



Disaster Response  
Emergency Fund

MID-YEAR  
REPORT

2025

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# 1. Executive summary



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In 2025, humanitarian needs continue to rise amidst complex crises, fragile contexts, and the accelerating impacts of climate change. In this demanding environment, the IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) continues to stand out as one of the most powerful enablers of local emergency response, fast, agile, and rooted in the strength of our National Societies, delivering lifesaving assistance where it is most urgently needed.

This year, we have taken bold steps to ensure the Fund is not only quicker, but also of higher quality and greater accountability. The launch of the revised procedures and expanded anticipatory action are strengthening our ability to respond, while monitoring and demonstrating impact remain key objectives we continue to advance, helping us better capture the voices of communities, measure impact, and steadily improve how we serve people in need.

Above all, the IFRC DREF remains a flagship of localization: with more than 75% of resources transferred directly to National Societies, empowering them to lead response and anticipatory action in their own contexts. In these challenging times, we do believe that Localization is the only relevant way to deliver humanitarian action. As we look ahead, we remain committed to ensuring that the Fund delivers meaningful and measurable support, helping communities prepare before crises strike and recover in their aftermath, today and for the challenges of tomorrow.

None of this would be possible without the trust and generosity of our donors and partners, whose commitment makes the IFRC DREF a reality for millions of vulnerable people.

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**Xavier Castellanos**  
Under Secretary General  
National Society Development and  
Operations Coordination Division

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# Executive summary

## A Fast, Local, and Evolving Fund in a Complex Year

The first half of 2025 saw increasing humanitarian needs, limited funding, and growing crisis complexity. In this context, IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) reinforced its role as the fastest and most localized financing tool in the sector - enabling National Societies to respond to floods, disease outbreaks, and displacement, especially where international support remained out of reach.

## New Procedures Unlock Faster Action

The launch of revised DREF Procedures in June 2025 introduced major changes:

- Immediate release of 25% of the allocation requested based on eligibility & compliance approval;
- Approval of DREF request in 24h following submission based on eligibility & compliance;
- Streamlined anticipatory protocols (EAPs and s-EAPs);
- A revised imminent DREF modality tailored for rapid-onset disasters.

These changes empower National Societies to act earlier, faster, and with greater autonomy.

## Scaling Anticipatory Action

The anticipatory pillar expanded significantly in 2025:

- 23 anticipatory action protocols approved (up from 13 in 2024);
- CHF 5.7 million allocated (up from CHF 4.1M);
- 17% of the fund is allocated to Anticipatory Action for the first half of 2025;
- New protocols for heatwaves, wildfires, epidemics, and displacement risks;
- Integration with IFRC GO and the conclusion of the s-EAP pilot review.

## Strengthening Accountability and Learning

DREF scaled up real-time feedback mechanisms, strengthened community engagement through pilots in Ethiopia and Honduras, and continued developing the updated operational review framework - emphasizing two-way accountability and evidence-based learning.

## Strategic Influence and Collaboration

DREF continued shaping global humanitarian financing by:

- Leading joint efforts along Start Network and CERF on positioning and demonstrating added value of the DREF;
- Playing a key role in the launch of the Global Pooled Fund Community of Practice and joined officially its Steering Committee;
- Featuring prominently at HNPW 2025 to advocate for localized, predictable, and risk-informed funding.

## Governance, Innovation, and Ambition

Key developments included:

- Two strategic meetings of the DREF Advisory Group,
- Review of the DREF Insurance mechanism following its CHF 14.4M payout in 2024,
- Launch of the DREF Ambition 2026–2030 consultation process with over 88 IFRC colleagues engaged across 10 working groups.

## Looking Ahead

While challenges such as procurement delays, and reporting backlogs persist, the DREF remains on strong footing. Rising demand is accelerating the push for multi-year and insurance-based financing.

## Conclusion

By mid-2025, DREF has not only maintained speed and scale - it has evolved into a more anticipatory, agile, and locally driven fund. **The launch of the DREF revised procedures marks a key milestone, further enhancing its speed** and positioning DREF to meet both immediate and future humanitarian challenges as the next strategic phase begins.

## 2. Overview



## 2.1. IFRC-DREF results at a glance

The first half of 2025 has confirmed IFRC-DREF's growing strategic importance in the global humanitarian financing landscape. As the international system continues to struggle with chronic underfunding and increasingly localized and climate-related risks, the DREF has maintained its ability to deliver fast, flexible, and localized financing - especially for small- to medium-scale disasters often neglected by other mechanisms.

From **January to June 2025**, IFRC-DREF supported a total of **82 operations** in 97 allocations, disbursing **CHF 32,3 Million**. With DREF support, National Societies targeted 8,9 million people.

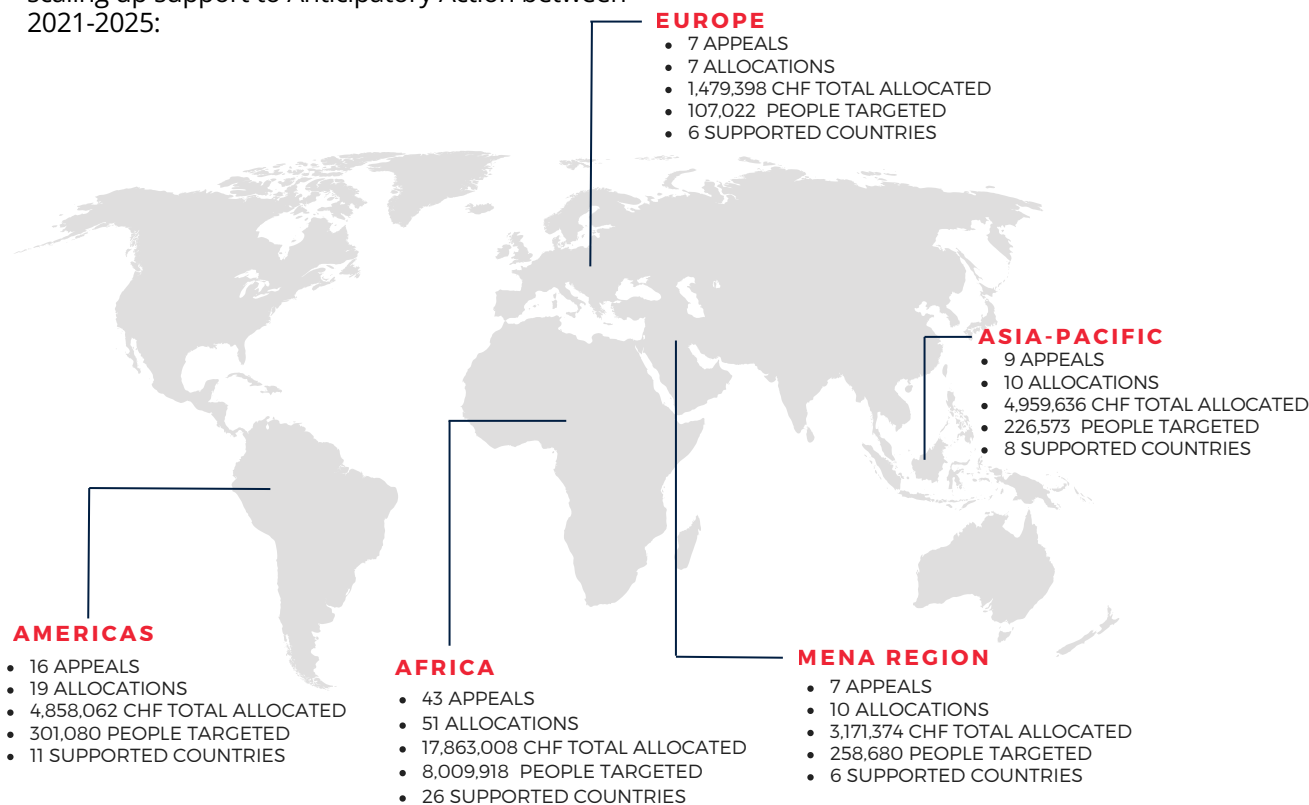
**Africa** region received the highest share of allocations, with **51 allocations in support of 26 countries**, totaling **CHF 17.8 million** in response to civil unrest, drought earthquake, epidemics, fire, floods and storm surge, food insecurity, and population movement. **Americas** followed as second largest in number of allocations - CHF 4.8 million in 19 allocations - although **Asia Pacific** received CHF 4.9 million in 10 allocations. **MENA** received CHF 3.1 million in 10 allocations, while **Europe** accounted for 7 allocations and CHF 1.4 million.

