



## **DREF Operational Review**

# **Assessing the effectiveness of 9-month timeframes for orange-level DREF operations**

March 2026

**+CIFRC**

# Executive Summary

This Operational Review examined three DREF operations implemented under the revised orange scale parameters introduced in September 2022, allowing National Societies (NSs) to request grants of up to **CHF 1 million** and operate over a **9-month timeframe**. With the further introduction of the 2025 DREF Procedures — removing loans for orange-scale operations — the use of the 9-month modality has expanded significantly, emphasizing the urgency of assessing its effectiveness.

The review focused on the operations in **Slovenia (Floods)**, **Vanuatu (Cyclones Judy & Kevin)**, and **Mozambique (Cyclone Freddy)**. These were the first NSs to implement the extended timeframe, and offer together diverse contexts in which to analyse:

1

## Rationale

The rationale for choosing an orange DREF, rather than launching an Emergency Appeal.

2

## Operational Quality

The extent to which the 9-month operational timeframe is linked to improved quality on the intervention.

3

## Community Feedback

The systematic use of community feedback on course correction.

Across all three operations, the extended timeframe offered critical room to accommodate delays caused by procurement bottlenecks, overlapping crises, and logistical challenges.

## Vanuatu

Transition to **multipurpose cash assistance** enabled by additional operational time following Cyclones Judy & Kevin.

## Slovenia

Expanded **psychosocial support** after a second flood event, made possible within the extended window.

## Mozambique

Phased **WASH interventions** during a concurrent cholera outbreak following Cyclone Freddy.

However, planned, phased designs and an exit strategy seem to have been largely absent, limiting evidence on the effectiveness of additional time for a more quality response. Relief and recovery often became **compressed due to delays**, rather than intentionally sequenced from the outset.

The review also found **no systematic link between the longer timeframe and stronger community engagement and feedback mechanisms** to inform operational changes. While some adaptations were informed by feedback - such as Slovenia's refinement of CVA eligibility criteria or Mozambique's adjusted hygiene kits - these were not systematic or strategic. Best practices on this area tended to occur where NSs already had stronger CEA foundations or received targeted IFRC technical support.

One significant finding of this review pointed to challenges on the extended timeframe in **overstraining staff and volunteer teams** due to longer periods. This points to a need of clearer direction for volunteer protection and workforce sustainability in extended operations, including how to structure rotations, manage workloads, and appropriately use staff-cost provisions. Despite these limitations, the nine-month timeframe also seem to have facilitated **important institutional gains**:



### Slovenia

Strengthened digital CVA systems, IM practices, and SOP development.



### Vanuatu

Advanced CEA and cash readiness capabilities within the National Society.



### Mozambique

Enhanced volunteer training, early action integration, and coordination through Emergency Operation Centers.

These examples highlight the potential of the 9-month modality to contribute to **longer-term National Society development** — provided this is intentionally built into operational planning.

Overall, the review found that the extended timeframe is a **relevant and often necessary modality** for orange scale emergencies, especially given increasing crisis complexity. However, its effectiveness depends on :



### Early Planning

Intentional phased design and exit strategies built in from the outset.



### Robust Assessments

Thorough needs assessments to guide operational decision-making.



### Structured Community Feedback Systems

Systematic CEA mechanisms to enable meaningful course correction.



### Workforce Sustainability Measures

Clear direction on volunteer protection, rotations, and workload management.

The report concludes with **targeted recommendations** to NSs, IFRC technical teams, and DREF Management to strengthen operational quality and strategic value under the 9-month modality.

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	3
1.1 Purpose .....	4
1.2 Scope .....	4
1.3 Methodology .....	6
2. Summary of interventions: .....	7
2.1 Slovenia - Floods (MDRSI003) .....	8
2.2 Vanuatu - Cyclones Judy and Kevin (MDRVU010) .....	8
2.3 Mozambique - Tropical Cyclone Freddy (MDRMZ020): .....	9
2.4 Best practices across operations: .....	10
3. Common Challenges.....	11
3.1 Volunteer fatigue: Are extended timeframes stretching volunteer capacity? .....	12
3.2 Logistical setbacks: room for adaptation, or delay in aid? .....	13
3.3 Coordination fatigue or improved positioning?.....	15
4. Findings and Learnings.....	16
4.1 What was the rationale for applying for a DREF vs. launching an Emergency Appeal? .....	17
4.2 Did the extended timeframes reflect strengthened operational effectiveness? .....	18
4.3 Have the extended timeframes enabled stronger community engagement and use of feedback for course correction? .....	21
5. Recommendations.....	22
Recommendation 1: Strengthen phased operational planning from the start .....	23
Recommendation 2: Improve initial planning and phased design with timely technical and assessment support .....	23
Recommendation 3: Implement midterm reviews (MTRs) to drive evidence-based course correction. ....	23
Recommendation 4: Institutionalize community feedback mechanisms and apply them consistently in decision-making. ....	24
Recommendation 5: Use extended operations as an opportunity to build institutional and technical capacity .....	24
Recommendation 6: Improve staff and volunteer workload management in extended operations .....	24
6. Conclusion.....	25

# Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This review aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the 9-month maximum timeframe for orange-scale DREF operations. This included understanding the positive impacts and challenges of prolonged response periods, the potential contributions to quality in cross-cutting areas such as Community Engagement and Accountability, and the analysis of the decision-making process of implementing a DREF operation instead of an Emergency Appeal.

On September 2022, the DREF introduced new operational timeframes and ceilings for grants to medium-scale emergencies (orange category per IFRC ERF), allowing National Societies an implementation timeframe of up to 9 months and a funding limit of up to CHF 1 million. These new ceilings replaced the previous parameters of up to 6 months and a maximum CHF 750,000 for emergencies of the same scale. These changes were implemented as part of **the DREF Evolution**, as response to the underfunded emergency appeals for medium-scale emergencies, to enable National Societies to access and implement larger grants and an operational strategy beyond immediate relief and lifesaving assistance.

In June 2025, with the launch of **the new DREF Procedures**, this review becomes even more relevant. Aiming at tackling the challenge of underfunded appeals, the new procedures “extinguished” the DREF loans to orange scale emergencies, consequently increasing the number of orange scale, 9-month DREF Operations – from only 3 in 2024, to 8 as of November 2025. The increase of over 150% in the use of this modality makes it even more urgent to learn about challenges and best practices around its implementation.

Finally, the purpose of this review goes beyond assessing the performance of individual operations: It provides insights into how DREF’s evolving tools and parameters are shaping the quality and timeliness of aid delivered to affected communities, while also testing the alignment of these tools with the actual capacities of National Societies. By critically reflecting on this alignment, the study contributes to rethinking IFRC tools to ensure they remain fit for purpose in increasingly complex crisis contexts.

