



DREF GUIDELINES

2020

© International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2020

Any part of this publication may be cited, copied, translated into other languages or adapted to meet local needs without prior permission from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, provided that the source is clearly stated.

All photos used in this document are copyright of the IFRC unless otherwise indicated.

Cover photo: © The American National Red Cross 2019

Address: P.O. Box 303, CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland

Telephone: +41 22 730 4222

Telefax: +41 22 733 0395

E-mail: secretariat@ifrc.org

DREF GUIDELINES
2020

CONTENTS

<u>About the DREF</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>DREF application process at a glance</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>How to apply for allocations from the DREF</u>	<u>8</u>
Assessment and decision to apply for DREF	8
Categorization of your event based on disaster type and onset	9
Timing of DREF requests	9
Communicating the situation and possible response	11
When developing the EPoA it is important to consider and focus on the following:	12
Defining operation timeframe	15
Eligible activities	15
Non-eligible activities	18
National Society fixed-rate and overhead costs	18
Developing the DREF budget	18
Programming standards	19
Surge personnel	19
<u>DREF approval process</u>	<u>21</u>
Quality assurance	21
Checklist	22
<u>Project agreement and transfer of funds</u>	<u>23</u>

Implementation and reporting	24
Project implementation	24
DREF Operations Updates	24
DREF operation final report	25
Procurement	26
In-kind support to DREF operation	27
DREF loan to an emergency appeal	28
When to request a DREF loan for an Emergency Appeal?	28
Determining the size of the loan	28
Paying back the loan	28
When a DREF grant becomes a loan to an EA	29
Regional/Multi-Country Appeals	30
Requesting additional allocations/Renewed Loans	30
Monitoring, evaluation and operational learning	31
Lessons learned	33
DREF Reviews	33
Reference documents	35
Key documents for DREF	35
Reference Documents	35



ABOUT THE DREF

The Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) was established by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1985 to provide immediate financial support to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, enabling them to carry out their unique role as first responders after a disaster.

In 2018, the IFRC launched the Forecast-based Action by the DREF, a funding mechanism that enables automatic allocation of funding for early action, that can be taken based on pre-agreed meteorological forecast information. The application process for allocations from the Forecast-based Action Fund is covered by separate [guidelines](#).

The DREF is available to all member National Societies of the IFRC, and has two main purposes:

- Start-up funding for the IFRC and National Societies to respond to large-scale disasters—the **“loan facility”**
- Funding for National Society responses to small- and medium-scale disasters and health emergencies for which no Emergency Appeal is launched or when support from other actors is not foreseen—the **“grant facility”**.

GRANT	LOAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is provided to a NS when no IFRC Emergency Appeal is launched • Funds 100% of the activities included in the approved DREF request, Emergency Plan of Action and budget • Funds response up to (indicative): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yellow*: CHF 500,000 ▪ Orange*: CHF 750,000 ▪ Red*: CHF 1,000,000 • Is not returned to the DREF unless an Emergency Appeal is launched. • Is allocated maximum 10 days after the impact of a sudden-onset disaster and max 14 days after a scale-up of response to a slow-onset disaster is triggered. Can be allocated before an ‘imminent crisis’ • is implemented through a ‘DREF Operation’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is allocated when an IFRC emergency Appeal is launched • Provides immediate funding to start NS and IFRC response activities • Maximum amount CHF 1,000,000. Actual amount determined based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Size of the appeal ▪ Funding prospects/plan ▪ Previous loan reimbursement ▪ Implementation capacity • Is returned to the DREF once contributions to the Emergency Appeal reach 200% of amount allocated • Is implemented through an ‘IFRC Emergency Appeal Operation’

*Each event requiring IFRC support is categorized through the IFRC [Emergency Response Framework](#)

All requests for DREF allocations are reviewed individually. Funds can be authorized and released within 24 hours. The fund aims to provide support to National Societies for them to respond timely and effectively before, during and after the impact of disasters and crises.

Criteria for DREF allocation

- Maximum cost per targeted individual (indicative CHF 100)
- Cost-effectiveness (Operational vs. support costs, see section [Developing the DREF budget](#))
- That planned activities adhere to [SPHERE standards](#)
- Inclusion of affected communities in the identification of needs, planning of interventions and assessment of the impact
- That cash and voucher assistance has been considered as a response option
- That communication with in-country Movement partners has taken place
- That request is submitted in a timely manner (see section on [Timing of the DREF requests](#))
- That the operational timeframe is fitting the maximum [DREF timeframe](#)



DREF APPLICATION PROCESS

AT A GLANCE



DISASTER

National Society

IFRC

NS response	Develops Emergency Plan of Action + budget	CO/CCST or RO* supports the NS in development of the EPoA and budget.
NS Request Request submission & approval	Submits EpoA to IFRC CO/CCST or RO* Address comments made by the IFRC CO/CCST and RO	RO completes technical review and quality assurance. Upon completion, Regional DCPRR submits EpoA, budget, DREF request form and checklist to HQ. HQ performs final quality and eligibility check. HQ notifies RO/CO/CCST upon approval. RO publish EpoA on Ifrc.org within 24 hours
Project agreement	Reviews and signs DREF project agreement	Project Manager completes / signs Project agreement (including Econtract flow)
Cash request and transfer		CO/CCST includes DREF requirements in cash flow requests. CO/CCST initiates transfer of funds to NS
Implementation	Implements activities included in the DREF Operation. Provides regular informal update on implementation status. Requests timeframe extension if required, and prepared operations update. <i>Please note that NS can start the implementation as soon as the request is approved in Geneva</i>	CO/CCST makes sure there is regular communication with the National Society, provides support to the implementation, including possible Rapid Response personnel, procurement, possible timeframe extension, second allocation request, operations update etc.
Operation closure	Provides narrative report on implementation of planned activities. Clears working advance / provides financial report Compiles and archives assessment reports, targeting/distribution lists etc.	Project Manager completes Narrative and financial report. RO posts final reports on ifrc.org RO closes financial project and returns unspent DREF funds to the DREF.

