only the first section of the template, containing the plan and budget, is made public. The second section, which functions as the funding agreement and cash request, is not published.

### **3.5.7 IMPLEMENTATION, REPORTING, AND CLOSURE**

Once the Imminent DREF Request is approved, the assigned DREF Operations Project Manager is responsible for promptly initiating the operation. This begins with setting up the necessary financial and contractual structures in IFRC systems to ensure timely fund disbursement and smooth implementation.

The first step is to convert the approved budget into a structured Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) in IFRC's Ready, enabling accurate tracking and management of project expenditure. Both the early action and early response should go under AP103, noting that a detailed budget is not required. In parallel, the DREF Operations Appeal Manager will initiate the Project Expenditure Approval Request (PEAR) to authorise the use of funds.

Next, the signed and approved Imminent DREF Request is uploaded by the Project Manager to e-Contract, where it serves as the formal Project Agreement (PA). Once uploaded, all contract data automatically migrates into the IFRC's Ready System.

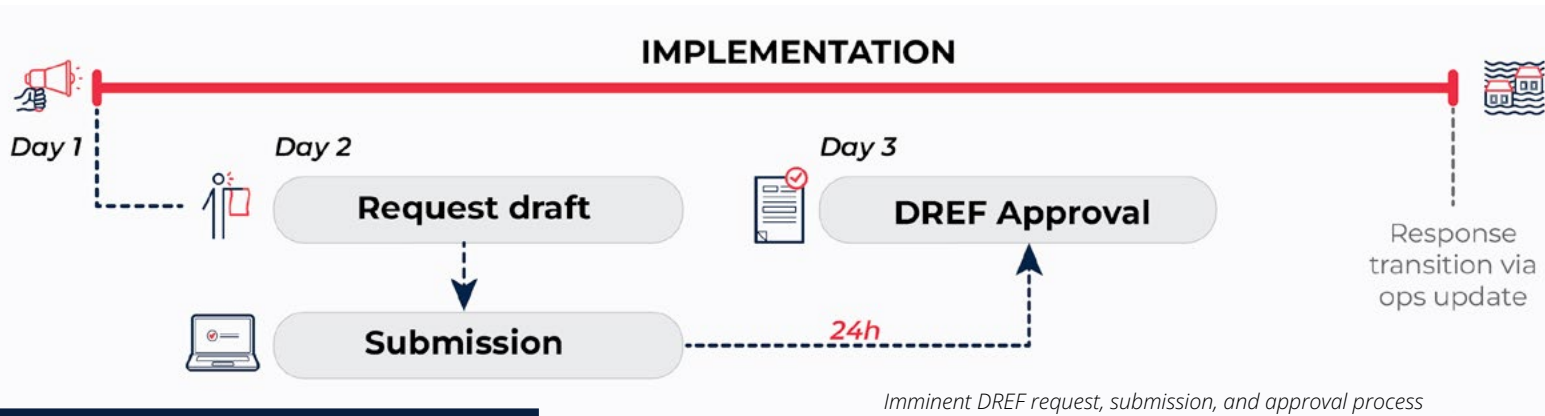
As soon as the data transfer is complete, the Project Manager initiates the payment request for CHF 75,000 within the Ready

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\* An institutional crisis is a situation where a humanitarian organisation's internal governance, leadership, systems, or integrity deteriorate to the point that it disrupts operational capacity, erodes trust, and undermines the organisation's legitimacy and effectiveness.

System, triggering the fund transfer to the National Society to begin implementation of the planned early action and response.

**Important:** the Imminent DREF Request serves as a rapid allocation of funding for a short-term implementation, and as such, no revisions of the Imminent DREF are expected.



The Imminent DREF provides funding to the National Society in anticipation of a forecasted hazard expected to have a humanitarian impact. Since the disaster may or may not occur, different scenarios can unfold following the approval and implementation of early action. Each option (1 and 2) has specific scenarios for reporting and closure requirements.

timeframe, which must be published by the IFRC one month later, i.e. within three months of the end of the operational timeframe.

**OPTION 1: THE NATIONAL SOCIETY DOES NOT NEED TO SCALE UP THE IMMINENT DREF**

**Scenario 1: The disaster does not materialise**

- ▶ Early action activities were implemented as planned.
- ▶ The disaster does not occur, so early response activities are not needed.
- ▶ The National Society completes a Final Report (narrative and financial) two months after the end of the operational

- ▶ Any unspent funds are returned to the IFRC-DREF.
- ▶ The operation closes, and the project and appeal codes are officially deactivated (see Section **Closure**).

**Scenario 2: The disaster materialises, but no further support needed**

- ▶ Early action and early response activities are implemented using the funding from the Imminent DREF.
- ▶ The disaster occurs, but the initial funding is sufficient; no additional support is required.
- ▶ As in Scenario 1, the National Society completes a Final Report (narrative and financial) two months after the end of the operational timeframe, which must be published by the IFRC one month

later, i.e. within three months of the end of the operational timeframe.

- ▶ Any unspent balance is returned to the IFRC-DREF, and the operation is closed as per the standard procedures.

### ***Reporting requirements and closure of the imminent operation***

Timely and transparent reporting is essential to ensure accountability and meet donor requirements. The DREF Operations Appeal Manager is responsible for ensuring that all reporting complies with IFRC's minimum standards. Financial reporting is managed by Regional Finance and Administration, while the Regional PMER team is responsible for publishing the final reports on the IFRC public website.

### **| Imminent DREF Operation Final Report**

A Final Report must be completed and published within three months of the end of the operational timeframe. This includes a narrative section describing the early action and early response activities carried out, and a financial report prepared by both the IFRC and the National Society, detailing how the funds were used. The final report can only be published when:

- ▶ All expenses have been accounted for, and
- ▶ there are no outstanding commitments or financial provisions.

During this three-month reporting period, the DREF Operations Project Manager works closely with the National Society to ensure all reporting requirements are met, and that funds have been used and

documented in line with the approved plan.

Important: the three-month deadline refers to the date of publication, not submission. To meet this requirement, the National Society must submit a draft report well in advance to allow sufficient time for review, feedback, and any necessary revisions.

### **| Closure of the Imminent DREF operation**

Once the DREF Operations Project Manager confirms that the operation is ready for closure, the Regional Finance and Administration team will:

- ▶ Freeze the project code in IFRC's Ready system to prevent any further spending.
- ▶ Review all financial transactions to ensure they align with the approved budget and procedures.
- ▶ Prepare the DREF Operation Standard Financial Report and share it with the DREF Operations Project Manager, Appeal Manager, Regional Focal Point, and Regional PMER, with a copy to the Finance Business Partnering Unit.

After the Final Report is published, the Finance Business Partnering Unit will initiate the return of any unspent funds to the IFRC-DREF and formally close the project and appeal codes.

## **OPTION 2: THE NATIONAL SOCIETY TRANSITIONS THE IMMINENT DREF INTO A RESPONSE DREF**

In some cases, the disaster for which an Imminent DREF was allocated escalates beyond the initial scope of the operation, and the National Society may require additional resources to meet the growing humanitarian needs. When this happens, the operation can transition into a response operation with another allocation from the DREF. This transition is articulated through an Operational Update, submitted in a template available on the GO Platform. To maintain continuity of the operation, it is important that the National Society uses the Operational Update template, and not a new DREF application.

### **The transition from Imminent DREF to Response DREF is treated as a continuation of the same operation:**

- ▶ The project and appeal codes remain the same throughout the transition.
- ▶ The original 45-day implementation period under the Imminent DREF counts toward the total timeframe of the Response DREF.
- ▶ The funds disbursed under the Imminent DREF (CHF 80,000 or CHF 90,800) are included in the overall DREF allocation and counted towards the applicable funding threshold for the DREF response operation or any potential contribution to an Emergency Appeal.

When submitting the Operational Update, which serves as a DREF Response request, the National Society must follow the standard process outlined in the **Response Pillar chapter** of the Guidelines and Section 6 of the **DREF Procedures**.

The application must:

- ▶ Explain how, where and when the activities of the Imminent DREF were implemented.
- ▶ Present an updated plan and budget that includes all activities already implemented under the Imminent DREF (both early actions and early response).
- ▶ Clearly list the Imminent DREF allocation under the “Previous Allocation(s)” section of the DREF Allocation Request.
- ▶ Specify in the Project Agreement that the Imminent DREF amount (CHF 75,000 transferred to the National Society) constitutes the first transfer under the total funding arrangement.

### ***Reporting requirements and closure of the Response DREF operation***

When an operation transitions to a Response DREF, a standard DREF Final Report (narrative and financial) must be submitted. This report should provide a comprehensive account of both the early actions implemented under the Imminent DREF phase and the subsequent response activities, as **there is no separate final report required for the Imminent DREF**.

The Final Report must be completed and published within three months of the end of the operational timeframe. This deadline refers to the date of publication, not submission. To meet this requirement, the National Society must submit a draft report well in advance, and no later than two months following the end of the operational timeframe, in order to allow sufficient time for review, feedback, and any necessary revisions.

## 3.6 SUMMARY OF THE KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE ANTICIPATORY PILLAR

### --- Activation

A protocol 'activates' when the pre-approved trigger threshold is reached, and implementation of the early actions starts within the lead time.

### --- Activation timeframe

It is the timeframe for the implementation of the early actions, lessons learned and reporting.

### --- Allocation ceiling

The maximum allowable funding that can be allocated under a specific anticipatory modality.

### --- Anticipatory Action

Anticipatory action is a **SYNONYM OF EARLY ACTION**; A set of actions taken to prevent or mitigate potential disaster impacts prior to a shock or before acute impacts are felt. The actions are carried out between the prediction or forecast of how the event will unfold and the impact of a hazard. Anticipatory action should not be a substitute for longer-term investment in risk reduction and aim to strengthen people's capacity to manage risks (Chapter 4 World Disaster Report, 2020).

### --- Anticipatory Pillar

IFRC-DREF funding mechanism for anticipatory action. The Anticipatory Pillar guarantees release of funding for pre-agreed protocols and imminent DREF for NS to be able to act before a disaster strikes.

### --- Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

Longer-term measures to minimise vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout communities with aim to avoid (prevention measures) or limit (mitigation and preparedness measures) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the context of sustainable development. (Sendai Framework, 2015).

### --- Early Action Protocol (EAP)

A detailed, pre-approved plan outlining the anticipatory action to be taken for a specific hazard, the triggers for activation, and the resources required. EAPs have three types of activities: the annual readiness activities, which ensure that a National Society has the capacity to act as soon as the trigger is reached, the prepositioned stock required for the early action and the early action activities, which will be done in the lead time between the forecast and the impact of the hazard.

### --- Emergency response

Actions taken directly before, during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected.

### --- Forecast-Based Financing (FbF)

Forecast-based Financing (FbF) is a methodology that uses forecast information, combined with risk and impact data, to guide early action in advance of a hazard. FbF is one of the approaches that can be used to plan anticipation action.

### --- Imminent DREF

A modality under the Anticipatory Pillar that provides funding for early actions in response to high-confidence forecasts of a weather or non-weather-related imminent event.

### --- Lead time

The period between the time when the trigger is reached and the expected impact of a disaster. The lead time could be a matter of hours (for a cyclone, typhoon or hurricane), days (floods, heatwaves or cold waves), weeks or months (for a drought), depending on the hazard and is unique to the context where the s/EAP operates.

### --- Preparedness

The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organisations, communities and individuals to anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of disasters (UNDRR).

### --- Readiness activities

Activities undertaken in advance of a specific hazard risk to ensure operational readiness for a humanitarian intervention (early action or response). Under an Early Action Protocol, National Societies undertake annual readiness to ensure that they have the capacity to undertake early action activities (IFRC).

### --- Stock prepositioning

Action taken to ensure that essential stock, such as emergency supplies or equipment, required for early action is available in advance of a trigger. This stock can be used for immediate early action activities. Note that stock prepositioning is not eligible under an imminent DREF request.

### --- Stop mechanism

For an EAP with forecast triggers with a lead time of more than three days, the EAP should include the description of a stop mechanism. This means that if a subsequent forecast – prior to the start of activities (related to the early action) shows that the event is no longer likely to occur, the activation of the EAP will be 'stopped' to avoid implementing actions that are no longer useful, thereby saving resources.

### --- simplified Early Action Protocol (sEAP)

A lighter approach to anticipatory action, which enables National Societies to do early action in advance of hazards. Like EAPs, sEAP have three types of activities: the annual readiness activities, which ensure that a National Society has the capacity to act early, the prepositioned stock required for the early action and the early action activities, which will be done in the lead time between the forecast and the impact of the hazard.

### --- Trigger

A set of conditions or changes in a situation that indicate that a potential escalation of risk has been reached and that consequently action needs to be taken. They serve as thresholds to mark different possible disaster or crisis scenarios. Triggers might be quantitative or qualitative, and they can be set either through a rigorous scientific process or through a consultative process with experts. It is important for both types of triggers to explain and justify why those established thresholds need to prompt a specific action. In some cases, the justification might come from scientific data that shows how a hazard has caused disastrous impacts once that trigger level has been surpassed, while in other cases the justification might come from combining facts or knowledge about the current context in a country with qualitative and quantitative information from an authoritative source (expert judgment) (IFRC).



# 4 Response Pillar

<b>4.1 WHAT IS THE RESPONSE PILLAR?</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>4.2 GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>4.3 DECISION TO APPLY FOR FUNDS</b>	
<b>– GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>4.4 ALLOCATION PARAMETERS UNDER RESPONSE DREF</b>	<b>121</b>
▶ Response DREF	121
▶ Response DREF for Drought-Specific (Slow-Onset) Crises	126
▶ DREF support for Readiness actions	128
▶ DREF grant contribution to Emergency Appeals	129
▶ DREF loan for Red-category emergencies	130
<b>4.5 PLANNING AND APPLICATION</b>	<b>136</b>
▶ 4.5.1 Planning out the operation	136
<i>Context and capacity analysis</i>	136
<i>Operational strategy and objectives</i>	137
<i>Eligible activities</i>	138
<i>Eligible activities under a Drought DREF</i>	139
<i>Workplan and implementation timeline</i>	143
<i>Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)</i>	144
<i>Equity and inclusion</i>	144
▶ 4.5.2 Designing a monitoring plan	145
<i>Results-Based Management</i>	145
<i>Coordination, partnerships and approvals</i>	146
<i>Risk management and contingency planning</i>	146
<i>Designing objectives, outcomes, outputs and indicators</i>	147
<i>Designing a monitoring plan</i>	148

▶ 4.5.3 Budget considerations and development	150
<i>Budgeting principles</i>	150
<i>Cost categories and eligible budget lines</i>	151
<i>Ineligible costs and common budget pitfalls</i>	153
<i>Procurement and asset considerations</i>	153
<i>In-kind goods donations in DREF operations</i>	154
▶ 4.5.4 DREF request submission	155
▶ 4.5.5 DREF loan request	160

## **4.6 REVIEW, APPROVAL AND DISBURSEMENT** **161**

▶ 4.6.1 DREF grant	161
<i>With Emergency Advance Payment</i>	162
<i>Without Emergency Advance Payment</i>	164
▶ 4.6.2 DREF loan	166

## **4.7 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING** **167**

▶ 4.7.1 Launching the operation	167
<i>WBS and PEAR</i>	167
<i>Project Agreement</i>	167
<i>Event launch</i>	168
▶ 4.7.2 Monitoring implementation	169
▶ 4.7.3 Best practices for implementation	170
▶ 4.7.4 Drought DREF - extended implementation timeframes	171
▶ 4.7.5 DREF Loan - additional monitoring considerations	173

<b>4.8 REVISIONS, REPORTING, AND CLOSURE</b>	<b>174</b>
▶ 4.8.1 Changes and revisions	174
<i>Requesting additional DREF funding</i>	174
<i>Requesting a timeframe extension</i>	175
<i>Requesting a change in operating scope</i>	175
<i>DREF Loan - specific considerations</i>	176
▶ 4.8.2 Operational learning	177
▶ 4.8.3 Closure and final reporting	178
▶ 4.8.4 Drought DREF - additional considerations	181
 <b>4.9 SUMMARY OF THE KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE RESPONSE PILLAR</b>	 <b>183</b>



## 4.1 WHAT IS THE RESPONSE PILLAR?

The **RESPONSE PILLAR** of the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) provides rapid and flexible financial support to National Societies for immediate humanitarian action following sudden or slow-onset disasters.

It ensures swift, needs-based, and context-driven emergency response when a crisis exceeds local capacities but does not warrant a full Emergency Appeal.

To further accelerate the lifesaving interventions, through the Response Pillar, the IFRC allows National Societies to make an Emergency Advance Payment Request (as part of the IFRC Immediate Response Protocol – IRP), enabling them to initiate immediate response activities while the full DREF application and Project Agreement are being finalised.

This pillar is operationalised through allocations for operations that are designed to accommodate varying emergency scales, response needs, and timeframes. These include the Response DREF and the DREF Loan.

► **RESPONSE DREF** provides flexible, rapid funding for small- to medium-scale emergencies triggered by both sudden and slow-onset events in the form of **grants**. The Response DREF supports **immediate relief and life-saving interventions**, within predefined thresholds, cost ratios and operational timelines, depending on the scale and nature of the crisis as defined by the IFRC Emergency Response Framework.

DREF Response grants are allocations to National Societies covering the full budget within the defined funding thresholds, and used where funding from other sources is not anticipated. Grants are typically used in emergencies that do not escalate to an Emergency Appeal, and where the overall needs remain within the DREF's funding thresholds.

For yellow and orange-level Emergency Appeals, the Response DREF grant is managed as a separate allocation with its own project code. It must be clearly distinguished from multilateral appeal funding to enable separate project reporting within the required timeframes.

In both cases, any unspent balance at the end of the implementation period must be returned to the DREF. In addition, National Societies with overdue DREF Response reports face reduced funding thresholds for new DREF applications: 75% of the threshold if one report is overdue, 50% if two are overdue, and 0% (becoming ineligible) if three or more operations remain unreported.

Whether the crisis emerges suddenly (earthquakes, flash floods or cyclones) or slowly over time (disease outbreaks, population displacement or droughts), the Response DREF remains a single, adaptable tool. The type of trigger shapes the timing and design of the response activities:

- ▶ **FOR SUDDEN-ONSET CRISES**, it covers a **single, distinct event** that occurs unexpectedly in a matter of days or even hours (e.g. earthquakes, flash floods or cyclones). When limited information on the event is available, the DREF funding also allows National Societies to **gather critical information** through emergency needs assessments, to determine the scope, scale, and required response strategy before committing to a full operation. It ensures evidence-based decision-making and better resource allocation. Starting an operation with just a needs assessment is also eligible.
- ▶ **FOR SLOW-ONSET AND/OR PROTRACTED CRISES**, this modality addresses specific needs arising from **compounded events** which have the potential to gradually lead to a humanitarian emergency (disease outbreaks, population displacement or droughts):
- ▶ **DROUGHT DREF** is a specific adaptation of the Response DREF designed for gradually developing droughts, food insecurity, and water shortage crises that require an extended response timeframe. The Drought DREF combines anticipatory, response, and early recovery actions, ensuring that affected communities receive timely and sustained assistance.

▶ **FOR READINESS ACTIONS**, DREF support can be requested under three specific scenarios: **election readiness, civil unrest readiness and epidemic readiness**, when a situation is unfolding and clear analysis indicates its impending nature. In all cases, the indicative budget threshold is set at CHF 150,000 for the planned actions. In practice, the process closely mirrors the Imminent DREF model, with the key difference being that the request is submitted using the Response DREF application template on the GO platform. More details on DREF Response support to readiness actions are available under section 4.5: Allocation parameters under Response DREF.

▶ **DREF LOAN** provides immediate funding to National Societies to kick-start and support critical early interventions while an Emergency Appeal (categorised as Red) is being launched. It acts as a bridge financing tool for large-scale Red-category emergencies, where needs exceed Response DREF limits, ensuring immediate mobilisation of resources before donor pledges are secured, enabling swift delivery of humanitarian assistance. The DREF Loan is a critical tool to maintain operational speed and impact at the onset of large-scale emergencies.

The DREF Loan is reimbursed once funding from the Emergency Appeal receives contributions equivalent to 200% of the loan amount. While the maximum loan available per Emergency Appeal is CHF 2,000,000, additional loans may be requested if operational needs expand, provided that the total outstanding loan amount under a single Emergency Appeal does not exceed this threshold at any time.

In the case of sudden onset events, to further accelerate the lifesaving interventions under the Response Pillar, the IFRC allows National Societies to make an **Emergency Advance Payment Request** (as part of the Immediate Response Protocol – IRP), enabling them to initiate immediate response activities while the full DREF application and subsequent Project Agreement are being finalised. In cases when an EA will not be launched, this option is available only when a sudden disaster occurs, and the National Society intends to submit a full DREF request shortly thereafter.

The request can be made regardless of the allocation type (grant or loan) and can cover:

- ▶ CHF 30,000 for Yellow-category events, or
- ▶ Up to CHF 100,000 for Orange- and Red-category events, to enable immediate response activities.

All Response Pillar allocations rely on strong in-country coordination between National Societies, IFRC Delegations, and local partners to ensure that DREF funding complements national response efforts. Rather than acting as a standalone mechanism, the Response Pillar is designed to fill critical humanitarian gaps and strengthen coordination with both Movement and non-Movement actors. While it is activated reactively, preparedness remains essential. National Societies are therefore encouraged to develop contingency plans and maintain readiness, enabling a faster, more effective response when crises occur. For more on the role of operational capacity, see xxx.

Overall, the Response DREF is a flexible, needs-driven funding modality that adjusts its operational focus according to the evolving nature of the emergency, while maintaining a consistent structure for accountability and impact.



More information about the **Emergency Advance Payment Request** and **Immediate Response Protocol** can be found [here](#) and [here](#).



## 4.2 GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The success of the response hinges on the seamless collaboration between various stakeholders, each with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. A well-coordinated division and clarity of tasks are necessary to avoid delays in request approval and response implementation, as well as to ensure efficient use of available resources.

This section provides a high-level overview of various actors' contributions. For more details about each step of the process, including planning, implementation, and monitoring, please refer to the dedicated sub-sections.

For more information about quality implementation, check out the ***IFRC's Steps for Quality Implementation***.

### DREF GRANT

#### ► DECISION-MAKING, APPLICATION, AND DISBURSEMENT

The Response DREF process begins with a clearly defined trigger, such as the onset of a disaster, after which the National Society must first assess the situation and determine whether it will respond using its own resources or seek external support through the DREF mechanism. If the decision is made to apply for DREF, a swift and coordinated planning process is initiated between the National Society and IFRC counterparts to ensure a timely and needs-based response. This phase includes the development and submission of a DREF application, grounded in ***results-based planning principles***. The National Society

leads the process, supported by IFRC Operations, PMER, and Finance colleagues. In situations requiring immediate financial support, National Societies may request an Emergency Advance Payment to begin implementation while the full application is finalised. Budgets must align with the narrative plan, follow IFRC cost eligibility guidance, and undergo proper validation.



More information about decision-making, application, and disbursement can be found in ***sections 4.5 and 4.6*** of the Guidelines and ***IFRC DREF Procedures***.



## NATIONAL SOCIETY



- Analyses existing resources and determines if DREF allocation is needed, in coordination with IFRC.
- Develops DREF application using result-based approach. Ensures collaborative planning.
- May request Emergency Advance Payment.
- If additional needs assessments are required, requests budget to support them.

**Example:** After a tropical storm triggered severe flooding in northern regions of country X, the Red Cross quickly assessed its pre-positioned stock levels and available funds, concluding that its existing resources were insufficient to meet the immediate shelter and health needs. Recognizing the urgency, the team led a collaborative planning process with branch staff and community representatives to develop a DREF application using a results-based approach. As access routes were compromised and immediate procurement was needed, they requested an Emergency Advance Payment to initiate distributions. During planning, they identified information gaps in remote areas and included a budget line for additional needs assessments to ensure no affected communities were overlooked.

## DREF OPERATIONS PROJECT MANAGER



- Coordinates development of the DREF application with National Society, and IFRC Delegation technical teams.
- Coordinates with in-country partners and/or IFRC Regional Office for technical support or to address support gaps.
- Submits the application and budget for review to the IFRC Regional Office (Regional DREF or Operations Focal Point)
- Double-checks disbursement amounts and reporting schedules for accuracy and closely tracks signature of the Project Agreement.
- Initiates the Project Agreement.
- Initiates payment request.

**Example:** Following severe flash floods in X in 2023, the DREF Operations Project Manager worked closely with the Red Cross/Red Crescent to coordinate the development of the DREF application, ensuring sectoral inputs and timelines were aligned. Once the draft was finalised, they submitted the application and budget to the IFRC Regional Office for internal review, while also verifying that the proposed disbursement amounts matched projected needs and that reporting deadlines were realistic. The Operation Manager carefully tracked the approval workflow and promptly initiated the Project Agreement once compliance was confirmed. To avoid any delay in response activities, they immediately triggered the payment request, enabling swift transfer of funds to the National Society.

## IFRC REGIONAL OPERATIONS COORDINATOR



- Provides technical guidance and support to Country/Cluster Delegations during application and implementation.
- Validates the operational strategy of the DREF intervention.
- Offers technical quality assurance across relevant sectors.

**Example:** After severe landslides cut off three districts in Country X, the Red Cross drafted a DREF. The Regional Operations Coordination team convened a coordination call (regional and Delegation) with shelter, WASH, health, CEA and logistics advisers to guide targeting, procurement options and access planning.

## IFRC GLOBAL OPERATIONS COORDINATION



- Performs Operational Quality Review.
- Maintains oversight of operational quality and risk management at a global level.
- Provide strategic and technical guidance to the response strategy, ensuring the alignment of the IFRC operational priorities and the appropriate operational modality.
- Ensures the coherence with the global and regional strategies.
- In case of a health-related emergency/epidemic, a health in emergencies focal point can be requested to co-lead the quality review process.

**Example:** When a large-scale flash flood hit Country Y, the National Society submitted a Response DREF application to provide emergency shelter and essential household items to displaced families. IFRC Global Operations Coordination conducted the Operational Quality Review, highlighting the need for strengthened logistics planning due to damaged infrastructure and limited local supplier capacity. They also requested clarification on targeting criteria and alignment with protection principles. As the emergency was not health-related, no health focal point was involved. Once key issues were addressed by the Regional and Country Delegation teams, Global Operations Coordination confirmed that operational risks had been mitigated, maintained oversight of the review process, and formally communicated the approval and operational conditions to all relevant stakeholders.

**Example:** When a cholera outbreak escalated in Country X, a DREF application was fast-tracked. Global Operations Coordination led the Operational Quality Review, flagging supply chain lead times and community feedback loops as key risks and requesting mitigation measures. Given the health emergency, they brought in a Health in Emergencies expert to review the epi curve, case management approach and IPC measures, and to confirm coherence with global guidelines. With risks addressed, they maintained oversight of operational quality and risk tracking, then communicated the approval and key conditions to the National Society.

## IFRC REGIONAL DREF FOCAL POINT (OR REGIONAL OPERATIONS COORDINATOR)

- Sets up shared planning workspace.
- Coordinates regional and global technical review.
- Carries out (together with the DREF Global Team) and Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management Review.
- Complete and sign the DREF Allocation Request Form.



**Example:** In response to a rapid-onset earthquake in X, the IFRC Regional DREF Focal Point set up a shared planning workspace to facilitate coordination between the National Society and IFRC technical and operations colleagues. As the DREF application progressed, they led the organisation of a joint technical review, engaging both regional and global advisors to ensure the proposed actions were technically sound and in line with standards. Together with the DREF Global Team, the Focal Point conducted the Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management Review, verifying that the request met DREF criteria and that identified risks were addressed. Once all inputs were consolidated and revisions agreed, they completed and submitted the DREF Allocation Request to move the process forward without delay.

## IFRC DREF GLOBAL TEAM

- Carries out (together with the DREF Global Team) an Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management Review.
- Shares the Compliance approval with relevant parties.
- Performs the final review.



**Example:** When the Red Cross submitted a DREF request in response to a nationwide cholera outbreak in 2023, the IFRC DREF Global Team collaborated with the Regional DREF Focal Point to conduct the Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management Review, ensuring the application met DREF criteria and addressed potential risks such as supply chain delays and coordination gaps. Once satisfied, the Global Team issued the compliance approval and shared it with relevant counterparts, including Finance, Operations, and technical leads. They then performed the Operational Quality Review, examining the coherence of the logframe, budget, and planned activities. Finally, the team conducted a full review of the final package to confirm readiness for approval and disbursement.



## IFRC DREF APPEAL MANAGER

- Approves the DREF Application and Budget compliance and eligibility.
- May seek additional approval from USG, as relevant.
- Approves the DREF Application, Budget, and release of funds.

**Example:** In early 2024, the DREF Appeal Manager reviewed a DREF request from the Red Cross following a major landslide in X. After confirming the application and budget met eligibility and compliance criteria, the Appeal Manager noted that the National Society had an overdue report from a previous DREF operation. In line with internal procedures, they sought additional approval from the Under Secretary General (USG) before proceeding. Once clearance was obtained, the Appeal Manager formally approved the application, budget, and release of funds, ensuring accountability requirements were upheld without delaying the lifesaving response.



## IFRC REGIONAL FINANCE

- Reviews and validates the budget with regards to budget groups and eligibility of costs.

**Example:** As part of the review of a DREF request from the Red Cross following severe monsoon flooding in 2023, the IFRC Regional Finance team carefully validated the proposed budget. They scrutinised each line to ensure budget groups were correct and that costs were eligible under DREF rules, flagging several items linked to long-term capacity-building that were outside the scope of the mechanism. Working closely with the Operations and Programme teams, they advised the National Society on how to reframe those costs to remain response-focused, ensuring the final budget met all compliance standards and could move forward without further delay.



## ► IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

National Societies are responsible for leading implementation on the ground, supported by a structured monitoring system that ensures activities are delivered on time, meet quality standards, and remain aligned with operational objectives. At this early stage, it is critical to initiate procurement processes promptly to avoid delays in delivery, making use of available **IFRC logistics guidance** where applicable. Where relevant, child safeguarding measures must also be incorporated in accordance with IFRC's Minimum Standards for Child Protection, using tools such as the **Child Safeguarding Checklist** to ensure risks are identified and addressed early.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) mechanisms are equally important to ensure responsiveness, inclusiveness, and transparency throughout the operation. Feedback received through these systems must be documented, analysed, and used to actively inform decision-making and adapt activities where necessary.

Learning should also be integrated during implementation. A Lessons Learned Workshop (LLW) is recommended before the operation ends to identify what worked well, what challenges were encountered, and how to improve future responses. This reflective process helps inform ongoing adjustments and contributes to real-time improvement and institutional learning.

IFRC Delegation and Regional teams provide operational oversight, technical support, and real-time performance monitoring to reinforce quality and accountability across all stages of the response.