## 1.2 Scope

Between 2023 and 2025, the DREF has supported 23 medium-scale (orange) emergencies, with operational timeframes of 9 months:

Year	Operation	Amount Allocated (CHF)
2023	Mozambique - Cyclone Freddy	973,954

	Vanuatu - Cyclone Judy and Kevin	799,389
	Slovenia - Floods	999,726
	Syria - Droughts	799,070
	Palestine - Complex Emergency	1,000,000
	Mexico - Hurricane Otis	951,574
2024	Myanmar - Flood	825,215
	Sudan - Floods	943,271
	Chad - Floods	1,000,000
2025	Afghanistan - Population Movement (loan)	750,083
	Vietnam – Monsoon Flood	1,000,000
	Afghanistan - Northern Earthquake	1,000,000
	Afghanistan - Southern Earthquake	1,000,000
	Iran - Complex emergency	1,000,000
	Malawi - Food insecurity	999,910
	Philippines - Earthquake	999,819
	Philippines -Typhoon Tino and Uwan	999,064
	Angola - Cholera Response	627,608
	Bolivia - Floods	495,243
	Nigeria - Population movement	1,000,000
	Viet Nam Central Flood 2025	608,000
	Indonesia - Floods	1,000,000
	Sri Lanka – Cyclone Ditwah	1,000,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>CHF 20,771,926</b>

Over the same period, the average allocation to orange (medium) scale emergencies has increased by 44% (from CHF 527,881 in 2023 to CHF 760,142 in 2025) - reflecting the increased complexity of crisis driven by climate change and socio-economic challenges. As mentioned in the previous section, the number of requests to this modality has tripled in 2025 (14 operations) compared to 2024 (3 operations), as a direct consequence of the new DREF Procedures.

This review focused on the DREF Operations for Mozambique Cyclone Freddy ([MDRMZ020](#)), Vanuatu Cyclone Judy and Kevin ([MDRVU010](#)), and Slovenia Floods ([MDRSI003](#)). These were the first three NSs to request and implement the new ceilings and timeframes for orange-scale emergencies, and also represent a diverse set of contexts – floods compounded with cholera and election-related protests, a cyclone in a small island State, and the use of the DREF by NSs which do not frequently request support through this mechanism. Emphasis will be placed on the context of Slovenia floods DREF Operation, as this is a non-frequent DREF user which implemented the DREF funds in combination with over EUR 5,000,000 Government and EU Donations.

Unintentionally, the case of Slovenia floods also enables the understanding of implementation of DREF funds for Orange-scale responses in combination with other resources – the “new normal” introduced with the revised Procedures in mid-2025.

### 1.3 Methodology

This Operational Review used a mixed method approach combining **secondary data review, key informant interviews** of IFRC and Slovenian Red Cross staff, and **AI supported document analysis**, structured against the analytical framework and the three key research questions guiding this study. The methodology was revised to incorporate a systematic “finding–evidence–lesson learned” approach and to inform the development of targeted recommendations addressed to National Societies, IFRC technical teams, and DREF Management.

<p><b>Secondary Data Review:</b></p>	<p>The review examined all available operational documentation for the three selected operations, including DREF applications, Operations Updates, Final Reports, email communications, and Lessons Learned Workshop (LLW) reports (except for Vanuatu, where no LLW was available, which may limit the depth of learning-specific analysis for this operation). This provided the primary evidence base for identifying operational decisions, bottlenecks, timelines, and adaptations.</p>
<p><b>Key Informant Interviews:</b></p>	<p>The findings of the secondary data review directed the questions to key informant interviews (KII). These were conducted via Microsoft Teams, in August 2025 with two IFRC Staff (the Project Manager and Operations Manager), as well as two Slovenian Red Cross Staff (Disaster Manager and the NS Secretary General). These KIIs supplemented document gaps, offering qualitative insights into operational decisions, coordination, challenges, and perceived effects of the extended timeframe. A key limitation of the data collection process was the significant time gap between the response and the interviews. Conducted approximately 1.5 years after the operation had closed, participants indicated difficulty remembering specific decisions, timelines, or operational details. As a result, some accounts may be incomplete or influenced by how events came to be understood retrospectively. To mitigate this, the review contextualized interview insights against operational documents.</p>
<p><b>AI-based Extraction</b></p>	<p>AI was used to scan operational documents and systematically map excerpts against the analytical framework, improving consistency and accelerating data processing. The analysis applied a structured approach for each research question, organizing data into Finding, Evidence (per operation) and Lesson learned.</p> <p>The use of artificial intelligence significantly sped up the process and set ground for future reviews.</p>

Key limitations include the absence of a LLW report for Vanuatu, reliance on retrospective accounts influenced by memory bias, and uneven documentation quality across operations. Furthermore, the review centred on only three NSs, which may limit generalizability; however, their diversity in operating context provides a strong basis for cross case learning.

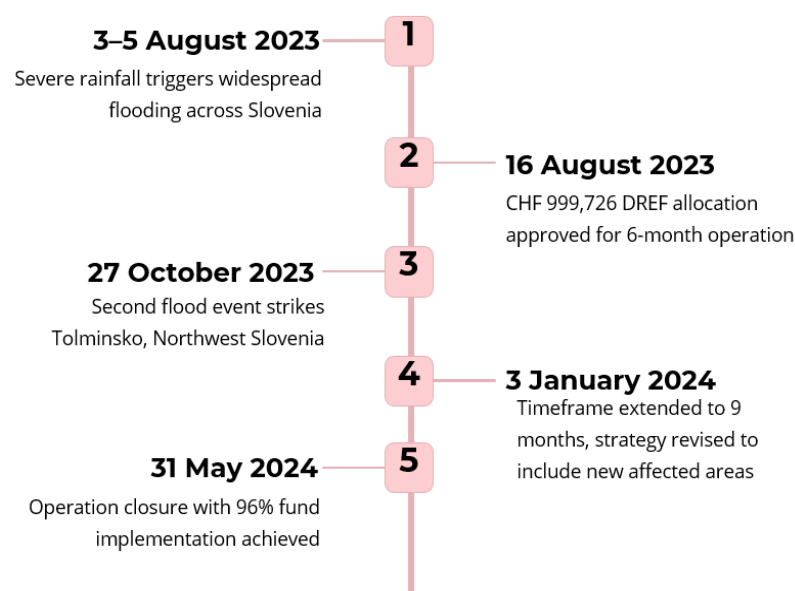
## 2. Summary of interventions:

### 2.1 Slovenia - Floods (MDRSI003)

**Timeframe:** 4 August 2023 – 30 April 2024

**People reached:** 40,070

#### Timeline and key milestones



The Slovenian Red Cross (SRC) responded to two flood events in both August and November 2023, under the 9-month DREF operation. Initially approved for a 6-months period, the NS requested a 2-month no-cost extension in December 2023 but followed global technical advice for a 3-month extension due to the low level of implementation of some activities.