Meanwhile the total number of allocations did not change compared to the same period in 2024, with 97 recorded in both periods; the **total amount of allocations** dropped from **CHF 35.6 million in 2024 to CHF 32.3 million in 2025**. This indicates smaller average allocations, even as the number of operations remained steady. This trend reflects the narrowing funding environment currently affecting the humanitarian sector.

IFRC-DREF support for **Anticipatory Action** has significantly increased in comparison to the same period last year - 15 new Early Action Protocols and Simplified Early Action Protocols were approved between January and June 2025, funding readiness, stock, and early actions to mitigate the impact of floods, epidemics, cyclones, wild fire, drought, population movement, cold waves, and heat waves. This growth echoes IFRC-DREF's commitment of scaling up support to Anticipatory Action between 2021-2025:

The Anticipatory Pillar accounted for **17%** of allocations by mid-2025 - up from 11% in mid-2024 - and continued expanding in both volume and thematic scope.

These figures reflect a Fund that is growing not only in scale but in **strategic relevance** - serving as a bridge between preparedness and response, between global commitments and locally-led action.



## 2.2. Operational highlights

### Responding to a Complex Risk Landscape

Between January and June 2025, the DREF enabled **58 National Societies** to deliver agile responses to disasters and crises across all five regions. Most of these operations were shaped by climate change and fragile socio-economic and political contexts.

As in previous years, **floods** remained the most supported emergency type by allocation, with **CHF 8.4 million** disbursed across Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, and MENA.

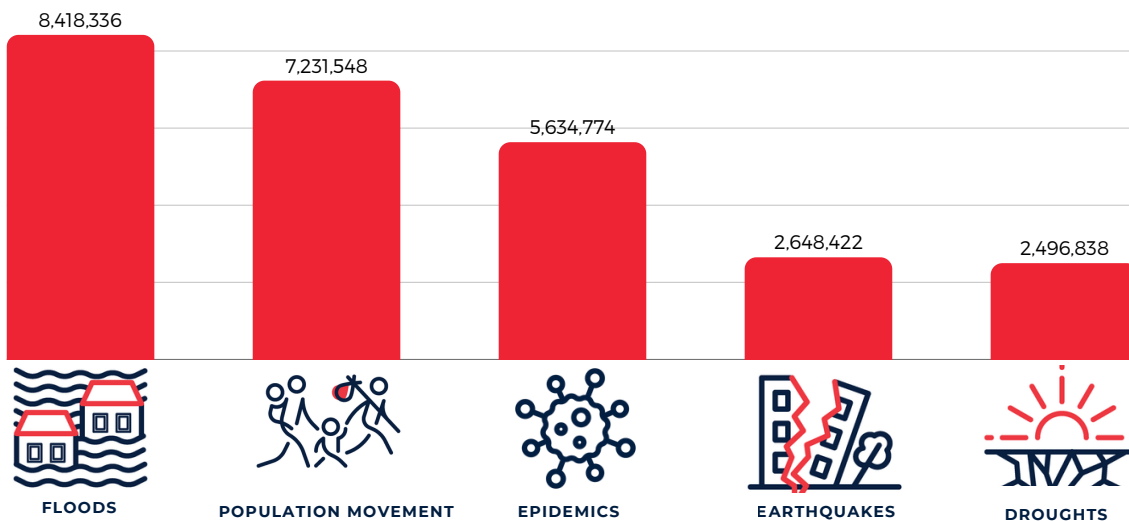
However, the landscape of weather-related emergencies shifted significantly in 2025:

**Population Movement** rose to second place, with **CHF 7.2 million** allocated to support National Societies in addressing the

humanitarian needs of people on the move. These included those displaced by conflict - such as the M25 crisis in eastern DRC and neighbouring countries, and the escalation of the complex emergency in the Middle East - as well as those affected by socio-economic crises, such as the influx of returnees in Central America.

**Epidemics** ranked third, with **CHF 5.6 million** allocated in response to outbreaks of cholera, Ebola virus disease (EVD), monkeypox, measles, dengue, and yellow fever. Epidemic outbreaks have risen sharply in the Africa region, where for the first time on record, epidemics surpassed floods as the top emergency, with CHF 4,649,562 allocated for this hazard in the region.

#### Top 5 hazards (CHF Allocated)



## Notable operations

**Population movement in Iraq:** the first imminent DREF using the revised approach was submitted in June 2025 by Iraqi Red Crescent, featuring a leaner application template and expedited review process which allowed the approval of life-saving early action and early response within 24 hours.

**Small and medium scale floods:** in Botswana, Argentina, Algeria, Malaysia, emergencies which received little media attention, relied on the DREF to ensure that pressing humanitarian needs were addressed.

**Epidemic response for cholera:** in 6 African countries, totaling CHF 2.2 Million including 2 newly approved Early Action Protocols, and CHF 673,440 through 3 allocations for **measles response** in Central Asia.

**Earthquake response in Myanmar:** when IFRC-DREF allocated CHF 2 Million to kick-start the Emergency Appeal in response to a red category emergency.

A new protocol for **population movement** was approved for Colombia. This protocol intends to mitigate the possible impacts of forced displacement due to the armed conflict, through early actions in the sectors of Protection, Gender and Inclusion, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Mental Health and Physical First Aid.

The first protocol for **the Pacific** was approved. The Fiji Tropical Cyclone s-EAP intends to reduce the impact caused by tropical cyclones on the lives and livelihoods of communities in Fiji, especially those who face greatest vulnerability.