HOW TO APPLY FOR ALLOCATIONS FROM THE DREF

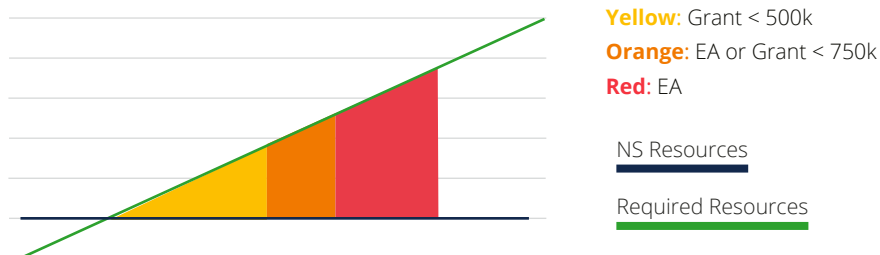
When a National Society engages in activities linked to a disaster event resulting in humanitarian needs that cannot be predicted and planned for in the annual planning process, it may consider applying for financial support from the IFRC DREF.

Assessment and decision to apply for DREF

Upon the impact of an event (or the need for preparedness activities/early action in anticipation of an imminent crisis), the need for IFRC financial support is normally based on the gap between the required/planned NS response and the financial resources available/expected. If the NS is in a position to respond to the crisis and lacks financial resources, the NS can request financial support to the IFRC. The type of operation (DREF Operation or Emergency Appeal) depends on the scale of the response and the anticipated need for support from the IFRC and partners.

When a National Society decides to request the IFRC to launch an Emergency Appeal on its behalf, the DREF can provide a loan to start-up activities. Refer to the section '[DREF loan to an Emergency Appeal](#)' for details.

The type of support mobilized by the IFRC is determined through a crisis categorization defined in the [IFRC Emergency Response Framework](#).



The categories and type of response is summarized as follows:

Yellow	Orange	Red
Responds to a localised emergency covering a small area or number of affected people and is normally managed at country level (by a NS), with technical or management support from the IFRC through surge personnel or DREF operation	Responds to an emergency affecting a wider area (or areas) and a higher number of affected people or with a level of complexity and receives international attention. Technical and management support is provided by the IFRC through surge capacity and/or DREF grant or Emergency Appeal.	Responds to an emergency of scale and complexity, affecting a wide area and high number of affected people, that makes it an organisation-wide priority at all levels. Full technical and managerial support is provided by the IFRC through surge capacity and launch of Emergency Appeal.

Categorization of your event based on disaster type and onset

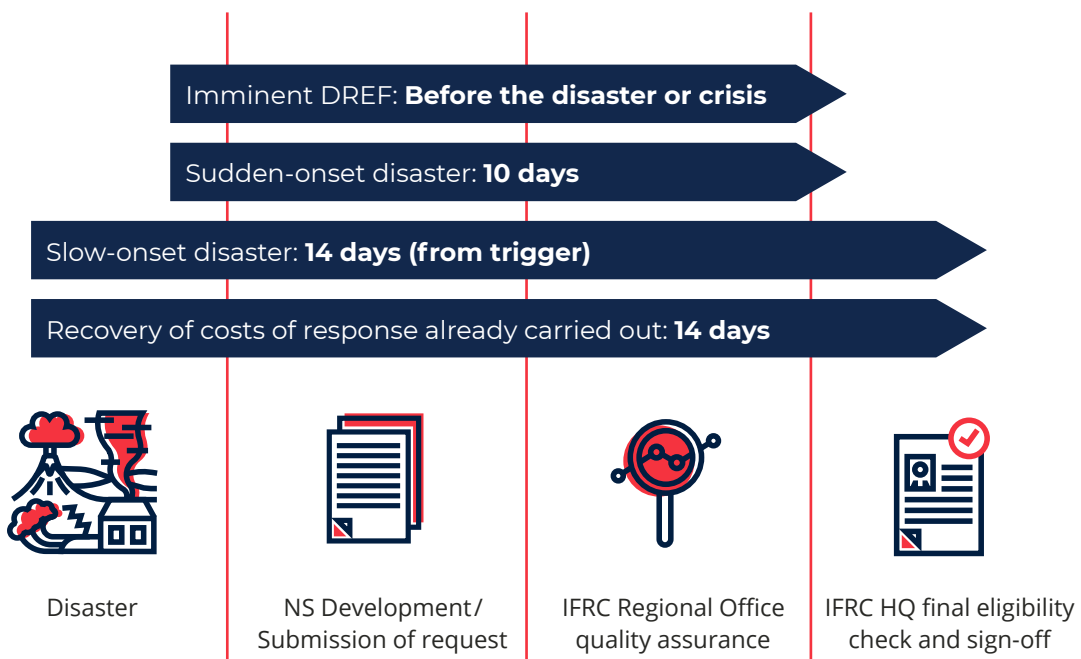
The DREF classifies events in the following categories, based on their onset, which are eligible for DREF allocation:

- **Imminent crisis** – Impending event where there is evidence that a disaster or crisis will happen (e.g. Cyclones, Election violence)
- **Sudden-onset disaster** – a single, discrete event that occurs in a matter of days or even hours (e.g. earthquakes, flash floods).
- **Slow-onset disaster** - slow onset events evolve gradually from incremental changes occurring over many months/years or from an increased frequency or intensity of recurring events (e.g. Droughts, Food insecurity, Epidemics, etc...)

An imminent DREF allocation may be followed by an additional allocation for a response once the event has materialized and it is possible to conduct a needs assessment to evaluate the appropriate operational strategy to implement.

Timing of DREF requests

The timely request for allocation of funds to allow a timely response to a disaster is essential to the DREF. To remain eligible, a DREF request must be approved within the following timeframes, starting from the date of the disaster (for slow-onset disaster from the event triggering the request):



In case a National Society is requesting a DREF allocation for an imminent crisis situation then the request has to arrive in timing that the National Society is able to mobilise its resources (early action or early response activities in anticipation of the possible impacts of an imminent crisis). This option allows the National Society to speed up their early response and/or to reduce and anticipate some of the impacts of the disaster or crisis. The standard DREF procedures and application guidelines remain the same for imminent crisis allocations.

It is important to note that the timeframe for approval of the allocation is inclusive of processing time at RO and HQ. Depending on the quality of documents and possible in-eligible elements, this may take up to 48 hours at each level.

A request for DREF funds to provide immediate assistance may not meet the eligibility criteria. These are some examples of requests for funds from DREF with different timeframe scenarios.

Is it an unforeseen event?