The SRC Floods response leveraged pre-established coordination mechanisms with local authorities, early deployment of trained volunteers, and introduced digital tools like EspoCRM (a hotline and filing system for feedback) and KOBO to deliver multipurpose cash assistance and psychosocial support.

The review has shown that the 9-months' timeframe was critical in enabling the adaptation of the response to evolving needs, such as shifting the targeting of their Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) between phases and expanding coverage of their Psychological First Aid (PFA) to newly impacted municipalities. The documents also showed high adaptability due to the longer implementation period, with field teams reassessing activities based on post-distribution monitoring and emerging vulnerabilities like mobility restrictions, winterization, and isolation among the elderly. One key element of the response was the need for conciliating the implementation of DREF funds with other funds from Government and European Union, in which DREF was regarded for its flexibility.

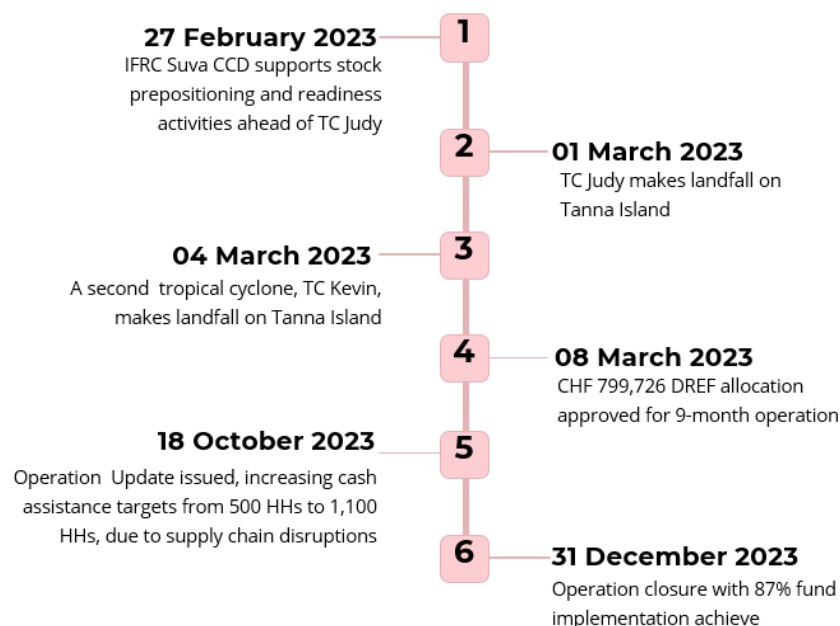
The longer implementation timeframes also highlighted challenges, particularly in human resources capacity and coordination sustainability. Coordination fatigue, staff and volunteer burnout, as well as digital literacy gaps may have affected consistent performance, especially in branches involved in both flood events. Overall, while the 9-month timeframe exposed underlying weaknesses in decentralized response systems, the review has shown that the operation achieved its proposed objective. The National Society depended heavily on compensatory efforts from branch staff and volunteers, underscoring the need for structured surge mechanisms, regional coordination hubs, and further institutionalization of digital and CEA/PGI practices.

## 2.2 Vanuatu - Cyclones Judy and Kevin (MDRVU010)

**Timeframe:** 1 March 2023 – 30 November 2023

**People reached:** 20,000

### Timeline and key milestones



The Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS) response to Cyclones Judy and Kevin built on existing systems, including the early activation of the Emergency Operations Center on 26 February 2023 (5-days prior to the first landfall), deployment of over 120 trained volunteers, and pre-positioned stockpiles across six regional hubs. While initial response efforts focused on WASH, health, and shelter, delays in

procurement and logistics, especially to remote islands, led VRCS to pivot toward multipurpose cash assistance (CVA). This strategic shift, grounded in community feedback and market assessments, allowed the NS to deliver timely and context-appropriate support as supply chains were disrupted.

The extended timeframe enabled market analysis, stakeholder coordination, and phased implementation, ensuring delivery of assistance in a geographically complex and logistically strained environment.

The operational documents suggest that VRCS integrated community engagement from the outset, using hotlines, IEC materials, and community meetings to inform activities and revise targeting. Feedback loops enabled operational adjustments - such as the inclusion of hygiene items - while the 9-month duration allowed the feedback collection to be refined and extended to remote communities.

Despite these gains, the longer response period may have created challenges such as volunteer fatigue, increased distribution costs, and coordination fatigue across provincial structures. VRCS addressed these by rotating deployments, offering basic welfare support, and consolidating activities. Post-operation efforts toward institutionalization of response elements - such as SOP revisions and alignment with Early Action Protocols - suggest emerging links between response and preparedness systems. However, while the extended timeframe enabled meaningful adaptations and learning, the scale of institutionalization remained modest and dependent on follow-up through ongoing resilience programs.

## 2.3 Mozambique - Tropical Cyclone Freddy (MDRMZ020):

**Timeframe:** 23 February 2023 – 30 November 2023

**People reached:** 60,000 individuals

### Timeline and key milestones



Mozambique Red Cross (CVM) implemented a DREF operation in response to the two landfalls of Tropical Cyclone Freddy, delivering an intervention focused on shelter, WASH, and health promotion. The review of secondary data indicates that the extended 9-month

timeframe ensured the completion of delayed activities, but that despite the extra time, a significant number of planned distributions was still not achieved. On the other hand, the operation leveraged CVM's national contingency plan, early action protocols, and participation in provincial and district-level Emergency Operations Centres, supporting alignment with local coordination systems.

Despite significant under-reach in NFI distributions reported across WASH and Health sectors, the extended timeframe seems to have enabled adaptation to evolving needs, allowing a multisectoral assessment that guided the expansion of hygiene promotion, a cholera response, the geographic expansion, and volunteer training – none of which would have been feasible under a shorter window. Post distribution monitoring introduced mid-operation through post-distribution monitoring, led to some adjustments in hygiene kits and messaging, although these systems were not formalized or sustained beyond the response.

The operational delays, compounded by the overlapping emergencies (civil unrest and cholera), seem to have been partially mitigated by the extended 9-month timeframe, which allowed for a second round of distributions and more time to finalize shelter procurement and delivery. While the infrastructure damaged after Freddy's, and the national elections in October created periods of restricted mobility, staff availability, and access for distributions, the extended timeframe enabled the CVM to resume paused operations once these disruptions subsided, avoiding full cancellation or loss of operational continuity. However, the extension could not fully compensate for the delays in immediate response windows resulting in some interventions, such as shelter support, reaching beneficiaries after the peak of vulnerability had passed. This illustrates the trade-off between operational flexibility and the urgency of life-saving assistance in the initial aftermath.