The first protocol for **dengue** was approved for Sri Lanka. This s-EAP aims to curb the rising trend of a dengue outbreak by limiting the spread of the disease in five targeted high-risk areas of the country.

A protocol to mitigate the impact of **wildfires** was approved for Chile. It is the first protocol to address this hazard, and it intends to reduce the impact on communities most at risk due to their proximity to wildfires in terms of damage and loss of homes and livelihoods.

These responses enabled local actors – Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies – to respond quickly to humanitarian needs, due to National Society leadership, simplified coordination with IFRC regional teams, and growing use of readiness tools.



## Regional Highlights

### Americas

The first half of 2025 in the Americas was marked by a diverse range of hazards, including floods, landslides, public health emergencies and population movement. In this context, the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) has remained a vital mechanism to enable National Societies to act rapidly before and immediately after disasters strike, providing flexible, needs-based funding that allows for early mobilization of resources and safeguarding lives and livelihoods.

From January to June, the Americas ranked second globally in number of allocations, with **CHF 4.8 million** disbursed for **16 operations: 9 from anticipatory pillar** (3 Simplified Early Action Protocols, 6 imminent DREFs) and **7 from response pillar** (6 response DREFs, 1 loan to Emergency Appeal). This represents a significant shift towards anticipatory action compared with the same period in 2024, when 19 operations were approved but only 2 corresponded to the anticipatory pillar, and in 2023 and 2022 when just 2 and 4 operations from the anticipatory pillar were approved respectively. In 2025, allocations from the anticipatory pillar now make up more than half of the regional portfolio - a clear signal of the region's increasing interest in anticipatory action, while maintaining robust post-disaster response capacity.

Notable achievements included a **CHF 1 million loan** to support large-scale flood and landslide response in Ecuador, and the approval of the **first Simplified Early Action Protocol for forced displacement** in Colombia, which targets impacts of mass displacement due to armed conflict.

Capacity strengthening remained a priority. Between February and April 2025, four **DREF update sessions** were held for IFRC staff and National Societies, covering new drought DREF guidance, updated submission processes for Early Action Protocols, quality implementation steps, Results-Based Management (RBM) minimum criteria, and new communications protocols. In June, the **new DREF Procedures** were rolled out in the region through dedicated online sessions for IFRC staff and National Society staff and volunteers. In total, eight sessions reached **over 400 participants**, ensuring both technical and operational staff across the Americas are equipped with the latest procedures and quality standards to deliver effective anticipatory and response interventions.



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## Europe and Central Asia

In Europe and Central Asia, between January and June 2025, the IFRC-DREF supported six response operations across five countries in the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and Central and Southeastern Europe, alongside the approval of one Simplified Early Action Protocol (s-EAP) for heatwaves in Albania. In total, CHF 1,479,398 was allocated, directly targeting a total of 107,022 people.

A major concern during this period was the sharp increase in measles cases across the region, with vaccine hesitancy particularly pronounced in Central Asia. With support from the IFRC-DREF, the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan built on its COVID-19 and ECHO PPP experience to strengthen community-based surveillance and reinforce risk communication and community engagement efforts, addressing the growing measles outbreak nationwide.

Anticipatory action also advanced in the first half of the year. Discussions on revising existing s-EAPs are expected to deliver concrete outcomes by the end of 2025. The agenda was further reinforced through thematic sessions on health impacts of heatwaves and peer exchanges with National Societies, including Greece (heatwaves) and Chile (wildfires). Similar sessions will continue in Q3-Q4 2025, with plans to engage external partners supporting s-EAP development.

Capacity strengthening remained a central focus. Between January and July, nine DREF Lessons Learned Workshops (LLWs) were held, five in March alone, facilitated by IFRC Delegations, the Regional Office, or the Global DREF team. To ensure adequate technical expertise across the region, selected profiles in

climate and environment, health, migration, preparedness, anticipatory action, PMER, and IM received a dedicated crash course on the LLW methodology. These efforts were complemented by monitoring missions, onboarding, and dissemination sessions led by the IFRC Regional Office for Europe.

Finally, dissemination of the revised DREF procedures has been prioritized to ensure National Societies and IFRC staff can efficiently access and apply the mechanism when disasters strike. Additional region-wide and targeted sessions are planned in the second half of the year to further consolidate this progress.

## Asia-Pacific

In the first half of 2025, the Asia Pacific region recorded significant engagement with the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF), both under the Anticipatory Pillar and in immediate response operations, while continuing to serve as a key mechanism to trigger Emergency Appeals.

Between January and June 2025, the IFRC-DREF supported two response operations with allocations amounting to nearly CHF 600,000: Floods in Malaysia, addressing the immediate humanitarian consequences of severe monsoon flooding and Population movement in Pakistan, supporting people displaced and affected by cross-border dynamics. Together, these operations reached more than 67,500 vulnerable people, providing life-saving relief and protection at a critical time. In addition, one DREF-funded response, the Afghanistan Population Movement operation was further escalated to an Emergency Appeal due to the scale and growing complexity of humanitarian needs.



In parallel, the DREF provided kick-start funds for Emergency Appeals in the region including the Myanmar Earthquake. Through these allocations, National Societies were able to immediately mobilize resources, activate response activities, and deliver urgent assistance to affected communities, while broader international fundraising efforts were initiated to sustain operations.

The first half of the year also marked important progress in anticipatory action across the region. Three new approvals were granted under the s-EAP protocol: Floods in Timor-Leste and Indonesia, tropical cyclones in Fiji and dengue in Sri Lanka.

In addition, 5 s-EAPs are currently under development, while approximately 20 have been identified where National Societies have expressed interest in developing them. These developments highlight the increasing commitment of Asia Pacific National Societies to adopt anticipatory approaches within disaster risk management, with a particular emphasis on climate- and health-related hazards that continue to shape the region's risk landscape.

With the revised IFRC-DREF Procedures approved in June, additional regional and country-level sessions are planned in the second half of the year to ensure National Societies, CD and CCD can apply them effectively, further strengthening the quality, speed, and impact of both anticipatory and response operations.



## Africa

Africa remains the highest user of the DREF in the first semester of 2025, with a total of 44 operations approved across all pillars and allocation types, mobilizing over CHF 15 million in support. These include 9 loans to emergency appeals, totaling CHF 2.99 million, among which 1 Ebola and 5 Mpox operations. The largest loan was CHF 1 million to the Nigeria Malnutrition Response, a crisis affecting over 5.4 million children and 800,000 pregnant and lactating women across the hardest-hit states.

In addition, 29 response DREF operations were approved, mobilizing CHF 12.16 million and targeting over 6.3 million people. These include 8 epidemics (5 cholera), 5 floods, 8 population movement crises, and 2 storm surges, reflecting the breadth of hazards faced across the continent. Anticipatory action is also expanding, with 6 operations (4 EAPs, 2 s-EAPs, and 1 i-DREF), amounting to CHF 2.72 million and reaching 216,730 people. While this represents

progress, the overall balance still leans heavily toward response rather than preparedness.