It is important to identify whether the event is a general occurrence or an unforeseen event. If the event in question is happening every year in the same targeted areas, it is possible to predict the season in which the disaster will take place as well as its magnitude. DREF funds cannot be requested to respond to such recurring events. Emergency funds, coming from DREF are made available to support National Societies in those exceptional cases where the needed response overwhelms the existing basic DM structure and resources of the National Societies.

What is the trigger?

It is important to determine what has triggered the need for requesting DREF funds to respond to a disaster at a specific moment. A risk may be identified, but it may not be having any effect on the population. Once it has become clear that the population is being affected, or if the event quickly increases in intensity causing major damage, the National Society will respond with either its own resources or it will request for support. If the National Society can no longer cope, it will need support to meet the needs.

Is the National Society already responding?

It is often the case that the National Society may have some resources to start the response. In these cases National Societies are engaged in the initial response activities and may need additional time to finalize a plan and budget to request for DREF funds. If the National Society is able to demonstrate that they are already responding, the DREF request process can be completed in up to 14 days. Even though the National Society is busy during the first few days, within two weeks it should be able to have some preliminary data from the assessments and be able to provide a emergency plan of action and a budget. The plan and budget can include planned response activities as well as those activities already completed during the initial response, and can be revised once a complete assessment has been finalized.

Communicating the situation and possible response

Once the NS has analyzed the situation and decided on a response option, it must inform the IFRC (through CO/CCST/RO) of the possible request. The planned type of financial support may be indicated in a field report issued by the NS on the IFRC disaster tracking and information management platform go.ifrc.org. The issuing of a field report is required before any financial support can be allocated but is also recommended when no financial support from the IFRC is anticipated.

Issuing a GO field report

1. Go to <http://go.ifrc.org>
2. If not already registered, create an account. All RC personnel can create
3. an account. If already registered, log in.
4. In the top right corner, click the 'create field report' button.
5. Complete the 5-step process using available information. Indicate if DREF operation or emergency appeal is being considered.
6. Click 'Publish Field Report'

A new emergency page will be created in the Emergencies section of GO / you can access your field report at any time.



SUBMITTING A REQUEST

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN AND BUDGET

Once the National Society decides to request financial support from DREF then they can reach out to the nearest IFRC Office, which will provide support on determining eligibility of the disaster for the DREF.

An **EPoA (see below) and corresponding budget shall be developed by the NS** with support from relevant IFRC field offices and submitted to the Regional Office for technical review and onwards submission to the DREF and Operations teams at IFRC headquarters in Geneva

When developing the EPoA it is important to consider and focus on the following:

- Briefly describe the reason for the operation ([background and effects of the disaster](#) on the people affected).
- Reflect the National Society's role, and capacity in responding, and if any [coordination mechanism](#) has been set up with other actors, or if none, then how other actors are also responding to make sure that there is no overlapping.
- Explain the [overall needs](#) and how the NS is aiming at responding and based on what it is decided to target the specific number of people.
- Refer to the contingency plan and the possible [scenarios](#) and reflect on the risks and how the NS is planning to incorporate these in their planning and operational strategy as assumptions
- In case there are any information gaps regarding the needs, mention the gaps and plan for activities to cover them
- The operational strategy has to be based on the current needs and the auxiliary role and capacity of the National Society to provide lifesaving support.
- [Summarize the overall goal and objectives](#) of the operation in the different sectors, the estimated number of beneficiaries and their selection criteria, the [planned activities](#) and the [time frame](#).
- This plan of action should be based on a rapid needs assessment and can be revised once a more detailed assessment is completed.

DREF requests are done from the onset of the emergency, EPoAs for DREF request are expected to be simpler than those developed for Emergency Appeals.

If a National Society uses DREF grants to finance two similar relief operations within a short interval of time, the Emergency Plan of Action should describe the actions taken since the last disaster to improve the response or reduce the risks of death and injuries and to build on lessons learned. This can include the development or update of contingency plans.

The DREF Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) should be published within 24 hours of a DREF request approval, accompanied by a budget and a map. While the information should be as complete and detailed as possible, the the Emergency Plan of Action should be concise and prepared in a timely manner.

USING THE EMERGENCY PLAN OF ACTION (EPOA) TEMPLATE

The EPoA is the main operational management tool recommended for all types of emergency operations. A guidance template for producing the Emergency Plan of Action can be accessed on FedNet.

The EPoA template is divided into three main sections



Situation Analysis: Provides an answer to the following questions:

- What happened, where and when?
- What has been done so far by the Movement and others?
- What are the current needs and gaps?
- How will the situation evolve, what are the possible scenarios and what is the NS response to it?



Operational Strategy – Helps the National Society to explain:

- Objective of the operation (how many persons are we targeting, where and with what actions) – linked to the needs
- Who are we targeting and why with our operation?
- What needs are going to be covered by the DREF grant?
- What actions is the NS going to carry out and how (include capacity on logistics, HR-personnel, monitoring, IT, protection and gender and also community engagement)?.



Detailed Operational Plan – Helps the NS to plan the operation in terms of:

- Outputs and specific activities
- Timeframe of the activities (timeframe shall be indicated in weeks ideally)
- Indicators and targets to measure progress

EPoAs are developed by National Societies requesting the DREF with support from the IFRC and PNS as needed.









Defining operation timeframe

- DREF should support early action and immediate response, but not longer-term recovery or rehabilitation. The relief phase after an emergency should not last longer than 3–4 months. In exceptional cases, a DREF operation may be extended but up to a maximum of six months.
- The action supported by DREF should provide the most effective means of meeting immediate needs of the people affected, and support community action. We seek to provide a quality response that provides the basis for sustainable community solutions.

Eligible activities

The DREF aims at enabling response to disaster affected communities, and all operations must include an element of direct assistance to the affected communities. This could be in the form of cash, goods, services or containment of disease outbreaks. The DREF procedures list the following as eligible activities under a DREF allocation:

 Assessment e.g. pre-disaster assessment of capacity to respond to imminent crisis; needs assessment, etc.)	 Communication e.g. attracting national and international media attention as early as possible, etc.	 Mobilising of Resources e.g. mobilisation and training of volunteers, surge personnel, equipment, pre-positioned stock, replenishment of stocks or funds used for cash, etc.
 Response e.g. evacuations, search and rescue, distribution of relief items or cash or vouchers, etc	 Monitoring and Evaluation e.g. beneficiary satisfaction surveys, lessons learned, etc	 e.g. psychological support for responders, NS and IFRC allocation of personnel dedicated to the implementation of the operation, NS capacity building for the specific operation, etc.