## 2.4 Best practices across operations:

<p><b>Slovenia</b></p>	<p><b>Integration of digital platforms</b> for tracking, assessment, and adaptation of targeting criteria after the second flood.</p> <p>At the start, digital tool usage was uneven across branches. The additional time allowed HQ and branches to identify gaps, deliver refresher training, and harmonize data collection practices. Insights from EspoCRM and KOBO collection tool helped inform adjustments.</p>	<p><b>Expanded psychosocial support</b> after the second flood was informed by feedback and local data. The additional months allowed SRC to recruit and deploy more PFA-trained volunteers, extend services to newly affected populations, and tailor support based on evolving psychological stressors. Activities under DREF and EU4Health projects were aligned to strengthen PFA and psychosocial support efforts.</p>	<p><b>Digital CVA system model</b>, with expert involvement from ERO IM and CVA teams, and the consequent set-up of a digital CVA system. This became a model for transparent and efficient fund delivery.</p> <p>Data dashboards, registration tools, and digital beneficiary tracking were developed.</p>
<p><b>Vanuatu</b></p>	<p><b>Early activation of the EOC</b> on 26 February 2023, five days before Cyclone Judy made landfall, enabled immediate coordination with national and branch disaster response systems.</p>	<p><b>Pre-positioning of stockpiles</b> across six regional hubs, allowing for faster dispatch of emergency relief items and rapid deployment of over 120 trained volunteers. VRCS began distributions and assessments even before Cyclone Judy made landfall – yet limited by damaged transport and infrastructure and cut communication with branches.</p>	<p><b>Adaptive cash assistance strategy</b> based on market assessments and community feedback. Rather than prolonging distribution delays, the extended timeframe allowed the National Society to conduct market functionality assessments, consult communities, and engage the Cash Working Group to design and roll out a cash assistance model.</p>
<p><b>Mozambique</b></p>	<p><b>Expanded WASH support</b>, initially delayed, CVM was able to pivot its WASH strategy midway through the operation, informed by both rapid needs assessments and ongoing feedback from affected communities - particularly those in temporary accommodation centers and newly resettled areas.</p>	<p><b>Community feedback integration</b>, gathered through volunteer networks, coordination meetings, and ad hoc consultations highlighted gaps in access and coverage. CVM leveraged the 9-month DREF window to expand its outreach beyond shelters, tailoring messaging, deploying trained WASH volunteers, and coordinating with local authorities to respond to specific community-identified needs.</p>	<p><b>Volunteer integration in EOCs</b> into provincial and district-level and from the outset of the emergency, ensuring they were involved in real-time planning meetings. These volunteers also served as liaisons between local communities and operational leads, relaying early warnings, facilitating access to remote locations, and flagging urgent needs such as water shortages or cholera alerts.</p>

### 3. Common Challenges

This section compiles key challenges identified across the review of operational documents and key informant interviews.

#### 3.1 Volunteer fatigue: Are extended timeframes stretching volunteer capacity?

The review of the operational documents and key informant interviews has shown that the extended timeframe allowed for prolonged volunteer and staff engagement but also overstrained the teams, increasing the risk of burnout. The prolonged response in Mozambique was compounded by two parallel operations, while in Slovenia the strain was caused by back-to-back deployments, and in Vanuatu it resulted from long deployments in hard-to-reach areas.

- **Vanuatu**

Volunteer rotation limitations were tied to the geography of the country, since few volunteers could travel repeatedly to outer islands without compensation or structured welfare support. Particularly in this context, many volunteers were not available for deployment due to overseas seasonal work, and while there were sufficient volunteers based in Port Vila, there were not enough in some of the outer islands or not available to travel to these locations. Consequently, the mobilized volunteers have reportedly played multiple roles throughout the operation. While this was not explicitly listed as a challenge and the LLW report for this operation was not available, this can be seen as a risk in exposing volunteers to overwhelming contexts, worsened by the prolonged implementation period of the operation.

- **Mozambique**

The response has also leaned heavily on pre-existing teams who were often simultaneously engaged in coordination, hygiene promotion, and distribution roles, stretching local capacities without external reinforcement. For CVM, staff availability was interrupted by national elections and overlapping response needs – this created an increased workload for CVM, particularly in Zambezia area, where a Cholera outbreak was declared a few days after TC Freddy's second landfall, and where CVM has parallelly implemented the Cholera response DREF (MDRMZ021).

- **Slovenia**

The need to staff both the August and November flood responses required re-deployment of the same volunteers, many of whom were already overstretched from the first event. This exposed gaps in their rapid response personnel planning, as the NS lacked ready pools for rotation or relief.

**Important note:** It is key to highlight that operational documents from Slovenia and Mozambique state that volunteers were not only responders, but also disaster-affected, particularly in rural and under-resourced branches. Over 9 months, emotional toll increased, and in Slovenia this informed the expanded rollout of PFA not just to affected populations, but also to volunteers and staff.

Across all **key informant interviews involved in Slovenia Floods operation**, staff and volunteer fatigue was noted as a major challenge:

- Engagement was high during the initial emergency phase but declined naturally over time. By month nine, exhaustion was widespread, though motivation remained strong.
- The operation revealed gaps in staff care and psychological support systems. In response, SRC developed a **Psychosocial Support Network** and mainstreamed **Psychological First Aid (PFA)** training for responders and communities.

Insights from both IFRC and SRC staff involved in the operation confirmed that the nine-month period reduced time pressure on implementation but required sustained motivation management to avoid burnout.

Moreover, the interviews also shed light on the topic of HQ-Branch relations, and internal coordination. The respondents pointed to structural gaps between HQ and branches evidenced during the operation – while the DREF implementation made these more evident, it also helped to address some of them:

- **Initial gaps at branch level:** Despite of its relatively small size, Slovenia holds 56 branch offices, and altogether a pool of 10,000 volunteers. At the onset of the crisis, branches initially lacked tools for assessment and preparedness; HQ provided direct coaching during implementation.
- **Improved HQ-Branch coordination:** Throughout the implementation of the DREF, coordination between HQ and branches improved significantly: due to technical support provided via HQ, from IFRC ERO, branches learned to perform **needs assessments, risk analysis, and prioritization** independently.
- **Structural reforms:** The experience led to the creation of **six regional coordinators** under a subsequent project, improving long-term decentralization and preparedness.
- **Digital literacy gaps addressed:** The inequalities in capacity and digital literacy among the branches stood out as a challenge during the implementation of this DREF response, it also led Slovenian Red Cross to apply for the capacity building fund on a project focused on digitalization.