Key successes include the strong contribution of DREF to epidemic response. Epidemics remain the foremost concern, with 16 operations in just six months. Indeed, Africa continues to face recurrent and deadly outbreaks, particularly in cholera, but DREF-supported operations have enabled National Societies to scale up rapid containment measures, aligning with IFRC's Call-to-Action to End Cholera and achieve elimination by 2030. Encouragingly, donor support remains strong: 18 replenishments from ECHO over 29 response DREFs, underscoring confidence in the mechanism.

However, persistent challenges threaten to undermine gains. Operational delays linked to procurement, customs clearance, and staffing have been reported in at least a quarter of active operations. Equally pressing, reporting compliance is lagging. Addressing these bottlenecks will be essential to sustain credibility, ensure accountability, and maintain the momentum of DREF-supported responses across the continent.

## MENA

From January to June 2025, the IFRC-DREF allocated a total of CHF 3,171,374 to seven operations across the MENA region. The majority of this funding supported complex emergency response operations, amounting to CHF 1,750,000, followed by CHF 631,641 allocated to floods and CHF 499,932 to population movement. In terms of financing type, CHF 750,000 was allocated in loans to the Middle East Crisis Emergency Appeal, while CHF 1,000,000 was granted to support the Iran complex emergency. All other allocations were provided as grants, including CHF 499,932 for a population movement response from Syria to Lebanon, CHF 472,691 for floods in northern Iraq, and CHF 158,950 for floods in Algeria.

Under the anticipatory action pillar, allocations included a simplified Early Action Protocol for cold waves in Lebanon and a DREF allocation for an

imminent population movement from Iran to Iraq, linked to the escalation of hostilities in the region.

Alongside these allocations, the IFRC supported capacity-strengthening efforts. In February, a DREF training was held for the Iraq Red Crescent Society, and in May, IFRC participated in the facilitation of an anticipatory action training in Iraq. Both trainings brought together National Society staff and volunteers, Partner National Societies present in the country, and in the case of the anticipatory action training, participants from the World Food Programme. Furthermore, during the last weeks of June and the beginning of July, four orientation sessions were organized for the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) on the revised IFRC-DREF procedures and the simplified Early Action Protocol (s-EAP), along with an additional meeting focused on IFRC-DREF support to drought events. Participants included staff and volunteers from both headquarters and branches, as well as a dedicated session for the heads of SARC's technical departments. In addition, the new DREF procedures were presented during the in-country membership coordination meeting. Additional orientation sessions on the new procedures are planned across the region during the second half of the year.

These allocations and activities reflect broader regional trends, with a notable increase in hostilities requiring complex emergency response operations by several National Societies, alongside shifting climate patterns that have triggered more frequent and severe extreme weather events.



## Operational Efficiency and Approval Speed

The IFRC-DREF continued to uphold its hallmark of fast funding:

- The average time for signature of the Project Agreements is **6 calendar days**, with some approvals completed in as little as **1–2 days** (e.g. Iraq, Iran, Guinea-Bissau).
- Africa (Average 6 day) and Asia Pacific (Average 8 days) maintained the fastest average review and signing times.

This reflects improved coordination processes, better alignment with regional structures, and increasing uptake of **compliance-ready documentation** from National Societies.

## Launch of New IFRC-DREF Procedures

A major milestone was reached in **June 2025** with the official launch of the revised **DREF Procedures**. This brought structural and procedural modernization after a two-year development process, including:

- **Eligibility and compliance check within 24 hours of submission:** enabling DREF approval and release of 25% of the funding request within the same timeframe
- **Dual EAP activation:** promoting enhanced flexibility and cost-efficiency
- **Revised imminent DREF modality:** applicable where no EAP exists

This rollout, combined with new guidance, templates, and onboarding support, represents a step-change in how the Fund operates - compared to 2024, when most procedures were still in draft or pilot phase.

## Strengthening Anticipatory Action

Building on the foundation laid in 2023–2024, in 2025 the Anticipatory Pillar continued to see an evolution from policy to practice:

The **number of protocols (s-EAPs) continues to grow**, with more protocols submitted in the first half of 2025 for a total of 21 (8 EAPs and 13 s-EAPs) compared to 13 protocols during the same period in 2024 (6 EAPs and 7 s-EAPs); more protocols approved with 15 in total during the first six months of 2025 (5 EAPs and 10 s-EAPs) compared to 8 protocols in 2024 (6 EAPs and 2 s-EAPs); and more funds allocated in the first semester of 2025 for a total CHF4,614,314, compared to CHF3,643,583 in the same period in 2024. In addition, the range of hazards being addressed has also expanded. In 2025, three epidemic s-EAPs were approved: a Cholera EAP for Cameroon, a Cholera s-EAP for Somalia and a Dengue Fever s-EAP for Sri Lanka. Other new hazards include wildfires in Chile and conflict related displacement in Colombia.



Plans to pilot a new approach to developing protocols began in 2025 for Small States. With support from the Netherlands Red Cross, the **Anticipatory Action for Small States (AA4SS) project** aims to provide technical support to Barbados and Belize Red Cross to see how protocols can be developed by smaller National Societies testing alternative approaches to ensure National Societies of small states with limited capacities can access international support from the IFRC-DREF Anticipatory Pillar to protect their population most at risks.

During this semester, the **Validation Committee was expanded**, with original Validation Committee members forming the core group and new members forming the extended group. The reason for the expansion is twofold, it creates a bigger pool of reviewers, and secondly it brings new expertise to the Validation Committee, such as epidemic and migration specialists, more cash experts and more Host National Societies. The extended group now includes 29 new members, 6 of whom come from a peer group of Host National Societies.

Based on almost a year of consultation, the **Anticipatory Action for Population Movement guidance** first draft was developed and shared with the members of the AA for population movement. Their comments are now being addressed and the document will be finalized and disseminated during the second half of 2025.

The EAP module in GO platform started development in 2025 and is expected that the submissions of new protocols can be done through this platform by 2026.

This reflects a maturing approach where anticipatory action is no longer an experimental add-on, but a central part of the IFRC-DREF strategy.

## 2.3. Operational challenges

Despite sustained efforts and developments aimed at strengthening compliance and accountability for IFRC-DREF operations, persistent and emerging challenges continue to shape IFRC-DREF's operational environment.

### Delayed reporting

**Delayed reporting** for IFRC-DREF operations remains a challenge. While a significant reporting backlog accumulated in the last months of 2024 (largely linked with ERP transition) it is worth noting that during the first half of 2025 a substantial portion was cleared, with many overdue reports finalized and published. While efforts are being undertaken to address overdue reporting, the IFRC-DREF continues to work with regional teams and departments to help address this issue. A reporting taskforce was established in early 2025 with PMER and Finance teams to further support the clearing of bottlenecks related to reporting. In addition, bi-weekly tracking of pending reports at global and regional level was maintained by the IFRC-DREF Team, maintaining increased visibility on latest status and required action points by responsible teams.

While the overall reporting backlog has decreased, overdue reports still necessitated escalating otherwise compliant new IFRC-DREF requests to Senior Management for additional approval.