More information about implementation and monitoring can be found in **section 4.7** of the Guidelines and **Annexe 1 of the IFRC Emergency Response Framework**.

Additional information about conducting a Lessons Learned Workshop can be found in **section 6.1**.



## NATIONAL SOCIETY



- Implements activities as per plan, monitors reach, activities and resources.
- Deploys staff and volunteers to conduct emergency distributions, evacuations, and other planned actions.
- Mobilises pre-positioned relief supplies.
- Engages and coordinates with government disaster agencies, local authorities, and humanitarian partners.
- Organises an in-country DREF operation launch event, as per DREF Procedures.
- Provides regular updates to IFRC on operational progress, evolving needs, and any required adjustments.
- Conducts real-time monitoring of response activities.
- Submits an Operations Update if additional funds, timeline extensions, or strategy modifications are required (subject to DREF Appeal Manager's approval).
- Organises and participates in the Lessons Learned Workshop at the tail-end of the implementation, documenting lessons learned.

**Example:** Following severe flooding in central X in 2023, the Kenya Red Cross began immediate life-saving actions using its own resources, deploying staff and volunteers to support evacuations, distribute emergency shelter items, and assist in setting up safe water points. Once the DREF allocation was approved, the National Society transitioned to full implementation under the approved plan, continuing distributions and scaling up WASH and health activities. Pre-positioned stocks were mobilised to cover the most affected counties, while coordination with government disaster agencies and local authorities helped identify and reach underserved communities. The team conducted real-time monitoring using digital tools to track reach, resources, and emerging needs, and provided regular updates to IFRC. As the situation evolved, they submitted an Operations Update to request a timeline extension and additional funds for replenishment and local procurement, ensuring the response remained timely and effective.

## IFRC OPERATION MANAGER

- Supports the National Society in using monitoring tools.
- Monitors implementation and spending against budget.
- Escalates issues to the Regional DREF and Operations teams/focal points.
- Organises mandatory monthly operation monitoring calls, starting 1 month after the approval of a DREF.
- Supports the LLW as required.



**Example:** In the aftermath of flash floods in northern X in 2023, the IFRC Operation Manager worked closely with the Red Cross to ensure effective implementation of the DREF operation. They supported the National Society in adapting and applying IFRC monitoring tools, including activity tracking dashboards and reach reporting templates, helping branch teams collect and consolidate data in real time. Throughout the response, the Operation Manager regularly reviewed progress reports and conducted budget follow-up calls with the NS to monitor implementation and spending against approved allocations. By flagging early underspend in the shelter budget and a higher-than-expected burn rate in logistics, they helped the team make timely adjustments while ensuring overall accountability.

## IFRC DELEGATION OR REGIONAL FINANCE

- Transfers funds per Project Agreement.
- Tracks expenditures.
- Reconciles NS' and IFRC's expenses.
- Monitors financial risks.



**Example:** After Cyclone Y struck X in 2023, the IFRC Delegation Finance team swiftly transferred funds to the Red Cross as per the signed Project Agreement. Throughout the operation, they maintained close oversight of expenditure patterns, reviewing financial updates and supporting the National Society to ensure expenses aligned with approved budget lines. As the response progressed, they facilitated regular reconciliation between NS and IFRC financial records, identifying and resolving discrepancies early. When fuel prices spiked unexpectedly, they flagged the potential budget risk and worked with the operations and logistics teams to adjust forecasts and maintain financial control throughout the response.

## IFRC DELEGATION AND/OR REGIONAL PMER

- ❑ Supports in development and maintenance of M&E frameworks.
- ❑ Tracks implementation.
- ❑ Can facilitate Lessons Learned Workshop.

## IFRC REGIONAL DREF FOCAL POINT / OPERATIONS COORDINATOR

- ❑ Guides the Ops Manager post-approval to ensure DREF standards and quality are maintained.
- ❑ Coordinates review of the Operation Update.
- ❑ May lead or support facilitation of the Lessons Learned Workshop.

## IFRC GLOBAL OPERATIONS COORDINATION

- ❑ Conducts the Operational Quality Review.
- ❑ Maintains global oversight of operational quality and risk management.
- ❑ Provides an additional layer of quality assurance beyond regional review.
- ❑ Flags critical operational gaps or risks.
- ❑ Engages specialised technical expertise when required.
- ❑ Confirms that operational risks have been adequately addressed.
- ❑ Communicates approvals and conditions.



**Example:** In the 2022 cholera response in X, the IFRC PMER team supported the National Society in setting up a simple monitoring framework aligned with the DREF plan. They tracked implementation progress and helped adapt tools based on field feedback. At the end of the operation, they facilitated a Lessons Learned Workshop, using monitoring insights to guide the discussion.



**Example:** Following floods in X in 2023, the Regional DREF Focal Point guided the National Society and Operation Manager in aligning early implementation with the approved plan. They coordinated with regional colleagues technical advice on procurement and reporting timelines, ensuring the operation met DREF standards and maintained quality throughout.



**Example:** A sudden-onset flash flood affects multiple districts in Country Y, displacing thousands of people. The National Society submits a Response DREF request focusing on emergency shelter and essential household items.

During the Operational Quality Review, IFRC Global Operations Coordination identifies several risks:

- damaged transport routes that could delay distributions,
- limited local supplier capacity, and
- unclear targeting criteria for the most vulnerable households.

Global Operations Coordination requests to strengthen the logistics plan, clarify vulnerability criteria, and confirm protection safeguards. As the emergency is not health-related, no additional health focal point is involved.

## IFRC DREF GLOBAL TEAM



- Supports strategic adjustments post-approval.
- Processes extension requests, if needed.

### ► REPORTING AND LEARNING

The final stage of the DREF operation focuses on synthesising and communicating results, drawing lessons, and ensuring accountability.

The Final Report must be developed collaboratively and submitted via the GO platform, incorporating both narrative and financial updates grounded in evidence collected through monitoring. National Societies lead the report development process, with coordination and validation support from IFRC Operations (led by the DREF Operations Project Manager), Finance, and PMER teams. Any changes made to the operational strategy during implementation must be clearly explained in the report, along with the rationale and any resulting impact/outcomes. Variances between planned and actual achievements should be thoroughly detailed, and relevant supporting evidence, such as activity reports, monitoring data, and post-distribution monitoring (PDM) findings, must be documented and archived by the Project Manager and Delegation PMER in a shared folder. To note, a DREF Operation Final Report is required, even if an Emergency Appeal is launched.

The report should also reflect feedback from people assisted, as well as outcomes from

**Example:** During the 2023 drought response in X, the DREF Global Team supported strategic adjustments to shift focus from food parcels to cash assistance. When delays in procurement arose, they processed an extension request to ensure continued support without compromising implementation quality.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) mechanisms, demonstrating how community input shaped the response. Lessons Learned Workshop (LLW) findings are strongly recommended to be integrated in the final report, to reflect on operational strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

Important: as part of the reporting process, any integrity issues encountered during the operation must be clearly documented in the final report, along with the actions taken and mitigation measures implemented.



More information about reporting and learning can be found in **section 4.8** of the Guidelines and **IFRC DREF Procedures**.

Additional information about conducting a Lessons Learned Workshop can be found in **section 6.1**.

## NATIONAL SOCIETY



- Leads drafting of the Final Report.
- Explains budget variances and returns all unspent funds.
- Organises and participates in the Lessons Learned Workshop and incorporates lessons learned in the reporting.

**Example:** After the 2023 landslides in X, the National Society led the drafting of the Final Report, explaining key budget variances—such as lower transport costs—and returning unspent funds. They participated in the Lessons Learned Workshop and incorporated findings, including feedback from affected communities, into the report to strengthen future operations.

## IFRC OPERATION MANAGER



- Ensures the National Society duly reports on the funds received.
- Confirms closing of the operation.
- If the operation is longer than 6 months, submits a DREF Operations Update.
- Supports the LLW as required.
- Supports narrative-financial alignment in the final report.
- Ensures explanations for variances exceeding +/-10% are provided with support from National Society.

**Example:** Following the 2022 floods in X, the Operation Manager supported the National Society to submit the Final Report on time, ensuring financial and narrative requirements were met. As the operation lasted over six months, they also submitted a DREF Operations Update before confirming formal closure with all parties.

## IFRC DELEGATION FINANCE



- Validates financial report.
- Supports narrative-financial alignment in collaboration with Project Manager.
- Explains variances exceeding +/-10% with support from the DREF Operations Project Manager.

**Example:** In the 2023 storm response in X, the Finance team validated the financial report, ensuring consistency with the narrative. They supported the NS in aligning figures with reported activities and provided justification for a 12% overspend in logistics due to fuel price hikes.

## IFRC REGIONAL FINANCE



- Reviews the transactions against budget for the final report.
- Issues DREF Operation – Standard Report.
- Upon publication of the final report, initiates the return of unspent balance (if applicable).

**Example:** In the 2022 cyclone response in X, Regional Finance reviewed all transactions against the approved budget before finalising the report. They issued the DREF Operation – Standard Report and, upon publication, initiated the return of unspent funds remaining from the shelter budget.

## IFRC DELEGATION PMER



- Ensures quality of the Final Report.
- Flags and helps to address discrepancies between plan and results.
- Archives documentation.

**Example:** After the 2023 floods in X, the PMER team reviewed the Final Report to ensure quality and consistency. They flagged discrepancies between planned distributions and reported figures, supported corrections, and archived all documentation for future reference.

## IFRC REGIONAL PMER



- Validates Final Report content and data alignment.
- Publishes the Final Report on GO.

**Example:** After the 2023 drought operation in X, Regional PMER validated the Final Report for accuracy and data alignment, then published it on GO. They also reviewed it for quality and compliance and led a Lessons Learned Workshop, ensuring key findings were reflected in the report.

## IFRC REGIONAL DREF FOCAL POINT



- Reviews Final Report for quality and compliance.
- May conduct or support the Lessons Learned Workshop.
- Ensures that lessons learned and monitoring findings are integrated in the DREF Final Report.

**Example:** After the 2023 population movement operation in X, the Regional DREF Focal Point reviewed the Final Report to ensure quality and compliance with DREF standards. They also facilitated a Lessons Learned Workshop and worked with the National Society to integrate key insights and monitoring findings into the final submission.



## IFRC GLOBAL OPERATIONS COORDINATION

- Maintains oversight of operational quality throughout the operation cycle.
- Ensures that operational risks and mitigation measures are reflected in reporting.
- Facilitates learning by linking operational review insights to reporting outputs.

**Example:** Following a Response DREF operation for floods in Country X, the National Society submits its Final Report through the GO platform. During the review process, IFRC Global Operations Coordination checks that the report clearly reflects the key operational risks identified earlier and explains how these were managed during implementation. They ensure that significant adjustments to the operational strategy are transparently documented and that learning points are clearly articulated. Once satisfied that the report accurately captures both results and lessons, Global Operations Coordination confirms the quality from an operational perspective and communicates completion of the review, supporting organisational learning and accountability across future DREF operations.

## IFRC DREF GLOBAL TEAM

- Updates DREF Master Data Sheet.
- Reviews the report to inform global tracking and learning.

**Example:** Following the 2022 earthquake in X, the DREF Global MEAL Officer reviewed the Final Report to extract key insights for global learning. They updated the DREF Master Data Sheet to reflect the operation's financials, reach, and key outcomes for ongoing tracking and analysis.



While the core responsibilities for DREF operations rest with the National Society and IFRC Secretariat, other actors may also play important roles depending on the context and scale of the emergency:

▶ **Partner National Societies (PNS)**, when present and involved in the response, may provide financial or technical support to the Host National Society. They can assist with logistics, surge personnel deployments, or contribute specialised expertise to support operations. This peer-to-peer collaboration enhances timeliness, accountability, and shared ownership of the response.

▶ **National authorities** may contribute by issuing official emergency declarations that validate the need for a DREF allocation. They can also provide hazard data, situational updates, and coordination support to ensure alignment with national response frameworks.

These contributions, though external to the formal IFRC-DREF structure, are often essential in enabling a coherent and effective response, particularly in complex or large-scale emergencies.

## KEY ACTOR-SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES IN DREF LOAN

The DREF Loan is used specifically for Red-category emergencies where an Emergency Appeal (EA) is launched. Unlike DREF grants, which support standalone National Society-led operations, DREF Loans serve as immediate start-up funding to kick-start implementation under the broader EA. While many of the same IFRC structures are involved, the roles and responsibilities shift. The table below outlines the key differences and additional steps for each actor involved in the DREF Loan process, compared to the standard DREF response grant.



More information about roles and responsibilities in the DREF Loan process can be found in **Annexe 1 of the IFRC Emergency Response Framework**.





## NATIONAL SOCIETY

- Participates in the Emergency Appeal (EA) development but does not lead the DREF Loan request. The process is typically led by the IFRC Secretariat (Operations and Finance)
- Implements the operation under the Emergency Appeal, not under a standalone DREF project.
- Contributes financial and narrative data as part of EA reporting, not a separate DREF final report. The DREF Loan does not require a separate final report.
- No reimbursement responsibility as the loan is reimbursed centrally through donor contributions to the EA.

**Example:** Following a major emergency requiring immediate start-up funding, the National Society requested a DREF Loan as part of the Emergency Appeal to enable rapid response activities. Throughout implementation, they ensured accurate financial tracking and reporting to support timely reimbursement of the loan once donor contributions were received.



## IFRC OPERATION MANAGER

- Leads preparation of both the Emergency Appeal and the DREF Loan Allocation Request.
- Coordinates timing between EA launch and DREF Loan request submission.
- Monitors implementation of DREF-funded activities within the EA framework.
- No need to manage a separate DREF project code or timeline.

**Example:** Following the decision to launch an Emergency Appeal for a large-scale emergency, the IFRC Operation Manager led the drafting of both the Emergency Appeal and the DREF Loan Allocation Request, ensuring the timing of the request aligned with the appeal launch. After approval, they monitored delivery of the DREF-funded start-up components within the Emergency Appeal plan, without managing a separate DREF project code or DREF-specific reporting timeline.

## IFRC FINANCE



- Processes DREF Loan allocation to the Emergency Appeal (not a DREF-specific project).
- Monitors donor contributions to the EA to track the 200% reimbursement threshold.
- Coordinates financial reconciliation and repayment from EA income to the DREF Fund.
- Advises on the reimbursement status.

**Example:** Following approval of a DREF Loan, IFRC Finance processed the allocation to the relevant Emergency Appeal project code and began tracking donor income to determine when the reimbursement condition was met. As contributions were recorded, they coordinated the financial reconciliation and repayment from Emergency Appeal income back to the DREF, and provided updates on reimbursement status to operational and DREF colleagues.

## IFRC REGIONAL DREF FOCAL POINT



- Reviews the DREF Loan Allocation Request Form for compliance.

**Example:** Following the launch of an Emergency Appeal, the DREF Regional Focal Point coordinated the regional review of a DREF Loan request, ensuring all required documentation was complete and compliant with procedures. They acted as the main liaison between operational teams and the Global DREF Team, addressing clarification requests before final submission.

## IFRC REGIONAL AND GLOBAL OPERATIONS COORDINATORS



- Ensure proper linkage between EA content and DREF-funded components.
- Provide feedback on the coherence of strategic and financial documentation.

**Example:** Following the drafting of an Emergency Appeal that included DREF Loan start-up funding, the IFRC Regional and Global Operations Coordinator reviewed the package to ensure the DREF-funded components were clearly reflected in the overall strategy, narrative, and budget logic. They provided practical feedback to strengthen coherence between the appeal objectives and the loan-funded start-up actions, reducing the risk of gaps between planning and implementation.

## IFRC DREF GLOBAL TEAM



- Conducts final compliance check of the DREF Loan Allocation Request.
- May recommend additional or follow-up loan requests if EA scale increases.
- With the support of the Finance and SPRM teams, monitors donor income to the EA post-approval.

**Example:** Following the submission of a DREF Loan request, the DREF Global Team conducted final quality and risk checks to confirm alignment with loan rules, categorisation, and reimbursement requirements. They submitted the request with recommendations to the DREF Appeal Manager and communicated the approval to relevant internal stakeholders once confirmed.

## IFRC DREF APPEAL MANAGER



- Approves DREF Loan.
- Monitors EA contributions during the first six months to determine reimbursement viability.

**Example:** Following the escalation of a large-scale emergency to Red category, the DREF Appeal Manager reviewed a DREF Loan request submitted alongside the Emergency Appeal. They confirmed the request met eligibility and threshold requirements, approved the loan allocation, and later monitored donor income to ensure reimbursement conditions were met within the required timeframe.

## IFRC DREF OPERATIONS PROJECT MANAGER



- May negotiate a partial or delayed repayment plan if full funding is not secured.

**Example:** Following a DREF Loan approval under an Emergency Appeal, the IFRC DREF Operations Project Manager tracked implementation progress and flagged operational or timeline issues that could affect financial planning and reimbursement expectations. Where donor income remained insufficient to reimburse the loan within the expected period, they supported discussions with the Emergency Appeal Manager and DREF colleagues to shape a realistic partial or delayed repayment approach.

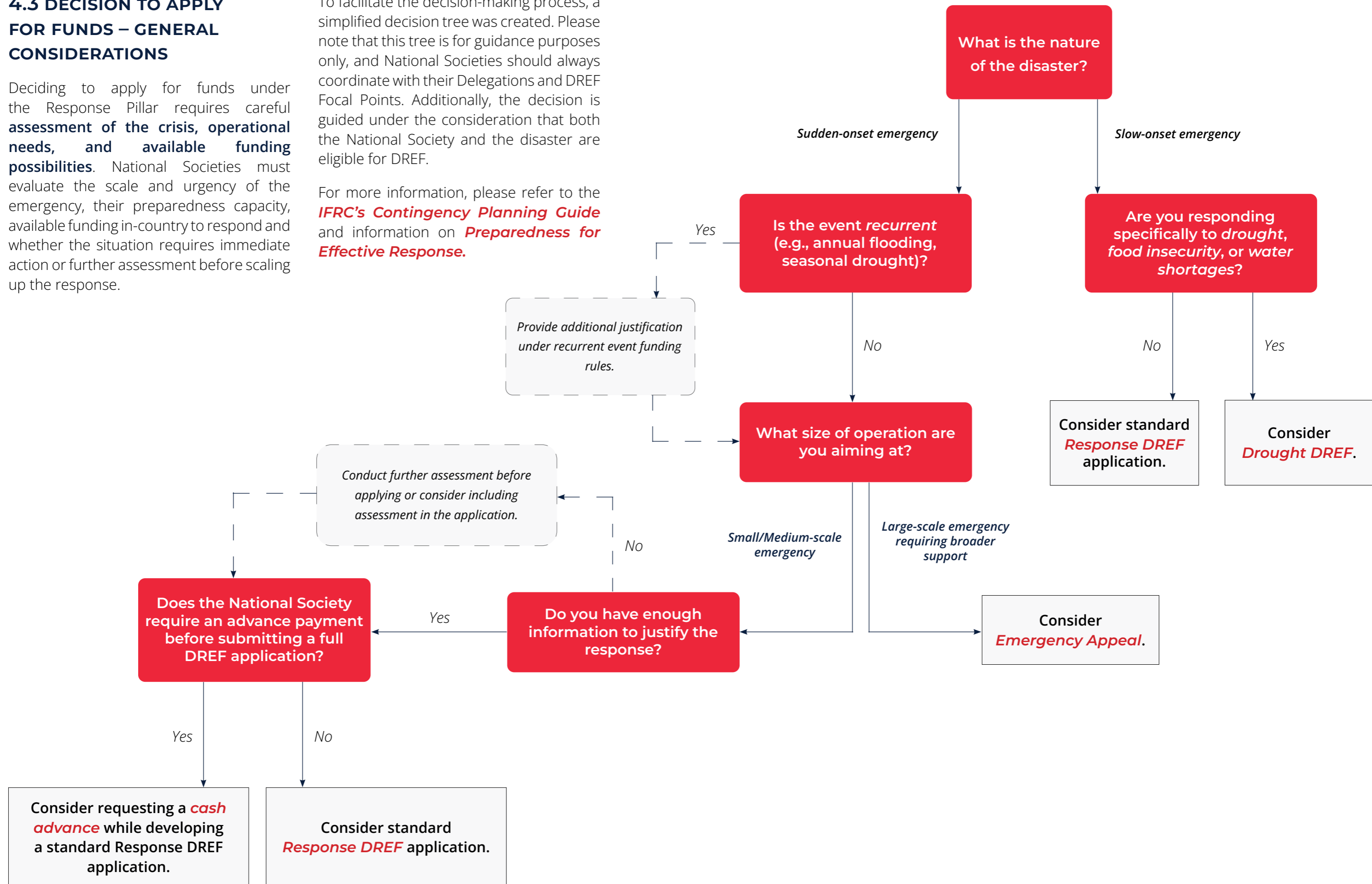
### 4.3 DECISION TO APPLY FOR FUNDS – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Deciding to apply for funds under the Response Pillar requires careful **assessment of the crisis, operational needs, and available funding possibilities**. National Societies must evaluate the scale and urgency of the emergency, their preparedness capacity, available funding in-country to respond and whether the situation requires immediate action or further assessment before scaling up the response.

To facilitate the decision-making process, a simplified decision tree was created. Please note that this tree is for guidance purposes only, and National Societies should always coordinate with their Delegations and DREF Focal Points. Additionally, the decision is guided under the consideration that both the National Society and the disaster are eligible for DREF.

For more information, please refer to the *IFRC's Contingency Planning Guide* and information on *Preparedness for Effective Response*.

#### ► The event has already happened



## GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED:



### What is the nature of the disaster? Does the emergency fit within the Drought DREF operational framework?

For slow-onset events resulting in drought, food insecurity or water shortages, you may want to consider the Drought DREF rather than the standard Response DREF.



### Is the emergency of slow or sudden onset?

The distinction between slow- and sudden-onset emergencies affects both the timeline and scope of a DREF operation, influencing the maximum duration of the response and the types of eligible activities.



### How is the emergency classified? Will this response likely transition into an Emergency Appeal?

Yellow-level emergencies are usually supported with a DREF grant allocation. For Orange-level emergencies, DREF and Emergency Appeal applications can be developed in parallel, but with no access to the DREF Loan. For Red-level emergencies, when the emergency requires a larger-scale appeal, a DREF Loan can provide immediate start-up funds while awaiting donor contributions.



### Is the scale and urgency beyond the authorities' and the National Society's capacities?

To assess this, consider the following guiding questions: Does the crisis require international humanitarian assistance? Are the Government and its humanitarian partners in-country able to provide a response to the crisis? Does the National Society have alternative funding to respond to the situation? Does the National Society have the human resources, logistics and operational capacities to respond?



### Are further assessments needed before launching a full response?

If the situation is unclear or data is insufficient, a DREF for Response with a focus on conducting an assessment may be the best first step. Such an operation would be feasible with a small DREF allocation.



### Is urgent funding needed before a full DREF request is completed?

If the National Society requires immediate liquidity to initiate response activities, it can apply for an Advance Payment Request (only in the case of sudden-onset emergencies). Alternatively, the National Society can decide to focus solely on their DREF application and access a 25% fast track from their submitted budget upon completion of the Eligibility and Compliance review.

## OVERVIEW OF THE GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

For a National Society to qualify for DREF Response Pillar funding, it should consider the following aspects:

### DATA-DRIVEN RISK ANALYSIS AND JUSTIFICATION

To support timely and justified DREF applications, National Societies should identify clear triggers - specific, measurable/factual indicators that signal the need for immediate humanitarian response. Triggers must be based on credible data and directly linked to the impact on affected populations. These could include government disaster declarations, a sharp rise in disease cases, IPC Phase 3 or above food insecurity, or verified displacement figures. Good triggers are specific, measurable, relevant to humanitarian needs, and timely enough to guide early action.

When applying for DREF, the National Society must **clearly reference the trigger(s) that prompted the request, including when they occurred (date) and what data supports them.** This strengthens the justification for funding and aligns with the DREF's requirement for evidence-based, needs-driven responses.

Specific to the Drought DREF operational parameter, identified triggers to prompt a request for an IFRC-DREF allocation shall include credible early warning and impact data, such as rainfall forecasts, vegetation and soil moisture indices (e.g. NDVI, SPI), and performance reports of previous harvests that signal deteriorating conditions. These must be supported by validated government or expert analysis, including IPC classifications, official emergency

declarations, or joint needs assessments, to confirm the likelihood or worsening of a humanitarian crisis and justify anticipatory or response actions. In a nutshell, the more information and/or triggers are met, the stronger the case for a DREF allocation. A National Society is eligible to apply for the Drought DREF parameter only once in two years, as the intervention has the potential to cross over a calendar year. The next application for the same hazard should be an sEAP, regardless of the number of years since the last request.



For more details on the eligible triggers for a Drought DREF, please refer to the ***Drought DREF Guidance*** annexed to these Guidelines ***here***.

**DREF funding is allocated based on demonstrated humanitarian needs;** that is why the National Society must also submit the following justifications:

- ▶ Detailed information outlining the scale of the disaster, the number of affected people, and the specific needs to be addressed.
- ▶ Evidence-based risk analysis, using historical disaster patterns, vulnerability data, and anticipated needs based on ongoing impact assessments.
- ▶ Alignment with IFRC's Emergency Response Framework, ensuring the crisis categorisation (Yellow or Orange) matches DREF funding thresholds.

## EXAMPLES:



### FOR SUDDEN-ONSET CRISIS

A National Society applying for DREF after a tropical cyclone may want to submit a rapid damage and needs assessment, local government reports, and response priorities based on the assessment findings.



### FOR SLOW-ONSET CRISIS

A National Society applying for DREF following a notification of disease outbreak may want to submit initial epidemiological reports showing the rising trend in cases, alerts from health authorities indicating potential spread, and community surveillance data highlighting emerging hotspots. These should be accompanied by response priorities based on the escalating health risks and projected impact.



A National Society requesting CHF 50,000 for a landslide assessment must explain that communication and access constraints prevent an immediate response plan without additional data collection.



A National Society applying for DREF for food insecurity must provide IPC reports showing a shift to Phase 3 (Crisis) or higher, alongside meteorological forecasts predicting worsening drought conditions.

## NATIONAL SOCIETY CAPACITY

The applying **National Society must demonstrate the operational ability** to implement a DREF-funded emergency response, which includes:

- ▶ Established emergency response capacity, including trained staff and volunteers, functional logistics and procurement systems, and an ability to mobilise and distribute aid efficiently.
- ▶ Proven financial and operational accountability, including systems for tracking expenditures and reporting on fund usage.



**Example:** A National Society applying for DREF for an earthquake response must provide evidence of a trained search and rescue team and an existing coordination mechanism with local authorities.

Detailed information about the National Society capacity can be found [here](#).

## COORDINATION MECHANISMS

DREF funding must be **integrated into national and regional response efforts**, and National Societies must demonstrate:

- ▶ Close collaboration with government agencies, particularly national disaster management authorities, to align response plans with official priorities.
- ▶ Engagement with humanitarian clusters, NGOs, and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in the country, to avoid duplication of efforts.
- ▶ Participation in national and/or regional

emergency response platforms, ensuring coordinated decision-making and information sharing.



**Example:** A National Society applying for DREF for a flood response must show that it is working closely with the National Meteorological Agency, local emergency services, and WASH partners.

## MONITORING AND REPORTING

National Societies must commit to a **robust results-based monitoring and reporting process** throughout the DREF operation to ensure accountability, timely adjustments, and evidence-driven decision-making, as guided by the Minimum Standards for a **Results-based Management of DREF operations**. Embedding continuous monitoring, inclusive learning, and timely reporting helps National Societies to be more effective, adaptive, and accountable to both communities and donors. Detailed information on monitoring and reporting can be found in **sections 4.7** and **4.8** of the Guidelines.

More information about allocation parameter-specific considerations can be found in the next section.

## 4.4 ALLOCATION PARAMETERS UNDER RESPONSE DREF

The Response DREF provides flexible funding to support National Societies responding to sudden- or slow-onset crises, including through assessments when needed. Sudden or slow onset triggers shape the types of activities proposed, but do not represent separate DREF modalities.

The Response DREF also supports National Societies to conduct rapid needs assessments\* when additional information is required to inform the design of an operational response.

Below are key parameters and considerations for a Response DREF:



Mozambique Red Cross

### Response DREF (triggered by sudden- or slow-onset events)

**PURPOSE:** time-sensitive funding provided to National Societies to support their local lifesaving interventions to emergencies triggered by floods, earthquakes, cyclones, landslides, droughts, or other sudden or slow onset events. Also supports National Societies to conduct rapid needs assessments when additional information is required to inform the design of an operational response.

**OPERATION DURATION AND TIMEFRAME:** the operating timeframe for a Response DREF must be realistic and reflect the scale and nature of the emergency. This includes considering the time required for activities such as procurement, delivery of assistance, and reporting by the National Society. The duration of a DREF-funded operation depends on the IFRC crisis categorisation and the type of onset:

CRISIS CATEGORISATION	OPERATING TIMEFRAME FOR SUDDEN-ONSET EMERGENCIES	OPERATING TIMEFRAME FOR SLOW-ONSET* EMERGENCIES
Yellow (small-scale)	up to 6 months	up to 6 months
Orange (medium-scale)	up to 9 months	up to 9 months

\* Extended timeframes beyond those allocated for the DREF Response exclusively apply to the Drought DREF specific parameter as detailed under the *Response DREF for Drought-Specific (Slow-Onset) Crises*.

In cases where the operation is primarily focused on assessments, an operational update must be published within four to six weeks to support timely decision-making.

\* For more information, please refer to the *IFRC Emergency Needs Assessment and Planning (ENAP) Guidance*.

As the DREF evolves, these thresholds may be revised to reflect the fund’s ambition and growth.

**FUNDING THRESHOLDS:** depend on crisis categorisation as per IFRC Emergency Response Framework and are inclusive of funding already allocated by way of an Imminent DREF:

CRISIS CATEGORISATION	FUNDING THRESHOLD
Yellow (small-scale)	up to CHF 500,000
Orange (medium-scale)	up to CHF 1,000,000
Red (large-scale) (only in exceptional situations; usually DREF Loan/Emergency Appeal)	up to CHF 1,000,000

**REDUCED FUNDING THRESHOLD** apply to National Societies with **OVERDUE NARRATIVE OR FINANCIAL REPORTS** from previous Response DREF operations\*. In such cases, the funding threshold shall be confirmed with the DREF Global Team prior to finalising the preparation of the DREF Application, and can be reduced as follows:

NUMBER OF RESPONSE DREF OPERATIONS WITH OVERDUE REPORTS	REDUCED FUNDING THRESHOLD
1	75% of maximum threshold
2	50% of maximum threshold
3 or more	Not eligible for new response funding

\* Overdue reports related to Early Action Protocols or other reporting obligations do not affect the Response DREF funding threshold.



**Important:** The reduction applies to the maximum allowable threshold, not the amount the National Society intends to request.