In all three cases, the lack of adequate internal surge systems or relief rotations exposed structural vulnerabilities across National Societies, such as overdependence on local branch-level volunteer pools, lack of mechanisms for rapid staff reinforcement across regions, inadequate volunteer welfare and retention frameworks, and minimal contingency for rotating field staff during prolonged deployments. These gaps limited the ability to maintain consistent service delivery and operational momentum throughout the 9-month implementation period. On the other hand, in the case of Slovenia, the extended period also seems to have allowed the staff and volunteers time to “breath” after the pressure of the initial months.

### 3.2 Logistical setbacks: room for adaptation, or delay in aid?

As mentioned throughout this report, procurement delays and access issues were documented in all three operations: in Mozambique due to supply chain and election-related protests, in Vanuatu due to transport to remote islands, and in Slovenia, due to supply chain challenges and equipment shipping delays.

- **Mozambique**

Shelter and NFI deliveries were initially held back due to national procurement bottlenecks and overlapping political events, and the 9-month timeframes allowed the NS time to finalize these activities. Specifically, according to the operational documents the procurement of shelter kits was delayed due to centralized processes at the headquarters, which involved lengthy approval procedures and supplier coordination challenges. On the LLW for the Cyclone Freddy Operations, participants have highlighted the coordination between IFRC and CVM on the procurement process as key challenges on this matter – i.e. communication around stocks, lack of understanding of processes.

These delays were compounded by political sensitivities surrounding the October national elections, which caused temporary disruption in some of the activities under DREF. Combined, these factors resulted in a substantial backlog in procurement and distribution – participants on the LLW also mentioned that relief items should have been distributed on the due phase but were instead handed to the communities at the recovery phase, only.

- **Vanuatu**

Disruption of supply chains by the TC and limited capacity of transportation providers due to the cyclone caused the delayed procurement of key shelter items and in-kind NFIs. In the initial months of the operation, the NS has shifted to international procurement but also prompted a strategic pivot to multipurpose cash assistance (CVA) after initial assessments and coordination with the Government and national Cash Working Group. Based on the context and challenges, the shift to multipurpose cash assistance has seemed a more efficient, timely, and relevant support based on community preferences and functioning local markets. While the shift to CVA would have been difficult to operate under a shorter timeframe, the operational documents also highlighted delay in the delivery of the cash assistance itself, due to agreements with service providers.

- **Slovenia**

The delays were coupled with the evolving scale of the emergency and a second flood in November, leading the NS to phase its assistance and eventually expand the use of multipurpose cash assistance. The additional time granted under the 9-month operation was essential for designing a more inclusive CVA strategy, adjusting eligibility criteria based on local branch input, and deploying gift cards tailored to household-level needs. Feedback mechanisms between the two distribution phases allowed operational adaptations that would not have been possible within a standard DREF timeframe.

**Note:** While most activities were ultimately completed across the three operations despite delays, the timing of delivery raises questions about whether the 9-month timeframe was necessary to meet humanitarian needs, or whether the operational strategy merely adjusted to delays.

While in Mozambique internal (coordination and heavy processes) and external (election-related protests) disrupted the delivery of aid, implementing staff agreed that the relief activities were no longer compatible with the recovery needs, 6 months within the crisis. In Vanuatu, the longer timeframe enabled the NS to re-assess its strategy and deliver assistance that was adequate to its island-state geographical context – in which transports and logistics are a heavy burden on the responders. Despite that, the cash programme itself experienced delays in its implementation, with beneficiaries receiving assistance only in the 7th month of the operation. The extended timeframe clearly provided enough room for the challenges of small island states yet still resulting in delayed assistance.

In the context of Slovenia, the delay in implementing DREF funds, as opposed to other sources, was seen as "strategic" regarding the flexibility of the tool. Despite that, some items that required international procurement, under the DREF, were still delayed, and delivered only after the second flood.

Despite of these delays, the **interviewed key informants** involved in that operation confirmed that the assistance delivered was still relevant on the final months of the response – such as psychological first aid – and that the additional time allowed for additional quality in this assistance, with strengthened branch coordination and trainings. On this topic, both the interviewed SRC Disaster Manager and SRC Secretary General emphasized that despite the extra operational time, preparedness for an effective response in peace time is essential to improve implementation of DREF funds in any context.

### **3.3 Coordination fatigue or improved positioning?**

Maintaining effective coordination over time was a common challenge for the three National Societies. Sustaining coordination became harder as momentum slowed, particularly due to the cumulative demands of a prolonged 9-month response.

The prolonged operational window required sustained planning, resource management, and partner alignment over a much longer horizon than most local coordination mechanisms were prepared for. Without established protocols for rotating leadership, maintaining updated communication pathways, and re-energizing local partnerships, some coordination efforts lost momentum or became inconsistent.

- **Mozambique**

While initial coordination was embedded in the provincial COEs and enabled rapid mobilization, coordination fatigue became visible as operations extended into the recovery phase. Overlapping responsibilities, recurrent disruptions from national elections and Cyclone Freddy, and delays in sectoral reporting created pressure on the same staff and coordination structures without formal rotation or refresh mechanisms

- **Vanuatu**

Despite a proactive start, coordination across remote provinces became strained over time due to the geographic spread of operations and lack of structured support for re-engaging provincial-level actors. The extended timeframe helped absorb these strains, but it also highlighted the absence of surge-ready coordination teams, shared SOPs across administrative levels, and mechanisms for sustaining multi-actor alignment over several months.

- **Slovenia**

The second flood in November required branches to revisit coordination mechanisms under new pressure – often relying on informal relationships such as personal networks between branch and municipal staff or ad hoc solutions like improvised logistics or uncoordinated scheduling – due to stretched resources and the absence of standardized long-term coordination protocols. Coordination fatigue was also observed among local stakeholders, with variable engagement from municipal actors, and inconsistencies in information sharing. The extended timeframe exposed the limits of decentralized coordination structures not originally designed for long-term, multi-event operations, as local branches had to coordinate responses to two successive flood events within the same DREF operation

❖ **Improved Movement Coordination: Insights from Slovenia**

Interviews with IFRC Staff and Staff from Slovenian Red Cross emphasized how the DREF played a role in improving movement coordination (between NS and IFRC), and internal coordination (between HQ and branches).

**Trust-Based Collaboration**

The collaboration between SRC and IFRC Budapest was described as trust-based and adaptive. During the operation, SRC leadership opted for limited in-country presence from IFRC, but welcomed short, targeted technical missions and remote technical support. On that note, IFRC staff supporting the operation emphasized the value of continuous but flexible engagement – allowing national leadership while ensuring accountability and quality control.

**Decisive Surge Support**

IFRC's surge support in CVA and IM, and CEA was praised by all interviewees as decisive to the success of the operation. Informally, on-the-job learning and peer support from IFRC counterparts in the region were significant.

**Improved Familiarity with IFRC Systems**

This exposure also improved SRC's familiarity with IFRC systems, including early warning, procurement procedures, and reporting protocols. As a positive outcome, the learnings from the DREF implementation were integrated into a subsequent Capacity Building Fund project.