The revised IFRC-DREF procedures introduced several foundational improvements to enhance the Fund's agility, effectiveness and accessibility. However, they also include measures such as reduced maximum budget thresholds tied to the number of overdue reports, making it even more critical to address the challenges of overdue reporting.

### Implementation delays

Mirroring 2024, among other challenges, **implementation delays** experienced within operations continued to be linked with changing operational contexts, but also with procurement bottlenecks and delayed fund transfers, requiring targeted support as well as flexibility. Such challenges often lead operations teams to carry out operational adjustments, including timeframe extensions, in order to meet the required needs of affected communities.

### Compliance/Procedural issues

During the first half of 2025, there were three instances where IFRC-DREF applications had not received approval, due to compliance or procedural issues (this is compared to the total of 97 allocations that were approved during this period).



### 3. Performance indicators



# Performance indicators

Total # of allocations:

**97**



Total allocations Anticipatory and Response pillar):

**32.3 million**



% of the total annual allocations that go towards operations funded by the Anticipatory Pillar:



**17%**

Total funds mobilized:



**CHF 33 million** processed

**CHF 25 million** confirmed funding

# of NS accessing IFRC-DREF for imminent events: **9**

# of IFRC-DREF funded operations reviews in progress: **5**

Total # of operations

**82**



# of new NS with simplified EAPs and EAPs:

**10**

Average amount of allocations (grants):

**CHF 313,457**

Timeliness of allocation approvals (grants):



**6,9 days** from request to approval

% of operations requiring additional approval (please refer to section Operational Challenges for further information):

**20.6 %**

Average # of days for IFRC-DREF allocations approved from trigger date:



**13.4 days**

% of allocations that go to yellow emergencies (excluding EAPs and s-EAPs):

**40**

Total amount allocated to Anticipatory Action (CHF allocated):

**CHF 5,6 million**

# of NS accessing the IFRC-DREF from high-risk countries (based on INFORM):



**24**



# Performance indicators

# of new NS accessing the IFRC-DREF Response Pillar: **0**

Contributions from the private sector:

**CHF 1.2 million**

% of response DREF operations that are concluded without a timeframe extension:



**93 %**

# of IFRC-DREF Council meetings (continuous engagement with the IFRC-DREF Council):



**1**



Average length for signing of Project Agreement:

DREF Operations (Including i-DREF) **6 days**



EAPs and S-EAPs **38 days**

Average implementation rate of IFRC-DREF operations:



**89.9%**

% of utilization of past lessons learned reports in DREF Applications:



**83%**

# of operations audited:

**7 operations** under audit (ECHO contract) **and 5 operations** under external audit



# of National Societies supported with increased IFRC-DREF capacity strengthening (trainings, mentorships, materials and others):

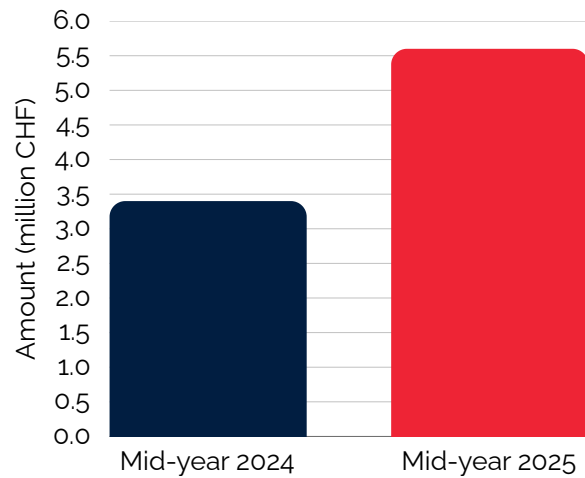


**Anticipatory Pillar: 23**  
**Response Pillar: 5**

Efficiency metrics (timeliness, compliance rates):

**9 protocols validated** by the VC **under 30 days.**

# Summary comparison 2024 vs. 2025 - Anticipatory Pillar



**Total Amount allocated to Anticipatory Pillar**

| INDICATOR                                     | MID-YEAR 2024 | MID-YEAR 2025 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| New early action protocol                     | 6             | 5             |
| New Simplified Early Action Protocols         | 2             | 10            |
| Imminent DREF                                 | 5             | 8             |
| Total Allocated (CHF)                         | 4,03 million  | 5,6 million   |
| % of total allocations to Anticipatory Pillar | 9.7           | 17            |



## 4. Progress towards outcomes



## 4. 1. Strategic Objectives



### Objective 1: Enabling Local Action

The funding target for 2025 is set at CHF 100 million Swiss francs, which consists also of CHF 15 million of insurance component that serve as a contingency fund for exceptional years. In the first 6 months of 2025, CHF 33 million was processed and additional CHF 25 million of funding was confirmed. IFRC has been exploring new, non-traditional funding sources, especially from the private sector, and collaborating with its regional offices in Africa, Asia Pacific, and the Middle East to attract new donors.

#### 1. Enhancing Accountability through Community Feedback Mechanism

Building on the success of the internal feedback mechanism launched in 2024, the DREF continues to put the voices of affected people at the center of funded operations. This mechanism allows us to:

- Capture and act upon the direct perspectives of people targeted by our operations.
- Demonstrate impact through their feedback.
- Use collected data to analyze and adapt our operations, improving the way humanitarian assistance is delivered.

In February 2025, the DREF team initiated a partnership with the IFRC Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) team and long-standing IFRC partner Ground Truth Solutions (GTS).

Co-designed with the CEA team, the initiative aims to improve and systematize community feedback across DREF-funded operations by developing lighter and more relatable data collection tools.

This work complements findings from the DREF Feedback Process, which revealed that 40% of respondents felt community participation was not sufficiently relevant in DREF operations.

Co-designed with the CEA team, the new project engages two pilot National Societies, Ethiopia and Honduras RC to build and test simple, effective tools for collecting community feedback during operations. Successful approaches will be adapted and scaled for all DREF users.

GTS has completed a desk review and consulted key global stakeholders.

**Ethiopia:** As the first pilot country, the project is well underway. Ten key informant interviews have been conducted and an in-country workshop held. Activities will continue in the second half of 2025.

**Honduras:** Selected for its strong experience in emergency response, anticipatory action, and community engagement. The National Society has endorsed the project, with initial briefings completed. In-country activities are planned for Q3-Q4 2025.

GTS has supported the IFRC in using community feedback to improve emergency responses since 2016. This new initiative deepens that collaboration, helping to make DREF operations more accountable, participatory, and responsive to the needs of the people we serve.

## 2. Communications and Visibility Enhancements

In 2025, the DREF continued the roll-out of its Donor Visibility Plan, ensuring that donor support is consistently acknowledged and highlighted across communications. This includes strategic use of media channels, targeted social media engagement, and direct outreach to stakeholders. The plan focuses on linking donor contributions with tangible impact stories from DREF funded operations, reinforcing accountability and transparency. Early results from associated outreach activities show measurable increases in visibility and engagement, with notable spikes following coordinated posts on LinkedIn, X, and WhatsApp.