The below list provides additional guidance on specific eligible activities (please note that the list is an indication and not comprehensive)

	Operational Activities
Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-disaster assessment of capacity to respond to an imminent crisis • Needs assessment missions
Mobilizing NS response mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilization and equipment of volunteers, including volunteer insurance*, transport costs, per diems, visibility items • Activation of community early warning procedures • Preparation of shelters • Pre-positioning of existing relief supplies, logistics and human resource assets • Communication material for the operation
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation of people at risk • Search and rescue and evacuation • Distribution of relief items • Replenishment of stocks used for emergency response • Preparation and distribution of cash or cash vouchers • Assistance to and registration of displaced people • Restoring family links • Protection activities in an emergency situation
	Health and first aid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NS participation in immunization and vaccination campaigns • Mother and child health care • Psychosocial support • First Aid delivery • Awareness raising, hygiene and epidemic sensitization campaigns

Operational Activities

Relief Goods

- Cash or vouchers
- Water purification or production of clean water
- Sanitation, including latrine construction and waste disposal
- Vector control material
- First aid kits
- Information materials, radio or television campaigns
- Home-based care kits for people living with HIV Aids
- Shelter material or shelter kits
- Hygiene material or hygiene kits

Support Costs

- Vehicle rental (Vehicle purchase is not eligible)
- Vehicle costs (fuel maintenance, spare part, insurance)
- Fleet costs
- In-country logistics costs (trucks, custom clearance and distribution)
- Psychological support for responders
- Temporary hire, or temporary re-assignment of existing NS staff to implement the operation
- Costs of NS or IFRC personnel in the implementation of the operation, including travel and operational costs
- Fixed-rate amount for administrative and indirect costs (if approved at NS Governing Board level and applied to all programs)
- Volunteer training for relief distributions or sensitization campaigns for the specific DREF operation
- NS capacity building activities for the specific operation
- Communication equipment
- Monitoring and evaluation of relief operation (including beneficiary satisfaction surveys and lessons learned for volunteers and National Society staff)
- Mobilization and equipment of volunteers, including volunteer insurance*, transport costs, per diems, visibility items
- Mobilization and deployment of surge personnel, including National Disaster Response Team members or Rapid response personnel or HEOPS depending on the scale of the disaster
- Translation of material
- Lesson learning exercise or reviews

Non-eligible activities

Activities not directly related to the disaster response are not considered eligible to be covered by DREF funds. This includes:

- Assets and vehicles
- Nation-wide training (unless the operation covers the entire country)
- Capacity strengthening of branches not involved in the response
- Participation in international training (unless directly related to the response)
- NS salaries, running costs, utilities etc. not directly related to the operation.

National Society fixed-rate and overhead costs

For National Societies that have a fixed overhead rate, this may be applied to a DREF operation as well– as long as this rate is applied consistently to all programs and it has been approved at NS Governing Board level. The fixed-rate is applied to the component of the operation implemented by the NS. It is important to note that the cost-effectiveness of the operation must be maintained, and administrative costs covered under the fixed-rate costs cannot be duplicated as support costs.

Example 1:

The National Society applies a 10% fixed rate to all of their programs. This covers overheads such as administration, utilities, financial processing and reporting. For a DREF operation where CHF 100,000 is transferred to the NS, an overhead of CHF 10,000 is budgeted.

Example 2:

The National Society does not apply a standard overhead charge to their programs. In this case the NS could add the following budget lines: Reporting officer 2 months (CHF 4,000), finance assistance 3 months (4,500) stationary (CHF 700) EOC utilities (CHF 800). The total costs remain the same as example 1, ie CHF 10,000

Developing the DREF budget

Once National Societies have planned their operations strategy in the EPoA, they will need to develop a detailed budget of all the costs associated to implement the response actions¹. The budget is developed using the DREF budget tool and is part of the necessary support documentation for a DREF allocation.

¹ Except 'Surge Personnel-Only' (see page 20)

When developing a budget, take into consideration:

- All budget lines should refer to the activities outlined in the EPoA.
- Avoid lumps sums budget lines, be as specific as possible.
- Make sure that figures (in CHF, and quantity of items) are coherent between EPoA and Budget.
- Ensure that all budget lines have the proper output code.
- Ensure cost efficiency of the operation. Make sure that the costs related to operational support (e.g. training of volunteers) are not higher than the cost related to direct implementation (e.g. training of community members in the use of shelter items).
- Ensure that the total cost of the operation, as a general rule, does not exceed CHF 100 per individual targeted.
- All budget lines related to CEA activities should be under output AP084.
- All budget lines related to Cash and Voucher Assistance should be under AP081.

Programming standards

National Societies are expected to conduct their DREF operations utilizing the latest standards for a humanitarian response (e.g. [Sphere standards](#) and the [Core Humanitarian Standards](#)) and to have cross-cutting consideration related to Community Engagement and Accountability, and [Protection, Gender and Inclusion](#). During the EPoA development, mention the standards being used, and if for a specific reason a certain standard cannot be met, then it must be explained in the Operational Strategy section. Relevant standards are included in the EPoA template.

Surge personnel

Surge personnel to support operation implementation

The IFRC Rapid Response system is a mechanism for National Societies to provide and receive peer support through the exchange of response experts for emergency operations. Most DREF operations include a budget for a rapid response deployment, either in a technical expertise role such as WASH or a cash assistance expert or in a supportive role such as project management or logistics. The deployment of rapid response personnel provides extra capacity for the implementation of the DREF operation and helps strengthen the international response capacity of National Societies deploying the personnel, hence gaining international disaster experience. For both reasons, it is strongly recommended to include a rapid response deployment in the operational plan.

Deployment of surge personnel as the only activity of a DREF operation:

- For operations requiring surge deployment where no other funding is available for deployments, a DREF allocation can support the deployments. This can include all or partial costs depending on requirements by deploying National Societies.
- For initial surge deployment DREF allocation, the indicative operational support cost limit is not applicable, and the allocation can be done for the surge deployment alone in anticipation of relief interventions being launched in the following days.
- The modality is limited to operations classified as **orange** or **red** in the IFRC emergency response framework and deployment of surge personnel under approved SOPs (RDRT, FACT, ERU, HEOPs). The total amount allocated from the DREF for surge is limited to CHF 100,000;
- Allocations are initiated through dialogue between the HQ Ops Coordinator and the Regional Head of Disaster & Crisis. The request for allocation is submitted by the Regional Head of DCPRR accompanied by a 1–2 page EPoA based on the surge ToR: short description of situation (could be from GO field report), function, and main deliverables of the deployed surge. This is to be prepared by the relevant unit (HQ or Regional Disaster and Crisis).