## 4. Findings and Learnings

This section compiles key findings under each of the guiding questions established for the review of operational documents and key informant interviews.

### 4.1 What was the rationale for applying for a DREF vs. launching an Emergency Appeal?

Based on reviewed documents and key informant interviews, **the 9-month DREF timeframe was a decisive factor across all three reviewed contexts**, enabling NSs to absorb escalating needs without launching an Emergency Appeal.

- ❖ In **Slovenia**, the NS selected DREF due to its flexibility and administrative efficiency, particularly given the large government and donor funds already being managed. DREF allowed complementarity, flexible allocation, and the NS benefited from technical support from the Europe RO, making it a practical tool amid capacity constraints.
- ❖ In **Mozambique**, the escalating cholera situation and donor fatigue caused by multiple global emergencies, the NS determined that a DREF grant (not a loan or an Appeal) was the most feasible option. The global funding environment made an Appeal unlikely to succeed, and DREF ensured operational continuity.
- ❖ In **Vanuatu**, the NS initially viewed the crisis as manageable under a DREF framework, and even after the second cyclone landfall, the extended 9-month DREF timeframe provided enough flexibility to adjust activities without needing an Appeal.

Below table provides details and learnings on the findings.

Finding	Evidence (per Operation)	Lesson Learned
<b>DREF chosen due to initially manageable response scope</b>	All the NSs selected DREF despite Orange-scale crises, based on their initially anticipated scope, institutional readiness, and expectations of a manageable response scale.	Early assessments may underestimate scale as such; scenario planning must factor likelihood of rapid escalation.
<b>9 months DREF allowed adaptation to evolving needs</b>	<i>Across all contexts, the needs escalated (Slovenia: second floods; Vanuatu: second cyclone landfall; Mozambique: cholera outbreaks), but NSs maintained their DREF operations because the timeframe allowed them to adapt strategy and implement additional activities.</i>	Extended DREF timeframe supports operational agility and reduces pressure to escalate to an Appeal.
<b>DREF provided flexibility within a fixed funding ceiling</b>	Maintaining their DREF grants allowed “agile, domestically led response” interventions, while maintaining strategic flexibility.	Flexibility is a major advantage of DREF, but scalability limitations when compared to appeals must be acknowledged early.

<b>Mozambique chose DREF grant due to fundraising constraints</b>	In Mozambique, the decision for a full DREF grant (CHF 973,954) vs. loan was driven by “fundraising challenges” and donor fatigue following Türkiye & Syria Earthquake Appeals.	Funding modality decisions must consider global donor environment; grants may be safer when fundraising and repayment capacity is uncertain.
<b>Slovenia selected DREF due to capacity limits and multiple parallel funding streams</b>	<i>In Slovenia</i> , SRC faced an overflow of government & donor funds and limited capacity to absorb more.  The NS also considered launching an Appeal “administratively heavy.”	When NS capacity is constrained and funding is abundant, DREF provides a lighter administrative footprint than an Appeal.
<b>DREF ensured complementarity with government/donor funds</b>	<i>In Slovenia</i> , the DREF operation enabled SRC to complement EUR 5.5M in government cash assistance and Caritas funds, allowing prioritization of funds across activities.	DREF can serve as an enabler for harmonizing multiple funding sources efficiently.
<b>DREF considered fast and compact with regional technical support</b>	To Slovenia RC, which received IFRC Europe RO support, DREF was perceived as fast and “compact,” limiting need for in-country IFRC presence.	Strong regional support structures make DREF an efficient tool without requiring large surge deployments.

#### 4.2 Did the extended timeframes reflect strengthened operational effectiveness?<sup>1</sup>

Based on reviewed documents and key informant interviews, the **extended 9-month DREF timeframe seems to have** allowed for better **operational effectiveness across all three operations**, particularly where early delays occurred due to procurement bottlenecks, access challenges, or overlapping events. However, while the longer timeframe enabled midcourse corrections and more adaptive interventions, **there is limited evidence of a planned phasing between relief and recovery**, with phases often compressed due to delays.

- ❖ In **Slovenia**, the extended timeframe was repeatedly described by SRC leadership and IFRC staff as a “turning point” that significantly improved the quality, pace, and accountability of implementation. It allowed Slovenia RC to sequence government/EU funds and DREF funding more effectively, complete activities that would have otherwise remained unfinished, strengthen IM and CEA systems, and institutionalize new procedures (e.g., SOPs). The extension enabled substantial CVA improvements and ensured continued provision of services (such as PFA) where government recovery was delayed.

<sup>1</sup> The definition of “effectiveness” used for this review: “extent to which an intervention has or is likely to achieve its intended, immediate results.”

*"The extension allowed operations to be conducted the Red Cross way, properly and at the right pace" – Slovenia RC DM Mrs. Špela*

- ❖ In **Mozambique**, the 9-month period allowed CVM to implement phased WASH activities in response to the cholera outbreak and incorporate “Build Back Better” approaches into the shelter intervention. Early actions taken before landfall aligned with EAP readiness measures. However, despite these efforts, operational documents reveal that the relief to recovery sequencing was not fully planned but was rather largely reactive due to delays. At the time the extension was approved (month 6), 70% of targeted people had still not been reached.
- ❖ In **Vanuatu**, the extended timeframe supported a smoother transition across early actions, relief, and recovery phases. However, logistical constraints delayed shelter distributions and pushed MPC delivery into the recovery phase, with beneficiary registration only occurring after month 6. Evidence suggests partial institutional integration, with some DREF approaches aligned with existing USAID/EU DEVCO resilience programmes and interest in developing an EAP. The extension allowed Vanuatu RC to pivot to cash when procurement challenges emerged.