## 3. DREF Key messages

In the first half of 2025, the DREF Key Messages were comprehensively reviewed and refined to better reflect the fund's strategic priorities and evolving humanitarian context. Drawing on operational data, donor feedback, and National Society insights, the updated messages emphasize DREF's dual role in rapid response and anticipatory action, its localization record, 76.5% of funds channeled directly to National Societies, and its ability to approve and disburse funding within days.

The messages have been tailored for targeted audiences, including donors, partners, and

media, to reinforce DREF's impact, cost-effectiveness, and leadership in locally led humanitarian action. This refreshed set of messages will guide all communications and visibility activities throughout 2025, including the upcoming pledging conference and country-level launch events.

## 4. Supporting Regional and Country-Level Launch Activities

Following the launch of the revised DREF procedures in June 2025, all National Societies and

IFRC delegations receiving DREF allocations have been encouraged to organize country-level visibility events. These events - targeting media, partners, and donors - are designed to communicate key messages, raise the profile of the National Society, and publicly acknowledge the support provided through the DREF. Regional and country delegations have received guidance and support from the DREF team to implement these activities effectively, ensuring coherent and impactful communication at the national level.



## Objective 2: Saving More Lives by Anticipating Crises and Acting Earlier

During the first half of 2025 the IFRC-DREF Anticipatory pillar:

- Continues to see a steady increase of the s-EAP pipeline, building on annual progress. With the new DREF procedures in place, including the two activations for full EAPs, the Anticipatory Pillar will come close to the IFRC-DREF Strategic Ambition target of 25% of budget allocation.
- Has seen significant improvement in efficiency with the introduction of the new submission process, via a centralized email address, combined with the expansion of the Validation Committee which has increased the pool of reviewers. In addition, in January, IFRC-DREF team, global and regional focal points met with Climate and Resilience team global and regional AA focal points to identify pain points in s-EAP development, management and activation lifecycle and workshop solutions; ensuring better collaboration across the teams.

• Solid progress has been made by the IFRC-DREF population movement working group, promoting learning and best practice internally across the Red Cross Red Crescent Network, and externally with the newly convened Anticipation Hub's Population Movement Technical Working Group. Similarly work done by the IFRC-DREF, WASH and Health Units, in collaboration with the Anticipation Hub's Health Working Group, also helps to promote learning and good practice on epidemiological hazards and has led to three protocols approved (Cholera and Dengue Fever), with another six under technical review (mainly Cholera and Lassa Fever). The Cholera proforma s-EAP was finalized by the IFRC WASH team, the IFRC-DREF team and the Climate Centre, making clear guidance available for National Societies wanting to develop an s-EAP on cholera.

- Saw the conclusion of the Readiness Review, which was initially started in September 2025, with support from the **Belgium Red Cross**.

The review aimed to examine the extent to which readiness activities (and funding) provided by the IFRC-DREF under EAPs in Mali, Niger and Uganda contributed to the organization and operational readiness to act in advance of a hazard. A summary of the final report will be disseminated in Q3 2025.

- Kicked off interesting discussions on the **evolution of the concept of Anticipatory Action** within the RCRC Network. Innovative ideas surfaced internally to the IFRC during the consultation for the new DREF Strategic Ambition 2026 - 2030, and then the conversation continued with the DREF Advisory Group in April, followed by the IFRC network-wide AA workshop held in May in Geneva, where there was a rich exchange on the progress and challenges of advancing anticipatory action across the network. The next semester of 2025 will see the conversation progress even further, with the s-EAP pilot phase review (2022 - 2025), when these findings feeding into development of a One EAP modality.



## Objective 3: Increasing the Value of IFRC-DREF in Slow Onset, Protracted, and Complex Events

As part of the IFRC-DREF's strategic evolution, the first half of 2025 focused on strengthening operational readiness for slow onset, protracted, and complex emergencies. Building on the 2025 annual plan, key efforts were directed toward disseminating the Drought DREF Modality guidance, supporting discussions on developing Federation-wide guidelines for slow onset, protracted and complex crises, while also developing surge deployment criteria to support National Societies readiness activities ahead of disasters and crises.

This section outlines the progress made across these areas and highlights ongoing work to ensure the IFRC-DREF remains fit for purpose in increasingly complex humanitarian contexts.

### 1. Develop and disseminate operational guidance

Building on the groundwork laid in 2024 through the development of the Drought DREF Modality operational guidance, in the first semester of 2025, the IFRC-DREF prioritized the dissemination of operational guidance. The guidance outlines eligibility criteria, activation triggers, and planning frameworks for anticipatory action, immediate response, and early recovery actions. It aims at enhancing National Societies responsiveness to slow onset, protracted, and complex crises.

The dissemination of this guidance has been ongoing since early 2025, through all DREF presentations conducted in the first part of the year at Global, Regional, Delegation levels. Tailored disseminations



were also conducted for National Societies and PNSs across Africa, Asia Pacific, Americas and MENA, where the issue of drought, food insecurity and water shortages is either chronic or evolving, giving country teams more insight to better plan such interventions when applying for DREF funds. These dissemination efforts will continue through country-focused DREF trainings, and the guidance shall also be included as an annex to the revised DREF Guidelines whose completion is underway, following approval of the revised DREF Procedures in June 2025.

Complementing this effort, the IFRC is following up with the Global Operations Coordination Team on the development of Federation-wide guidelines for addressing slow onset, protracted crises, and complex emergencies (such as civil unrest, population movement, and epidemic outbreaks). This collaboration with the DREF Team aims to clarify how DREF funds can be used and under what conditions multiple allocations may apply, especially in protracted and complex emergency settings. This work is being led by the Global Operations Coordination Team.

Despite the stall in developing above mentioned Federation-wide guidelines for slow onset, protracted crises, and complex emergencies criteria, the IFRC-DREF team continued working with Surge Team and the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) Team to support surge deployments and external support in for National Society readiness actions within the IFRC-DREF Anticipatory Actions pillar.

These consultations resulted in the IFRC Surge Team launching a dedicated Rapid Response role profile for Readiness (RR for Readiness or RDY) on 13 February 2025. Developed in collaboration with the IFRC-DREF Team and the NS Response Capacity Strengthening Senior Officer, this new role profile marks a significant step

forward in operationalizing readiness support through surge mechanisms. It integrates the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) mechanism, to systematically assess and strengthen National Societies' response capacities. This approach ensures coordinated and measurable improvements across the disaster risk management continuum, while also supporting future planning efforts (including Emergency Appeal revisions, recovery strategies, and long-term preparedness initiatives).

With this new role profile, RDY surge can be deployed up to two months before anticipated crisis peaks. This role supports NS and IFRC teams in identifying and addressing capacity gaps, guides implementation of anticipatory actions and readiness activities as well as facilitates smooth transitions between mitigation and response phases in the life cycle of a DREF operation. The RDY surge profile will be piloted through a one-year period, with adjustments based on lessons learned.