**Example:** If the standard ceiling is CHF 500,000, a National Society with one overdue report would be eligible to apply for up to CHF 375,000, regardless of whether they plan to request the full amount.

**PLAN AND BUDGET:** the response plan should be clearly based on assessed needs. It is important that the situation analysis, identified needs, and planned activities align. Plans should prioritise actions that are both impactful and cost-effective.

If the National Society does not yet have enough information to develop a full response plan, it can request DREF funding to carry out a multi-sectoral assessment. This request should explain how the findings will guide the next steps and help shape a complete Response request. In such cases, the funding threshold is:

- ▶ up to CHF 50,000 if no surge personnel are deployed, or
- ▶ up to 100,000 if surge support is included.

**RECOMMENDED MINIMUM REACH:** at least 100 households (500 people) affected and targeted.

**COST RATIOS:** it is recommended that 60% of the budget be allocated to direct interventions and 40% to support services (including volunteer cost and Surge deployment). This cost ratio does not apply when the operation focuses on conducting an assessment or in the case of epidemic operations, when most associated costs come from volunteer mobilisation and awareness activities.

**COST PER BENEFICIARY:** indicative CHF 150.

**FUNDS MANAGEMENT:** when a Response DREF (**GRANT**) is provided under an Orange (very rarely Yellow) scale Emergency Appeal, the DREF funding shall be managed separately with its own project code. **DREF AND MULTILATERAL FUNDING SHALL NOT BE MIXED UP**, ensuring distinct financial tracking and enabling separate project reporting within the given timeframes.

## **EXAMPLES**

**SUDDEN-ONSET CRISIS:** Responding to flash floods in an urban area, a National Society may apply for DREF to evacuate populations, distribute relief items, provide psychosocial support, and deliver cash assistance.

**SLOW-ONSET CRISIS:** Following months of escalating political instability, unrest and economic crises leading to widespread disruptions and displacement, a National Society may apply for DREF to support internally displaced or refugee communities with cash assistance, emergency health services, psychosocial support, and protection activities, amongst others.

**ASSESSMENT:** After a landslide blocks access to remote communities, a National Society applies for CHF 50,000 for assessments, which enables the deployment of teams to collect data on displacement, infrastructure damage, and urgent needs. They also coordinate with local authorities and affected communities to identify priority areas for a potential full-scale response. Gathered information shapes the full Response request.

**COORDINATING DREF AND EMERGENCY APPEAL LAUNCHES:** National Society X faced a large cyclone emergency classified as orange. Damage was serious, and many people needed help fast. After

coordinating with IFRC and partners, the National Society decided to launch an Emergency Appeal, defining the overall strategy and scope, capturing all relevant sectors and needs to be addressed.

The National Society and IFRC agreed to publish the Appeal first so that partners and donors could start supporting the operation right away through various resource mobilisation mechanisms. This ensured that the National Society's actions were not delayed, especially for life-saving activities such as clearing roads, helping injured people, and providing temporary shelter.

Once the Appeal was launched, the National Society quickly sent a DREF for Response request to fund the most urgent activities. This covered actions like initial relief distributions, water treatment, and transport for emergency teams. These activities were aligned with the overarching strategy of the Emergency Appeal and selected among the time-sensitive, life-saving interventions that fit within the DREF grant criteria.

Doing it this way kept the response moving fast. The Appeal provided the big picture and long-term funding, while the DREF gave the immediate resources needed to start saving lives and helping people right away.

## Emergency Advance Payment (for sudden-onset events only)

When a sudden-onset disaster occurs, National Societies are often required to act immediately, before a full DREF application can be prepared and approved. The Emergency Advance Payment mechanism enables the rapid release of funds to initiate lifesaving response activities within the first 24 hours. This option allows National Societies to begin implementation without delay, while the full DREF application and Project Funding Agreement are still being finalised.

It is important to note that the Emergency Advance Payment is not part of the DREF mechanism itself, nor is it managed by the DREF Team. Rather, it is a standalone mechanism activated under the Immediate Response Protocol (IRP) - a key operational tool of the IFRC's Emergency Response Framework (ERF). This mechanism is available in support of both DREF-funded operations and Emergency Appeals (EAs), depending on the nature and scale of the crisis.

The IRP is designed to streamline and accelerate the IFRC's emergency response by providing:

- ▶ Clear decision-making triggers and simplified processes.
- ▶ Pre-agreed coordination structures and timelines to reduce delays.
- ▶ Rapid mobilisation of funds, including Emergency Advance Payments, by fast-tracking approvals.
- ▶ Integration with the broader Emergency Response Framework (ERF), covering both sudden-onset and slow-onset emergencies.
- ▶ Emphasis on anticipatory planning, risk assessment, and regional readiness to enhance speed and effectiveness.

You can get more information about the Immediate Response Protocol [here](#).

### HOW THE ADVANCE PAYMENT WORKS:

**TRIGGER:** When a sudden-onset emergency is identified, a National Society who is planning to access Secretariat emergency funding mechanisms (DREF or Emergency Appeal) can initiate a request for an advance payment within 24 hours of the disaster or event trigger.

**ELIGIBILITY AND THRESHOLD:** the National Society must be in good standing with the IFRC, meaning there are no ongoing compliance issues that would make it ineligible to receive DREF funding. Additionally, the context must meet the criteria for a Response DREF. The National Society may request an Emergency Advance Payment of CHF 30,000 for Yellow-scale events and CHF 100,000 for Orange and Red-scale events.

CRISIS CATEGORISATION	EMERGENCY ADVANCE PAYMENT THRESHOLD
Yellow (small-scale)	CHF 30,000
Orange (medium-scale)	CHF 100,000

**FAST DISBURSEMENT:** the funds are released within 24 hours of the disaster or event, allowing the National Society to begin mobilising teams, purchasing supplies, or deploying volunteers without delay.

**FULL DREF APPLICATION:** the primary trigger for requesting an Emergency Advance Payment is the occurrence of a sudden event requiring immediate action. *At the time of the request, the National Society is not expected to have a fully developed DREF application, as the decision to apply for DREF funding may still be evolving.* However, the intention to proceed with a DREF application should follow shortly thereafter.

The amount received through the Emergency Advance Payment will be counted as part of the total DREF allocation and should be considered when developing the operation's budget. If the full DREF application is not submitted or approved, the advance must be returned to the IFRC.

For more details on the Emergency Advance Payment, please refer to the [DREF Procedures](#) and for more information on the IRP can be found [here](#).

## EXAMPLE

After a landslide causes severe displacement, a National Society requests the advance payment of CHF 30,000 to begin evacuations and emergency shelter distribution. Within 7 days, they submit a full DREF request with a total budget of CHF 400,000,

including the emergency advance payment amount. The request is reviewed and approved 12 days after the disaster, and the remaining allocation of CHF 370,000 is transferred following the project agreement.

**Important:** if a National Society decides not to request an Emergency Advance Payment, the initial 25% disbursement of DREF funds will be processed after the Eligibility check. These two options are mutually exclusive. The Emergency Advance Payment, which can be requested immediately after an event, is intended for National Societies with limited financial resources who are unable to begin responding without immediate support.

On the other hand, if the National Society is able to initiate activities using its own contingency resources, it may opt to forgo the Emergency Advance Payment and instead wait for the 25% disbursement that follows the Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management check, which should be conducted within 24 hours of submission. This approach allows operations to begin with internal resources while ensuring rapid access to partial DREF funding once the application passes the initial Eligibility and Compliance Review. More information about the post-Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management check disbursement can be found [here](#).

## Response DREF for Drought-Specific (Slow-Onset) Crises

**PURPOSE:** designed to support National Societies in responding to **DROUGHTS, FOOD INSECURITY AND WATER SHORTAGES**, with a focus on anticipatory, response, and early recovery actions. This DREF Response for Drought-specific crises is generally referred to as the 'Drought DREF' parameter. More specific information about the Drought DREF can be found in the Guidance document [here](#).

**EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS:** National Societies are expected to demonstrate the use of recent, good-quality and context-relevant data to identify and justify the humanitarian needs of affected people, as well as to inform the proposed response design, targeting and scale. Evidence may come from the National Society's own assessments or from other credible sources, provided it is clearly relevant to the affected population and current context. In situations where sufficient evidence is not available, or where the quality of data does not adequately justify a full response operation, it is expected that the response begins with a DREF for Assessments allocation to generate the necessary analysis before progressing to a larger-scale intervention.

**TIMELINESS:** requests must be submitted and approved within 21 days after the trigger date. Can be activated before, during, or after a drought peak based on early warning systems and impact data.

**OPERATION DURATION:** for Drought DREF operations, the maximum timeline depends on the type of intervention: **UP TO 6 MONTHS FOR ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS, UP TO 12 MONTHS FOR RESPONSE ACTIONS, AND UP TO 18 MONTHS WHEN BOTH ANTICIPATORY AND RESPONSE ACTIONS** are combined within the same operation, based on the operation's scale. The last 4 months include transition planning with the National Society, supported by the Membership.

**FUNDING THRESHOLDS:** Same as standard DREF for Response, naturally guided by the needs and activity types proposed in the application.

CRISIS CATEGORISATION	FUNDING THRESHOLD
Yellow (small-scale)	up to CHF 500,000
Orange (medium-scale)	up to CHF 1,000,000

**Reduced funding threshold:** National Societies with overdue narrative or financial reports from previous Response DREF operations will face a reduced funding threshold\*. The funding threshold shall be confirmed with the DREF Global Team prior to finalising the preparation of the DREF Application, and can be reduced as follows:

NUMBER OF RESPONSE DREF OPERATIONS WITH OVERDUE REPORTS	REDUCED FUNDING THRESHOLD
1	75% of maximum threshold
2	50% of maximum threshold
3 or more	Not eligible for new response funding

\* Overdue reports related to Early Action Protocols or other reporting obligations do not affect the Response DREF funding threshold.

**PLAN AND BUDGET:** the operation should be based on a clear and realistic plan that responds directly to the needs identified, whether through assessment or anticipation. The situation analysis, identified needs, and planned actions all must align and make sense together. In addition, the plan should:

- ▶ focus on cost-effective activities that will make the greatest impact;
- ▶ use forecast-based indicators and vulnerability assessments to guide where and how resources are allocated, ensuring support reaches the people most at risk.

**EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY:** Drought DREF focuses on both immediate relief and early recovery actions. General parameters are expanded beyond standard DREF guidelines towards focused recovery.

**COMPLEMENTARITY WITH THE ANTICIPATORY PILLAR:** National Societies may include early action activities within the Drought DREF when different areas are at different stages of impact, for example, responding in affected regions while taking anticipatory measures in at-risk ones. This allows for tailored support and operational flexibility. However, if a Drought EAP or sEAP has already been activated, early actions cannot be included in the plan and budget to avoid the risk of double funding for the same activities.

**RECOMMENDED MINIMUM REACH:** at least 100 households (500 people) affected and targeted.

**RECOMMENDED COST RATIOS:** 60% of budget on direct interventions; 40% on support services (including volunteer cost and Surge deployment).

**COST PER BENEFICIARY:** indicative CHF 150.

**Based on forecasts:** requires linkage to early warning systems, *Integrated Phase Classification (IPC)*, or equivalent food insecurity assessment data.

**TRANSITION PLANNING:** mandatory transition planning toward longer-term resilience programming is carried out during the final four months, in collaboration with the National Society and supported by the Membership.

**REPORTING:** an operations update must be published every six months throughout the implementation period, with standard final reporting requirements applying at the end of the operation.

## DREF support for Readiness actions

DREF for Readiness actions enables National Societies to prepare for imminent events through targeted readiness actions, particularly in the context of elections, potential civil unrest or epidemics. These actions are supported under the DREF Response Pillar when analysis indicates a high likelihood of elections-related or civil unrest, and epidemic spread\*, allowing for timely and locally led readiness efforts. The process mirrors the Imminent DREF model, focusing on a mix of readiness and early response actions, allowing for quick scale-up of the interventions in contexts where mitigation actions are unlikely to be successful. The application is submitted using the Response DREF application template on the GO platform, and allocation is made from the Response pillar.

**TIMELINESS:** DREF grant for readiness actions is activated when a situation is unfolding and a credible analysis confirms its impending nature. The NS needs to apply in time to be able to complete the readiness actions, typically a minimum of 30 days before escalation. To note, relevant analysis will be obtained from Global Information Management and Health Teams prior to validating such requests, to avoid misuse of funds into regular preparedness actions.

**OPERATION DURATION:** Aligned with the typical short-term period for DREF response operations. Duration should be clearly justified in the DREF Application and may vary depending on the nature of the crisis but shall not exceed 6 months overall.

**FUNDING THRESHOLDS:** The indicative budget threshold for readiness actions under Response DREF is CHF 150,000, applicable to election, civil unrest and epidemic readiness scenario. A top up above this amount shall not be possible without analysis and information clearly indicating the need for a full-scale response.

**PLAN AND BUDGET:** Requests must be submitted using the Response DREF application template via the IFRC GO platform. The plan of action should outline readiness activities, prepositioning supplies for early response, and surge capacity, ensuring alignment with local needs and operational feasibility.

**BASED ON ANALYSIS:** All DREF requests focusing on readiness actions must be grounded in robust situational analysis, including risk assessments, forecasts, and coordination with relevant stakeholders. The justification must demonstrate the likelihood of impact and the necessity of early action.

**REPORTING:** An operations update must be published in the event of a change in the operational strategy, timeframe or budget, with standard final reporting requirements applying at the end of the operation.

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\* DREF allocations for epidemics readiness would be linked to multiple factors, including disease severity and benchmark CFR, endemicity of the disease, and direct border transmission risks.

## DREF grant contribution to Emergency Appeals

**PURPOSE:** DREF grants may be allocated as contributions to IFRC Emergency Appeals categorised as Yellow or Orange when National Societies require immediate liquidity to launch or sustain life-saving activities at the onset or during a peak of a crisis. These allocations follow the principles and eligibility parameters of standard Response DREF operations.

DREF contributions to EAs are not separate operations. They represent one funding stream, similar to a donor pledge, within the EA's overall operational strategy. They must support life-saving, time-critical interventions aligned with the objectives of the EA and the NS operational plan.

### PRINCIPLES AND POSITIONING:

- ▶ **INTEGRATED RESPONSE:** DREF-funded activities must form part of the EA's overall strategy, ensuring coherence rather than parallel project streams.
- ▶ **IMMEDIATE LIQUIDITY:** DREF contributions provide rapid access to funds while the EA is being drafted, approved, or launched.
- ▶ **FLEXIBILITY:** Country teams may start with DREF operations and scale up, or launch Emergency Appeals with DREF grants contributions based on the needs, context and operational urgency.
- ▶ **SAME ELIGIBILITY PARAMETERS:** All DREF contributions to EAs follow the same criteria, cost eligibility, and crisis categorisation thresholds as standard Response DREF allocations.

### DREF CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE REQUESTED:

- ▶ To cover the response phase and critical first critical weeks of life-saving actions.
- ▶ When the rapid onset/peak of a crisis requires immediate liquidity before EA resources materialise.

For more information about DREF contribution to Emergency Appeals, please refer to [\*\*these documents\*\*](#).

## DREF loan for Red-category emergencies

**PURPOSE:** DREF Loan is a reimbursable advance of funds that provides **IMMEDIATE START-UP FUNDING TO NATIONAL SOCIETIES IN RED-CATEGORY EMERGENCIES FOR WHICH AN EMERGENCY APPEAL HAS ALREADY BEEN LAUNCHED**. It serves as a bridge financing mechanism, enabling the implementation of urgent and life-saving activities while donor contributions to the Emergency Appeal are being secured. This allows for the rapid mobilisation of resources and helps ensure continuity and speed in delivering humanitarian assistance at the onset of large-scale emergencies.

In emergencies categorised as Orange (and occasionally Yellow), a National Society may initially request funding through a Response DREF grant to support immediate activities. If, during the response, it becomes clear that the needs exceed the DREF threshold, the National Society may decide to launch an Emergency Appeal. This can happen either in parallel with the DREF request or shortly thereafter. In such cases, the DREF-funded operation and the Emergency Appeal must be managed as separate projects. This is done by assigning distinct project codes to the DREF and Emergency Appeal-funded projects, ensuring clear financial separation and enabling accurate, standalone reporting. In this case, the Response DREF does not become a DREF Loan.

In Red-category emergencies, where an Emergency Appeal has been launched, the DREF allocation is treated as a loan rather than a grant and must be reimbursed.

**REIMBURSEMENT:** when a National Society receives a DREF Loan, it's important to remember that this is not a grant and the funds must be paid back.

- ▶ The loan must be reimbursed once the Emergency Appeal receives donations equal to at least 200% of the DREF loan amount, within the first six months of the Appeal.
- ▶ In multi-country Emergency Appeals, each National Society is responsible for repaying the amount it received, based on its specific DREF Loan allocation.
- ▶ If the Appeal does not raise enough funds within the six-month period, a repayment plan must be agreed upon by the Emergency Appeal Operations Manager and the Global DREF Appeal Manager. Any unused funds remaining in the Emergency Appeal must be used to help repay (or reduce) the loan to the DREF.

In **exceptional cases**, if no Emergency Appeal is launched for a Red-level disaster but the National Society still requires international support, a Response DREF for Orange-category crises may be allocated.

**FUNDS MANAGEMENT:** all DREF Loans must be allocated to a project benefiting from multilateral funding under the Emergency Appeal.

**ADDITIONAL AND RENEWED LOANS:** additional loans can be requested within the first three months of the single-country Emergency Appeal, provided the combined DREF Loan does not exceed the CHF 2 million cap. If the Emergency Appeal is relaunched (e.g., to reflect increasing needs), and the original DREF Loan has been fully reimbursed, a new

DREF Loan may be requested under the same threshold and reimbursement conditions.

**RECLASSIFICATION OF APPEALS:** if an emergency originally classified as Yellow or Orange is reclassified as Red, any further DREF allocations from the date of reclassification are treated as Loans.

## MULTI-COUNTRY CRISIS

In emergencies that affect multiple countries (potentially leading to a multi-country Emergency Appeal\*), each National Society involved can still access DREF support, either through a Response DREF or a DREF Loan, depending on the classification of their specific context.

- ▶ **If all countries are classified as yellow or orange**, each National Society can apply for a Response DREF, as long as the total combined funding allocated from the DREF does not exceed CHF 5 million.
- ▶ If the multi-country Appeal includes a **mix of classifications** (some yellow/orange, some red):
  - ▶ Yellow/orange countries apply for Response DREF.
  - ▶ Red-classified context countries may request DREF Loans, up to CHF 2 million each.
  - ▶ The total combined threshold for DREF allocations to such an Emergency Appeal remains CHF 5 million.
- ▶ **If all countries are classified as Red**, only DREF Loans can be used, and the total combined amount must stay within the CHF 5 million limit.

CRISIS CATEGORISATION		REDUCED FUNDING THRESHOLD	FUNDING THRESHOLD	
All Yellow/Orange		Response DREF	total up to CHF 5,000,000	
Mixed	Yellow	Response DREF	up to CHF 500,000 each	total up to CHF 5,000,000
	Orange	Response DREF	up to CHF 1,000,000 each	
	Red	DREF Loan	up to CHF 2,000,000 each	
All Red		DREF Loan	up to CHF 2,000,000 each and total up to CHF 5,000,000	

\*More information about Emergency Appeals can be found [here](#).

## EXAMPLES

**Multi-country Emergency Appeal:** A major earthquake strikes two neighbouring countries, causing widespread devastation and displacing 100,000 people. A disaster categorisation is conducted for both countries. **In country A, the crisis is categorised as Red, while in country B, the crisis is categorised as Orange.** A multi-country Emergency Appeal is being prepared to coordinate the response, and both National Societies apply for DREF support based on the need and categorisation.

- ▶ **Country A** receives a **DREF loan** of CHF 2 million DREF Loan to initiate relief operations while preparing an Emergency Appeal to scale up the response to CHF 12 million. The DREF loan is allocated to a project that will benefit from multilateral funding under the Emergency Appeal. The DREF Loan must be reimbursed once donor contributions to the Appeal reach at least 200% of the loan amount within the first six months.
- ▶ **Country B** receives a **Response DREF grant** of CHF 1 million through the standard Response DREF process to kickstart its emergency activities while preparing an Emergency Appeal to scale up their interventions. The funds are allocated to a project separate from the Emergency Appeal's multilateral funding, allowing for independent financial reporting within the required DREF timeframes. Any balance remaining from implementing the DREF-funded activities under the Emergency Appeal must be returned to the DREF. Meanwhile, at the launch of the Emergency Appeal, a new project code shall be created to manage any multilateral funds received through the Emergency Appeal for the response in Country B.
- ▶ The total contribution from the DREF for this crisis affecting two countries is CHF 3 million.

**Single-country Emergency Appeal:** A country faces extreme food insecurity affecting 1 million people. The crisis has been categorised as Red. The National Society applies for a CHF 2 million DREF loan to fund food distributions while launching an Emergency Appeal for CHF 10 million.



## RECURRENT EVENTS AND ACCESSING DREF FUNDING

### What is a recurrent event?

A recurrent event is a disaster or crisis that occurs regularly and predictably over time, often tied to seasonal or cyclical patterns. These events are not isolated incidents but are instead recurring hazards that can be anticipated based on historical data. For an event to be classified as recurrent under the DREF, it must meet the following criteria:

#### ▶ Temporal and seasonal regularity

The event occurs according to a seasonal or time-based pattern (e.g., annual floods, biannual drought cycles).

There is historical consistency, meaning past occurrences indicate the event happens regularly (e.g., tropical storms that hit the same region every monsoon season).

#### ▶ Geographic specificity

The event is confined to a clearly defined geographical area, typically at the administrative level 2 (district level).

Focusing on sub-national areas (rather than national or regional levels) ensures the response is context-specific and addresses the actual communities affected.

#### ▶ Predictability and recurrence

The event follows a well-established pattern, supported by historical records and impact data.

Even though it is expected, its current occurrence may still exceed past thresholds in terms of severity or impact, necessitating emergency response.

**Example:** Annual floods affecting District X every monsoon season would be classified as recurrent, especially if historical data confirms consistent past occurrences.



### Guidance on recurrent event funding requests

Previously considered ineligible under earlier versions of the DREF Procedures, recurrent events are now eligible for DREF funding. National Societies can apply for DREF for recurrent events under the following conditions:

#### RECURRENT EVENTS THAT ARE NOT ABOVE AVERAGE

Suppose an event is predictable and aligns with historical seasonal patterns (i.e., its impact does not exceed past occurrences). In that case, a DREF request may still be considered but requires additional justification, including:

#### ▶ Alternative funding analysis

A brief review of existing funding sources (e.g., contingency funds, government funding, or RC Movement bilateral support) and why they are insufficient.

#### ▶ Operational capacity assessment

A summary of readiness and constraints based on the *PER Readiness Checklist*, explaining why additional support is necessary.

#### ▶ Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Community Engagement measures

An outline of DRR initiatives already in place (e.g., community awareness programs, early warning systems) and how they will be integrated into the response to enhance future preparedness.

**Example:** A National Society requests DREF for annual floods in Province X, but because the impact is similar to previous years, they must demonstrate why existing funds are insufficient and how this DREF request will contribute to long-term resilience.



## RECURRENT EVENTS THAT ARE ABOVE AVERAGE

If the impact of a recurrent event clearly exceeds historical norms, it will be treated as a normal DREF request, without additional annexes or justifications.

An event is classified as above average if:

- ▶ The number of people affected is significantly higher than in past years.
- ▶ The damage and humanitarian needs exceed historical trends.
- ▶ There are additional complicating factors, such as concurrent crises (e.g., a cholera outbreak during a flood season).

**Example:** A drought-affected region that normally experiences moderate food insecurity sees an unprecedented rise in malnutrition rates, making the event above average and eligible for standard DREF funding without additional requirements.



## ASSESSING WHETHER A RECURRENT EVENT IS ABOVE AVERAGE

### 1. Quantitative comparisons

#### ▶ Historical benchmarks

Compare key indicators (e.g., number of affected people, number of people in need due to the event, displacement levels, economic losses) with historical averages.

#### ▶ Defined thresholds

Use established thresholds (e.g., a 30% increase in affected households compared to previous years) as an objective measure of above-average impact. Where possible, provide the number of people affected compared to previous years, and cite the sources of information or data.

### 2. Qualitative factors

#### ▶ New or widening impacts

Is the event now impacting previously unaffected areas? Are there new compounding factors (e.g., a healthcare crisis worsening flood impacts)?

#### ▶ Operational capacity strains

Has the current event created unexpected pressure on the National Society's response capacity (e.g., shortage of trained volunteers, logistics constraints)?

**Example:** If historically, seasonal wildfires affect 5,000 hectares annually, but this year's fires have burned 20,000 hectares, the event is above average and qualifies for DREF without additional justification.



## RECURRENT EVENTS THAT ARE ABOVE AVERAGE

When recurrent events become a regular part of a National Society's response, a proactive approach is needed to reduce dependence on emergency funding.

**Example:** A National Society experiencing annual heatwaves develops an EAP for extreme heat that automatically triggers heat stress awareness campaigns, water distribution, and cash assistance for vulnerable populations before temperatures reach critical levels.



National Societies are **strongly encouraged** to:

- ▶ Work with in-country partners and IFRC to develop an Early Action Protocol (EAP) under the **Anticipatory Action pillar**.
- ▶ Identify triggers for early action before the event reaches emergency levels.
- ▶ Invest in disaster preparedness, community resilience, and prepositioning of emergency stocks to reduce the need for reactive DREF requests.



## RECURRENT EVENTS - ELIGIBILITY FOR DREF

RECURRENT EVENT TYPE	ELIGIBILITY FOR DREF	ADDITIONAL JUSTIFICATION REQUIRED?
Predictable recurrent event with an impact similar to past occurrences	Possible but must demonstrate why existing funding is insufficient	<b>Yes</b> – requires alternative funding analysis and operational capacity assessment
Recurrent event with significantly above-average impact	Eligible as a normal DREF request	<b>No</b> – follows standard DREF application process
Recurrent event affecting new areas or worsening due to additional factors	Eligible as a normal DREF request	<b>No</b> – standard justification of increased impact is sufficient
Recurrent event with potential for anticipatory action	Encouraged to develop an Early Action Protocol (EAP)	<b>Yes</b> – move toward proactive disaster risk management

## 4.5 PLANNING AND APPLICATION

### 4.5.1 PLANNING OUT THE OPERATION

Effective planning is at the heart of every successful DREF-funded response. A strong plan sets the direction for how humanitarian assistance will be delivered, to whom, and with what intended impact/outcome. It also lays the foundation for accountability, coordination, and agility throughout the operation. For Response DREF operations, planning must be clear and goal-oriented, while flexible enough to adapt to rapidly changing situations.

Planning should not begin with predefined activities or assumptions. Instead, it should be rooted in a structured decision-making process that considers both external and internal factors.

#### CONTEXT AND CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Effective planning starts with a fundamental question: What assistance is needed, and how can we deliver it best? To answer this, the National Society must analyse the operational context, understand the specific needs and risks of affected populations, and evaluate their own capacity to respond. The selection of activities in a DREF operation must be informed by a combination of evidence and operational feasibility. A National Society must assess what the most urgent needs are, who is most affected, and what can realistically be delivered within the timeframe and context. This process involves two main dimensions:

##### 1. Analysing the external context

A robust context analysis ensures that the response is relevant, targeted, and aligned with existing coordination structures. This involves:

##### ► Understanding the humanitarian impact

What are the priority needs (e.g. shelter, health, livelihoods)? Who is most at risk? What coping mechanisms are already in place?

##### ► Analysing risk factors

Are there compounding risks (e.g. political instability, public health crises, insecurity) that could affect operations?

##### ► Mapping the landscape

Who else is responding (government, NGOs, UN agencies)? Are there gaps or overlaps in assistance?

##### ► Forecasting likely developments

Could the situation escalate? Are there seasonal or political considerations that may affect implementation?

Information related to context and capacity, should be captured through a Field Report with the support of the **IFRC analytical framework**. The primary purpose of the Field Report is to communicate critical information at an early stage of an unfolding situation. For further information about Field Reports, please refer to the **section** on the IFRC GO Platform.

##### 2. Assessing internal capacity

Equally important is an honest review of the National Society's ability to deliver the planned response. This helps avoid overextension and ensures that activities are realistic, safe, and within operational reach. Key questions may include:

##### ► Human resources

Do we have the trained staff and volunteers needed to implement and manage the operation?

### ▶ Logistics and supply chains

Can we access the required goods or services quickly? Are procurement processes and warehousing in place?

### ▶ Branch readiness

Are the branches closest to the affected areas equipped and engaged? Do they require additional support?

### ▶ Financial systems

Can we manage and report on funds effectively? Are cash disbursement systems in place if using CVA?

### ▶ Previous experience

Has the National Society implemented similar interventions before? What lessons can be applied?

### ▶ Security and access

Are there restrictions that would limit where or how activities can be carried out?

This self-assessment should be collaborative, involving programme teams, branch staff, logistics, finance, and senior leadership. Where gaps are identified, the National Society may consider scaling down, phasing activities, or seeking surge support through the IFRC.

Only after this analysis should activities be selected, prioritised, and developed into an operational strategy. The context and capacity assessment also helps define realistic objectives, shape the workplan, and inform risk management and monitoring frameworks.

For more information about the self-assessment, please see the **PER resources** and information presented in the **Guidelines**.



## OPERATIONAL STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

Once the context has been analysed and capacity assessed, the next step is to define a clear strategy for the operation. The strategy sets out what the National Society aims to achieve, its overall objectives, and the key outcomes it intends to deliver for affected people.

These objectives should reflect the most pressing humanitarian needs identified during the assessment phase and describe the expected improvements in safety, dignity, or well-being. At this stage, the focus is on what change the National Society wants to achieve, rather than on the details of how. The next step will be to select activities that support these objectives and fall within the scope of eligible DREF funding.

### ***A strong strategy should include:***

- ▶ Response objectives that describe intended improvements for affected people, based on needs and risks identified.
- ▶ A focus on outcomes rather than outputs (e.g., “improve temporary shelter conditions” vs. “distribute 500 shelter kits”).
- ▶ A clear link between target groups, operational goals, and expected results.

More information about defining objectives, outcomes, and outputs can be found in the following “*Designing a monitoring plan*” sub-section.



## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Once objectives are set, a National Society must identify the most appropriate activities to achieve them. Selected activities must be feasible based on context and capacity, and they must be eligible for DREF funding.

General eligible activities under a Response (sudden-onset) DREF operation:

### ▶ Direct response

e.g. evacuations, search and rescue, distribution of relief items or cash or vouchers, etc.

### ▶ Assessment

e.g. rapid needs assessment.

### ▶ Human resources

e.g. NS and IFRC allocation of personnel dedicated to the implementation of the operation, NS capacity building for the specific operation, volunteers' insurance coverage and PSS for responders.