Once the response operation is launched, the allocation will be included in the total DREF allocation (but not considered when reviewing indicative operational support ratio or cost per individual targeted). For allocations not followed by relief interventions, the allocation will remain a grant and will require a short final report describing deployment results and reason for not launching an additional response before closure.



DREF APPROVAL PROCESS

Quality assurance

When a National Society submits a request for a DREF allocation (EPoA and Budget), **the IFRC Regional Office will carry out a technical review of the operation to assure quality of the planned activities and adherence to the DREF procedures and IFRC global standards.** This includes the following elements:

1. At Regional level

Compliance with DREF procedures

The operation must be compliant with the DREF procedures. Before submitting to IFRC HQ DREF team, the **regional DCPRR confirms it adheres to criteria included in the DREF procedures.** These include:

- maximum cost per targeted individual (indicative CHF 100)
- cost-effectiveness (Operational vs. support costs, see section [Developing the DREF budget](#))
- that planned activities adhere to [SPHERE standards](#)
- inclusion of affected communities in the identification of needs, planning of interventions and assessment of the impact
- that cash and voucher assistance has been considered as a response option
- that communication with in-country Movement partners has taken place
- that request is submitted in a timely manner (see section on [Timing of the DREF requests](#))
- that the operational timeframe is fitting the maximum [DREF timeframe](#).

Technical review

Each component of the [operational strategy](#) must be reviewed by an IFRC technical expert at the Regional Office. This includes the Areas of Focus (Shelter, WASH etc.) and the specific technical areas (cash and voucher assistance, community engagement and accountability (CEA), protection and gender inclusion (PGI), logistics etc.). **All technical areas covered by the operation must be reviewed at RO level before submission**—if some technical sectors are not available at the RO level, respective technical support from HQ should be consulted.

Financial validation of budget

The DREF budget must be reviewed and validated by the Head of Finance and Admin in the Regional Office. The validation ensures that the budget adheres to IFRC financial standards and procedures and that it is coded correctly.

Once completed, the RO submits the EpoA, budget, checklist and DREF allocation request to IFRC HQ.

2. Final HQ eligibility, quality check and approval

A final Eligibility and quality check are done at the IFRC HQ level. For operations of a certain size or complexity, IFRC HQ technical experts may be asked to review components of the plan. If the final eligibility and quality check raises issues that prevents approval (such as the proposed strategy does

not meet the criteria, or the programming standards mentioned above), the request will be returned to the Regional Office with a request for additional clarifications or reason for rejection.

Once the request meets all the requirements mentioned above the EpoA, budget, checklist and DREF allocation request is signed by the DREF Appeal Manager approving the allocation

Checklist

The checklist serves as documentation that quality assurance process has been completed at the Regional Office level.

By signing the checklist, the Head of the Regional DCPRR confirms that all information in the checklist is correct and necessary reviews have been carried out. If certain criteria are not met, an explanation must be provided in the comments field.

The checklist is countersigned in the IFRC HQ by the relevant Operations Coordinator and the DREF Senior officer to confirm final eligibility and quality check before presented with the EpoA and budget to the DREF Appeal Manager for approval and allocation.



PROJECT AGREEMENT AND TRANSFER OF FUNDS

After a DREF has been approved, the IFRC should start the process of signing a project agreement with the National Society. In the IFRC the Project agreements require approval through eContracts, by using the specific approval matrix developed for DREF allocations:

For the Project Manager

- In eContracts, DREF contracts must be uploaded under the Contract type "Project Grant Agreement (NS) (DREF)". If other types/category of contract is selected, such as Project Grant Agreement (NS), the approvers may prioritize it as they cannot identify it as a DREF.
- A template has been created to ease the process, this can be shared with the National Society in advance, so they are familiar with the template and it will not delay the process
- As much as possible it should be avoided to make changes to the template as this may delay the approval process.
- Project agreements have to be signed before any transfer of funds to the National Society.
- National Society signatory and bank details need to be confirmed in advance.

Up to CHF 249,999

- Legal (for non-standard agreements only)
- DREF project manager
- Regional head of Finance and Admin
- Regional Director

CHF 250,000 to 1'000,000

- Legal (non-standard agreement)
- DREF Project Manager
- Regional head of Finance and Admin
- Regional Director
- USG, Programs and Operations

IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

Project implementation

The activities budgeted for the implementation of the operation can start as soon as the DREF request has been approved by Geneva. These activities may include costs that the National Societies have been incurring since the start of the response. A couple of examples are assessment costs and distribution of existing stocks.

DREF operations are short term and aim to support the NS in implementing immediate actions to save the lives of the affected population. Therefore, the response needs to start immediately and without delays.

During the implementation of the operation the National Society should identify any challenges that may delay the implementation of the operation and the assistance to the beneficiaries:

- Assess the impact of a possible delay; Is it still possible to address the needs? Is the response planned still relevant? Is there a need to look for other approaches that address the same needs within the timeframe? Do we have to change the operational strategy?

Once the National Society has decided on how to address the challenges, IFRC should be notified and will advise on the next steps.

For any DREF-related report (Emergency Plan of Action, DREF operations updates or DREF operational Final reports) the use of quality photos, graphs or visual elements are encouraged to highlight the National Society response actions, impact of the emergency or key data.

DREF Operations Updates

If a National Society wishes **to request an additional DREF allocation** for the same operation, or to **revise the budgeted use of the funds**, or to **extend the timeframe of the operation**, a DREF operations update must be issued.

The DREF Appeal Manager will grant or deny the request via email. If the requested change is granted, a DREF operations update must be published within one working day of the approval reflecting the new end date, reasons for the modification, and progress on activities.

Request for additional DREF allocation:

Any request for an additional allocation must undergo the standard request for allocation process and comply with DREF eligibility criteria and operation quality assurance.

The National Society submits the operations update that outlines the reason for an additional allocation request, updates on the situation, the changes in the operational plan and the budget. The IFRC regional office conducts the technical review for quality assurance and also reviews if the proposed operation is fulfilling the DREF eligibility criteria.