## 2. Capacity strengthening of National Societies:

Progress in the first half of 2025 included tailored dissemination sessions and sensitizations with National Societies and Delegations, aligned with the initial rollout of the revised DREF Procedures. As mentioned above, these efforts targeted regions most affected by drought and food insecurity, enhancing operational understanding of the new modality. For the remainder of the year, focus will shift to integrating the the Drought DREF modality into revamped response and anticipatory action trainings. These capacity-building initiatives are closely linked to ongoing strategic consultations and the development of Federation-wide guidance, ensuring that National Societies are equipped to respond effectively to increasingly complex humanitarian challenges.



### 3. Reinforce donor communication and partner engagement:

In the first half of 2025, donor communication and partner engagement efforts focused primarily on showcasing the IFRC-DREF's evolving capacity to address slow-onset, protracted, and complex crises. While no formal operational reviews or success stories were conducted during this period, the dissemination of the Drought DREF Modality guidance across global, regional, and delegation levels served as a key opportunity to highlight the Fund's adaptability and relevance. These engagements helped reinforce the strategic direction of the IFRC-DREF and laid the groundwork for future advocacy aimed at increasing donor contributions. Further efforts to profile impact and strengthen donor relations are planned for the second half of the year particularly through the rollout of revised DREF Guidelines and targeted communications aligned with the upcoming 2026–2030 Strategic Ambition.

### 4. Strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning:

In the first half of 2025, the IFRC-DREF laid critical groundwork for strengthening monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) systems, with a focus on institutionalizing Results-Based Management (RBM) across operations. While formal operational reviews were not conducted during this period, collaboration with the PMER teams advanced the adoption of minimum RBM standards. These include the use of M&E plans, Gantt charts, risk registers, and indicator tracking tools; elements that were disseminated through regional workshops and the Global PMER Meeting in June 2025.

In parallel, efforts are underway to develop a DREF Operations Monitoring Tool within the GO platform, in collaboration with the Information Management Team. This tool aims to standardize indicator tracking and reporting, support real-time follow-up on operations, and facilitate the generation of operational updates and final reports. The IFRC-DREF Team is currently mapping out six key functions to initiate the consultation process which will guide its development; this includes Delegation and NS project managers, DREF focal points, PMER, and Ops teams.

These initiatives are designed to improve forecasting, tracking, and learning in DREF operations, while reinforcing accountability, adaptability, and evidence-based decision-making. The IFRC Operations Learning Platform continues to be promoted as a key resource for National Societies to leverage past experiences and strengthen future interventions, while it is expected that the recently launched RDY surge profile, which integrates the PER mechanism, shall further support structured capacity assessments and readiness planning for National Societies.



## 4. 2. Enablers



### Enabler 1: A Lean, Efficient Fund

#### Enhancing Compliance and Accountability

IFRC-DREF has sustained its strong commitment to enhancing compliance, accountability, and risk management. IFRC-DREF continued diligent monitoring of compliance issues linked with IFRC-DREF operations, allowing for timely documentation and mitigation of risks. IFRC-DREF continued to develop analyses on a quarterly basis to provide an overview of compliance-related issues across DREF-supported operations, with the aim of enhancing overall accountability. The analyses highlight both areas of concern and good practice and promote transparency in how compliance is managed.

With the introduction of the revised IFRC-DREF Procedures, dedicated analyses of risk and compliance are now systematically conducted for every new IFRC-DREF request in the form of concise one-pagers which are utilizing IFRC-DREF's compliance data and comprehensive data available on National Societies. Aimed to support the eligibility and compliance check of new IFRC-DREF requests, the analyses draw on past operational experiences, existing risk data, and contextual analysis to help anticipate potential challenges and tailor mitigation measures. The one-pagers are supporting the review and approval process for new IFRC-DREF requests, ensuring risks are considered early and addressed appropriately. By providing a transparent and structured overview of key risks, this

tool strengthens accountability, and fosters trust within the Movement. It also enhances proactive risk management, enabling National Societies and IFRC to respond more confidently and effectively to the emerging humanitarian needs.

At the end of the first half of 2025, IFRC-DREF also developed and is piloting a new tool (Integrity Issue One-Pager) to systematically support coordinated mitigation and follow-up actions at the relevant levels on any integrity issues encountered during IFRC-DREF operations.

IFRC-DREF continues to collaborate closely with the IFRC Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI). During the first six months of 2025, 12 IFRC-DREF operations were covered by audits (donor-commissioned and IFRC-commissioned), with more operations being considered until the end of the year.

#### DREF process in GO

The first half of 2025 has focused on launching list of bug fixes and improvements based on feedback received during 2024 to the existing DREF form in the platform, as well as the launch of the new DREF imminent modality which launched with the DREF 2025 procedures. The DREF imminent final report form will be launched beginning of the second half of the year and will bring to completion the digitalisation of the new imminent modality in the platform. Work will continue in the year prioritising the translation functionality for all existing DREF forms in GO, allowing National Societies to work the forms in any of the IFRC official languages with option to automatically translate between them.



## Enabler 2: Increased Support to Strengthening National Societies

### New IFRC-DREF Procedures and Guidelines

In the first half of 2025, while the new IFRC-DREF Procedures were drafted, pending approval, work started on drafting the **new IFRC-DREF Guidelines** which aim to operationalize the Procedures. The new guidelines will focus on the two DREF Pillars, for Anticipation and Response, and provide more detailed operational guidance on how to access DREF funding as well as best practice on managing and closing DREF funded operations.

### Outreach on new IFRC-DREF procedures

The new IFRC-DREF procedures were announced by the Under Secretary General (USG) on 17 June, with the new procedures coming into effect for all

operations on 23 June 2025. On 20 and 24 June 2025, the IFRC-DREF team began the roll out with two global webinars outlining the key features of the new procedures. The **global outreach will be complemented by regional webinars**, for National Societies and IFRC staff and will be facilitated in relevant languages.

### Launch of CoP on the Communities Platform

The **IFRC-DREF Community of Practice (CoP)** was launched in June 2025, as a key pathway for disseminating the new IFRC-DREF Procedures. The CoP is hosted by IFRC's Communities Platform and is accessible to Red Cross Red Crescent or IFRC staff or volunteers. Today, the CoP has 194 members.

### Revision of the training package

Now that the IFRC-DREF Procedures are approved, as of June 2025, the second semester in 2025 will focus on **revising the DREF training** (online and

in person). The revised training package will be made modular, so that it best meets the needs of National Societies and specifically targets the organizational or operational challenges encountered.

The revised training package will be made modular, so that it best meets the needs of National Societies and specifically targets the organizational or operational challenges encountered.

For National Societies with approved protocols in place, the training scenario can feature the transition from s-EAP activation in advance of a hazard through to disaster response with an allocation from the Response Pillar.

### Ongoing outreach on the Anticipatory and Response Pillars

**Feedback calls** are an important, albeit optional part of the EAPs validation process. The calls enable National Societies, and the delegations that support them, to directly access the Validation Committee reviewers; provide additional operational context information, ask clarifications on the comments and expectations from the reviewers as well as identify the most crucial that needs to be addressed. In the first semester of 2025, the IFRC-DREF's Anticipatory Pillar facilitated 10 feedback calls.