### ▶ Admin fees

National Society fixed-rate and overhead costs.

### ▶ Mobilisation of resources

e.g. mobilisation and training of volunteers, surge personnel, equipment, stock procurement, replenishment of stocks or funds used for cash, etc.

### ▶ Monitoring, evaluation and learning

e.g. beneficiary satisfaction surveys, IFRC/NS monitoring, visit to branches, lessons learned, etc.

### ▶ Communication

e.g. attracting national and international media attention as early as possible, etc.

A comprehensive list of eligible and ineligible costs can be found under the "**Budget considerations**" sub-section.

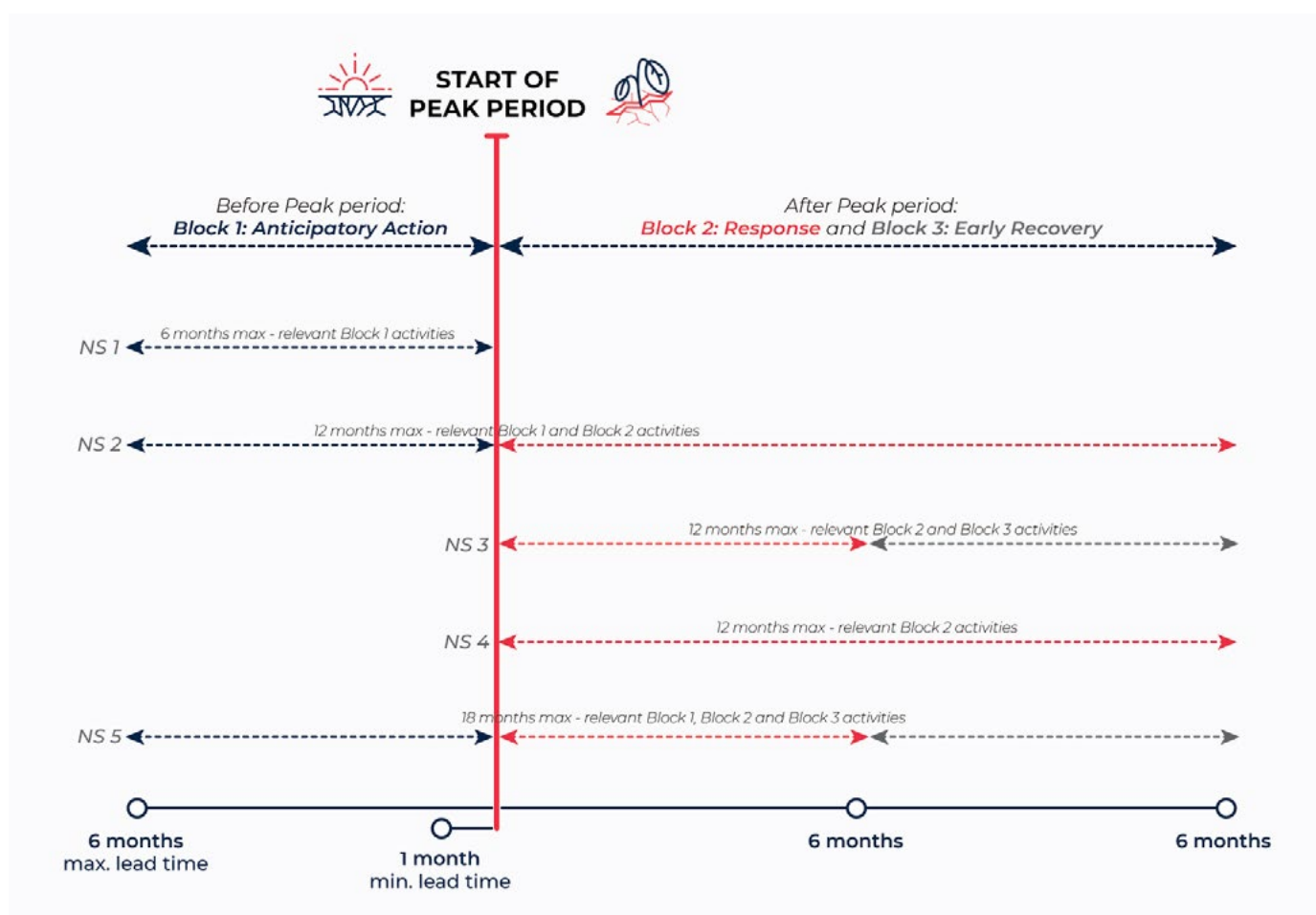


## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES UNDER A DROUGHT DREF

Drought operations are structured into three blocks:

- ▶ **Block 1: Anticipatory (mitigation) actions,**
- ▶ **Block 2: Response actions,**
- ▶ **Block 3: Early recovery actions.**

Each block has its own eligibility conditions and must be justified with drought forecasts, early warning data, or humanitarian impact assessments.



### Examples of *eligible* Block 1 (Anticipatory/mitigation) activities and costs:

#### Preparation/set-up for early actions

- ▶ Rapid assessment and scenario planning.
- ▶ Stakeholder mapping (identification of roles and responsibilities, and actions) and coordination.
- ▶ Raising awareness within the communities (early warning messages).
- ▶ Strengthening drought early warning information coordination and dissemination.
- ▶ Pre-crisis market assessment.
- ▶ Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments.
- ▶ Community targeting and registration.
- ▶ Community mobilisation through CEA.
- ▶ Set up a monitoring framework and system.

- ▶ Procurement of stock required for early actions (local and quick procurement only).
- ▶ Mobilisation and training for staff and volunteers (as long as it is directly related to the early actions and the NS has previous experience delivering this activity).
- ▶ Coordination with national/local authorities and partners.
- ▶ Procurement of Financial Service Providers (FSP).
- ▶ Branch support is encouraged (volunteers, special logistics, warehouse, transportation, personnel costs).
- ▶ Requests for additional coordination, operational management or humanitarian diplomacy support, either from sister National Societies through the Rapid Response, or through fast-tracked contracts from the Secretariat.

### Implementation of early actions

- ▶ Monitoring of drought and drought-related crisis triggers and impact (including in relation to water availability and access, prices, fodder, livestock health, etc.).
- ▶ Repairs/protection/construction of basic water infrastructure, if possible, or other sustainable and cost-efficient means of improving availability/supply and access to water, coupled with WASH promotion.
- ▶ Preventive crop management (e.g. short-term water conservation and provision of drought-tolerant seeds; can be done through CVA).
- ▶ Preventive livestock management (e.g. water and feed supply, basic health, herd management – can be done through CVA - information on/facilitation of destocking).
- ▶ Sensitisation on drought-sensitive farming and herd management techniques, and appropriate

crop types, complementing preventive crop and livestock management.

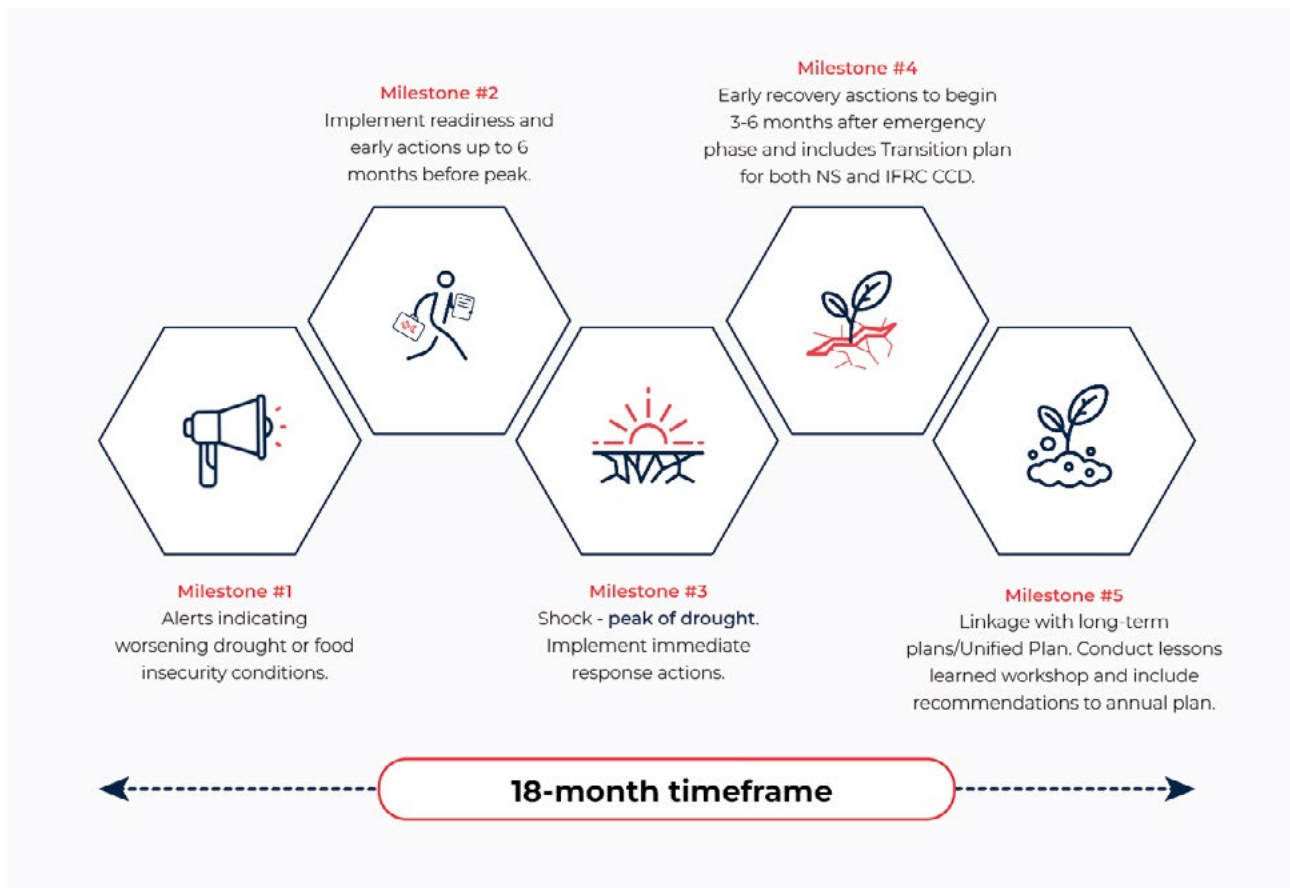
- ▶ Nutrition sensitisation for preventive purposes, including hygiene and sanitation awareness.
- ▶ Facilitation of access and use of public/private services (incl. information) for livestock destocking

### Examples of *non-eligible* Block 1 activities and costs:

- ▶ Generic multipurpose cash grants without any sensitisation on the purposeful use to mitigate the impact of drought.
- ▶ Cash for food (especially as a one-off grant).
- ▶ Activities that focus on an early response, which do not mitigate the effects of drought or food insecurity.
- ▶ Preparedness for early actions and preparedness for response are ineligible as those activities are longer-term activities and should be implemented following e.g. the PER approach.

For further information on eligible anticipatory actions under the DREF, kindly consult ***this document***.





### Examples of *eligible* Block 2 (Response) activities and costs:

#### Preparation/set-up for response actions

- ▶ Mobilisation and deployment of volunteers.
- ▶ Emergency needs assessments.
- ▶ Community targeting and registration.
- ▶ Market assessment.
- ▶ Community mobilisation through Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and/ or Emergency and Recovery Livelihoods Assessment and Response Option Analysis (*ERLA*).

#### Implementation of response actions

- ▶ Food assistance (minimum 3 months and up to 6 months maximum), coupled where relevant with nutrition awareness-raising (including sensitisation on hygiene and sanitation).

- ▶ Multi-use water provisioning, coupled with WASH awareness.
- ▶ Health and nutrition assistance.
- ▶ Provision of drought-tolerant seeds and farming tools (can be done through CVA and should be aligned with planting seasons).
- ▶ Awareness-raising on simple and improved short-term soil moisture/water conservation and farming and livestock management techniques, and on drought resilient crop types
- ▶ Short-term soil moisture conservation actions.
- ▶ Facilitation of public/private services for (or direct implementation of) restocking of sold/ dead livestock, e.g. small ruminants (can be done through CVA).

#### Support activities

- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation.

- ▶ Review meeting with stakeholders (coordination).
- ▶ Branch support is encouraged (volunteers, special logistics, warehouse, transportation, personnel costs).
- ▶ Requests for additional operational management support from sister National Societies through the Rapid Response.
- ▶ Procurement of items for response activities.
- ▶ Stakeholder engagement (local authorities, community leaders and sectoral partners to ensure buy-in and alignment).
- ▶ Community mobilisation (women/youth groups, etc) to support implementation and sustainability.
- ▶ Updated operational plan with clear timelines, roles and procurement strategies.
- ▶ Monitoring and accountability systems (feedback mechanisms, post-distribution monitoring tools, and community accountability structures).

### Examples of *non-eligible* Block 2 (Response) activities and costs:

- ▶ Signature of FSP agreements, as it must already exist.
- ▶ Preparedness for Effective Response assessment/activities.
- ▶ Disaster risk reduction activities.
- ▶ Stockpiling (not distributed as part of early action).
- ▶ Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (eVCA).
- ▶ Purchase of fixed assets.

### Examples of *eligible* Block 3 (Early recovery) activities and costs:

#### Preparation/set-up for response actions

All preparation and set-up activities undertaken for the response phase remain fully relevant and applicable to early recovery. Since DREF does not support early recovery in isolation, these actions should ideally be integrated from the outset. However, to effectively implement early recovery components, a few additional steps may be required:

- ▶ Needs assessments with a focus on early recovery & targeting.

#### Implementation of recovery actions

- ▶ MPC for recovery of key household productive assets (sold/lost during drought), complementing other early recovery activities listed below.
- ▶ Rehabilitation of water points/sources, if possible, or other sustainable means of improving water availability/supply, coupled with gender-sensitive support to community water management.
- ▶ Health and nutrition assistance.
- ▶ Provision of drought-tolerant seeds and farming tools (can be done through CVA and should be aligned with planting seasons).
- ▶ Awareness-raising on simple and improved soil moisture/water conservation and farming and livestock management techniques, and on drought-resilient crop types.
- ▶ Soil moisture conservation actions.
- ▶ Facilitation of public/private services for (or direct implementation of) restocking of sold/dead livestock, e.g. small ruminants (can be done through CVA).

- ▶ Provide support to community groups (women, youths, etc) to facilitate implementation and ensure sustainability of actions.
- ▶ Cash for drought-resilient/climate-smart community assets.

## Support activities

- ▶ PDM, Lesson Learning, Transition/Exit planning.
- ▶ Monitoring and reporting.
- ▶ Evaluation and coordination for sustainability strategy.
- ▶ Branch support is encouraged (volunteers, special logistics, warehouse, transportation, personnel costs).
- ▶ Requests for additional coordination, operational management, and humanitarian diplomacy support from sister National Societies through the Rapid Response.
- ▶ Procurement of items for early recovery activities.

## Examples of *non-eligible* Block 3 (Response) activities and costs:

- ▶ Signature of FSP agreements, as it must already exist.
- ▶ Preparedness for Effective Response assessment/ activities.
- ▶ Disaster risk reduction activities.
- ▶ Stockpiling (not distributed as part of early action).
- ▶ Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (eVCA).
- ▶ Purchase of fixed assets above CHF 10,000.
- ▶ Long-term programming.
- ▶ Preparedness for early actions and/or response

are ineligible as those activities are longer-term activities and should be implemented following, e.g. the PER approach.

- ▶ Readiness activities, as it is part of the wider preparedness spectrum.

## WORKPLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Once operational objectives and activities have been defined, the next step is to translate them into a structured implementation plan. A well-developed workplan helps ensure that all activities are clearly sequenced, responsibilities are assigned, and the operation progresses on time and within scope. In this sense, ***a workplan plays the role of a bridge between planning and monitoring.***

A workplan is often presented as a Gantt chart or similar visual tool, and lays out what needs to be done, by whom, and when. It should include all activities and sub-activities, with defined start and end dates, and realistic timeframes based on context and capacity.

A comprehensive workplan should:

- ▶ Translate response objectives into a logical sequence of activities.
- ▶ Include start and end dates for each task and sub-task.
- ▶ Assign responsibility for each activity to specific team members or departments.
- ▶ Identify key milestones that can later be used to measure progress.
- ▶ Allow for periodic review and adaptation, especially in dynamic emergency contexts.

At the same time, plans must be dynamic and responsive to change. Humanitarian crises are often unpredictable, requiring flexibility in plans and the ability to pivot as new information emerges. Agility involves integrating real-time monitoring and feedback loops, enabling teams to adapt quickly to shifting priorities or unforeseen obstacles. For instance, when a sudden influx of displaced people strains existing resources, an agile approach allows for immediate reallocation of aid and modification of objectives to address urgent needs without disrupting broader goals.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to selecting appropriate activities and developing a strategy and workplan, several cross-cutting factors must be considered during the planning phase. These factors ensure that the operation is coordinated, inclusive, accountable, and resilient to change. They do not stand alone but must be woven into all aspects of the operation, from design to implementation.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA)

Operations are more effective when affected people are informed, consulted, and able to shape decisions. Accountability to those affected by disasters is about creating systems where communities have a voice in decisions that impact them. This includes mechanisms for two-way communication, such as feedback hotlines or community consultations, enabling affected people to share concerns and influence interventions. CEA strengthens trust between humanitarian actors and communities, ensures interventions are relevant and effective, and upholds the

dignity of those receiving assistance. Key planning actions:

- ▶ Consulting and informing communities about the operation.
- ▶ Using community feedback to shape the response.
- ▶ Allocating budget and resources for CEA activities.
- ▶ Establishing feedback mechanisms such as toll-free hotlines, community meetings, or digital platforms.

More information about the CEA approach can be found [here](#).

### EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Disasters do not affect everyone equally. Planning must ensure that the most at-risk groups, such as women, children, older people, persons with disabilities, and minority communities, are not overlooked. For example, gender-sensitive programming might involve separate facilities for women in shelters, while disability-inclusive responses may include accessible infrastructure or assistive devices. Equity ensures that no group is left behind, fostering fairness and dignity in crisis response. Inclusive planning may mean:

- ▶ Designing services that are accessible and safe for all.
- ▶ Using disaggregated data to inform targeting.
- ▶ Providing information in appropriate formats and languages.
- ▶ Consulting with diverse groups to understand and address their specific needs.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To support the successful planning of a DREF operation, the following resources are available for National Societies:

### ▶ **IFRC DREF resources**

Procedures, templates, checklists, and other DREF-related resources.

### ▶ **Operational toolbox**

This operational toolbox is a central repository with key operational documents helpful for your mission like templates, checklists, guidance and examples.

### ▶ **Minimum Results-Based Management (RBM) requirements**

A framework to ensure planning and implementation are logical, measurable, and aligned to impact.

### ▶ **Operational Learning dashboard**

A source of lessons drawn from past operations.

## 4.5.2 DESIGNING A MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring is an essential component of every DREF-funded operation. It allows National Societies and IFRC to ensure that planned activities are being delivered on time and as intended, that resources are being used effectively, and that affected communities are receiving support that is both relevant and impactful. Monitoring also strengthens accountability to communities, donors, and Movement partners, and provides critical data for learning, adaptation, and reporting.

Monitoring must be planned from the outset of the operation and embedded into the design of the intervention. It should not be treated as a separate or final step. Instead, it must be integrated into all aspects of planning, implementation, and review.

### RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

A **Results-Based Management** (RBM) approach is central to DREF-funded operations. It ensures that emergency response efforts are not only fast and well-coordinated but also focused on achieving meaningful results for affected people.

RBM shifts the emphasis from delivering activities to delivering outcomes. It helps ensure that operations stay focused on the intended improvements in people's lives, such as safety, health, shelter, or restored livelihoods, and that these improvements are both measurable and accountable.

In fast-moving and high-pressure contexts, RBM provides a structured yet flexible framework to monitor relevance, adjust activities, and demonstrate impact. It also aligns DREF operations with global humanitarian standards such as the Core Humanitarian Standard and Sphere.



## Core RBM principles

RBM in DREF operations is underpinned by four main principles:

### ▶ Equity and inclusion

All DREF-funded activities must aim to reach those most in need, without discrimination. Marginalised groups, e.g., women, children, older people, people with disabilities, or minority communities, should be systematically identified, consulted, and supported.

### ▶ Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

Implementation must include feedback loops that allow affected communities to influence the operation. Two-way communication, transparency about entitlements, and space to raise concerns are critical.

### ▶ Evidence-based decision-making

Plans and adjustments should be guided by data - from needs assessments and monitoring systems to feedback and contextual analysis. This ensures resources are used effectively and that priorities reflect real needs.

### ▶ Agility in dynamic contexts

Operations must remain responsive. Where situations evolve quickly, due to new risks, population movement, or resource changes. National Societies and IFRC teams must be ready to revise objectives and reallocate resources.

## COORDINATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND APPROVALS

Effective coordination ensures that the operation aligns with national systems and complements the efforts of other responders. A National Society should seek to work collaboratively with government counterparts, humanitarian clusters, and Movement partners from the outset. Key considerations:

- ▶ Securing necessary approvals (e.g. disaster clearance, import permits).
- ▶ Participating in national or local coordination platforms.
- ▶ Coordinating with IFRC Delegations and Partner National Societies.
- ▶ Mapping external actors providing similar services to avoid duplication and identify gaps.

## RISK MANAGEMENT AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Every emergency operation faces uncertainty. Identifying risks early and planning how to address them is critical to avoiding delays, safeguarding staff and volunteers, and ensuring aid reaches affected people. A National Society should:

- ▶ Maintain a risk register identifying operational, financial, reputational, and security risks.
- ▶ Develop contingency measures such as alternative supply routes, backup staffing, or revised delivery methods.
- ▶ Review and update risks regularly as the situation evolves.

More information about Risks and Accountability can be found [here](#).

## DESIGNING OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES, OUTPUTS AND INDICATORS

All DREF-funded operations must be designed with a clear results chain in mind. This ensures that activities are not simply implemented, but also contribute to measurable improvements in the lives of affected people. Expected results should be structured using a four-level results chain:

**Impact** – the overall improvements or change expected (e.g., restoring the dignity of targeted people, improving the well-being of affected communities, reduction in disaster-induced mortality, etc).

**Outcome** – the medium-term results of the intervention (e.g., households reached with response actions).

**Output** – the direct deliverables (e.g., number of people evacuated before a flood).

**Indicator** – The metric used to assess whether these changes have occurred (e.g., % of households that received shelter kits within 14 days).

Each level of the results chain must be clear, specific, and measurable. National Societies should avoid vague or general statements and instead use phrasing that allows for monitoring, analysis, and reporting. Well-defined objectives and indicators should be:

- ▶ **Specific** – clearly linked to the result being measured.
- ▶ **Relevant** – directly aligned with the goals of the operation.
- ▶ **Measurable** – include practical, unambiguous ways to track performance.
- ▶ **Quantifiable** – wherever possible, numerical targets should be used (e.g., “80% of households reached”).
- ▶ **Achievable** – realistic for the time, resources, and context.
- ▶ **Time-bound** – indicate when the result is expected to be achieved.
- ▶ **Comparable** – where possible, aligned with standard IFRC indicators.



**Example:** For a cyclone response, expected results could be:

**Impact:** Reduced loss of life, health risks and property damage due to cyclones through timely and targeted humanitarian assistance.

**Outcome:** 90% of targeted households have improved access to safe shelter, reducing secondary risks and supporting basic well-being.

**Output:** 5,000 households provided with emergency shelter kits to meet immediate needs.

**Indicator:** Percentage of targeted households that received emergency shelter kits within the first 10 days of the operation.

National Societies are encouraged to use the **IFRC Indicator Bank** to identify standardised indicators across sectors and ensure consistency across operations.

**EXAMPLES OF WELL-DEFINED AND POORLY DEFINED EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS AND OBJECTIVES:**

WELL-DEFINED EXAMPLES	WEAK EXAMPLES
Objective: "By the end of the project, 85% of flood-affected households will have received emergency relief kits within 48 hours."	Objective: "People will get aid when needed" (X No measurable target, time frame, or defined population.)
Indicator: "Number of households receiving hygiene kits and health awareness sessions within the first month of response."	Indicator: "Hygiene awareness will be improved." (X Vague, lacks specific timeframe or method of tracking.)
Objective: "90% of targeted displaced families receive temporary shelter within the first week of the operation."	Objective: "People will have shelter." (X Lacks numbers, timeline, and clear action.)
Indicator: "Number of search and rescue operations completed in the first 72 hours"	Indicator: "Search and rescue" (X Vague, lacks specific timeframe or method of tracking.)

**DESIGNING A MONITORING PLAN**

Every DREF operation must include a monitoring plan in its application. The monitoring plan should be developed during the planning phase and outline:

- ▶ **What will be monitored:** activities, outputs, outcomes, timelines, risks, resource use, and community feedback.
- ▶ **How monitoring will be conducted:** tools such as Gantt charts, activity tracking sheets, distribution records, field visits, and satisfaction surveys.
- ▶ **Who is responsible:** monitoring responsibilities must be clearly defined across branches, HQ teams, and IFRC Delegations.
- ▶ **How data will be used:** monitoring results should feed into day-to-day management, operational reviews, reporting, and final evaluation.

The monitoring plan should be realistic and tailored to the size and complexity of the operation.

Without a well-defined monitoring plan, gathering accurate data to support intervention reporting becomes difficult, leading to reports that lack evidence. Systematic collection and analysis of data on operational activities to track progress against plans and determine if the accomplishments are contributing to the planned objectives/outcomes and are on time.

Good monitoring answers

**“WHAT HAPPENED?”:**

- ▶ Identifies potential problems that permit corrective measures.
- ▶ Supports decision-making.
- ▶ Fosters internal and external accountability.

- ▶ Aids in identifying weaknesses in the planning process.
- ▶ Checks if implementation is on track.

To ensure comprehensive oversight, different forms of monitoring should be planned for and used:

#### ▶ **Activity tracking**

Monitors the implementation of activities against the workplan, ensuring timely delivery and adherence to planned objectives. Document evidence such as photos, videos, attendance sheets, distribution records, and field notes to track progress and identify issues early. This can be done using a GANTT chart uploaded to the IFRC SharePoint. Alternatively, if a National Society uses online activity tracking tools, operation may use those.

#### ▶ **Monitoring reach**

Regularly tracks the number and demographics (e.g., age, gender, vulnerability) of people reached. This will help to avoid the stress of last-minute retrospective data collection and ensure the quality of reporting. This can be done using data collection tools and approaches described in the operational toolbox.

#### ▶ **Resource use monitoring**

Documents the allocation and utilisation of financial, material, and human resources. This can be done using the budget template triangulated with the GANTT chart that was developed as a workplan and is being used for activity monitoring.

#### ▶ **Gathering feedback and acting on it**

Follows the CEA minimal standards in emergencies to ensure the affected population can provide feedback or raise concerns, ensuring community input informs adjustments to the operation.

#### ▶ **Risk monitoring**

Identify and document risks, challenges, and delays in real time, enabling corrective actions to maintain progress. This can be done using risk register guidance from the operational toolbox.

The PMER unit assists the Secretariat and National Societies to enhance their capacity to improve service delivery and to inform relevant partners in a timely and systematic manner. This involves an effective planning process and the establishment of appropriate monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems to demonstrate accountability.

#### ▶ **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**



Operational plans and budgets, including emergency operations, as well as relevant reports (narrative and financial information), are available on the **IFRC's public website**, **FedNet** (internal, accessible to Movement members) and **GO** (with a public and Movement options).

More information about monitoring and quality assurance can be found in the **IFRC Minimum Standards for a Result-based Management of DREF Operations**.

### 4.5.3 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

Developing a strong budget is an essential part of planning a DREF-supported response operation. A well-prepared budget ensures that resources are allocated efficiently, activities are realistically costed, and the operation is fully aligned with IFRC financial standards and the DREF Procedures.

All DREF budgets must be realistic, cost-effective, and directly linked to the operational strategy. This means that every budget line must correspond to a planned activity or support function, with clear justifications and quantifiable estimates. While the budget should be detailed and structured, some flexibility must be maintained to allow for cost-sharing, prioritisation of life-saving actions, and adaptation across different operational phases. In all cases, resources should be directed towards maximising the humanitarian impact for affected communities.

In addition to complying with the financial caps and categories outlined by the DREF, the budget must also be submitted using the official **DREF budget template** provided by the IFRC and uploaded at the same time as the narrative proposal.

#### BUDGETING PRINCIPLES

- ▶ Several principles guide the development of a DREF budget:
- ▶ The budget must be directly tied to the planned response strategy. Every cost should correspond to a specific activity or operational requirement.
- ▶ All expenditures must comply with IFRC cost classification rules and DREF-specific financial caps, particularly on staff, assets, and overheads.
- ▶ Budgets must be prepared using the standard DREF budget template and must be submitted alongside the operational narrative.
- ▶ National Societies must ensure that all costs are justifiable, auditable, and based on real needs, not assumptions.
- ▶ Transparency is key. Avoid generalised and lump-sum budget lines. Instead, clearly describe and justify all costs by breaking them down.
- ▶ While flexibility is permitted to adapt to real-time needs, the budget structure must support clear cost control and allocation.
- ▶ If a National Society has overdue DREF reports, funding thresholds may be reduced in accordance with the compliance framework. For example, one overdue report lowers the threshold to 75%, two to 50%, and three or more to 0% (ineligible for new DREF allocations).

In situations where the application results from a scaling up from an Imminent DREF, the application shall include the CHF 80,000 or CHF 90,800 allocation (see **section 5.7 of the IFRC DREF Procedures** and the **AA section on Imminent DREF**).

## COST CATEGORIES AND ELIGIBLE BUDGET LINES



### PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT COSTS

Personnel and volunteer support costs are often essential to ensure timely and quality implementation. All personnel-related costs must comply with IFRC's Costing Principles and should be clearly linked to the operation. Staff and volunteers not directly involved in the response must not be included. Eligible costs can include:

- ▶ **Volunteer insurance** and protective equipment for those deployed in the operation.
- ▶ **Travel, per diems, and accommodation** for field staff and volunteers.
- ▶ **Salaries or support costs** for National Society staff directly contributing to the operation, up to a maximum of 5% of total direct costs. This includes consultants hired by the National Society.
- ▶ **Costs for IFRC staff supporting implementation of the operation**, capped at 4% of total direct costs. This includes consultants hired by the IFRC.
- ▶ **Rapid Response personnel deployments**, typically lasting up to three months (an extension for an additional 4th month can be granted in exceptional circumstances), may also be covered, either partially or in full. These are encouraged, especially for larger or complex operations, and should be included in the budget if required.



### OPERATIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC COSTS

This category forms the core of most response budgets, encompassing direct

service delivery and operational logistics. It is important to ensure that all assets are procured during the operational timeframe and that the stock purchased aligns with the needs and duration of the operation. Pre-positioning unrelated to the response is not allowed. Eligible expenses include:

- ▶ **Assessments** (e.g. pre-disaster assessment of capacity to respond to imminent event; emergency needs assessment, etc.).
- ▶ **Procurement and distribution** of relief supplies (e.g., food, shelter materials, WASH kits).
- ▶ **Transportation and logistics** costs for warehousing, fuel, vehicle hire, and distribution efforts.
- ▶ **Communication** costs, including radio equipment, security communications, and mobile connectivity for field teams.
- ▶ **Cash assistance** programs (if applicable) including financial service provider fees.
- ▶ **PPE and team protection equipment**, especially for health-related responses.
- ▶ **Assets and vehicle purchase** (generators, office equipment, etc) for the National Society needed for the implementation, up to a maximum total budget of CHF 10,000.
- ▶ **Vehicles from the IFRC leasing programme** which are being re-directed from current use to respond to the operation.
- ▶ **Costs directly linked with in-kind donations** (customs, in-country transport, distribution), provided the in-kind goods are part of the plan and related costs are included in the approved budget.

## EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE ASSETS IN DREF OPERATIONS:

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES
Logistics & Equipment	Vehicles (motorbikes, boats), generators, water pumps
Health & Shelter	Tents, cold chain equipment (e.g. vaccine fridges), shelter kits (if above value threshold)
ICT & Communication	Laptops, radios, satellite phones, tablets
Office & Infrastructure	Furniture, solar panels, prefab containers
WASH	Water tanks, purification units, latrine structures (if durable)



### COORDINATION AND VISIBILITY

Strong coordination with external partners and clear public communication are vital during emergencies. These activities help to raise awareness, build trust, and ensure clarity about the role of the Red Cross Red Crescent in the emergency response. Budget lines in this category may include:

- ▶ **Coordination meetings and workshops** with stakeholders, humanitarian clusters, and government agencies.
- ▶ **Public awareness and media engagement**, including dissemination of life-saving messages via radio, printed materials, or social media.
- ▶ **Visibility costs** for response teams and relief items (e.g., IFRC/National Society-branded materials).



### MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING, AND LEARNING

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and learning are critical components of DREF operations and must be adequately budgeted for. These activities are key to supporting quality assurance and meeting IFRC and donor accountability standards. Relevant costs include:

- ▶ **Post-distribution monitoring (PDM)** and satisfaction surveys to assess the

effectiveness and reach of assistance.

- ▶ **Field visits and supervision missions** to check progress and quality of implementation.
- ▶ **Lessons learned workshops and evaluations** can be held at the end of the operation to capture recommendations and ensure continuous improvement.

### ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL COSTS



While the primary focus of DREF funding is on direct support to affected populations, certain administrative costs are eligible if they are essential to the operation:

- ▶ Bank charges, transfer fees, and exchange rate management linked to receiving and disbursing funds.
- ▶ Translation costs for key operational documents, including plans, updates, and final reports.
- ▶ National Society overheads, capped at 5% of the total budget, and provided they are based on a transparent, governance-approved costing policy and relate to actual operational costs.
- ▶ IFRC overheads, calculated at 6.5% of the total budget to cover indirect costs such as financial processing and technical support.

## INELIGIBLE COSTS AND COMMON BUDGET PITFALLS

To ensure compliance with DREF procedures, National Societies must avoid including costs that fall outside the scope of eligible expenditure. The following are **not** eligible for DREF funding:

- ▶ Assets and vehicles purchased for IFRC.
- ▶ Assets for permanent structures (e.g. construction).
- ▶ Nationwide training (unless the operation covers the entire country).
- ▶ Capacity strengthening of branches not involved in the operation.
- ▶ Participation in international training (unless directly related to the response).
- ▶ NS or IFRC salaries, running costs, utilities, etc.; not directly related to the operation.
- ▶ Development of Early Action Protocols (EAPs) with National Societies.
- ▶ Readiness costs that are not essential for activating an Early Action Plan.
- ▶ Preparedness activities focused on long-term disaster management planning.
- ▶ Activities already funded under existing National Society or IFRC ongoing/annual programmes.
- ▶ Long-term response, recovery, or rehabilitation interventions.
- ▶ National-level disaster management or capacity-building training not linked to the operation or responding branches.
- ▶ Stock items not intended for the current response or early action, or with shelf

lives inconsistent with the operation's timeframe.

- ▶ Costs of staff not directly involved in the operation.

## PROCUREMENT AND ASSET CONSIDERATIONS

Depending on the National Society's capacity and the outcome of the Capacity Review and Risk Assessment (CRRA), procurement may be managed by the National Society or the IFRC. Key points to consider:

National Societies may carry out local procurement and use their own procedures if they meet IFRC procurement standards and have CRRA approval. More information about the compliance can be found in Sections 1.2 and 1.3.3 of the ***IFRC Procurement Manual***.

- ▶ IFRC procedures apply when the procurement is carried out by the IFRC or where the National Society carries out procurement with Emergency Appeal funding.
- ▶ All procurement must occur within the operational timeframe, including delivery.
- ▶ All items and services procured must be relevant to the DREF operation and budgeted for in advance. The agreed procurement process shall be clearly stipulated in the DREF Checklist.
- ▶ Stock purchases for pre-positioning are only eligible under Early Action Protocols, not for Response DREF. Stockpiling for long-term use or items with a shelf life inconsistent with the operation's duration will not be approved.

- ▶ DREF funding may be used to stock in replenishment of National Society preparedness stocks which have been used for the Response DREF operation. Replenishment may be carried out after the initial emergency phase, but within the approved operation timeframe.
- ▶ Assets must be essential to the operation (e.g. vehicles, generators, office equipment etc.) and may not exceed CHF 10,000 in value.
- ▶ Permanent structures or fixed installations are not eligible under DREF.

If an operation transitions into an Emergency Appeal, IFRC procurement procedures automatically apply, and all related procurement activities must be reviewed with the regional logistics team.

#### **IN-KIND GOODS DONATIONS IN DREF OPERATIONS**

While the DREF mechanism is designed to provide direct financial support for National Society-led emergency operations, in-kind support from Partner National Societies may sometimes complement these efforts. When such bilateral in-kind donations occur:

- ▶ The IFRC will not reflect the donated value in DREF financial statements.
- ▶ However, DREF funding may be used to cover associated costs such as customs clearance, internal transport, and final-mile distribution, provided these in-kind goods were part of the approved DREF plan and budget.



#### 4.5.4 DREF REQUEST SUBMISSION

Once the planning process is complete, the National Society must formally apply for DREF funding. The application process ensures that all planned activities, budget lines, and operational arrangements are clearly defined, justified, and aligned with **DREF procedures** before funding is released. The level of detail required depends on the DREF modality being applied for, but all applications must be data-driven.



**Note:** When a sudden-onset emergency is identified, a National Society who is planning to access Secretariat emergency funding mechanisms (DREF or Emergency Appeal) can initiate a request for an advance payment within 24 hours of the disaster or event trigger. **At the time of the request, the National Society is not expected to have a fully developed DREF application, as the decision to apply for DREF funding may still be evolving.** However, the intention to proceed with a DREF application should follow shortly thereafter.

For more details on the Emergency Advance Payment, please refer to the **DREF Procedures** and more information on the IRP is available [here](#).

To support the National Society through this process, the IFRC Country (or Cluster) Delegation or, where applicable, the Regional Health, Disasters, Climate and Crisis (HDCC) team will provide technical and operational assistance. This includes reviewing the draft application, offering guidance on eligibility and budget caps, and ensuring the application is complete, coherent, and ready for submission. Ideally, the DREF request should be submitted within 5 days from the disaster/trigger event date.

If not already in place, the Head of Delegation or HDCC will appoint two key roles to oversee the process:

- ▶ The **DREF Operations Appeal Manager**, who oversees strategic alignment and high-level review.
- ▶ The **DREF Operations Project Manager**, who coordinates the preparation, submission, and follow-up of the application and implementation.

The National Society can choose one of two methods to submit the application:

1. Online via the **GO Platform**, by completing the GO DREF Application template.
2. Offline via a dedicated **Microsoft Excel DREF Application Template** available from IFRC.

If the offline method is used, the DREF Operations Project Manager, supported by the Regional DREF Focal Point, will be responsible for uploading the completed application template into the GO Platform to start the review and approval processes.

## DREF request information requirements

The DREF Application form on the **GO platform** is divided into five main sections, guiding National Societies through the key elements required to request funding. Below is a detailed walkthrough of each section, including guidance on what to enter and how to ensure completeness and clarity.

### 1. OPERATION OVERVIEW

Basic administrative and contextual information.

#### ▶ National Society name

Select your National Society from the dropdown list.

#### ▶ Field report import

If an existing GO field report is available, this option allows automatic data transfer into the form.

#### ▶ DREF type

Choose whether the application is for a Response DREF or Loan.

#### ▶ Disaster details

Define the type of hazard (e.g. cyclone, earthquake), onset type (sudden or slow), and disaster category (Yellow/Orange/Red).

#### ▶ Affected areas

Specify the countries and regions affected by the event.

#### ▶ DREF title

The system can generate a standardised title based on inputs, or one can be manually entered.

#### ▶ Map and cover image

Upload a geographic map and an image to visually represent the operation. These materials are important for enhancing public visibility once the DREF request is approved and published. The Regional Information Management (IM) team can support National Societies in creating appropriate maps. For images, ensure that each photo includes a clear caption and photo credit.

### 2. EVENT DETAIL

Background information on the event and the justification for the request.

#### ▶ Previous operations

Indicate whether a similar event has occurred in the same area within the last three years. If yes, summarise the key lessons learned and how they inform the current operation.

#### ▶ Child safeguarding

If a Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment (CSRA) was conducted in previous operations, indicate the assessed risk level. If no prior assessment exists, the National Society is encouraged to conduct a CSRA within the first month of the operation. This can be done with support from IFRC regional teams where available. The CSRA tool and guidance can be accessed [here](#).

#### ▶ Trigger date

Specify the date on which the trigger for the operation occurred.

### ▶ **Affected population data**

Provide estimated figures for the total affected population, people in need, and demographic breakdowns (men, women, children, elderly). You may also include estimates for “people in need” if data is available.

### ▶ **Event description**

Describe clearly what happened, where, and when. Include relevant details such as the type of disaster, intensity, locations affected, and timing.

### ▶ **Scope and Scale**

Explain the broader humanitarian impact - on lives, infrastructure, livelihoods - and specify which groups are most at risk (e.g. older people, displaced families, people with disabilities).

### ▶ **Source Information**

List credible sources used to inform your assessment (e.g. national disaster management agencies, meteorological services).

### ▶ **Image Upload**

Add up to two relevant photos to document the event's impact.

If you are applying for a DREF to carry out an **assessment**, this section requires fewer details than a full operational request, and you are only asked to provide:

- ▶ A brief event description (what happened, when, and where),
- ▶ Any available numerical data on the affected population, and
- ▶ Sources of information used to inform the assessment.

## | **3. ACTIONS AND NEEDS**

What has already been done, who else is responding, and what gaps remain.

### ▶ **Current National Society actions**

Outline what the National Society has done so far, including staff or volunteer mobilisation, distributions, assessments, or coordination efforts. Detail the branches involved and a number of people reached. In cases when the National Society is planning replenishment of activities conducted through the DREF, it can also be specified in this section.

### ▶ **IFRC and Partner National Society actions**

Explain whether IFRC and/or PNSs are present in-country or supporting remotely. Specify the type of support provided (technical, strategic, surge personnel, etc.).

### ▶ **ICRC and Other Actors**

Clarify whether ICRC is involved, and describe the roles of national authorities, UN agencies, or other NGOs in the current response.

### ▶ **Coordination mechanisms**

Confirm whether formal coordination systems (e.g. cluster meetings, national emergency platforms) are in place and whether the National Society is actively engaged in them.

### ▶ **Identified needs and gaps**

Upload any assessments and list the priority needs (e.g. WASH, health, food security). Describe any specific limitations, such as lack of access, insufficient funding, coordination issues, or unaddressed vulnerable groups. Inform if needs and/or gaps will be supported by other partners or will remain a need/gap.

If you are applying for a DREF to carry out an **assessment**, the “Identified needs and gaps” subsection will not be present in the template, as the purpose of the DREF is to determine these through the planned assessment.

## **| 4. OPERATION**

Intervention strategy, targeting approach, and how the operation will be managed.

### ***Objectives and strategy***

#### **▶ Overall objectives**

Provide a clear and concise goal that describes what the operation will achieve in terms of outcomes for affected people. Focus on the humanitarian impact and the specific needs the operation aims to address.

#### **▶ Strategy rationale**

Explain why the proposed approach was chosen. Highlight the most urgent needs the operation aims to address. Describe the main priorities and explain why these priorities were chosen based on the specific context of the emergency. Justify why particular methods and actions were selected and how they are expected to achieve the desired outcomes.

### ***Targeting strategy***

#### **▶ Target groups**

Describe the groups that will benefit from the operation (e.g. displaced families, people living in high-risk areas, rural farmers). Explain how the group/s will be targeted.

#### **▶ Selection parameters**

Describe how individuals or communities will be identified for support. Criteria may include vulnerability, exposure, socio-economic status, or gender etc.

#### **▶ Targeted population data**

Provide disaggregated estimates for men, women, girls, and boys, and include people with disabilities or those on the move where relevant.

#### **▶ Additional documents**

Optionally add supporting documents for targeting.

### ***Risk and security considerations***

▶ Confirm whether your National Society has key policies in place, such as child safeguarding, PSEA, whistleblower, and fraud prevention.

▶ State whether a child safeguarding risk analysis has been carried out for this operation, and describe the outcome if applicable.

▶ Describe any operational or contextual risks (e.g. access challenges, political instability, safety concerns) and how these will be mitigated. Risk mitigation should be specific and actionable, not generic.

### ***Planned intervention***

#### **▶ Upload budget**

Submit the DREF budget using the IFRC template, ensuring alignment with your activities and timeline.

#### **▶ Requested amount**

Enter the total requested DREF allocation in Swiss francs.

For each sector selected (e.g. Shelter, Health, WASH, Livelihoods), the application requires the following:

#### **▶ Overview of planned activities**

Clearly describe what will be done in the selected sector. For example, in Health, you might describe health promotion campaigns, provision of first aid, or support for clinics.

▶ **Expected results**

Explain what will change as a result of these activities, linked to the outputs and outcomes defined in the operational strategy.

▶ **Target figures**

Provide estimates of how many people will be reached under each sector. Ensure these are aligned with your disaggregated population data.

▶ **Budget**

Provide the budget linked to the selected intervention. The system will automatically verify if the entered amounts match the indicated total budget.

▶ **Indicator alignment**

Where possible, draw on the *IFRC Indicator Bank* to select standard indicators that can be monitored and reported on during and after implementation.

**Support services**

▶ **Personnel and volunteer plan**

Provide details on the number of staff and volunteers involved, clearly outlining their roles and responsibilities throughout the operation, the timeframe each role will cover, and the specific support or training required. If any new roles are planned, clarify whether they will be recruited locally or seconded, and provide a justification for their inclusion in the operational structure.

▶ **Surge deployment**

If you plan to request Rapid Response Personnel or other surge support, justify the need and outline how surge staff will contribute to quality and accountability.

▶ **Procurement**

If the operation involves procurement of goods or services, the National Society must clearly outline: Who will be responsible for procurement, whether suppliers will be local or international, how long the tendering is expected to take, and if relevant, what is the status of the Financial Service Provider.

▶ **Monitoring approach**

Describe how implementation will be monitored. Include reference to activity tracking tools, field visits, community feedback systems, and financial monitoring processes.

▶ **Communication strategy**

Describe how the National Society will manage internal and external communication throughout the operation.

**5. OPERATIONAL TIMEFRAMES AND CONTACTS**

Schedule for the operation and key contacts.

▶ **Date of application**

The date the National Society submits the application to IFRC.

▶ **Date of submission to Geneva and approval**

Entered by the Regional Office once approved.

▶ **Operation timeframe**

Specify the duration of the operation in months.

▶ **End date**

Automatically calculated based on approval date and timeframe.

## ► **Contacts**

Provide full contact information for all key personnel associated with the operation. These individuals may be contacted for clarification, operational coordination, or public communication.

### **4.5.5 DREF LOAN REQUEST**

In large-scale events classified as Red-level emergencies, the IFRC may launch an Emergency Appeal to mobilise multilateral donor support. In such cases, the DREF can provide immediate start-up funding in the form of a reimbursable loan. More information about DREF Loan allocation can be found [here](#).



**Important:** if no Emergency Appeal is launched for a Red-level emergency, the National Society follows the standard Response DREF procedures.

To initiate a DREF Loan, the National Society must submit a DREF Loan request. This is done using a simplified template available on the **GO platform**, designed specifically for this purpose. This simplified template only requests essential information, such as:

- Name of the National Society,
- DREF type,
- Disaster details (type, onset, category),
- Affected country and region(s),
- Date the trigger was met,

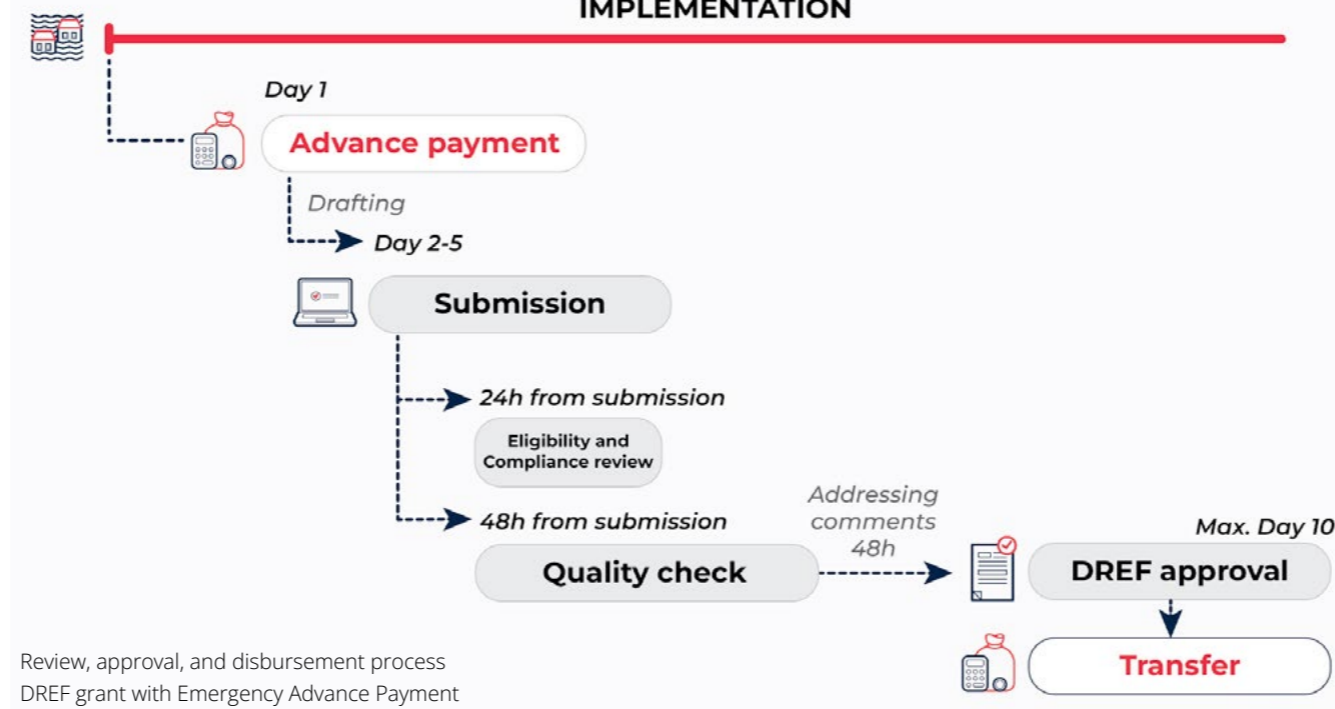
- Estimated number of people affected.

This streamlined form is intended to accelerate the request and generate the corresponding **DREF Allocation Request** which must be submitted to the **DREF Appeal Manager**. Ideally, this request is submitted:

- at the same time as the Emergency Appeal Funding Ask (FAD) is sent to the Secretary General/NSDOC Under Secretary General, or
- at the latest, by the time the Emergency Appeal is officially launched.



## IMPLEMENTATION



## 4.6 REVIEW, APPROVAL AND DISBURSEMENT

The review and approval process for DREF funding under the Response Pillar ensures that applications are thoroughly assessed for eligibility, compliance, and operational quality before funds are disbursed. This process is designed to balance speed and accountability, ensuring that National Societies can access funding quickly while maintaining financial and operational integrity.

### 4.6.1 DREF GRANT

Two primary review pathways depend on whether the National Society has requested a DREF Advance Payment of CHF 30,000 (for Yellow-level emergencies or CHF 100,000 for Orange/Red-level emergencies). Each pathway follows a structured review process, involving compliance checks, operational quality reviews, financial validation, and final approval before implementation begins.

#### REVIEW, APPROVAL, AND DISBURSEMENT – WITH EMERGENCY ADVANCE PAYMENT

For emergencies where immediate funding is required before the full DREF application is submitted, National Societies may request an Emergency Advance Payment. This mechanism enables rapid response in the critical first hours or days after a disaster, while maintaining the requirement to submit a full DREF application shortly thereafter.

#### Step 1: Submitting the Emergency Advance Payment request

Within 24 hours of the event or disaster trigger, the National Society, supported by the IFRC Country or Cluster Delegation, completes and signs the Emergency Advance Payment Request template. This is a standard form that includes:

- ▶ The amount being requested.
- ▶ A bank letter confirming the National Society's official banking details.
- ▶ A commitment to submit a full DREF application and sign a Project Agreement within the stipulated deadline.

**Important:** The bank letter must exactly match the bank details in the request. Discrepancies or missing documents may delay the payment.

Once the form is complete, it is reviewed and approved by the **Head of the IFRC Country (or Cluster) Delegation**, who also informs the **Regional Head of Health, Disasters, Climate and Crisis, DREF Global Team** and the **Regional DREF Focal Point**.

#### Step 2: Release of Advance Payment

After approval:

- ▶ The **Delegation Finance Officer** initiates the payment using the bank details provided (no appeal codes are being opened at this stage).
- ▶ If the delegation lacks sufficient funds or the amount exceeds internal thresholds, the payment may be deferred to **Regional Finance and Administration**. For countries under sanctions, the payment may be deferred to the **IFRC Treasury in Geneva**.

The Emergency Advance is considered the first tranche of the DREF allocation and will later be integrated into the full DREF funding structure once the application is approved.

**Important:** If the National Society does not submit a full DREF application and sign the Project Agreement within the agreed deadline, it will be required to reimburse the full amount and could face a one-year suspension from requesting Emergency Advance Payments.

#### Step 3: Submitting the Full DREF application

The National Society completes the full application on the GO platform (more information about the application process can be found under **section 4.5** of the Guidelines). This should be started immediately once a DREF has been decided and can run concurrently with the Emergency Advance Payment Request.

Once finalised, the **DREF Operations Project Manager** notifies the **Regional DREF Focal Point**, who sets up the SharePoint folder for the operation and initiates the **DREF Review Checklist**, which documents all steps in the review and approval process.

#### Step 4: Dual review process

Upon submission, two reviews occur in parallel:

##### A. ELIGIBILITY, COMPLIANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW

It is a mandatory step for all DREF applications, regardless of the funding modality. This review is conducted by the **DREF Regional Focal Point** and the **DREF Global Team**, and it confirms:

- ▶ The operation's eligibility under DREF rules.
- ▶ That the budget is free of ineligible costs or duplications.
- ▶ That the National Society meets minimum compliance standards.

The review should be completed **within 24 hours** of application submission.

The approval of the Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management Review is considered

the official start date of the operation.

Following approval:

- ▶ The DREF Information Management and Quality Team creates the official Appeal Code and updates the Ready system.
- ▶ The Finance Business Partnering Unit opens the Project Code and allocates funds from the Response Pillar to the new project.

If the DREF is issued under an Emergency Appeal, a separate Project Code is created specifically for the Response DREF portion to ensure accurate tracking.

## **B. OPERATIONAL QUALITY REVIEW**

At the same time, a broader review is conducted by:

- ▶ Regional Operations Focal Point.
- ▶ Regional and/or HQ technical leads (e.g. Health, WASH, Shelter, CVA).
- ▶ Regional DREF Focal Point.
- ▶ Operations Coordination Senior Officers at HQ.
- ▶ The DREF Global Team.

This review focuses on:

- ▶ The strength and relevance of the operational plan.
- ▶ The appropriateness of the targeting, strategy, and monitoring arrangements.
- ▶ The feasibility and readiness of the National Society to implement.

The **Regional Finance and Administration Unit** also validates the budget and assesses:

- ▶ Whether costs align with DREF and IFRC

rules.

- ▶ Which working modality will be used (e.g. Working Advance, Cash Transfer, or Fund Transfer).
- ▶ Potential financial or delivery risks.

Feedback is provided in the DREF Review Check List. This process is expected to be completed within 48 hours. Once the review is shared, the National Society will have a consecutive 48-hour time window to respond to any comments or requests for clarification.

The full DREF application's Operational Quality Review should be completed for a sudden onset within 10 days, and within 21 days from the identified trigger for a slow onset.

**Important:** To avoid delays, National Societies are strongly encouraged to upload all relevant documents (e.g. assessments, response plans) along with the application.

## **Step 5: Final validation and endorsement**

Once the reviews are complete, the DREF Review Checklist is finalised and endorsed by:

- ▶ The **Head of Delegation** acting as the **DREF Operation Appeal Manager**.
- ▶ The **Regional Head of Health, Disasters, Climate and Crisis**, who confirms technical and budgetary review.
- ▶ The **Regional DREF Focal Point**, who confirms that all required steps have been completed.
- ▶ The **Regional Finance Unit**, who validates the revised and final budget

following the outcome of the review process.

At this point, the **DREF Allocation Request** is completed by the Regional DREF Focal Point.

## Step 6: Final approval and disbursement

The completed package, including the application, budget, Review Checklist, and Allocation Request, is submitted to the **DREF Global Team** for final review. A last verification is carried out in consultation with HQ Operations Coordination staff.

Once cleared, the full package is submitted to the **DREF Appeal Manager**, who formally approves:

- ▶ The final application.
- ▶ The full DREF budget.
- ▶ The release of funds via the signed DREF Allocation Request.

This completes the approval process. The National Society is informed, and all relevant stakeholders (HQ, region, country delegation, finance teams) are notified of the approval and funding release (balance after deducting advance payment).

Before providing the final approval, the DREF Appeal Manager may request additional information and, in certain cases, conditions upon approval, which would require after-approval actions.



## REVIEW, APPROVAL, AND DISBURSEMENT – WITHOUT EMERGENCY ADVANCE PAYMENT

A National Society may choose to submit a full application without requesting an Emergency Advance Payment. In these cases, the standard DREF review and approval process applies. While this route does not include an initial cash advance, it is designed to be equally fast and efficient, with a partial disbursement (25%) issued upon Eligibility, Compliance, and Risk Management review and approval to enable rapid implementation, unless the National Society decided to wait for a full disbursement in one tranche.

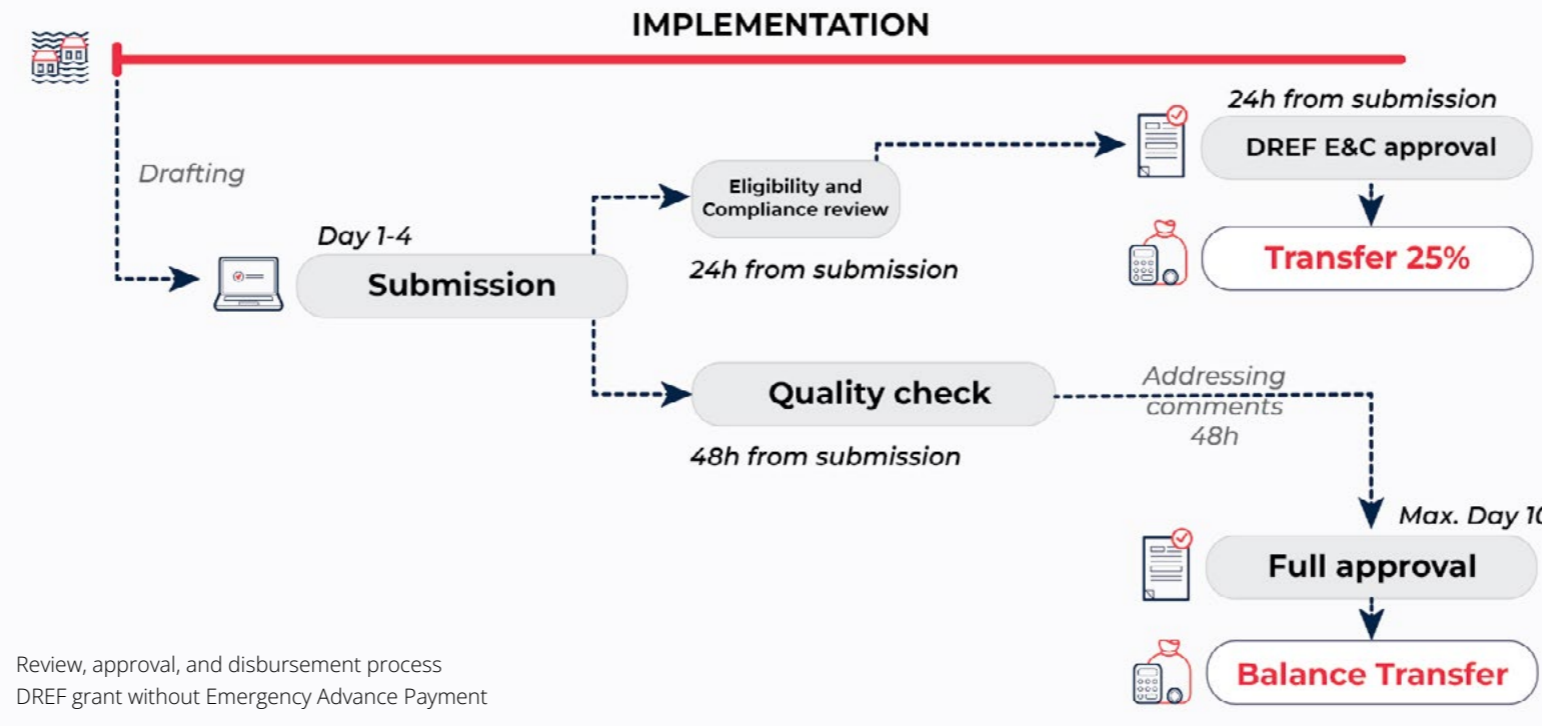
### Step 1: Submitting the DREF application

Once the DREF application is finalised on the GO platform (more information about the application process can be found under **Section 4.5** of the Guidelines, the **DREF Operations Project Manager** notifies the **Regional DREF Focal Point** (with an attachment of the DREF Budget), who sets up the SharePoint folder for the operation and initiates the **DREF Review Checklist**, which documents all steps in the review and approval process.