Budget revisions:

Often a DREF operation is launched at the assessment phase, and once these are completed, a more complete picture of the most immediate needs is available. This might prompt a revision of the plan and a request for an additional allocation(s) to cover these immediate needs. Additional grant allocations may be requested as part of a plan revision reflected in an operation's update, clearly stating the reason for change, the results of the assessment, and the revised operational strategy, including highlighting the new activities.

Timeframe extensions:

The timeframe of a DREF operation can be requested to be extended considering the following aspects:

- the overall operation's timeframe will not exceed 6 months
- extension requests are submitted before the last 15 days of the operating timeframe, allowing sufficient time for approval and publication of an operations update
- the request must be sent via email detailing the extension period and the reasons for the extension need.

The DREF operations update will give information on how the implementation of the operation is progressing, any changes in scope, changes in numbers or selection of the target population, challenges etc.

Operations updates provide visibility for the National Society operation and keep DREF donors' interest alive in continuously supporting the response via the DREF. If the public or donors have to wait many months or more to know how the operation was implemented, an opportunity to highlight the work of the National Society is lost.

DREF operation final report

The DREF operation final report is mandatory and should be published with a final financial report of expenditures within 3 months of the end of the DREF operation. This deadline cannot be extended.

The final report should illustrate how the National Society implemented the operation, whether the objectives were met and show the impact it has had on the lives of the people affected, or how the action taken has averted a disaster. Any lessons learned should also be listed and what action has or will be taken to implement the learning.

Any variances between the original budget and plan of action and the operation must be explained in the final report. Preliminary final reports should not be issued.

In addition to ensuring accountability of the use of funds, DREF operation updates and final reports should be used as a marketing and visibility opportunity. Consistently good and timely reports which underline efficient relief operations have shown to bring donor confidence in the National Societies concerned and can lead to the development of longer-term funding relationships at national or regional level.

Failure to report on the use of DREF in a timely and thorough manner may jeopardise future allocations.

The National Society and Federation office should also make use of national and international media to give visibility to the operation. A news story with photos on the International Federation web site complements the DREF reporting.

All DREF-related reports are public and can be accessed by National Societies, governments, donors, partner organisations or the general public here: <https://www.ifrc.org/appeals>

Procurement

As part of the planning process, the sourcing strategy for goods and services required for the operation must be decided. The IFRC office closest to the operation is responsible for the implementation of DREF operations and will take the final decision on the appropriate sourcing strategy in discussions with the National Society and IFRC logistics, Procurement and Supply Chain management units.

The procurement of relief items may be carried out either by the National Society or the IFRC. The IFRC Regional Logistics, Procurement and Supply Chain Management (LPSCM) is to assess the National Society procurement procedures on a regular basis to validate that they are aligned with IFRC standards. This is further described in the **IFRC Procurement Procedures**² as below:

- National procedures may apply when local procurement is carried out by the National Society with DREF funding (DREF Operation), conditional on compliance with provisions stipulated in Sections 1.2, **1.3.3**, 1.3.8 and Appendix 42 of the **IFRC Procurement Manual**³.
- IFRC procedures apply when the procurement is carried out by the IFRC, or where the National Society carries out procurement with Emergency Appeal funding.

If National Society is to carry out the procurement, the RO LPSCM must have confirmed the comparability of National Society procurement procedures with IFRC procedures before the procurement is initiated.

² Please refer to **IFRC procurement** manual

³ The IFRC procurement guiding principles are as follows:

- (a) Principle of sound financial management
- (b) Principle of equal treatment, fairness and transparency
- (c) Principle of proportionality
- (d) Principle of avoiding conflicts of interest and due diligence
- (e) Principle of ethical procurement

In situations where the National Society has not been assessed by the RO LPSCM as having comparable IFRC procurement standards, but has the capacity and items in country to carry out the procurement, the CO/CCST based on explored risks may request approval from the Regional Director for the NS to undertake the DREF procurement. The Director of LPSCM shall be consulted to set a financial limit of such procurement, and the amount to be specified in the DREF checklist.

The agreed procurement process shall be clearly stipulated in the DREF Checklist. For any additional approval and financial limit of procurement, the DREF Check List shall be accompanied by documentation signed by the CO/CCST, supported with the Director of the Region and Director of LPSCM approvals in the annex where applicable.

In situations where a DREF Operation becomes an Emergency Appeal, the IFRC Project Manager shall immediately inform the respective Regional LPSCM procurement authority (PA).

Replenishment of stocks: DREF funding may be used to replenish National Society preparedness stocks, which have been used for the relief operation. Replenishment may be carried out after the initial emergency phase when there are less time constraints, however, need to take place during the operating timeframe (inclusive of delivery, receipt of goods), and it is strongly recommended to the project manager to coordinate the relevant regional LPSCM PA in order to ensure a timely and cost effective stock replenishment. Therefore, the timing of replenishment needs to be factored when establishing the operating timeframe. Any delays in procurement and/or delivery must be notified to the DREF Appeal Manager in due time and extension of timeframe considered (at the latest 15 days before the current end timeframe). Extension of timeframe may not be approved where the procurement process has not been initiated.

DREF funding may also be used to replenish the National Society calamity or reserve funds used for cash or vouchers assistance. However, to qualify for the replenishment, the NS should carry out proper procurement process following the IFRC Cash SOPs and IFRC Procurement Manual 2018 as part of preparedness and before requesting the DREF. The procurement process should be carried out in close coordination with regional LPSCM.

In-kind support to DREF operation

In some cases, National Societies may get support outside of the DREF operation in the form of In-kind items (e.g. A PNS providing them with household items). In such cases, the IFRC shall not treat the in-kind donation in its financial statements and consider the in-kind donation as a bilateral contribution. Funds from the DREF cannot cover any cost related to the in-kind support (e.g. transportation, or distribution).

DREF LOAN TO AN EMERGENCY APPEAL

The DREF allocation to an emergency appeal is a loan to allow immediate response by the National Society and the IFRC until the Emergency Appeal receives donor contributions. Once contributions to the Emergency Appeal are registered, the loan is reimbursed to the DREF from the Appeal.

If an Emergency Appeal is to be launched within 2 days of the DREF allocation, no DREF EPoA is necessary. The DREF allocation and the amount should be mentioned in the Emergency Appeal and in any of the Operations updates. When the reimbursement of the allocation to the DREF has been made it should also be mentioned in the Operations Updates.