Another important milestone is the **post approval briefings** for IFRC delegations. Once a s-EAP is approved the IFRC-DREF's Anticipatory Pillar facilitates a briefing, empowering the IFRC

Project Manager to lead on the set up and kick off of s-EAPs. During this semester, briefings were facilitated for all the 14 s-EAPs that were approved. In addition, other briefings conducted in this semester include briefing on DREF modality, on the technical review process and the activation process. Anticipatory Pillar outreach within the IFRC Network include an intervention in the Europe Region's Extreme Heat and Wildfires Webinar in May, and beyond the IFRC Network include three sessions at the HNPW in March, in Geneva.

## Peer to peer exchange programme

As part of cross-regional peer-to-peer collaboration, the Regional DREF Focal Point from the Africa Region provided valuable support to the Americas team in delivering a DREF dissemination session for the Haitian Red Cross. This contribution was instrumental in ensuring the session could be facilitated in French, enabling full engagement and understanding by participants. The exchange highlights the strength of inter-regional cooperation in enhancing the reach and impact of DREF capacity-building efforts.

However, the IFRC-DREF Peer Exchange Programme faced significant limitations due to ongoing funding constraints affecting the humanitarian sector since the start of 2025. These constraints have challenged the programme's key deliverable to expand deployments during critical periods and enhance cross-regional knowledge sharing.

Despite these challenges, efforts were made to maintain continuity and support regional capacity, especially following the departure of

the Asia Pacific DREF Focal Point in February 2025. To address the gap, the Operations Coordination team in APRO continued to provide operational support, while the DREF Senior Officer in Geneva offered proximity technical assistance on compliance and eligibility matters.

To ensure a smooth transition, a structured onboarding mission was conducted in Kuala Lumpur from 9th to 17th June 2025 for the newly recruited DREF Coordinator for Asia Pacific. The mission focused on familiarizing the new focal point with DREF tools, procedures, and coordination mechanisms, including the revised DREF Procedures and operational review planning. The onboarding also included engagement with Geneva-based technical teams and regional stakeholders and laid the foundation for continued remote support. The new Coordinator is expected to fully assume the portfolio by the end of August 2025, with continued guidance from the global DREF team and peer support from other regional focal points.



Overall, while broader peer exchange objectives may not be met this year due to funding challenges, these targeted support at critical times reinforce the collaborative spirit of the programme.

## Enabler 3: National Society Ownership and Trust

### IFRC-DREF Feedback Process

The year began with a dedicated team sprint in January, focused on establishing a clear way forward for the feedback tool. The team worked on improving the tool's purpose and features and developed ideas to share it more widely and make its results more useful. This sprint set the foundation for a more relevant tool, including better integration of Anticipatory Action (AA), and a stronger focus on generating meaningful insights.

With the launch of the new DREF procedures in June, the feedback process has become even more relevant. It was used to collect anonymous questions about the new procedures, which were later answered through the public Community of Practice platform. This approach helped make the process more open and responsive, and demonstrated real steps to close the feedback loop.

At the same time, work began on using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help organize and analyze feedback more efficiently. In the next quarter, the focus will shift to consolidating the feedback system and starting to automate the analysis of findings, making the process faster and easier to use.

## IFRC-DREF Operational Reviews

As part of IFRC's commitment to localization, learning, and accountability, the DREF team started 2025 with finalizing the reports of a few reviews engaged in 2024. This includes the review of Dengue Preparedness and Response in Asia Pacific and Americas Regions and the External Review of the IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (IFRC-DREF), whose reports were made available to the relevant stakeholders for action on the recommendations. With these reports, the team rounded up the 2023-2024 review cycle, as detailed in the 2024 annual report.

In May, the 2025-2026 DREF operational review cycle was launched with 15 operational reviews planned, spread across both anticipatory (5) and response (10) pillars. The plan reflects a balanced mix of thematic and strategic reviews, with a stronger emphasis on single-country and single-operation reviews to generate context-specific insights and actionable recommendations. Given the volume of reviews planned, a prioritization exercise was done, and reviews marked low are expected to spill into 2026, pending relevance and resource availability.

This is with acknowledgment that full implementation of this plan will only be possible through load-sharing with IFRC's partners. The DREF team has, as such, actively engaged with Partner National Societies, especially the members of the DREF Advisory Group, to lead or co-lead some of these reviews. So far, the American RC, British RC, Canadian RC, Swedish RC, German RC and Netherlands RC have either committed to, or are already engaged, in a few of these reviews. The DREF Team is also engaged internally with PGI, Migration and Health departments, to support reviews focusing on these specific thematics.

Progress has been made in initiating the following five (5) operational reviews which are part of the 2025-2026 DREF operational review cycle:

- Assessing the Impact of New Extended Timeframes for Orange Emergencies a desk-based review which looks into how the newly implemented longer timeframes for DREF operations affect operational planning and decision-making processes on activities as well as outcomes;
- Review of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Elections Readiness Operations in Africa, a desk-based exercise supported by the Swedish and German Red Cross Societies, focusing on how election-related DREF allocations and processes empower National Societies' ability to anticipate, prepare for and respond to crises in a timely, efficient, and context-appropriate manner;
- Review of Sri Lanka 2023-2024 Floods operations, with objective of collecting insights from the responses provided to communities and exploring learnings to inform anticipatory actions. This review is co-led by the IFRC-DREF Coordination and Canadian RC and will be conducted using a mixed method approach including desk review and a field visit to one of the intervention areas;
- Review of Portugal Wildfires operation, led by the Netherlands RC, using a mixed method approach combining desk review and field visit, to assess the timeliness and agility of the DREF allocation. The review also examines the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of the humanitarian response delivered by the National Society as a first-time user of the DREF;



- Review of Emergency WASH Actions in DREF Operations Across Africa, co-led by Africa WASH team and the Netherlands RC, aims to improve their quality and sustainability of such interventions. It assesses the relevance to local needs, the effectiveness in achieving intended outcomes, and the potential to support longer - term resilience programming. By analyzing operational demand, National Society capacity, and lessons learned, the review will generate actionable insights to inform future planning, capacity development, and strategic decision-making.

In the meantime, discussions are underway on ToR development for five (5) more, including a review of Floods Operations in Sri Lanka, a review of Afghanistan/Pakistan 2025 Returnee Population Movement operations, a review of Portugal Fire operation (the first DREF implemented by this NS), an external review of the simplified EAP modality launched in Q2 2025 and an Operational Research and Lessons on Protection Gender and Inclusion in DREF operations. Overall, the plan remains on track with strategic adjustments being made based on operational realities and prioritization exercises.

Regarding the update of the Operational Reviews Framework, progress so far includes continued refinement of the associated toolbox, alongside efforts to integrate AI-based technologies to accelerate and improve evidence analysis and reporting. Coordination with regional and thematic focal points remains essential to ensure the relevance of reviews and to avoid duplication with other evaluation initiatives. In parallel, collaboration with the Information Management team is helping to ensure that insights from reviews are systematically captured and shared via the Ops Learning Platform on IFRC GO.



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