Immediately upon submission, two key reviews begin in parallel:

- ▶ An Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management Review.
- ▶ An Operational Quality Review.

Where the National Society has not requested an initial Emergency Advance Payment, the Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management approval includes the release of 25% funding of the DREF Application. The **DREF Regional Focal Point**



is responsible for completing the DREF Allocation Request Form for 25% of the DREF Application's budget. The aim is to allow the DREF Operations Project Manager to accelerate the start-up of project implementation.

### Step 2: Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management Review and partial disbursement

It is a mandatory step for all DREF applications, regardless of the funding modality. The first review, carried out by the Regional DREF Focal Point and the DREF Global Team, ensures that the application complies with DREF rules and funding principles. The team checks:

- ▶ That the National Society is eligible to apply.
- ▶ That the application meets all necessary documentation and quality criteria.
- ▶ That the budget is accurate, justified, and free from duplications or ineligible costs.

This review should be completed **within 24 hours** of application submission.

Once the review is completed, the application is forwarded to the DREF Appeal Manager, who formally approves the DREF application and budget, and authorises the release of 25% of the requested funding via the signed DREF Allocation Request.

This initial disbursement is designed to enable the National Society to begin implementing key activities while the full operational review is being finalised.

Additional approval from the USG for National Society Development and Coordination (NSDC) may be required if:

- ▶ The funding requested exceeds the standard thresholds.
- ▶ The operation's timeframe is beyond the standard thresholds.
- ▶ The application is submitted late.
- ▶ Three or more final reports are overdue.

\* An institutional crisis is a situation where a humanitarian organisation's internal governance, leadership, systems, or integrity deteriorate to the point that it disrupts operational capacity, erodes trust, and undermines the organisation's legitimacy and effectiveness.

- ▶ The National Society is suspended or facing institutional crisis\*.

Based on the compliant approved DREF Application and DREF Allocation Request:

- ▶ The **DREF Information Management** and Quality Team creates the official Appeal Code and updates the Ready system.
- ▶ The **Finance Business Partnering Unit** opens the Project Code and processes the 25% income allocation to the newly opened codes.
- ▶ The **DREF Operations Project Manager** initiates the implementation of the project.

### Step 3: Operational Quality Review

At the same time of the Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management Review, the Operational Quality Review begins, led by:

- ▶ Regional and/or HQ technical leads (e.g. Health, WASH, Shelter, CVA),
- ▶ Regional DREF Focal Point,
- ▶ Regional Operations Focal Point,
- ▶ Operations Coordination Senior Officers at HQ,
- ▶ The DREF Global Team.

This review focuses on:

- ▶ The strength and relevance of the operational plan.
- ▶ The appropriateness of the targeting, strategy, and monitoring arrangements.
- ▶ The feasibility and readiness of the National Society to implement.

The **Regional Finance and Administration Unit** also validates the budget and assesses:

- ▶ Whether costs align with DREF and IFRC rules.
- ▶ Which working modality will be used (e.g. Working Advance, Cash Transfer, or Fund Transfer).
- ▶ Potential financial or delivery risks.

Feedback is provided in the DREF Review Check List. This process is expected to be completed within 48 hours. Once the review is shared, the National Society will have a consecutive 48-hour time window to respond to any comments or requests for clarification.

The full DREF application's Operational Quality Review should be completed for a sudden onset within 10 days from the trigger and within 21 days from the identified trigger for a slow onset.

**Important:** To avoid delays, National Societies are strongly encouraged to upload all relevant documents (e.g. assessments, response plans) along with the application.

#### Step 4: Final validation

After all reviews are complete and feedback has been addressed, the DREF Review Checklist is finalised. It must be signed off by:

- ▶ The **DREF Operation Appeal Manager (Head of Delegation)**, confirming support for the operation and budget.
- ▶ The **Regional Head of Health, Disasters, Climate and Crisis**, verifying that technical quality has been reviewed.
- ▶ The **Regional DREF Focal Point**, confirming that all compliance and validation steps have been completed.

At this point, the DREF Allocation Request is finalised to cover the remaining 75% of the budget and submitted to the **DREF Global Team**.

#### Step 5: Final approval and second disbursement

The DREF Global Team receives the complete application package, including:

- ▶ The final DREF Application.
- ▶ The validated DREF Budget.
- ▶ The DREF Review Checklist (with signatures).
- ▶ The updated DREF Allocation Request, indicating the initial 25% disbursement already made.

A final review is conducted by the **DREF Global Team** in collaboration with **HQ Operations Coordination** staff. The full package is then submitted to the **DREF Appeal Manager**, who formally approves the application and budget and signs off

on the release of the second (remaining) tranche of funds.

Before providing the final approval, the DREF Appeal Manager may request additional information and, in certain cases, conditions upon approval, which would require after-approval actions.

Note that the timing from submission by the National Society to final approval need to factor the reviews and validations taking place at all levels - Country (Cluster) Delegation, Regional Office and Headquarters.

#### Step 6: Operational codes update

Following final approval:

- ▶ The **DREF Information Management** and Quality Team updates the funding requirements and Appeal history in IFRC's Ready system.
- ▶ The **Finance Business Partnering Unit** processes the second tranche of funding from the DREF Response Pillar to the Project Code previously opened.

Within one working day from its approval, a DREF Operation and Budget are posted on IFRC's public website.

In operations linked to an Emergency Appeal, a separate project code will be created to manage the Response DREF funding and keep it distinct from other multilateral contributions.

#### 4.6.2 DREF LOAN

To initiate a DREF Loan, the request must be submitted using a template available on the GO Platform. This request automatically generates an **Allocation Request** template, which must be completed and submitted to the DREF Appeal Manager. Ideally, this request is submitted to the DREF Appeal Manager:

- ▶ at the same time as the Emergency Appeal Funding Ask (FAD) is sent to the Secretary General, or
- ▶ at the latest, by the time the Emergency Appeal is officially launched.

Once approved, the DREF Global Team shares the confirmation with the relevant stakeholders, including:

- ▶ The Regional Office
- ▶ The Country or Cluster Delegation
- ▶ The Finance Business Partnering Unit

Based on the approved DREF Allocation Request, the Finance Unit processes the income allocation from the DREF to the Emergency Appeal's project codes in line with **IFRC's Emergency Appeal Guidelines**.

While the size of each DREF Loan is subject to the discretion of the Secretary General, the standard maximum is CHF 2,000,000 per Emergency Appeal. This limit applies regardless of whether the loan is released in a single allocation or in multiple instalments.

## 4.7 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Once a DREF application has been approved, either through the emergency advance pathway or the standard approval route, the focus shifts to implementing the planned operation. This phase is where strategic plans and allocated resources are translated into action. Implementation must begin promptly, be monitored effectively, and remain adaptive to evolving needs and contexts.

### 4.7.1 LAUNCHING THE OPERATION

#### | PROJECT INITIATION

Implementation formally begins upon either of the following:

- ▶ The **approval of the DREF application** (for operations with an emergency advance payment), or
- ▶ The **compliance approval and initial disbursement** of funds (for standard applications without advance).

In both scenarios, the DREF Operations Project Manager is responsible for initiating implementation steps, without delay, to ensure the operation gets underway in line with the timeframe and scope agreed during the planning phase.

#### WBS AND PEAR

The first technical step in implementation is the creation of the **Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)** in IFRC's Ready system. The WBS converts the approved DREF budget into a format that allows for detailed tracking of expenses and activities across sectors, timeframes, and implementation partners.

Alongside this, the **Project Expenditure Approval Request (PEAR)** is launched by the **DREF Operations Appeal Manager**. This formalises the link between the operation's planned costs and the internal financial controls required for disbursement and reporting.

Where applicable, the WBS is updated after the final approval of the full DREF application, particularly in cases where only partial funding (e.g. 25%) was initially released.

#### PROJECT AGREEMENT

The **Project Agreement (PA)** is a critical document that governs the financial relationship between the IFRC and the implementing National Society. The agreement outlines:

- ▶ The scope and timeframe of the DREF operation.
- ▶ The financial and narrative reporting requirements.
- ▶ The disbursement schedule.
- ▶ The agreed working modality (Working Advance, Cash Transfer, or Fund Transfer).
- ▶ Final reporting requirements.
- ▶ If agreed on by the Delegation and National Society, internal progress reporting.

The DREF Operations Project Manager is responsible for preparing and coordinating the signing of the PFA. To ensure timely implementation, it is strongly recommended that the drafting of the PFA begins in parallel with the DREF application.

For National Societies that received an Emergency Advance Payment, this amount is recorded as the first tranche within the agreement. For those who did not, the PA is initially based on the 25% disbursement approved after the compliance review. Once the operational quality review is completed and full approval is granted, the PA is amended to reflect the full budget and disbursement schedule.

The PFA must be approved according to IFRC's e-Contract matrix and signed by all parties. Once uploaded to the e-Contract system, the agreement is synchronised with the Ready system. This must happen within 15 days of DREF approval. If the PA is not signed within 45 days, the DREF approval may be withdrawn and the DREF allocation cancelled. In such cases, the DREF Appeal Manager must seek authorisation to cancel the operation from the Under Secretary General for National Society Development and Coordination (USG NSDC), and donors will be informed through the DREF final report.

Once the PA is signed and its data is available in the Ready system, the DREF Operations Project Manager initiates payment requests in accordance with the agreed disbursement schedule.

## EVENT LAUNCH

A key part of project initiation is the organisation of a launch event, held once the National Society has received confirmation of the DREF allocation. As per DREF Procedures, the event is mandatory as it is a way to formally mark the start of the operation. It is strongly recommended to be conducted within the first days/weeks in the first month of the operation. The launch brings together key stakeholders, including the National Society, IFRC, and,

where appropriate, external partners such as government agencies, UN actors, and other humanitarian organisations.

The purpose of the launch event is to:

- ▶ Announce the allocation of DREF funds and official start of the operation.
- ▶ Present the planned objectives, activities, and timelines.
- ▶ Promote transparency and coordination across the response.
- ▶ Strengthen visibility and engagement with relevant national and international partners.
- ▶ Reach national media and be actively relayed on social media to enhance public awareness and engagement.



## 4.7.2 MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION

Effective monitoring is essential to implementing DREF operations with speed, quality, and accountability. It enables early detection of problems, supports adaptive decision-making, and ensures that results are documented and verified. Monitoring begins from day one of implementation and continues throughout the operation, using tools, indicators, and roles defined during planning.

As part of the initial implementation and monitoring process, the DREF Operations Project Manager is also required to convene one **mandatory implementation monitoring call**, to be held one month after the DREF allocation approval date. This applies to all Response DREF operations. The purpose of this call is to review early progress, identify challenges or delays, and agree on any necessary adjustments to ensure smooth implementation. It also helps maintain coordination across all levels of the operation. Participants in the initial monitoring call should include:

- ▶ The National Society,
- ▶ The IFRC Country or Cluster Delegation,
- ▶ The Regional Office,
- ▶ The IFRC DREF Team.

### ACTIVITY TRACKING

Activities must be monitored against the approved workplan (e.g. using a Gantt chart), which outlines what is to be done, by whom, and by when. Progress should be tracked continuously, with delays or changes documented.

Monitoring should be supported by physical and digital evidence, including distribution records, attendance lists, photos, and field reports. Shared platforms such as IFRC SharePoint or other online systems can be used to centralise updates.

### MONITORING REACH

Operations must regularly collect data on who is being reached, broken down by sex, age, and vulnerability. This ensures that the operation is on track to meet its targeting goals, that no groups are inadvertently excluded, and that reporting can be done with accuracy and integrity.

Using standard tools from the **DREF Operational Toolbox** helps ensure consistency and comparability across operations.

### RESOURCE USE MONITORING

The use of financial, material, and human resources must be monitored against both the budget and the workplan. Regular cross-checking helps identify and allows early escalation of overspending, underspending, or delays in procurement or delivery.

Triangulating the Gantt chart, budget tracking tools, and logistics reports helps ensure transparency and avoids discrepancies between expenditure and outputs.

### COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND ADJUSTMENT

Feedback from affected people is one of the most valuable forms of operational monitoring. National Societies should implement CEA mechanisms such as community meetings, suggestion boxes, hotlines, or social media channels to gather real-time input.

The feedback collected must be reviewed regularly, and used to make changes to the operation where needed. This supports relevance, transparency, and community trust. More information about working with community feedback can be found [here](#).

## RISK MONITORING

Risks, whether operational, financial, or contextual, must be tracked throughout the operation. A risk register should be used to log issues, mitigation measures, and follow-up actions. Maintaining an up-to-date risk register also supports learning and future preparedness.

### 4.7.3 BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There are several practices that can significantly improve coordination, visibility, and operational success during implementation:

#### ► Kick-off meetings

Every operation should begin with an internal kick-off meeting involving National Society leadership, IFRC Delegation staff, technical advisors, and key partners. This ensures shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

#### ► Online workspaces

Use digital platforms (e.g. SharePoint or Google Drive) to centralize documents, updates, and reports. This enhances collaboration, reduces duplication, and improves access to real-time information.

#### ► Progress reviews, including financial monitoring

Regular check-ins using the workplan and monitoring tools help track implementation,

identify bottlenecks, and adjust where needed; regular financial acquittals and reporting.

#### ► Using lessons learned

Making use of lessons drawn from previous operations can prevent repeating the same mistakes, and help incorporate verified good practices.

#### ► Risk management plan

Operations should build in backup plans for critical components, such as alternative procurement channels, additional staff, or adjusted timelines.

#### ► Integrating CEA

Community engagement should not be a separate activity, it must be embedded into all components of the operation, from targeting and messaging to delivery and complaint handling.



#### 4.7.4 DROUGHT DREF - EXTENDED IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAMES

Drought DREF operations are structured differently from standard Response DREFs due to the slow-onset nature of drought-related crises. To ensure flexibility while maintaining operational relevance and accountability, the Drought DREF allows for an extended implementation timeframe of up to 18 months. This total duration is divided into three operational phases or “blocks”, which must be clearly planned and justified in the application.

Implementation timeframe:

- ▶ **Early actions** = up to 6 months before the identified peak period (Block 1).
- ▶ **Response** = up to 12 months after the identified peak period (Block 2 and Block 3; inclusive of early recovery activities and transition/exit plan from the DREF Operation).



To access the full 18-month implementation window, the National Society must design an operation that includes **activities under all three blocks: Anticipatory Actions, Response Actions, and Early Recovery Actions**. Detailed eligible actions can be found in [here](#). More information about DREF Drought can be found [here](#).

#### BLOCK 1: ANTICIPATORY (MITIGATION) ACTIONS

These activities take place **before the identified peak period** of the drought, and may begin **up to six months in advance**. The goal of this block is to mitigate the expected impact on the most vulnerable populations, particularly those not yet affected but at high risk.

Eligible anticipatory activities may include:

- ▶ Early warning messages and awareness campaigns.
- ▶ Community mobilisation and early targeting.
- ▶ Pre-positioning of supplies or small-scale early disbursement of cash.
- ▶ Support to protect livelihoods (e.g. veterinary care, drought-tolerant seeds).

To qualify, the National Society must demonstrate that:

- ▶ The risk of a humanitarian crisis is credible and imminent.
- ▶ Preventive actions are appropriate and feasible in the local context.
- ▶ There is sufficient operational capacity to act before the peak.

Some anticipatory actions may continue into Block 2 if the main objective remains mitigation in areas not yet fully impacted.

## BLOCK 2: RESPONSE ACTIONS

This block covers the period *during the peak of the drought crisis*, typically lasting **up to 12 months**. It includes core emergency activities aimed at meeting immediate survival needs and mitigating worsening impacts.

Response actions may include:

- ▶ Emergency water, food, or cash assistance.
- ▶ Health services, including nutrition and WASH.
- ▶ Continued support for drought-stressed livelihoods.

If applicable, certain mitigation activities from Block 1 may continue in Block 2, provided it is clearly demonstrated that they continue to save lives and reduce risk.

To be eligible, the National Society must provide:

- ▶ Verified analysis of the peak crisis period and its humanitarian consequences.
- ▶ A plan that links response actions with clear, outcome-focused objectives.

## BLOCK 3: EARLY RECOVERY ACTIONS

This phase begins as the peak crisis subsides and focuses on helping communities *transition to recovery*. Activities are designed to restore livelihoods, rebuild coping mechanisms, and prevent reliance on prolonged emergency aid.

Typical early recovery actions include:

- ▶ Rehabilitation of water points or infrastructure.
- ▶ Distribution of climate-resilient seeds or restocking of livestock.
- ▶ Multipurpose cash grants for asset recovery.
- ▶ Support to community groups or cooperatives.

National Societies must demonstrate that they:

- ▶ Have capacity and local access to deliver recovery activities.
- ▶ Can show how these actions build on earlier phases and contribute to sustainability.



## TRANSITION PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT

A transition plan is a mandatory element of all Drought DREF operations. It must outline how the operation will shift from response to recovery, and how results will be sustained beyond the end of the intervention. This plan should be updated regularly and is the responsibility of the DREF Operations Project Manager, with support from the regional operations team.

Given the potential for drought impacts to vary by location and time, National Societies may implement different blocks simultaneously in different regions, as long as the implementation strategy remains coherent and justified.

This phased structure helps ensure that Drought DREF operations remain relevant, time-bound, and focused on delivering meaningful support at each stage of the crisis. It also prevents operations with minimal activities from remaining open longer than necessary, reinforcing the DREF's principles of timeliness and accountability.

## 4.7.5 DREF LOAN – ADDITIONAL MONITORING CONSIDERATIONS

The DREF Loan is considered reimbursable. Reimbursement is triggered once the Emergency Appeal receives cash contributions equivalent to 200% of the DREF loan amount. Within the first six months of the Emergency Appeal's operating timeframe, the **DREF Appeal Manager** and **Finance Business Partnering Unit** monitor contributions and initiate reimbursements. They also keep the Emergency Appeal Manager informed of the status.

If the 200% target is not reached within six months, a partial or complete reimbursement plan must be agreed between the DREF Appeal Manager and the Emergency Appeal Manager. At the closure of the Emergency Appeal, any remaining balance must be returned to the DREF, up to the value of the unreimbursed loan.



## 4.8 REVISIONS, REPORTING, AND CLOSURE

### 4.8.1 CHANGES AND REVISIONS

During implementation, the operating context may shift, requiring adjustments to the original DREF plan. These adjustments, known as **revisions**, allow National Societies and IFRC teams to respond to new information, extended needs, or changes in scale. Revisions may be required in the following situations:

- ▶ A need for additional funding due to increased or new humanitarian needs.
- ▶ A timeframe extension, allowing more time to complete planned activities.
- ▶ A change in operational scope, often linked to a deterioration in the situation or a necessary shift in approach.

#### | DREF OPERATIONAL UPDATE

In cases where the operation is longer than 6 months or it undergoes significant revisions, a formal DREF Operational Update must be prepared and published. This can be done using a template available on the **GO Platform**, and is mandatory when:

- ▶ The operation duration is longer than six months.
- ▶ The National Society requests additional funding.
- ▶ The operation requires a timeframe extension.
- ▶ There is a major change in scope that involves a budget revision.

Operational updates must be approved by the Regional Office 15 days before the closure of the operation. Once approved, the Update will be published on the IFRC website within one working day.



#### REQUESTING ADDITIONAL DREF FUNDING

If humanitarian needs expand or escalate beyond what was originally planned, a National Society may request additional DREF funding, provided this remains within the standard funding thresholds.

The implementation rate, or “burn rate”, of the ongoing operation is a key part of the request. This means the National Society must provide in the checklist and operations how the original funds have been utilised to date, demonstrating that implementation is progressing efficiently and in line with the initial timeframe. This request follows the same review and approval process as the original DREF request and must include an updated operational plan and budget to reflect the increased scope of activities.

#### Examples:

In the 2022 South Sudan floods, the National Society conducted a rapid analysis of stocks and local capacity, concluding that a DREF allocation was necessary to address urgent shelter needs.

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Following the 2023 landslides in Nepal, the National Society developed a DREF request using a results-based framework, involving sectoral teams and local branches in planning.

During Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu (2020), the National Society requested an Emergency Advance Payment to immediately mobilize relief teams before the DREF was fully approved.

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In the 2021 Madagascar drought, the National Society identified the need for additional assessments in remote areas and requested a DREF budget extension to support these field missions.



### REQUESTING A TIMEFRAME EXTENSION

Where an operation cannot be completed within the originally approved timeframe, a formal extension request must be submitted via DREF Operations Update on GO or email by the National Society or DREF Operation Manager to the Regional Office and approved at least **15 days before the end date** of the operation. For timeframe extensions only, initial approval may be sought via email. Once this initial approval is obtained, an official DREF Operations Update must then be submitted to formalise the request.

Timeframe extensions are reviewed and submitted by the DREF Regional Focal Point to the DREF Global Team.

The request must:

- ▶ Explain why additional time is needed.
- ▶ Propose a new end date (always set at the end of the month).

Approval of the extension **not involving additional funding** depends on the timing of the request:

If the request is made more than 15 days before the end of the operation, approval is provided by the DREF Global Team.

If the request is submitted within the final 15 days of the operation, approval is required from the DREF Appeal Manager.

If the extension also **involves additional funding**, the request follows the full review process – the same as the original DREF request.



### REQUESTING A CHANGE IN OPERATING SCOPE

In some cases, the context may shift so significantly that the operation must change in scope, such as expanding to new areas, revising activities, or adjusting targeting. Such changes may also require a budget revision.

If such a change is required, the National Society must submit a revised plan and budget via a DREF Operations Update to the DREF Appeal Manager. The request will then follow the same review process as the original DREF request.

If the revised budget results in a decrease in overall costs, the original DREF allocation must be adjusted accordingly and any unused funds returned to the DREF at the end of the implementation.

The DREF Operations Project Manager is responsible for updating the WBS in the Ready system and initiating a revised PEAR to reflect the approved changes.

## SCALE-UP TO EMERGENCY APPEAL (WITH A DREF LOAN)

If the situation deteriorates further and the National Society formally requests international assistance through an IFRC Emergency Appeal, the DREF operation transitions into the Emergency Appeal structure.

In such cases:

- ▶ The existing Appeal Code is retained, ensuring continuity.
- ▶ All DREF allocations made to date are converted into a DREF Loan.
- ▶ This transition ensures that DREF funding is used for immediate response and then reimbursed once donor funding is secured through the Emergency Appeal.

## DREF LOAN – SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

### ADDITIONAL AND RENEWED LOANS

There are two situations where further DREF Loans can be requested:

#### ADDITIONAL LOANS (WITHIN THE FIRST 3 MONTHS)

If the scale of the disaster exceeds early estimates, additional allocations may be requested within the first three months of the Emergency Appeal. These are treated as part of the original loan and must be reimbursed within six months of the Emergency Appeal's launch.

The total value of the original and additional loans combined must not exceed CHF 2,000,000.

#### RENEWED LOANS (AFTER FULL REIMBURSEMENT)

If the Emergency Appeal is relaunched, due to an increase in needs or the need to renew donor interest, and the original DREF Loan has been fully reimbursed, a new DREF Loan may be requested. The same threshold and reimbursement rules apply.

Reimbursement for renewed loans begins once 200% of the new loan amount has been received in cash contributions, within six months of the new loan's approval date.

At no point should an Emergency Appeal hold more than CHF 2,000,000 in total DREF Loan value.

### EMERGENCY RECLASSIFICATION

In cases where an Emergency Appeal was initially classified as a Yellow or Orange operation - and a Response DREF grant was already provided - but later reclassified as Red, **any additional DREF funding disbursed after the reclassification is treated as a DREF Loan.**

To maintain clarity in financial reporting:

- ▶ The original Response DREF grant retains its own separate project code.
- ▶ The new DREF Loan is recorded under a separate project code linked to the Emergency Appeal and supported by multilateral contributions.

Together, the combined value of the DREF grant and loan must not exceed CHF 2,000,000.



### Example:

1. An **Orange**-categorised Emergency Appeal is launched on 15.02.2024
2. The National Society applies for **Response DREF** of CHF 750,000, approved on 25.02.2024, allocated to **Project Pcc001**.
3. On 07.04.2024, the Emergency Appeal is re-classified to **Red**.
4. On 07.04.2024, an **additional DREF Allocation Request** is submitted for CHF 1,250,000, approved on 08.04.2024, allocated to **Project Pcc002**.

Only the DREF allocation processed after 07.04.2024 – CHF 1,250,000 shall be treated as a loan.

## 4.8.2 OPERATIONAL LEARNING

Operational learning is essential to improving disaster preparedness and response. Within the DREF mechanism, it ensures that the experiences, challenges, and achievements of each operation are captured and used to strengthen future responses. Embedding learning into the future planning cycles helps National Societies address unmet needs, improve timeliness, and deliver more effective support.

A key tool in this process is the Lessons Learned Workshop (LLW), which is a structured and participatory approach to reviewing operations and identifying practical improvements. Regardless of funding allocation type, all Response DREFs should conclude with a LLW focused on:

- ▶ Assessing the **relevance** of DREF operations – *Did the intervention meet its objectives, and were funds used effectively?*
- ▶ Identifying **operational successes and challenges** – *What worked well, and where were gaps in response capacity?*
- ▶ **Integrating learnings** into future National Society planning – Ensuring key takeaways inform future response and resilience-building efforts.

Lessons Learned Workshops should be held within the operational timeframe to be eligible for DREF funding. If that is not feasible, a no-cost extension may be requested. The LLW can also be facilitated after the end of the operational timeframe, but in such a case, costs would need to be covered by the National Society or partners. In addition, hosting the LLW too long after the implementation risks losing critical insights and momentum.

For Drought DREF operations, these workshops should directly inform the Transition Plan and guide donor engagement.



More information about operational learning and lessons learned workshop can be found in **Section 6.1** of the Guidelines.

### **4.8.3 CLOSURE AND FINAL REPORTING**

The final phase of a DREF-funded operation is critical for demonstrating accountability, closing financial and contractual obligations, and consolidating learning. Timely and accurate reporting and closure are not only administrative requirements, but they are also essential to preserving the credibility of the DREF mechanism and the IFRC's relationship with its donors and partners.

Important: as part of the reporting process, any integrity issues encountered during the operation must be clearly documented in the final report, along with the actions taken and mitigation measures implemented. This transparency is key to strengthening risk management and learning across the network.

#### **CLOSURE OF THE OPERATION**

Closure is a financial and administrative process that confirms the operation has been fully implemented and accounted for, and that all commitments have been fulfilled. The operation cannot be formally closed, and the final report cannot be published, until all financial transactions have been completed and any unspent funds have been returned.

Throughout the operation, the DREF Operations Project Manager is responsible for monitoring implementation and expenditure, with support from their Finance Officer. As part of the closure phase, they ensure that the National Society has reported on the use of funds in accordance with the Project Agreement and that there are no remaining commitments or provisions.

Once the DREF Operations Project Manager confirms the operation is ready to close, the Regional Finance and Administration team undertakes the following steps:

- ▶ Sets the project code to FROZEN in IFRC's Ready system, blocking any further expenditure.
- ▶ Reviews transactions to confirm they align with the approved budget and IFRC financial procedures.
- ▶ Issues the DREF Operation Standard Report, submitting it to the DREF Operations Project Manager, DREF Appeal Manager, DREF Regional Focal Point, and Regional PMER team (with copy to Finance Business Partnering Unit).

Following the publication of the Final Report, the Finance Business Partnering Unit initiates the return of any unspent balance to the DREF and formally closes all associated project and appeal codes.

#### **FINAL REPORTING**

The final reporting includes:

- ▶ A narrative report detailing implementation, challenges, results and outcomes /impact.
- ▶ A financial report from the National Society covering the use of DREF funds received.
- ▶ Documentation of lessons learned and forward-looking reflections.
- ▶ Supporting documentation, such as assessments or feedback reports (compiled and archived by the National Society).

A DREF Final Report is mandatory for all DREF-funded operations and must be completed and published no later than three months after the end of the approved implementation period. This deadline is fixed and cannot be extended, and is the date by which the report must be fully developed, reviewed, approved, and published. To meet it, the National Society must finalise and submit the required information for approval well in advance, allowing sufficient time for IFRC review and publication. The **GO platform** offers an interface for developing the narrative final report, an automatically generated form which incorporates information from the initial DREF application.

In cases where a Response DREF becomes part of a broader Emergency Appeal, the DREF-funded component must still be reported on separately. This ensures clarity and accountability for DREF donors, even within multilateral funding mechanisms.

Timely final reporting is a critical performance metric. National Societies with outstanding reports may face a reduction in funding thresholds for future DREF requests. Delays can also negatively affect the IFRC's ability to provide assurance to its donors and partners.



### **BEST PRACTICES FOR FINAL REPORTING**

It is strongly recommended that the report be co-drafted in a shared workspace, for example, SharePoint or Google Drive, before being entered into the GO platform. This approach enables collaborative input from National Society teams, IFRC programme and finance staff, and regional PMER colleagues.

Important: the final report deadline refers to the publication date, not the start of drafting. As such, teams should

schedule backwards from the deadline, allowing sufficient time for internal review, validation of financials considering IFRC financial period closure, and final approval. DREF Operations Project Managers should take this into account when drafting the Project Agreement, ensuring that reporting timelines are realistic and allow for adequate review and processing at both cluster and regional levels.

The following best practices are based on the **“Minimum RBM requirements for DREF”**, and will support the development of a comprehensive and credible report:

### **GENERAL GUIDANCE**

#### ▶ **Update application content**

Review the auto-generated content from the original DREF application. Remove sections that are no longer relevant, and revise the rest using past tense to reflect completed activities.

#### ▶ **Replace images and links**

Use photos taken during the implementation phase, and verify that any hyperlinks included in the report are active and functional.

#### ▶ **Include the final financial report**

Ensure that the most up-to-date and reconciled version is attached.

#### ▶ **Document continuity and learning**

Describe how lessons from previous similar operations influenced this response and were applied during implementation.

#### ▶ **Note on form instructions**

Please be aware that some sections of the final report form on GO may display instructions in the present tense. Despite this, content should be written in the past tense, as the report reflects completed activities.

## STRUCTURING THE NARRATIVE

### ▶ ***What happened, where, and when?***

Provide a concise summary of the event and its impact. Describe how the situation evolved by the end of the operation.

### ▶ **Scope and scale**

Outline the scale of the disaster at the outset. Highlight progress made and summarise the overall impact on communities and National Society capacity.

### ▶ **National Society actions**

Provide highlights of actions undertaken by the National Society with non-IFRC network funding, which complemented the intervention. Indicate the number of people reached and sectors supported with these resources.

### ▶ **IFRC and Partner National Society actions**

Summarise how IFRC and PNSs contributed to the response. Include figures on people reached and describe how this support enhanced the National Society's reach and capacity.