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Evidence (per Operation)</b>	<b>Lesson Learned</b>
<b>Extended timeframe enabled completion of delayed interventions</b>	All: 9month timeframe allowed NSs to complete activities hindered by procurement delays, volunteer fatigue, access constraints, and overlapping events.	Longer timeframes increase operational stability and ensure delays do not compromise outputs.
<b>Extended timeframe enabled adaptive, phased interventions</b>	All: Shift from reactive response to more adaptive strategies (e.g., cash shift in Vanuatu, expanded PSS in Slovenia, phased WASH in Mozambique).	Flexible timelines improve strategic relevance by enabling midcourse corrections.
<b>Limited evidence of planned phasing between relief and recovery</b>	All: Relief and recovery phases were “compressed” due to delays; little evidence of intentional sequencing.	Extensions alone do not guarantee structured phasing; early planning for transitions is essential.
<b>Mozambique achieved adaptation but remained reactive due to delays</b>	Mozambique: Early actions pre-landfall; planned exit strategy including “Build Back Better” shelter; but extension was approved at month 6 with 70% of people unreached.	Planned approaches can be undermined by operational delays; proactive phasing must start early to avoid reactive implementation.
<b>Vanuatu’s transition improved but faced</b>	Vanuatu: Early actions and coordinated readiness; relief delayed due to	Logistical constraints significantly affect phasing; cash

<b>major logistical delays</b>	transport; MPC delivered late (beneficiary registration only after month 6).	can provide flexibility when in-kind supply chains are disrupted.
<b>Slovenia’s 9month timeframe significantly improved quality and institutionalization</b>	Slovenia: Extension described by leadership as a “turning point”; enabled CVA improvements, IM and CEA strengthening, PDM, institutional SOPs, and use of IFRC regional technical support.	Longer timeframes support quality programming and contribute to institutional strengthening and sustainability.
<b>Extension allowed NSs to finalize activities that would otherwise be incomplete</b>	Slovenia: Without extension, many activities would remain unfinished and funds returned; allowed prioritization among government/EU and DREF funds.	Extensions ensure efficient use of resources and reduce risks of unspent funds or incomplete outputs.
<b>Extended timeframe supported alignment with recovery and resilience efforts</b>	Mozambique & Vanuatu: Evidence of linking DREF learning to future resilience planning and partner funded projects.	Longer DREF operations can better connect emergency response to long term resilience and preparedness.
<b>Important note: Despite</b> setting exit strategies for all these interventions, there is little evidence that the 9-month operational timeframe enabled better phasing - such as early response followed by recovery activities. Rather than a planned sequencing of interventions, relief and recovery phases seem to have been “compressed” due to operational delays – further described under the “challenges” section.		

Interviews in Slovenia consistently showed that extending the DREF timeframe to nine months significantly improved the quality of assistance. It was seen as a strategic “turning point” that enabled better adaptation, more thorough and properly paced implementation, and strengthened overall quality, accountability, and preparedness for future operations.

- The DREF funds were implemented by Slovenian Red Cross in parallel with Government and European Union funding – with their own respective shorter timeframe. The extension of DREF timeframe from 6 to 9 months, in this context, enabled Slovenian Red Cross to prioritize the different funds for different activities – for instance to strengthening its Information Management team to perform assessments and implement the cash program.
- The IFRC Project Manager Chris Jahn stated that despite of the extensive funding from other sources, on the final months of the operation – months 6 to 8 –needs such as psychological first aid was still present, as the Government response had also been delayed.
- Regarding the need to balance the availability of human resources with the need to implement different activities, without extension, several activities would have remained incomplete, and a large portion of funds returned.
- The interviewees confirmed that the additional three months (bringing the full operational timeframe to 9 months) allowed SRC to:

- Strengthen the **cash and voucher assistance (CVA)** component, shifting from in-kind vouchers to digital registration systems.
- Increasing access to technical support from the IFRC Europe Regional Office (ERO), through improving its IM and CEA systems.
- Conduct post-distribution monitoring and consequently adjust delivery approaches.
- Reflect on lessons learned throughout the operation and institutionalize new practices – besides the acquired technical knowledge on CEA and IM, Slovenian RC developed standard operational procedures.

The SRC staff interviewed for the operation also confirmed longer term/exit strategies resulting from the response – Standard Operational Procedures were developed, and the National Society has accessed the IFRC Capacity Building Fund to address gaps identified in the operation.

### **4.3 Have the extended timeframes enabled stronger community engagement and use of feedback for course correction?**

Based on reviewed documents and interviews, **all three operations integrated CEA/PGI activities**, but **there is no clear evidence that the 9month timeframe directly strengthened community engagement systems or feedback driven decision-making**. Community feedback *did* influence operational adjustments in all contexts, but improvements were largely the result of:

- existing NS capacities,
- support from IFRC (regional or cluster),
- and institutional readiness—not the longer timeframe itself.

In some cases (notably Slovenia and Vanuatu), the extended timeframe **increased opportunities for engagement, reflection, training, and internal learning**, but these gains remained **partial or inconsistent**.

- ❖ **In Mozambique**, community feedback led to practical adjustments such as revised hygiene kit composition and targeted support to resettlement sites. Beneficiary perception surveys informed the timing and location of distributions in lagging provinces. Feedback also shaped the exit strategy through community-based mobilization and training of volunteers. However, the final report acknowledges that **feedback collection remained weak**, and the overall approach was more **reactive than planned**.
- ❖ **In Vanuatu**, CEA was integrated across sectors, and two-way feedback system informed key decisions—such as the shift from in-kind to cash assistance after market and community assessments. The operation strengthened VRC's CEA capacities, with documented improvements and learning around early community engagement. While the extended timeframe did not inherently improve CEA, it **provided room for training, engagement, and alignment with longer-term resilience programmes**.

- ❖ **In Slovenia**, feedback loops (e.g., between CVA phases) enabled refinement of eligibility criteria and targeting, and community feedback surfaced winterization needs. However, interviews indicate that stronger CEA processes were **not a result of the extended timeframe**, but rather isolated improvements. The hotline (EspoCRM) was new and helpful but not used for systematic monitoring. Feedback processes remained **fragmented, decentralized, and lacking structured oversight**, though the operation contributed to SOP development and some institutionalization.

<b>Finding</b>	<b>Evidence (per Operation)</b>	<b>Lesson Learned</b>
<b>No clear link between longer timeframe and stronger CEA</b>	All: Despite 9 months' operations, CEA/PGI depth varied; improvements were not attributable to longer timeframes.	CEA strengthening requires institutionalization, not just extended implementation periods.
<b>Community feedback informed operational adjustments</b>	Mozambique: Revised hygiene kits, targeted resettlement sites. Vanuatu: Shift to cash based on assessments. Slovenia: Feedback refined CVA eligibility and informed winterization needs	When used, feedback can significantly improve relevance and targeting of interventions.
<b>CEA systems remained inconsistent or reactive</b>	Mozambique: Feedback collection remained weak; planning reactive. Slovenia: Feedback processes decentralized, not routine.	Without structured systems, CEA remains ad hoc—even with longer timelines.
<b>Extended timeframe increased opportunities for learning and capacity strengthening</b>	Vanuatu: CEA capacities improved through the operation. Slovenia: SOP development and institutional learning emerged.	Longer periods can enhance learning and systems-building when paired with IFRC support.
<b>Feedback influenced exit strategies and recovery planning</b>	Mozambique: "Build Back Better" mobilization and volunteer training informed by community engagement.	Community engagement is critical for sustainable exits and resilience building.
<b>Extended timeframes enabled deeper engagement only when combined with IFRC training or support</b>	Vanuatu & Slovenia: Exposure to CEA tools and technical support during operations strengthened future capacities.	Extended operations amplify impact when coupled with capacity-building efforts.
<b>Feedback mechanisms were established but not fully institutionalized</b>	Slovenia: Hotline used but not integrated into monitoring; SOPs still in development. Mozambique: Mechanisms existed but were weak.	For CEA to influence course correction consistently, NSs require standardized tools, trained staff, and routine documentation processes.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the cross operation findings from Slovenia, Mozambique, and Vanuatu, and reflecting on the three key research questions; (1) the rationale for choosing DREF vs. an Appeal, (2) the effectiveness of extended 9month timeframes, and (3) the use of community engagement and feedback, five priority recommendations emerge for National Societies, IFRC Technical Teams, and DREF Management to strengthen the effectiveness of the 9month DREF modality. These recommendations target the systems and teams best positioned to address gaps identified in operational planning, community engagement, and extended timeframe implementation. The recommendations aim to strengthen operational design, improve the use of extended timeframes, and enhance community-driven course correction in future DREF operations.