When to request a DREF loan for an Emergency Appeal?

When the funding requirements for the National Society Response to a disaster exceeds what can be covered through a DREF grant, an Emergency Appeal must be considered. The humanitarian needs and National Society's capacity to respond is the main driver for the decision to launch an emergency appeal, but other factors also affect this decision. These include:

- whether the Government of the affected country has requested or will accept international assistance;
- whether access to national funding is sufficient to cover the financial needs of the National Society, making an international appeal unnecessary;
- whether the scale of response to the situation and needs are beyond the National Society's capacity to respond making regional and/or international assistance necessary;
- whether there is a clear indication that there is enough interest to generate sufficient funding for implementing the planned EA.

Determining the size of the loan

The size of a start-up loan for an Emergency Appeal may vary based on the type of operation, scale of the response, planned activities etc. The following points guide the determination of the size of loan. The size of the loan is set by the DREF Appeal Manager based on a request from the NS and the IFRC Regional Office.

- Total size of the operation. A proportional amount of 10–15% of the Emergency Appeal funding requirements up to a maximum of CHF 750,000 for Orange Operations and CHF 1M for Red Operations.
- Funding plan and potential income to the Emergency Appeal. The amount may be reduced if there is limited or no anticipated contributions to the emergency appeal.
- Repayment of previous loans. The amount may be reduced if previous loans have not been reimbursed to the DREF.
- Capacity of the NS to spend the funds within the first 2–3 months.

Paying back the loan

An Emergency Appeal seeks funding from donors, and once adequate funding has been received by the Emergency Appeal, the DREF loan must be returned to the DREF fund. The loan is automatically

returned to the DREF fund when funding to the Emergency Appeal reaches 200% of the amount allocated as a DREF loan (ie. A loan of CHF 120,000 was allocated, funding to the Emergency Appeal has exceeded CHF 240,000). If funding to the Emergency Appeal has not reached 200% of the DREF loan after three months, a decision on the payment is made by the DREF Fund Manager according to the following criteria:

- If the funding to the Emergency Appeal is lower than the DREF loan (ie. CHF 120,000 allocated as DREF loan, only CHF 90,000 received as donor funding to the Emergency Appeal), no return of the DREF loan will be expected. If a balance remains when the Emergency Appeal Operation finishes, any remaining funds are returned to the DREF fund.
- If the funding to the Emergency Appeal is above the amount allocated as DREF loan, but below 200% of the loan amount (ie. CHF 120,000 allocated as a DREF loan, CHF 180,000 received as donor funding to the Emergency Appeal) a partial or delayed repayment plan is agreed between the Emergency Appeal Manager and the DREF Fund Manager. The amount to be returned and the timing of the return is based on the following:
 - Expenditures to date—has the loan been used to fund the start-up activities. If not, repayment will be expected.
 - Expectations of additional donor funding - For slow-onset disasters, donor funding often comes several months after the launch of the appeal. In this case, return of the loan may be delayed.
 - Amount of funding received. If donor funding only just exceeds the amount of the DREF loan, a partial return may be agreed.
 - Size of the loan. Loans beyond CHF 500,000 are expected to be returned even when donor funding is between 100% and 200% of the DREF loan amount. No-return or partial return is more likely for smaller loans.

When a DREF grant becomes a loan to an EA

Some operations for which DREF provided an allocation as a grant may need to be revised as a result of a deteriorating situation or changes to the original plan. The operation may be revised with minimal changes to its plan (see [DREF Operation Updates](#)), or it may be revised to become a larger scale operation (orange or red) which would require the launching of an Emergency Appeal. DREF funds can be requested—through submitting the **DREF Allocation Request** document together with the official emergency appeal documentation—and all allocations to this operation will be part of the loan to the Emergency Appeal.

In the case in which a decision to launch an Emergency Appeal for the same disaster is taken within weeks of the start of the operating timeframe of the DREF operation: The original grant amount becomes a loan to the Emergency Appeal.

In the case in which a decision to launch an Emergency Appeal for the same disaster is taken weeks or months after the start of the operating timeframe of the DREF operation, and all (or most) of the activities in the operation have been concluded; the DREF operation should be finalized and reported on, and the launched Emergency Appeal will be considered a new operation with new activities and a new operating timeframe. DREF funds can be requested as a loan to start up the activities in this Emergency Appeal.

Regional/Multi-Country Appeals

In the event of a same disaster affecting more than one country, it may be decided to consolidate the needs of each country National Society into a Regional Appeal.

To enable each of the National Societies to respond to the disaster in their respective countries a **DREF Allocation Request** for a loan shall be requested by country. The approved DREF loan will be allocated to the specific country project of the respective country under the Emergency Appeal.

The DREF loan shall be reimbursed once the Country Project to which the loan has been allocated to has received cash contributions to the EA for a value of 200% of the DREF loan following the process described above.

Requesting additional allocations/Renewed Loans

In some cases, it is possible to request additional allocations for the same operation (please see section [DREF Operation Updates](#) for additional allocations to grants):

1. When a DREF operation is scaled up to an Emergency Appeal, an additional allocation can be requested to complement the initial amount allocated for the DREF operation. The total size of the loan will follow the principles explained [above](#) and is reimbursed to the DREF within three months of the launch of the Emergency Appeal.
2. During the initial 3 months of the Emergency Appeal (e.g. where the disaster is of a much larger scale than initially anticipated), additional DREF allocations may be requested.
3. Where a significant change in needs and scale-up of the operation requires an Emergency Appeal re-launch to renew donor interest, and where the initial DREF loan has been fully reimbursed, a new DREF Loan may be requested. The size of the loan and reimbursement follows normal process.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND OPERATIONAL LEARNING

To be able to illustrate the effectiveness of an operation, the desired effect and impact on the target population should be clearly stated in a plan of action by formulating objectives. Effectiveness can be judged by the extent to which the objectives were met. Impact looks at the long-term effect, both positive and negative, that the intervention has had on the lives of target population.

Monitoring and evaluation are carried out to provide evidence of whether the goal and objectives are or have been met. The costs incurred by the National Society or the International Federation in carrying out monitoring of the operation or a final review should be budgeted in the DREF request.

On-going assessments of needs, monitoring of beneficiary satisfaction and monitoring of the progress of the operation can all be vital to meeting the goal of the operation and lead to adjustment of the plan of action if necessary. Official reports should reflect the mechanisms put in place and the results of consultations carried out with the target population. These could include beneficiary satisfaction surveys, feedback and complaint mechanisms, post-distribution monitoring surveys, among others.