### ▶ **ICRC actions**

Include relevant actions undertaken by the ICRC to support the response and the number of people reached.

### ▶ **Other humanitarian actors**

Describe the contributions of external partners, including other NGOs, UN agencies, or government bodies. Note coordination mechanisms that were established or participated in, and whether these were still active at the end of the operation.

### ▶ **Identified needs**

Provide a sector-by-sector summary of needs

identified at the beginning of the response. Explain which needs remained unmet or partially addressed by the end of the operation.

### ▶ **Operational strategy and outcome/impact**

Present a summary of people reached and highlight the primary outcomes of the operation. Describe any implementation challenges and how they were addressed. Outline how support services (e.g., logistics, PMER, communications) were managed and how implementation was monitored. Reflect on general lessons learned and include any long-term plans or transition strategies linked to recovery or ongoing programming.

## SECTOR-SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATIONS

For each sector (e.g., Health, WASH, Shelter, Livelihoods), the report should include:

- ▶ Detailed reporting on each planned activity, including outputs and, where possible, the positive/negative changes of these actions (impact) on the affected population.
- ▶ Identification of sector-specific challenges and how they were resolved.
- ▶ Documentation of any outstanding or emerging needs at the time of closure.
- ▶ Highlighted successes and innovations that could inform future operations.
- ▶ Accurate and completed indicator tables, with supporting data archived in a shared folder (e.g. activity reports, satisfaction surveys, distribution lists).
- ▶ Clearly explained variances in achievement, especially when targets were exceeded or not met.

## FINANCIAL REPORTING

- ▶ Include an explanation for any budget revision that took place during the operation.
- ▶ For each budget line according to IFRC Financial Report Area of Focus, or Budget Category and Group where available, explain variances of  $\pm 10\%$  compared to the most recent approved version of the DREF budget. Also provide an explanation for unspent budget lines.
- ▶ Financial variances should be based on consolidated figures from both the National Society and IFRC expenditures.
- ▶ Ensure that the final reconciled financial report is submitted and clearly linked to the narrative components of the report.

### 4.8.4 DROUGHT DREF – ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION

Unlike standard Response DREF, slow-onset crises such as droughts and food insecurity require extended transition planning to avoid dependency and support long-term resilience. That is why, under the Drought DREF parameter, National Societies are required to develop and submit a Transition Plan. This plan should outline how short-term emergency efforts will connect to longer-term recovery and development goals. Where possible, the Transition Plan should be annexed to the DREF Final Report, as this helps promote it to donors and partners. In addition, the Transition Plan can serve as a valuable input into Unified Planning processes, supporting coordinated follow-up and continuity of action beyond the DREF operation itself.

A strong Transition Plan is grounded in the following considerations:

#### ▶ **National Society strategy and annual planning**

The foundation of any transition must be the National Society's own strategy and priorities. Localisation and National Society leadership remain central to IFRC-supported actions. The Transition Plan should align with the National Society's interests, capacities, partnerships, and strategic direction, ensuring national ownership and coherence with annual planning cycles.

#### ▶ **Membership coordination**

Although it may be difficult to identify longer-term opportunities in the earliest stages of an operation, it is important to begin these conversations as soon as the peak of the emergency has passed, typically around three months into implementation. Transition planning offers an opportunity to coordinate more strategically with Movement partners to identify complementary activities, shared priorities, and joint resource mobilisation.

#### ▶ **External coordination**

Many medium- and long-term needs arising from an emergency will fall outside the scope or mandate of the National Society or Movement partners. The Transition Plan should clearly identify where ongoing needs exist and where coordination with non-Movement actors—such as government agencies, UN bodies, or development organisations—is necessary. Highlighting these external linkages helps position the National Society within broader response and recovery efforts.

#### ▶ **Business continuity and long-term risk**

Drought operations and other protracted crises often take place in complex environments where risks are interconnected and continually

evolving. While not all risks can be anticipated or fully mitigated, the Transition Plan should incorporate a simple risk triage approach to help prioritise activities and remain agile. This

may involve identifying critical services that must be maintained or outlining how the operation could rapidly adjust if new or emerging needs arise.

### REPORTING PHASE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (GENERAL)

ROLES	RESPONSIBILITIES
National Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensure timely development of the Final report on the operation with support from the IFRC Operation management team.</li> <li>▶ Explain expenditure variances on the budget.</li> </ul>
IFRC Operation Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Liaises with the implementing NS on matters related to the final report's review and validation.</li> <li>▶ Coordinates technical inputs from the Delegation into the final report.</li> <li>▶ Submits the DREF Narrative and Financial reports to Regional DREF and/or Ops Co for report validation process.</li> </ul>
IFRC Delegation Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Validates NS and IFRC expenses in ERP.</li> <li>▶ Support the Operation manager with explaining expenditure variances.</li> <li>▶ Submit a consolidated financial report to the Regional Finance Unit analysts for validation.</li> </ul>
IFRC Regional Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Validates the consolidated financial report and proceed with financial closure.</li> </ul>
IFRC Delegation PMER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Coordinates technical inputs from the Delegation into the final report.</li> <li>▶ Reviews the final report to ensure quality, including flagging the discrepancies between implemented and planned actions and indicator targets and actuals using the monitoring plan.</li> <li>▶ Supports with filling out the final report forms on GO based on NS provided information and reports, if this support is requested by the implementing NS.</li> <li>▶ Submits the DREF Narrative and Financial reports to Regional PMER, DREF and/or Ops Co for the report validation process, if this support is requested by the Operation Manager.</li> </ul>
IFRC Regional PMER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ In coordination with the Regional DREF focal point and/or Operations coordinator, validates the final report.</li> <li>▶ Supports final editing and publishing of operation update(s) and/or final report on ERP.</li> <li>▶ Ensures updated and accurate reporting schedule on ERP.</li> </ul>
IFRC Regional DREF Focal Point (or Ops Coordinator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Reviews the final report and coordinates regional review processes to ensure quality in alignment with planned actions and DREF Procedures.</li> </ul>
IFRC DREF Global Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Reviews the final report published to inform DREF Master data sheet and DREF Issue Register.</li> </ul>

## 4.9 SUMMARY OF THE KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE RESPONSE PILLAR

### --- Affected people

All those whose lives and livelihoods have been impacted as a direct result of the shock or stress (floods, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, droughts, etc.).

### --- Allocation threshold

This refers to the maximum funding limits set for DREF response operations, determined by the scale and categorisation of the emergency. These thresholds vary based on crisis category, which is guided by the IFRC Emergency Response Framework (i.e., CHF 500,000 for Yellow category emergencies, CHF 1,000,000 for Orange category emergencies).

### --- Appeal (Emergency Appeal, EA)

A larger-scale fundraising mechanism activated when the required humanitarian response exceeds DREF funding thresholds. A DREF Loan can be used as a start-up fund for an Emergency Appeal.

### --- Crisis categorisation

The IFRC classification system for emergencies, determining the funding thresholds and response modalities. Emergencies are classified as:

- ▶ Yellow (small-to-medium emergencies);
- ▶ Orange (larger emergencies requiring extended timeframes and resources – can also be an Emergency Appeal);
- ▶ Red (major crises triggering an Emergency Appeal).

For more details, please refer to the IFRC Emergency Response Framework (ERF) [here](#).

### --- DREF (Disaster Response Emergency Fund)

The IFRC's global emergency funding mechanism providing immediate financial support to National Societies for anticipation and rapid response to disasters.

### --- DREF Grant

In the case of the Response Pillar, a DREF grant is a financial provision for small-to-medium-scale emergencies that fully covers the budget within the established DREF funding limits, enabling National Societies to anticipate or respond to crises. Any unused funds remaining from this allocation must be reimbursed to the DREF at the end of the operation.

### --- DREF Loan

A reimbursable financial support provided to a National Society to start up an Emergency Appeal. The loan is repaid once donor contributions to the Emergency Appeal reach 200% of the amount provided by the DREF.

### --- Eligibility parameters

The set of conditions which must be complied with for a National Society to access DREF funding. These parameters include the scale of impact on communities, the timeliness of response provided by the National Society, the absence of alternative funding sources in-country, as well as the absence of pending reports due to the DREF for previous funds allocated.

### --- Operational timeline

The defined period during which a DREF response operation is implemented. Timelines vary depending on the crisis category, ranging from a maximum of 6 months (Yellow) to a maximum of 9 months (Orange) for response operations. For the specific case of Drought DREF operations, timelines could range from a maximum of 6 months, if intervention focuses on anticipatory actions, or a maximum of 12 months, if the intervention focuses on response actions. Where the National Society implements both anticipatory and response actions in a single Drought DREF operation, and depending on the scale of the operation, the maximum timeline is set at 18 months.

### --- Peak period (for Drought DREF)

The peak period in a crisis is when an existing situation worsens, potentially leading to a humanitarian emergency. This is often characterised by poor food consumption, crop and livestock losses, decreased water and fodder availability, or environmental degradation, amongst others. It often results in negative coping strategies, with more people or regions experiencing drought conditions within about six months. Identifying this period, with support from expert sources, is crucial for applying for the Drought DREF parameter to determine the crisis phase and necessary activities to implement.

### --- People in need (PIN)

Affected community members whose physical security, basic rights, dignity, living conditions or livelihoods are threatened or have been disrupted, **and** whose current level of access to basic services, goods and social protection is inadequate to re-establish normal living conditions with their accustomed means without additional assistance. In a nutshell, this group of people would not be able to recover without external assistance.

### --- People targeted

People who humanitarian actors aim or plan to assist.

### --- People reached

People who have received some form of assistance.

### --- Project Agreement (PA)

A contractual agreement between IFRC and the National Society outlining the approved budget, reporting obligations, and fund disbursement conditions for a DREF allocation.

### --- Protracted crisis and protracted disaster

Protracted crisis refers to a situation in which a population faces a prolonged period of instability, vulnerability, or humanitarian need due to a combination of factors such as conflict, displacement, recurrent disasters, food insecurity, economic collapse, or weakened governance. These crises typically last for months or years, often without a clear beginning or end, and may involve cyclical surges in humanitarian needs.

A protracted disaster is a type of protracted crisis characterised by long-term or recurrent exposure to natural or climate-related hazards, such as drought, floods, or epidemics, where the affected population's ability to recover is persistently overstretched, leading to chronic humanitarian needs.

### --- Readiness check

A pre-crisis preparedness assessment used by National Societies to evaluate their operational capacity for emergency response. Readiness checks are encouraged but not a prerequisite for DREF funding.

### --- Request for allocation form

It is the official IFRC authorisation document used within the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) mechanism to confirm and approve the release of funds to support a National Society's emergency operation.

It is completed after the DREF request has been reviewed and validated, and serves as the final step before the allocation is processed. In IFRC terms, it is an income reallocation request approved by the DREF Appeal Manager. It also serves to open project/appeal codes.

### --- Response DREF

A core funding allocation within the Response Pillar, enabling National Societies to mobilise resources swiftly for emergency relief operations, including shelter, food, health, and cash assistance, amongst others. The DREF for response also ensures provision of funding for gradual/slow-onset, sudden-onset and protracted disasters and crises.

Under the Response DREF, the ***Drought DREF*** funding allocation is an adaptation developed to specifically address community needs stemming from extended drought, food insecurity and water shortage emergencies.

### --- Response strategy

The operational plan that details the immediate interventions, targeting criteria, and implementation approach for a DREF-supported emergency response.

### --- Surge deployment

The mobilisation of additional personnel (national or international) to support a National Society in scaling up its response capacity during a crisis. DREF allocations can include funding for surge support when needed.

### --- Sudden-onset crisis

A sudden-onset disaster is a type of disaster that occurs rapidly and unexpectedly, triggered by natural or human-induced hazards. These events cause immediate and severe humanitarian impacts, requiring a rapid mobilisation of emergency response and relief efforts.

### --- Slow-onset crisis

IFRC-DREF defines a slow-onset disaster or crisis as one which manifests over several months or years, in a gradually incremental and often invisible process, imposing collective stress to affected communities and resulting in a wide humanitarian impact. Such disasters/crises often have unknown speed/ending timing and multiple drivers.

### --- Trigger date

The specific date that marks the start of a disaster event (sudden onset) or the escalation of a crisis (slow onset), used to determine eligibility and timeliness of a DREF response request.





# 5 Risk Management and Accountability

<b>5.1 RISK MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN IFRC-DREF</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>5.2 DEFINING RISK IN IFRC-DREF OPERATIONS</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>5.3 TOOLS AND PROCESSES</b>	<b>193</b>
▶ 5.3.1 Risk management tools	193
▶ 5.3.2 Operational monitoring and learning process	193
▶ 5.3.3 Collaborative risk oversight and assurance	194
<b>5.4 IMPACT ON OPERATIONS</b>	<b>195</b>
▶ 5.4.1 Timely allocation of funds and compliance-linked delays	195
▶ 5.4.2 Operational efficiency and learning from risk management	196
▶ 5.4.3 Financial and reputational consequences of poor risk management	197
<b>5.5 SCENARIOS AND CASE STUDIES</b>	<b>198</b>
▶ <b>SCENARIO 1:</b> Reduced DREF allocation due to an overdue report	199
▶ <b>SCENARIO 2:</b> Delayed reporting and its impact on future funding	200
▶ <b>SCENARIO 3:</b> Ineligibility for DREF allocation due to multiple overdue reports	201
▶ <b>SCENARIO 4:</b> Procurement delays and ineligible expenditures	202
▶ <b>SCENARIO 5:</b> Cash transfer programme without adequate risk mitigation	203
▶ <b>SCENARIO 6:</b> Strengthening risk management through learning	204
▶ <b>SCENARIO 7:</b> Child Safeguarding Risk	205

## 5.1 RISK MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN IFRC-DREF

The IFRC-DREF operates on the principle of the humanitarian imperative—providing rapid, early support to National Societies at the onset of a disaster. To do so effectively, risk management and accountability are fundamental. The Fund's risk appetite is shaped by the specific context and capacity of the requesting National Society, as well as the level of support provided by IFRC teams to ensure that funds are used transparently, efficiently, and in full compliance with IFRC policies and donor expectations.

**ACCOUNTABILITY is the foundation of trust and transparency in humanitarian action.** It ensures that IFRC-DREF funds are used effectively, reaching the most vulnerable communities without delay. By adhering to established policies and procedures, National Societies and IFRC Delegations help minimise the risks of mismanagement or inefficiency. Strong accountability mechanisms also maintain donor and stakeholder confidence, which is essential for sustaining funding and long-term support. Just as importantly, accountability fosters a culture of continuous improvement, encouraging the system to learn from past challenges and build on successes.

While risk management and accountability are critical to operational integrity, IFRC-DREF also recognises the need to maintain agility and responsiveness in emergency situations. Humanitarian response inherently involves taking calculated risks to ensure that assistance is provided rapidly and effectively. By integrating strong risk governance with flexibility, IFRC-DREF can continue fulfilling its humanitarian mandate

while safeguarding financial integrity and operational accountability. The balanced approach includes:

Higher risk appetite is accepted in life-saving emergencies, ensuring that funds are released quickly.

Structured risk mitigation measures (e.g., funding in tranches or funds disbursed with certain conditions including increased monitoring) are put in place to protect resources.

Adaptive risk management allows IFRC to modify strategies based on evolving operational challenges.

To reinforce accountability and manage operational risk, IFRC-DREF applies a risk-based approach to funding disbursements. In cases where a National Society has pending compliance issues or identified risks, funds may be released in tranches. This ensures that mitigation measures are put in place before full disbursement, allowing high-risk operations to proceed with greater oversight and improved safeguards.

The recent expansion of the IFRC-DREF has highlighted the need for a more structured and systematised approach to risk management, one that equips National Societies and IFRC Delegations to identify, mitigate, and manage risks while upholding high standards of accountability. Risk management and accountability are now integral to all DREF operations, supported by systematic risk tracking, rigorous compliance mechanisms, and real-time learning to ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered transparently, effectively, and with maximum impact.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN RECENT YEARS:



**Enhanced risk monitoring** – the development of real-time monitoring systems, such as the global IFRC-DREF Issue and Risk Register, allows for timely documentation and mitigation of risks.



**Stronger compliance mechanisms** – IFRC-DREF has introduced tiered compliance requirements, ensuring that National Societies with historical compliance challenges are given additional oversight and support.



**Risk-informed funding allocation** – IFRC-DREF has shifted towards a risk-based approach, where fund disbursement is linked to National Society performance and accountability records.



**Collaboration with internal oversight bodies** – the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) works closely with IFRC-DREF to conduct regular audits, financial reviews, and risk assessments.



**Operational learning initiatives** – a dashboard compiling lessons learned from past IFRC-DREF-supported operations ensures that risk mitigation strategies are continuously improved.



## 5.2 DEFINING RISK IN IFRC-DREF OPERATIONS

**RISK** is defined as the effect an uncertainty has on the objectives of the organization and can be both negative (threat) or positive (opportunity).

The IFRC is committed to identifying and analysing risks associated with activities and operations with the objective of maintaining a safe workplace, minimising losses, maximising opportunities, and developing appropriate risk treatment options for informed decision-making.



**Contextual:** events, factors or dynamics occurring in the broader environment which affect programming or operations yet are beyond the full control of IFRC.

**Example:** sudden escalation of conflict, political instability that hampers access, natural disasters that disrupt planned early actions, or government restrictions on international funding.



**Fiduciary:** risks arising from not managing finances according to requirements (e.g. internal financial procedures / donor financial reporting etc.) / funds not being used for intended purposes.

**Example:** unauthorised procurement during a DREF-funded operation, or a National Society failing to report on expenditure in line with IFRC standards.



**Operational:** risks arising from inadequate/failed internal processes including in procurement, HR, Finance, IT etc. Also includes “people risks”, i.e. risks to staff safety, unavailability of sufficient capacity and capability to achieve set objectives.

**Example:** delayed recruitment of surge personnel, insufficient logistics capacity to distribute prepositioned items, or staff exposed to danger in insecure environments.



**Reputational:** risks arising from negative publicity, public perception, or uncontrollable events to harm IFRC's reputation (global, regionally or in-country).

**Example:** *media reports of misused DREF funds, failure to act on time during a forecasted disaster, or perceived lack of coordination with local actors.*



**Safeguarding:** risks arising from sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment to the affected population, staff or volunteers due to IFRC funding or operations.

**Example:** *a failure to vet personnel deployed under DREF operations, or the absence of community-based complaints mechanisms.*



**Strategic:** risks arising from inappropriate policies, or failures to meet expectations or requirements of National Societies, donors and from other stakeholders.

**Example:** *a National Society may prioritise activities that are misaligned with the objectives of the Early Action Protocol or DREF criteria, leading to ineligible costs or limited impact.*



**Programme Delivery:** risks arising from inadequate operations / programme management or oversight, including risks to timely and effective delivery of programmes and operations including the capacity and capability of the NS through which we deliver (NS capacity, capability, systems, etc.).

**Example:** *a National Society lacking experience in cash assistance programming, or delays in early action due to incomplete readiness activities.*

## 5.3 TOOLS AND PROCESSES

Effective risk management and accountability in IFRC-DREF operations rely on a structured system of tools, processes, and frameworks. These mechanisms ensure that risks are identified, monitored, and mitigated while enhancing compliance and operational efficiency.

### 5.3.1 RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLS

IFRC-DREF has developed a suite of risk management tools that provide a data-driven approach to identifying and mitigating risks at different levels. These tools are designed to offer real-time monitoring, structured risk assessment, and evidence-based decision-making.

**Global IFRC-DREF Issue and Risk Register** is a centralized internal system used to document and monitor compliance issues and operational risks across DREF-supported operations.

**Risk Analysis One-Pagers** are concise, country-specific assessments developed to inform decision-making on IFRC-DREF operations by highlighting contextual, operational, fiduciary, and programme-delivery issues. They also inform the Eligibility, Compliance and Risk Management Review process by feeding into the checklist used during application review, including issues summarised in the one-pager.

**Quarterly Compliance Reviews** are regular analyses conducted by IFRC-DREF to provide an overview of compliance-related issues across DREF-supported

operations, identifying recurring risks, highlight both areas of concern and good practice, and promote transparency in how compliance is managed.

### 5.3.2 OPERATIONAL MONITORING AND LEARNING PROCESS

**Monitoring and learning** are essential for continuous improvement in IFRC-DREF operations. Several key processes ensure that challenges are documented, lessons are captured, and best practices are shared across National Societies.

**Operational Learning Dashboard** is a platform that compiles lessons learned from IFRC-DREF-supported operations since 2016. It captures challenges and learning across various areas with the aim of informing and improving future operations. By making these insights available to all National Societies and IFRC teams can learn from previous experiences, avoid repeated issues, and strengthen the quality and efficiency of emergency response.



More information on how operational learning contributes to improved decision-making and accountability can be found in the **Operational Learning section** of the Guidelines. The dashboard itself can be accessed [here](#).

**Operational Reviews** are regularly conducted for IFRC-DREF operations to promote global learning and improve the quality of small- to medium-scale disaster response. These reviews aim to identify successes, challenges, and lessons learned, helping to enhance compliance with IFRC-DREF Procedures, strengthen accountability and improve the overall efficiency of the funding process. Findings from reviews directly inform decision-making, process refinement and enhance accountability. Reviews can be carried out with support from Partner National Societies and other donors.

### **5.3.3 COLLABORATIVE RISK OVERSIGHT AND ASSURANCE**

While the IFRC-DREF team conducts its own oversight, reviews, and evaluations of DREF-funded operations, **the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI)** provides an independent layer of assurance on a risk-based basis as part of its broader mandate. This collaboration enhances risk awareness through joint efforts such as risk assessments, internal and external audits, and structured information exchange. The partnership helps strengthen the overall accountability framework of IFRC-DREF and contributes to continuous improvement and informed decision-making across the system.



## 5.4 IMPACT ON OPERATIONS



### 5.4.1 TIMELY ALLOCATION OF FUNDS AND COMPLIANCE-LINKED DELAYS

National Societies with a strong track record of compliance, timely reporting, and risk management benefit from faster fund approvals.

- ▶ When a National Society has a history of submitting accurate financial reports and adhering to operational timelines, IFRC-DREF is more likely to approve funding requests quickly.
- ▶ National Societies that have pre-approved supplier agreements, efficient procurement systems, and well-documented risk management plans can expedite implementation immediately after receiving funds.
- ▶ Transparent financial management and past compliance reduce the need for additional scrutiny, ensuring smooth and uninterrupted financial flow.

#### EXAMPLE OF A WELL-MANAGED FUND ALLOCATION:

A National Society submits a well-prepared DREF application, clearly outlining:

- ▶ A detailed operational plan with identified risks and mitigation strategies.
- ▶ A comprehensive procurement plan, ensuring timely purchase of relief items.
- ▶ A strong financial reporting history, giving IFRC confidence in its ability to manage funds.

*As a result, funding is approved swiftly, allowing for immediate mobilisation of aid.*

#### NEGATIVE IMPACT: POOR COMPLIANCE LEADS TO DELAYED OR CONDITIONAL FUNDING

National Societies with a history of late reporting, procurement delays, or financial mismanagement often face longer approval times or conditional funding.

- ▶ IFRC may require additional risk mitigation measures, such as fund disbursement in tranches rather than a full allocation upfront.
- ▶ Outstanding financial reports from past operations can cause a funding request to be delayed or rejected.
- ▶ Unclear or weak risk management strategies in the application process may lead to prolonged review and additional monitoring requirements.

#### EXAMPLE OF A DELAYED FUND ALLOCATION:

A National Society requests funding for flood response but has outstanding final reports from a previous DREF operation.

- ▶ The funding request is flagged for additional review.
- ▶ IFRC requires the National Society to submit missing reports and financial reconciliations before funds are approved.
- ▶ Delays in submission push back the disbursement timeline, reducing the effectiveness of the flood response.

*As a result, communities experience delays in receiving aid, and the National Society's credibility is impacted.*



## 5.4.2 OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND LEARNING FROM RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk-aware decision-making leads to better-prepared operations, improved resource allocation, and higher overall efficiency.

### POSITIVE IMPACT: RISK-INFORMED OPERATIONS IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

When risk assessments are embedded in operational planning, National Societies are better equipped to handle unforeseen challenges.

- ▶ Pre-assessed procurement processes ensure that relief items are delivered on time.
- ▶ Scenario planning and contingency measures allow teams to adapt quickly to shifting operational realities.
- ▶ Strong compliance frameworks mean teams can focus on delivering aid rather than managing administrative delays.

### EXAMPLE OF AN EFFICIENT OPERATION USING RISK LEARNING:

After facing procurement challenges in a previous operation, a National Society updates its supplier agreements, introduces faster procurement approval systems, and implements digital payment mechanisms for cash-based interventions.

- ▶ In its next DREF-supported operation, it executes procurement within the first 10 days.
- ▶ Aid reaches beneficiaries weeks earlier than in previous responses.

- ▶ The National Society spends less time on administrative corrections, improving overall efficiency.

*As a result, the response is faster, more effective, and better received by affected communities.*

### NEGATIVE IMPACT: POOR RISK AWARENESS CAUSES INEFFICIENCIES

When a National Society fails to identify and address operational risks, efficiency suffers.

- ▶ Delays in procurement lead to incomplete operations, or providing items when the need for them has passed.
- ▶ Weak financial controls result in misallocated funds, requiring time-consuming corrections.
- ▶ Lack of coordination with local partners causes duplication of efforts, reducing overall impact.

### EXAMPLE OF OPERATIONAL INEFFICIENCY DUE TO POOR RISK AWARENESS:

A National Society is allocated funding for an emergency food distribution.

- ▶ The procurement team underestimates demand, leading to stock shortages.
- ▶ Delivery logistics are not pre-arranged, causing delays and/or increase in cost related to transportation.
- ▶ A lack of pre-planned coordination with local authorities results in confusion about targeting.

*As a result, the operation fails to meet its intended objectives, affecting trust in the National Society's capacity to respond effectively.*



### 5.4.3 FINANCIAL AND REPUTATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF POOR RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management and accountability are **not just internal concerns**—they have significant financial and reputational implications.

#### **POSITIVE IMPACT: STRONG FINANCIAL CONTROLS STRENGTHEN DONOR CONFIDENCE**

- ▶ IFRC-DREF and donors prioritise funding to a National Society that demonstrates sound financial management.
- ▶ A National Society that submits detailed, timely, and accurate reports gains credibility and future funding opportunities.
- ▶ Well-managed finances mean fewer audits, less administrative burden, and more focus on humanitarian response.

#### **EXAMPLE OF A NATIONAL SOCIETY ENHANCING ITS REPUTATION:**

A National Society implements a transparent cash transfer programme, using digital banking to ensure accountability and traceability.

- ▶ Every transaction is logged and verified, reducing the risk of fraud.
- ▶ IFRC recognises the strong financial controls, increasing funding allocations in future requests.

*As a result, the National Society is seen as a trusted partner, attracting further donor contributions.*

#### **NEGATIVE IMPACT: COMPLIANCE FAILURES LEAD TO FINANCIAL LOSS AND REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE**

- ▶ Delayed financial reporting can result in funding suspensions, affecting future humanitarian responses.
- ▶ Mismanagement of funds or non-compliance can lead to financial penalties or repayments.
- ▶ Repeated non-compliance damages the National Society's reputation, making it difficult to secure funding in the future.

#### **EXAMPLE OF FINANCIAL AND REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE:**

A National Society fails to provide clear documentation for procurement expenses in a DREF-supported response.

- ▶ IFRC is unable to verify whether funds were used appropriately.
- ▶ The National Society is required to return unaccounted funds, creating financial strain.
- ▶ Donors and stakeholders lose confidence, reducing future funding allocations.

*As a result, future response capacity is weakened, and the organisation's credibility suffers.*



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## 5.5 SCENARIOS AND CASE STUDIES

This following section presents real-world scenarios, illustrating both effective and challenging cases in IFRC-DREF-supported operations. By examining these scenarios, National Societies and IFRC Delegations can identify common pitfalls, implement best practices, and strengthen risk-informed decision-making.



## **SCENARIO 1: REDUCED DREF ALLOCATION DUE TO AN OVERDUE REPORT**

**SITUATION:** A National Society submits a DREF application.

However, during the review process, the IFRC DREF team notes that one final report for a previous Response DREF operation hasn't yet been submitted, having missed the submission deadline by nearly two months. While the report is close to finalisation, it is still considered overdue as it has not yet been submitted to the IFRC-Secretariat.

**As per the Procedures, the National Society is still eligible for funding but is informed that its maximum allocation threshold has been reduced to 75% of the usual threshold for its emergency categorisation.**

The application must be revised accordingly, reducing the scope of activities to align with the revised budget. This reduction negatively affects the humanitarian impact of the operation.

### **WHAT COULD HAVE GONE WRONG:**

- ▶ The National Society did not submit the final report for a previous Response DREF-funded operation on time.
- ▶ There was a lack of internal follow-up to ensure the report was finalised, reviewed, and submitted within the agreed deadline.
- ▶ The potential consequences of one overdue report, specifically, the reduction in funding thresholds, were not fully understood or planned for when preparing the new application.

### **CONSEQUENCES:**

- ▶ The planned allocation was cut by 25%, limiting the scale of the response and forcing difficult decisions about which activities to prioritise.
- ▶ Not all target communities could be reached, and some components (e.g. training or CEA activities) had to be postponed or removed.
- ▶ The team had to rapidly revise the plan and budget mid-process, creating time pressure and risking quality compromises.

### **LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES:**

- ▶ Submit reports within the deadline - ensure that all narrative and financial reports from previous Response DREF operations are finalised and submitted before applying for new allocations.
- ▶ Plan ahead for reporting - build report writing into the operation workplan and designate adequate time and human resources for data collection, analysis, and drafting. If the National Society does not have sufficient capacity, a PMER surge can be requested, or a hire made through the operation.
- ▶ Monitor DREF reporting thresholds closely - use the DREF Procedures and Guidelines as a checklist before application to avoid surprises during compliance review.
- ▶ Engage early with the IFRC - if reports are pending, be transparent with the IFRC and proactively discuss the implications for upcoming applications. A clear reporting plan may help mitigate negative impacts.



## **SCENARIO 2: DELAYED REPORTING AND ITS IMPACT ON FUTURE FUNDING**

**SITUATION:** A National Society receives DREF funding to respond to a disaster. At the end of the timeframe, the operation is satisfactorily implemented. However, due to competing priorities and a lack of structured reporting mechanisms, the final report is submitted five months after the reporting deadline. It should be noted that the National Society had also submitted the final reports for other recent DREF operations with a delay.

After the latest report was submitted with the five-month delay, the National Society submits a new funding request for another emergency operation. As part of the review process, IFRC assesses its previous compliance history and flags the report from the earlier operation, which was submitted late. This raises concerns about the National Society's ability to manage funds efficiently and comply with IFRC-DREF reporting requirements.