### **Recommendation 1: Strengthen phased operational planning from the start**

*Addressed to National Societies and IFRC Technical Teams (DM, PMER, CVA, CEA, Logistics)*

The review indicates that the 9 months operations became reactive because the sequencing of phases (early actions, relief, and recovery) was not defined from the outset. To avoid this, NSs and IFRC technical teams should **jointly develop operational plans that clearly map out each phase and include phase specific indicators**. This will enable intentional transitions and prevent lastminute catchup.

Additionally, **operational plans should specify timelines, indicators, and resource requirements for each phase** - early actions (when applicable), relief, and recovery. A structured, phased approach minimizes reactive programming and supports smoother adaptation throughout the 9month period. This should be enforced systematically during the Eligibility, Compliance and Quality Review processes.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve initial planning and phased design with timely technical and assessment support**

*Addressed to IFRC Regional and Cluster Disaster Management teams, PMER, CVA, Logistics, CEA as well as National Society DM/PMER teams*

Regional and Cluster Offices, together with National Society DM and PMER teams, should ensure that the first week of a DREF operation **includes robust multi-sectoral assessments** - covering needs, markets, logistics feasibility, and community engagement. This early technical support **should feed directly into a phased operational design** (early actions, relief, recovery) to ensure plans are realistic, sequenced, and grounded in evidence. Strengthening early assessment and planning processes will reduce reactive shifts later in the operation and improve the effectiveness of extended 9 months' timeframes.

### **Recommendation 3: Implement midterm reviews (MTRs) to drive evidence-based course correction.**

*Addressed to National Societies Operations Managers and IFRC PMER & DM Teams*

To prevent reactive adaptations, **all 9month operations should include a mandatory midterm review (MTR)<sup>2</sup> around months 4–5**. This review should assess progress, procurement status, evolving needs, volunteer capacity, and community feedback. IFRC PMER support should help NSs translate review findings into concrete adjustments to targets, modalities, or delivery approaches. This structured checkpoint would strengthen learning and ensure timely, proactive shifts in operational strategy.

### **Recommendation 4: Institutionalize community feedback mechanisms and apply them consistently in decision-making.**

*Addressed to National Societies and IFRC CEA/PGI Teams*

Although hotlines, PDMs, and outreach mechanisms existed, feedback was rarely used to inform operational decisions. On the other hand, the 9 months' timeframe allows enough room for the integration of feedback in course corrections. To strengthen accountability and relevance, NSs should be required to:

- Link their CEA Strategy to different operational phases, planning for the use of collected feedback on operational updates.
- Establish **multiple accessible feedback channels** (e.g., hotline, PDM, community outreach) with centralized oversight and analysis
- **Validate major operational changes** (e.g., shifts to cash, changes in targeting, sector reallocation) through community consultation.

NS and IFRC CEA teams **should support NSs to formalize these systems into SOPs to ensure consistency across branches**. Any major adjustments in modality, targeting, or geographic focus should be validated through community consultation to reinforce accountability and operational relevance.

### **Recommendation 5: Use extended operations as an opportunity to build institutional and technical capacity**

*Addressed to National Societies, IFRC Regional/Cluster Technical Teams and DREF Management*

The Slovenian and Vanuatu operations show how extended timeframes can strengthen CVA, IM, CEA, and SOP development. NSs **should intentionally embed capacity strengthening into DREF operational plans**, and IFRC teams should provide targeted technical support during implementation. DREF Management **should encourage linkages between DREF and NSD tools** such as the **Capacity Building Fund (CBF)**, enabling operational learning to translate into longer-term institutional improvements.

---

<sup>2</sup> The updated DREF Operational Reviews Framework provides for “Real-Time Reviews” which are adapted to such situations.

## **Recommendation 6: Improve staff and volunteer workload management in extended operations**

*Addressed to National Societies + IFRC Health/MHPSS & HR/Volunteer Management Units*

Volunteer and staff fatigue was a recurring issue across all reviewed operations. To ensure a sustainable workforce in extended responses, **NSs should integrate volunteer rotation schedules, surge support options, MHPSS mechanisms, and make use of the newly eligible NS staff salary lines under DREF operations.** IFRC volunteer management and MHPSS teams should support NSs in adapting workforce plans specifically for longer DREF operations.

Operational guidance should **further encourage NSs to include targeted capacity building objectives (such as IM, CEA, CVA, and logistics) within operational designs, aligning these with broader NSD efforts where possible.** Clearer direction is also needed to outline expectations for volunteer protection and workforce sustainability in extended operations, including how to structure rotations, manage workloads, and appropriately use staff cost provisions.

## **6. Conclusion**

The nine-month DREF timeframe has demonstrated clear value in enabling National Societies to deliver assistance in complex and evolving emergencies. In all three reviewed operations, the extended modality allowed NSs to absorb delays, adapt strategies, and complete activities that would not have been feasible within a traditional six-month cycle. The longer timeframe demonstrates relevance for contexts with logistical constraints, overlapping crises, or large-scale funding from multiple sources.

However, the review also shows that extended time alone does not guarantee more effective planning, stronger community engagement, or structured phasing. Most adaptations were reactive; feedback systems remained inconsistent; and volunteer and staff fatigue emerged as a significant concern. The quality gains observed, such as Slovenia's digital CVA system or Vanuatu's improved cash and CEA capacities, stemmed from targeted technical support and NS leadership, rather than from the extended timeframe itself.

The overall conclusion is that the nine-month modality is fit for purpose, but its success relies on early, evidence-based planning; structured community feedback systems; and deliberate integration of capacity strengthening and workforce protection. The new Eligibility & Compliance and Quality Review steps under the 2025 Procedures offer an opportunity to embed these improvements systematically.

The review's recommendations aim to ensure that extended DREF operations evolve from reactive adaptation to planned, phased, community driven, and institutionally strengthening interventions.