Any lessons learned workshop and review carried out at the end of the operation should look at beneficiary satisfaction, at the appropriateness of the operation and the relief items, how the National Society performed and include feedback from the people targeted, volunteers and staff using a simple participatory questionnaire or other tools.

It is recommended that all DREF operations include:

- a consultation with the target population to assess the appropriateness, relevance, timeliness of the assistance provided - [CEA](#)
- a lessons-learned exercise to gather operational learning and improve future response efforts.

Monitoring: The routine collection and analysis of information to track progress against set plans and check compliance to established standards. The NS is responsible for monitoring the operation at the level of activity, calendar, budget, feedback from the target population, indicators and human resources. Regular monitoring helps to identify trends and patterns, adapt strategies and inform decisions for operation management. The IFRC can also provide monitoring support through monitoring visits.

Evaluation: An assessment that identifies, reflects upon and judges the worth of the effects of activities implemented. Due to the small scale and timeframe of DREF operations, evaluative processes are usually lighter.

Lessons learned workshops: provide spaces for the NS to reflect on what went well and what needs to be improved for future response.

Review: A structured opportunity for reflection to identify key issues and concerns and make informed decisions for effective operation implementation. DREF reviews are IFRC-led and seek to assess more specific aspects of an operation.

All DREF operations can be subject to monitoring visits, reviews or audits.



Lessons learned

Objectives

The Lessons Learnt Workshop (LLW) is a methodology for the NS and its partners to analyse the relevance, effectiveness, impact, and timeliness of a DREF operation. The main objectives of the LLW are to:

1. establish to what extent the DREF operation was relevant, what results were achieved, and how the implementation was conducted; and
2. identify key lessons learnt to further strengthen the NS preparedness to respond to future emergencies.
3. identify learning for NS' long-term programmes.

Costs associated with this exercise need to be included in the initial DREF budget. The summary of the outcomes of the lessons learnt workshop needs to be communicated in the final report. At the same time, the DREF Appeal Manager can ask to refer to lessons learnt from previous operations before approving a new allocation. LLW has to be conducted during the timeframe of a DREF operation to ensure that the associated costs can be eligible.

The lessons learnt workshop is an opportunity for a NS that carried out DREF operation to analyse and re-examine its response mechanism. The Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) approach⁴ offers a solid structure for the discussions on the above-mentioned objectives. PER frames the NS Preparedness and Response Mechanism through 5 key areas (Strategy and Standards, Analysis and Planning, Operational Capacity, Coordination and Operations Support) and 37 components. By analysing the use of the mechanism during DREF operations, NSs can identify strengths and gaps in the response system.

Please refer to Discussion points for DREF operations Lessons Learnt exercise to better structure the operations' learnings and capitalise on this critical process.

DREF Reviews

An audit of the DREF in 2010 provided recommendations around improving compliance with existing DREF and financial procedures, including measures to promote compliance of the use of funds with authorized budgeted expenditure. As a result of this recommendation, it was decided that carrying out reviews of operations implemented with DREF funds would provide an opportunity to have a snapshot on a specific aspect of an operation and learn from it, as well as highlight donor support to the DREF with user National Societies and beneficiaries and promote greater transparency and accountability to beneficiaries and donors on the use of DREF funds.

The principle objective of carrying out a review of a DREF operation is to support and strengthen the National Society in delivering more efficient and effective assistance to people affected by disasters. But carrying out a review also provides valuable information to improve the efficiency of the DREF and Secretariat processes as well as support greater accountability to beneficiaries and DREF donors. They may also promote donor support to the longer-term preparedness, risk reduction and recovery programmes of these National Societies, by highlighting outstanding needs.

⁴ Website <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/disaster-and-crisis-management/disaster-preparedness/national-society/>

A DREF operation is limited in scope and timeframe; it aims to preserve lives and meet the immediate needs of people affected by disasters. Therefore, the objectives of any review must respect, and be in proportion to this limited scope and seek to focus on appropriate issues. Recommendations made should be simple, practical and realistic and aim to improve on-going response, DREF and Secretariat processes and to build the capacity of National Societies to respond to future events.

Thematic reviews and evaluations of operations of the same type may also be organized by the Secretariat to support institutional learning, highlight challenges and best practice and could also be viewed as communication and advocacy opportunities.

Monitoring and evaluation demonstrate whether the organisation is focusing on the needs of the target population and bringing about a change in their situation. It also allows the International Federation to illustrate, through its reports, the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of operations to the wider public and donors.⁵

For more information, the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Department has posted useful guidance documents on www.ifrc.org/mande The Monitoring and Evaluation Guide: <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/monitoring/IFRC-ME-Guide-8-2011.pdf>

⁵ For more information, the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Department has posted useful guidance documents on www.ifrc.org/mande The Monitoring and Evaluation Guide: <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/monitoring/IFRC-ME-Guide-8-2011.pdf>

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Key documents for DREF

DREF procedures v.3 (2019)

<https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/ourifrc/about-the-federation/ppp/disaster-response-emergency-fund-dref/>

FbA by the DREF procedures

https://fednet.ifrc.org/PageFiles/238387/244_1.00%20FbA%20Fund%20Procedures%2001.11.2018.pdf

EpoA package on FedNet

<http://fednet.ifrc.org/EPoA>

IFRC Emergency Response Framework

<http://fednet.ifrc.org/ERF>

DREF website

<http://ifrc.org/DREF>

FbA website

<https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/fba/>

Reference Documents

Sphere standards

<https://www.spherestandards.org/>

Core humanitarian standards

<https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>

Protection Gender and Inclusion in emergencies

<https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/11/Minimum-standards-for-protection-gender-and-inclusion-in-emergencies-LR.pdf>

Community engagement and accountability

<https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/communications/CEA/training-kit-and-tools/>

Procurement guidance documents

<https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/logistics/procurement/>

Preparedness for effective response

<https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/disaster-and-crisis-management/disaster-preparedness/national-society/>

Monitoring and Evaluation guide

<https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/monitoring/IFRC-ME-Guide-8-2011.pdf>



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 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.

Follow us:

[ifrc.org](https://www.ifrc.org) | twitter.com/ifrc | facebook.com/ifrc | instagram.com/ifrc | youtube.com/ifrc