**As a result, the new funding request is subjected to additional scrutiny, delaying the fund disbursement and causing operational slowdowns in the new emergency.**

### **WHAT COULD HAVE GONE WRONG:**

- ▶ The National Society did not have an internal tracking system to ensure reporting deadlines were met.
- ▶ There was a lack of coordination between operations and finance teams, which caused delays in finalising financial reconciliation.
- ▶ The team underestimated the impact of delayed reporting on future funding requests.

### **CONSEQUENCES:**

- ▶ Delayed access to funds for the new operation – the extended review process postpones critical humanitarian interventions, affecting vulnerable communities.
- ▶ Increased monitoring requirements – IFRC imposes additional oversight, requiring more frequent updates and justifications for fund utilisation, adding an administrative burden to the National Society.
- ▶ Reduced donor confidence – late reporting can negatively impact IFRC's ability to demonstrate transparency and accountability to donors, potentially influencing future contributions.

### **LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES:**

- ▶ Prioritise timely reporting – National Societies should establish internal reporting timelines that ensure all financial and operational reports are finalised before the official IFRC deadline.
- ▶ Assign a dedicated reporting focal point – a designated team or individual should be responsible for monitoring reporting deadlines, compiling necessary financial and narrative data, and ensuring submission readiness.
- ▶ Engage IFRC early – if reporting delays are anticipated due to unforeseen circumstances, the National Society should communicate with IFRC immediately to discuss potential mitigations and avoid funding repercussions.



### **SCENARIO 3: INELIGIBILITY FOR DREF ALLOCATION DUE TO MULTIPLE OVERDUE REPORTS**

**SITUATION:** A National Society has implemented several DREF-funded operations over the past years. However, due to internal staffing constraints, competing priorities, and inconsistent follow-up, the National Society has accumulated a backlog of overdue final reports for three previous Response DREF operations.

Despite the delayed reports, the National Society submits a new Response DREF application. The operation is time-sensitive and aims to deliver urgent assistance, including shelter materials, clean water, and first aid.

Upon submission, the IFRC team identifies that three reports remain overdue at the time of submission - beyond the maximum threshold allowed under the DREF Procedures. **As a result, the National Society is informed that it is not currently eligible to receive a new DREF allocation.**

#### **WHAT COULD HAVE GONE WRONG:**

- ▶ The National Society failed to submit final reports for three previous response operations within the three-month deadline following operational closure.
- ▶ Internal reporting processes were not strengthened despite repeated delays.
- ▶ The Procedures outlining eligibility thresholds related to overdue reports were not actively monitored or followed by the National Society.

#### **CONSEQUENCES:**

- ▶ The application for the new emergency response is not accepted due to non-compliance with reporting requirements.
- ▶ The inability to access DREF funding slows down relief activities, affecting already vulnerable flood-affected communities.
- ▶ The National Society's reputation is impacted, both with the IFRC and with donors, raising concerns about accountability and risk management.
- ▶ Efforts must now be redirected to urgently finalise overdue reports to restore eligibility, delaying forward-looking planning and partnerships.

#### **LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES:**

- ▶ Institutionalise reporting compliance tracking - introduce automated systems or shared calendars that monitor and flag upcoming reporting deadlines and required documentation.
- ▶ Assign accountability for report closure - allocate clear responsibilities to specific departments or individuals to manage and submit both narrative and financial reports on time.
- ▶ Proactively communicate with IFRC - if reports are delayed due to exceptional circumstances, notify the IFRC immediately and share a realistic submission plan to maintain transparency and mitigate operational risks.
- ▶ Understand and apply the DREF eligibility thresholds - familiarise yourself with the DREF Procedures and assess how pending obligations could impact future access to funding.



## **SCENARIO 4: PROCUREMENT DELAYS AND INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES**

**SITUATION:** A National Society receives DREF funding to procure essential relief items such as food, hygiene kits, and shelter materials. However, procurement takes longer than expected, for several reasons:

- ▶ The National Society's supplier selection process is slow, with delays in gathering quotations and approvals.
- ▶ The items require additional quality control checks, which are prolonged due to limited laboratory capacity.
- ▶ The National Society's internal financial authorisation procedures are cumbersome, requiring multiple levels of approval before purchase orders can be issued.

**By the time the procurement process is completed, the DREF operational timeframe has ended, making the expenditures ineligible for reimbursement.**

### **WHAT COULD HAVE GONE WRONG:**

- ▶ No clear procurement plan was in place, leading to avoidable delays.
- ▶ Lack of communication between logistics and operations teams resulted in misalignment between response activities and procurement timelines.
- ▶ The National Society did not escalate procurement challenges to IFRC early enough to explore potential solutions.

### **CONSEQUENCES:**

- ▶ The National Society is unable to claim these costs, which creates a financial strain on its own budget.
- ▶ The relief supplies arrive too late to be useful for the intended beneficiaries, reducing the effectiveness of the humanitarian response.
- ▶ IFRC requires additional justifications for expenditure eligibility, increasing the administrative burden on both the National Society and IFRC reviewers.

### **LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES:**

- ▶ Conduct a pre-assessment of procurement needs – before applying for DREF funding, National Societies should assess potential procurement challenges and ensure that realistic timelines are factored into the response plan.
- ▶ Develop pre-approved supplier agreements – establishing framework agreements with pre-vetted suppliers enables faster procurement during emergencies.
- ▶ Ensure procurement teams are fully aware of DREF timeframes – training finance and logistics teams on DREF procedures can prevent ineligible expenditures.



## **SCENARIO 5: CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME WITHOUT ADEQUATE RISK MITIGATION**

**SITUATION:** A National Society decides to implement cash assistance as part of its emergency response. However, **the operation fails to conduct a risk assessment before launching the programme**, leading to:

- ▶ Inadequate verification of beneficiary lists – some ineligible individuals receive funds, while some intended recipients are left out.
- ▶ Weak monitoring mechanisms – there is no system in place to track whether cash transfers were successfully received by beneficiaries.
- ▶ Reports of discrepancies – some beneficiaries complain that they received less than the promised amount, raising concerns of potential fraud.

### **WHAT COULD HAVE GONE WRONG:**

- ▶ No fraud mitigation measures were in place before the operation started.
- ▶ The National Society underestimated the risk of poor targeting and fund mismanagement.
- ▶ There was no real-time tracking of financial transactions, creating accountability gaps.

### **CONSEQUENCES:**

- ▶ IFRC flags the operation for financial mismanagement concerns, reporting it to the leadership. If the scope of mismanagement was significant, it may result in starting an internal investigation.
- ▶ Community trust in the National Society declines, as irregularities create tension and dissatisfaction.
- ▶ Additional financial audits and reporting requirements are imposed, increasing the administrative burden.

### **LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES:**

- ▶ Implement rigorous beneficiary verification – use clear eligibility parameters and multi-step verification to confirm recipient identities.
- ▶ Use secure digital payment systems – whenever possible, electronic transfers should be used to ensure traceability and prevent fraud.
- ▶ Conduct post-distribution monitoring – National Societies should track how funds are used, ensuring effectiveness and identifying any irregularities.



## SCENARIO 6: STRENGTHENING RISK MANAGEMENT THROUGH LEARNING

**SITUATION:** A National Society successfully implements a DREF-funded operation in response to a natural disaster. The operation delivers critical assistance on time, providing shelter materials, hygiene kits, and cash assistance to affected communities. However, several operational challenges arise during the implementation:

- ▶ **Procurement delays:** the purchase of shelter materials takes longer than expected due to internal approval bottlenecks, slowing down distribution.
- ▶ **Limited community engagement:** some beneficiaries express dissatisfaction with the selection process, indicating that communication about eligibility parameters was insufficient.
- ▶ **Weak data management:** field teams struggle to keep track of distributions in real-time, delaying reporting and creating minor discrepancies in beneficiary numbers.

### WHAT COULD HAVE GONE WRONG:

- ▶ Lack of streamlined procurement approvals, which delayed the timely distribution of materials.
- ▶ Inadequate communication with affected communities, leading to misunderstandings and dissatisfaction.
- ▶ Manual data collection methods resulted in inaccuracies, making reporting and accountability more difficult.

### ACTIONS TAKEN:

Instead of overlooking these issues, the National Society takes a proactive approach to learning and improvement:

- ▶ Conducting a lessons learned workshop – after completing the operation, the National Society organises an internal review session with key stakeholders, including IFRC representatives, operational staff, and finance teams.
- ▶ Updating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) – based on the identified challenges, the National Society revises its procurement procedures to introduce faster approval workflows and supplier pre-selection.
- ▶ Improving community engagement approaches – the team develops a community feedback mechanism, ensuring that affected populations can voice concerns before and during an operation.
- ▶ Strengthening data collection and monitoring – a new mobile data collection system is piloted, allowing field teams to update beneficiary records in real time, reducing future discrepancies.

### CONSEQUENCES:

- ▶ Future operations are executed more efficiently, minimising delays and improving overall response time.
- ▶ The National Society builds stronger community trust, as it incorporates feedback into its planning processes.
- ▶ Internal risk management capacity is strengthened, allowing the organisation

to manage future DREF-funded responses with greater confidence and accountability.

- ▶ The improvements lead to enhanced donor confidence, increasing the likelihood of securing future funding.

#### **LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES:**

- ▶ Document and share lessons learned – each DREF-funded operation should conclude with a structured review to capture successes, challenges, and best practices.
- ▶ Refine internal processes based on real-world experience – operational procedures should be continuously updated to address recurring challenges.
- ▶ Establish clear community feedback mechanisms – engaging with beneficiaries early reduces misunderstandings and enhances accountability.
- ▶ Adopt technology for data collection – using digital reporting tools enhances data accuracy, tracking, and transparency.



### **SCENARIO 7: ADDRESSING CHILD SAFEGUARDING RISK**

**SITUATION:** A National Society has submitted a DREF application.

During the review process, the IFRC DREF team receives information that a safeguarding incident involving children was reported during a Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) activity in a previous DREF-funded operation. While the National Society has initiated an internal inquiry, the case has not yet been fully documented, nor has a clear follow-up plan been submitted to the IFRC.

As per safeguarding procedures, the National Society remains eligible for funding, but additional due diligence is triggered. The application review process is paused until minimum safeguarding requirements are met (submission of incident documentation, action plan, and assurance of safe programming). This delay risks slowing down the launch of the operation and limiting the timeliness of the humanitarian response.

#### **WHAT COULD HAVE GONE WRONG:**

- ▶ Safeguarding incident occurred during a programme activity (e.g. PDM, community engagement, or service delivery) but was not documented or escalated in a timely manner.
- ▶ The National Society lacked a clear safeguarding focal point or trained staff to manage the incident.
- ▶ Reporting and accountability lines were unclear, delaying follow-up actions.
- ▶ There were no safe, accessible, and

child-friendly reporting mechanisms in place, or the one existing was not known to the communities.

- ▶ A child safeguarding risk analysis was not conducted during programme planning.
- ▶ The implications of safeguarding compliance for funding and operations were not fully understood.

### **CONSEQUENCES:**

- ▶ Delay in approval of the new DREF application, slowing the emergency response.
  - ▶ Increased reputational risk for the National Society and IFRC if safeguarding obligations are perceived as unmet.
  - ▶ Erosion of trust among affected communities, especially children and caregivers.
  - ▶ Staff and volunteers exposed to heightened stress due to lack of clear safeguarding procedures.
- ▶ Integrate safeguarding into planning: Child safeguarding risk assessment should be part of the design phase of all DREF operations (e.g. safe recruitment, safe programming, and clear complaint mechanisms).
  - ▶ Build awareness: Train staff, volunteers, and partners on safeguarding standards, reporting channels, and their responsibilities.
  - ▶ Engage early with IFRC: If an incident is under review, proactively share the status and planned actions with IFRC to avoid delays in compliance and funding.
  - ▶ Accessible Reporting Mechanisms: Ensure the presence of safe, confidential, accessible and child-friendly reporting mechanisms in all programme locations. These mechanisms must be widely communicated in appropriate languages and formats to adapt to individual needs of community members.
  - ▶ Institutional Learning: Conduct safeguarding reviews (case studies) post-incident resolution to build institutional knowledge and improve future safeguarding measures.

### **LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES:**

- ▶ Early reporting and escalation: Any safeguarding incident, no matter how minor it may seem, must be logged, reported, and acted upon immediately. Reporting obligations apply to all personnel and must be followed without delay as per IFRC policy.
- ▶ Safeguarding focal points: Ensure that a trained safeguarding focal point is assigned for every DREF operation and is known to staff, volunteers, and communities.

Relevant resources to take into account:

- ***IFRC PSEA Policy (2024)***
- ***IFRC Child Safeguarding Policy***
- ***IFRC Child Safeguarding Risk Analysis Tool***
- ***IFRC PGI Minimum Standards in Emergencies***
- ***IFRC Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool***



# 6 Operational Learning



<b>6.1 LESSONS LEARNED WORKSHOPS (LLW)</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>6.2 IFRC OPERATIONAL LEARNING PLATFORM</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>6.3 DREF OPERATIONAL REVIEWS</b>	<b>214</b>

Operational learning is essential for effective disaster preparedness and response. Within the DREF mechanism, the Operational Learning ensures that the experiences, successes, and challenges from each operation are captured, analysed, and used to strengthen future actions. Whether responding to a sudden crisis or implementing anticipatory action, every experience offers rich insights that can improve the next operation.

Learning is a forward-looking process. The value of documenting lessons is only realised when they are actively used to inform planning, readiness, and implementation. Too often, issues identified in past operations resurface in future ones due to a lack of follow-through. By embedding operational learning in the planning cycle, National Societies can avoid repeating past mistakes, address previously unmet needs, and implement more timely and impactful actions. There are three core tools and actions of operational learning:

- ▶ **Lessons Learned Workshops (LLW)**, which offer a structured, participatory process for reviewing operations.
- ▶ **The IFRC Operational Learning Platform**, a global space for sharing and accessing knowledge from across the Movement.
- ▶ **The DREF Operational Review**, an internal learning and quality assurance exercise designed to assess how DREF-funded operations are implemented and how they can be improved.

All components are designed to ensure that learning becomes part of how the IFRC and National Societies operate, not just after an intervention, but before the next one begins.

## 6.1 LESSONS LEARNED WORKSHOPS (LLW)

### **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

Lessons Learned Workshops (LLW) offer National Societies a structured opportunity to reflect on operations supported by DREF. Their primary purpose is to look back at the implemented operation and capture what went well, identify challenges, and co-develop practical recommendations for improvement. LLW create a space for honest reflection across all levels of the National Society, from volunteers and field staff to senior leadership and technical departments.



#### **SOME KEY OBJECTIVES OF LLW ARE:**

- ▶ Offer a space for internal and external stakeholders to meet and to share experiences implementing the response and learn from their different perspectives.
- ▶ Reflect on what happened versus what was planned.
- ▶ Identify operational successes and the reasons behind them.
- ▶ Understand the challenges encountered and their root causes.
- ▶ Develop practical and prioritised recommendations to strengthen future DREF-supported operations, whether anticipatory or response, sometimes feeding into internal yearly and contingency planning.

- ▶ Contribute to the revision and refinement of s/EAPs and Response Plans.
- ▶ Foster greater ownership and institutional understanding of DREF mechanisms across the National Society.
- ▶ Serve as a platform for team building and recognition of the contributions made during the operation.

The recommendations from LLW must feed directly into the planning of future operations. This prevents the recurrence of known issues and ensures that past gaps or oversights are addressed proactively.

### **WORKSHOP DESIGN AND APPROACH**

LLW are designed to be interactive, participatory, and inclusive. They prioritise dialogue over presentations and provide participants with diverse ways to contribute their experiences and insights.

An ideal two-day workshop (ideally in-person) may include:

- ▶ Participatory timeline exercise to reconstruct the activation and reflect on timing, coordination, and decision-making.
- ▶ Monitoring results presentation from target communities, comparing expectations with lived experiences.
- ▶ Interactive sessions to explore successes, challenges, and lessons across various thematic areas (e.g., logistics, internal coordination, CEA,

trigger analysis).

- ▶ Recommendation prioritisation using participatory voting (e.g., stickers or post-its);
- ▶ Funding linkage discussion, including IFRC's support mechanisms such as the Capacity Building Fund.
- ▶ Closing session to discuss the operationalization of recommendations, including responsibility assignment, timeline, and resource planning.

In exceptional settings, LLW can also be delivered virtually with adapted formats. Virtual sessions remain participatory by including tools like interactive whiteboards, polls, and breakout groups.

### **WORKSHOP OUTPUTS**

Every LLW should result in a clearly documented and actionable set of outputs:

- ▶ A **matrix** with identified successes, challenges and recommendations.
- ▶ Ranking of lessons, prioritising practical recommendations.
- ▶ Final report of the LLW.
- ▶ It is also recommended for the LLW to incorporate practical working sessions, such as review and update of SOPs based on the recommendations coming out of the LLW, contingency planning to scale up or down early actions (including, draft of proforma DREF request), or development of a proposal for financial support to address organisational or operational challenges highlighted during the LLW, from the IFRC's Capacity Building Fund (CBF) or any other donor to the National Society.

These outputs should be revisited when designing or revising any new DREF application to ensure learning is translated into operational improvements.

### **TIMING AND PARTICIPATION**

The LLW should be held within the operational timeframe to be eligible for IFRC-DREF funding. If that is not feasible, a no-cost extension may be requested to extend the operational timeframe. The LLW can also be facilitated after the end of the operational timeframe, but in such a case, the cost of the LLW would need to be covered by the National Society or partners. In addition, hosting the LLW too long after the activation risks losing critical insights and momentum.



#### **LLW SHOULD INVOLVE A CROSS-SECTION OF STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING:**

- ▶ Field volunteers and branch staff involved in the response.
- ▶ HQ technical departments and support services (e.g., finance, logistics, HR).
- ▶ Surge personnel and IFRC staff.
- ▶ Partner National Societies.
- ▶ Where appropriate, external stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, non-governmental organisations, community leaders, community members, Anticipatory Action Technical Working Group, Met Agency, etc.).

### **LEVERAGING SYNERGIES ACROSS FUNDING MECHANISMS**

Lessons learned often highlight structural or systemic gaps that require additional investment beyond what is covered under a single DREF allocation or the annual readiness budget. To help address such challenges, National Societies are encouraged to take a strategic approach to the suite of funding options available, including the Capacity Building Fund (CBF), the National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA), and the Empress Shôken Fund (ESF).

These mechanisms are complementary and interconnected. When used in a cohesive and planned manner, they can create a pathway from short-term emergency response to long-term development. The goal is to ensure that lessons learned from emergency operations are not only captured but also institutionalised to guide future organisational strategies and enhance National Society resilience. In doing so, emergency response becomes a catalyst for sustainable change.

The CBF, for example, provides grants of up to CHF 50,000 to support small-scale, short-term interventions aligned with seven priority pillars:

- ▶ Integrity, Transparency and Accountability
- ▶ Financial Sustainability
- ▶ Systems Development & Digital Transformation
- ▶ Youth Engagement and Development
- ▶ Volunteering Development
- ▶ Protection, Gender and Inclusion
- ▶ Branch Development

Findings from LLWs, such as challenges in volunteer engagement, digital systems, or financial planning, can inform targeted proposals under the CBF. These, in turn, can be further reinforced through multi-year investments from the NSIA, or innovation grants via the ESF. This layered approach enables National Societies to strengthen their systems over time, creating robust foundations that can adapt to changing needs and deliver more effective humanitarian action. To capitalize on the full potential of operational learning, it is recommended that National Societies and the IFRC collaborate to establish a system-wide repository of lessons learned across all funding streams. This would allow for better mapping of needs and opportunities, taking into account the specific value and purpose of each mechanism.

The IFRC-DREF plays a particularly pivotal role in this ecosystem. As the fastest and most accessible funding mechanism, it provides a foundation for identifying learning in real time. These insights can then be scaled up or addressed through other funds. At the same time, continuous organisational development, supported by additional funding mechanisms such as CBF, NSIA, or ESF, reinforces a National Society's readiness and capacity to respond, creating a virtuous cycle of learning, investment, and improved impact.

By fostering synergies across funding streams, the IFRC and National Societies can turn operational challenges into opportunities for strategic growth, embedding sustainability, strengthening systems, and ultimately delivering better, faster, and more localised assistance to communities in crisis.

For more information or support, National Societies may contact their regional DREF Focal Points.



## **EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS AND IMPACT EVALUATIONS**

While LLW serve as the main tool for internal reflection and learning, external evaluations and impact assessments may also be warranted in certain situations to generate broader, more evidence-based insights. It is not always necessary to do an external evaluation, particularly if the National Society has the capacity to monitor and evaluate the impact themselves, but the IFRC may support an external evaluation under the following conditions:

- ▶ The EAP covers a new hazard, or a new or innovative approach, for example a multi-hazard approach, or a regional approach.
- ▶ The early actions involve a novel forecast model or innovative activities with potential for cross-context learning.

Funding for such evaluations may be covered under the IFRC-DREF coordination budget. National Societies interested in conducting an external or impact evaluation should consult their regional DREF focal point or the Anticipatory Pillar global team for guidance and support.

## 6.2 IFRC OPERATIONAL LEARNING PLATFORM

### WHAT IS THE IFRC OPERATIONAL LEARNING PLATFORM?

The IFRC Operational Learning Platform is an interactive space hosted on [go.ifrc.org](https://go.ifrc.org), designed to capture, share, and summarise learning from DREF-supported operations, and draws from over 800 operations, extracting more than 13,600 learning insights.

The platform plays a key role in ensuring that experiences and innovations from one context can inform practice elsewhere, building collective knowledge across the Membership. It is a central resource for operational staff, technical leads, and decision-makers who want to strengthen preparedness and response activities through evidence-based learning.

**A National Society is strongly encouraged to use the Operational Learning Platform when preparing a DREF application.** Reviewing past learning from their own past operations and from other National Societies in similar contexts can help identify recurring gaps, reinforce what has worked well, and ensure that lessons previously documented are actively addressed. This step can improve the quality and effectiveness of future operations and help avoid recurring challenges.

### KEY FEATURES OF THE PLATFORM



#### Advanced search and filtering

- users can explore operational learning by region, disaster type, sector, PER component, and learning type.



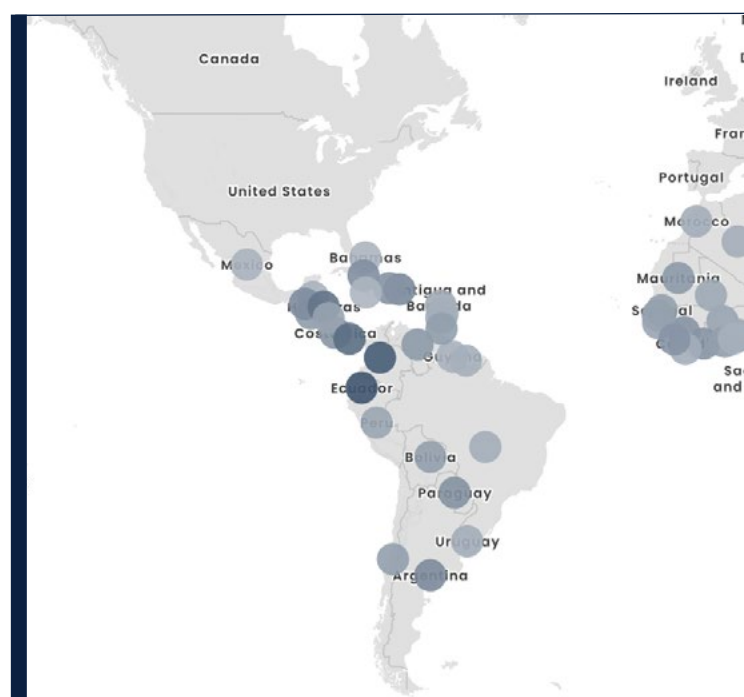
#### AI-generated extracts

- the platform uses AI/ Large Language Models to summarise key insights from IFRC reports, based on selected filters.



#### Visual data insights

- maps and graphs show learning distribution by geography, time, and sector.



mapbox Sources: ICRC, UN CODs

Learning count 0 593

### Summary of learning

#### Empowering Local Volunteer Capacity

The importance of training and empowering local volunteers highlighted across multiple responses in Afghanistan, with reports indicating that newly recruited staff faced challenges due to inexperience during the July 2022 floods. Capacity

## 6.3 DREF OPERATIONAL REVIEWS

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

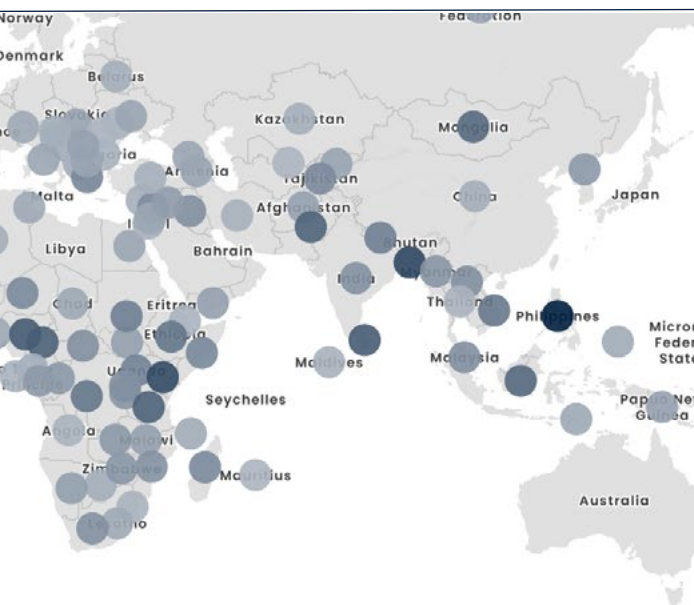
DREF Operational Reviews are internal exercises focused on learning and quality assurance. They evaluate how DREF-funded operations are carried out and identify opportunities for improvement. By capturing actionable insights from emergency responses, these reviews support National Societies in enhancing their practices, while also generating evidence that strengthens operational processes, decision-making, and accountability for the IFRC-DREF management.

### DESIGN AND APPROACH

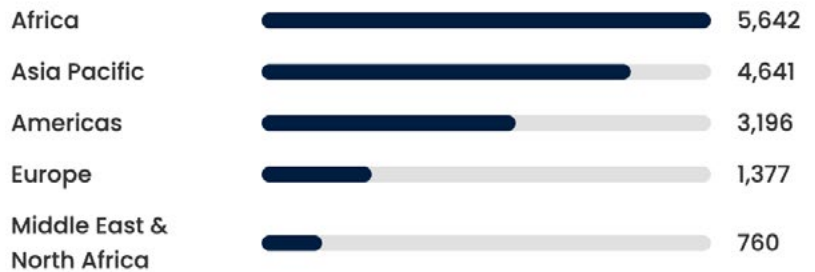
Operational reviews are designed to be flexible, light, and aligned with the IFRC Framework for Evaluations. They are not formal evaluations but are structured to generate actionable insights. There are two sub-types of Operational reviews:

**Thematic Reviews:** Focus on recurring disaster types or strategic themes to assess broader impact and relevance for DREF funding.

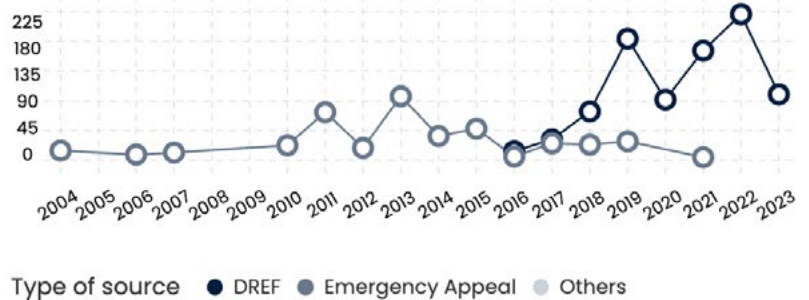
**Process Reviews:** Examine how DREF processes (e.g., allocation, access, implementation) affect operational efficiency and quality.



#### Learning by regions



#### Sources over time



### Community Engagement is Crucial

Effective community engagement strategies emerged as a vital component in emergency response operations across various reports. In Afghanistan, the affected populations expressed the need for additional support beyond the

### Addressing Long-term Needs

There is a clear trend indicating that immediate response efforts must be complemented by long-term strategies addressing community vulnerabilities. Reports from Afghanistan on drought and flash floods highlight that while

The operational reviews combine desk review, stakeholder interviews, and field visits (where applicable), and recommends the use of standardized tools and templates from the DREF Operational Review Toolbox.

DREF operational review criteria are aligned with IFRC Framework for Evaluation and OECD-DAC Evaluation criteria. These include Relevance & Appropriateness, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Coverage, Impact, Innovation, Connectedness, Equity, Protection & Safety, Sustainability.

### **KEY FEATURES OF DREF OPS REVIEWS**

- ▶ *Evidence-based*: grounded in data and stakeholder input.
- ▶ *Learning-focused*: designed to inform future operations and strategic planning.
- ▶ *Accountability-oriented*: supports transparency and donor confidence.
- ▶ *Flexible and scalable*: adaptable to different contexts and operational needs.
- ▶ *Digitalized Tools*: streamlined processes through updated review toolbox.
- ▶ *Linked to Evaluation Standards*: aligned with IFRC's evaluation principles and criteria.

### **TIMING AND PARTICIPATION**

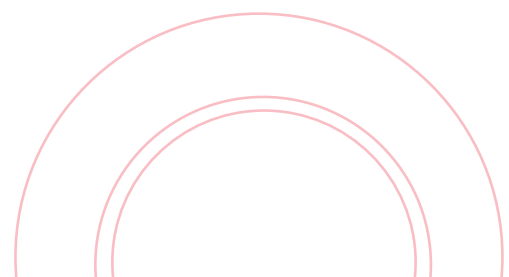
DREF Ops reviews can be conducted at any stage of an operation (not limited to post-operation). They typically would be conducted for two to six months, however, timing is flexible as it depends on the scope, complexity and availability of IFRC/ NS or Partner staff.

With regards to participation, the DREF Ops reviews are generally (co)led by IFRC-DREF Team and/or DREF Advisory Group Members, with support from Regional and country-level IFRC staff, National Societies, Partner National Societies/ donors and technical experts (e.g., Health, WASH, Logistics). Recommended team size: 3–4 people per country, scalable as needed.

### **REPORT DISSEMINATION AND USE OF FINDINGS**

Internal and External Sharing: DREF Operational review reports are disseminated internally with the implementing National Societies, IFRC-DREF Team, Operations, PMER, and other relevant stakeholders. External versions may be prepared for donors and partners, with sensitive content adapted.

Utilization: DREF Ops review findings should inform future planning, policy, and operational decisions. Stakeholder feedback mechanisms are recommended to promote ownership and learning from these reviews, as such, a Management Response and Action Plan are recommended to ensure follow-up.





# **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.



**The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 15 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.