

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

**Real Time Evaluation
FINAL REPORT
MYANMAR EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE
JANUARY 2026**



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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this Real Time Evaluation are solely those of the consultant team and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the IFRC, Participating National Societies (PNS), or the Myanmar Red Cross Society.

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ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
APRO	Asia Pacific Regional Office
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CD	IFRC Myanmar Country Delegation
CEA	Community Engagement and Accountability
CHF	Swiss Francs
DDM	Department of Disaster Management (Myanmar)
DREF	Disaster Response Emergency Fund
EA	Emergency Appeal
EFM	Evaluation Framework Matrix
EMT	Evaluation Management Team
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ERF	Emergency Response Framework
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ERT	Emergency Response Teams (MRCS)
ERU	Emergency Response Unit
HR	Human Resource
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IRP	Immediate Response Protocols
JRCS	The Japanese Red Cross Society
MRCS	Myanmar Red Cross Society
OMU	Operations Management Unit
PGI	Protection, Gender and Inclusion
PNS	Participating National Societies
RTE	Real-Time Evaluation
ToR	Terms of Reference

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

On 28 March 2025, a 7.7-magnitude earthquake and a 6.7 aftershock struck central Myanmar, severely affecting Sagaing, Mandalay, Southern Shan, Naypyidaw, and Bago. The disaster hit areas already facing conflict, displacement, and economic hardship, and occurred in a highly restricted operating environment with longstanding limits on humanitarian access and international presence. By late April, over 3,700 deaths, 5,000 injuries, 200,000 displaced people, and around 150,000 damaged or destroyed buildings were reported. Widespread infrastructure damage and continued aftershocks further complicated rescue and relief efforts. The scale of destruction, combined with pre-existing vulnerabilities and political constraints, shaped both the pace and design of the response and reinforced the central role of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) staff and volunteers in early action.

During the first three months, MRCS led the response in the most affected regions, supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and more than thirty Participating National Societies (PNS). A CHF 100 million Emergency Appeal was launched on 31 March 2025. By the end of June, MRCS and partners had reached over 192,000 people with relief items, safe water, health services, cash assistance, shelter support, and psychosocial services, while initiating early recovery planning. Pre-positioned stocks, volunteer mobilisation, and domestic capacity enabled rapid action despite access and administrative constraints, while international surge and Emergency Response Units (ERU) support complemented nationally led efforts under a Federation-wide coordination framework.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

This Real-Time Evaluation (RTE) assesses the quality and appropriateness of decisions and actions taken during the first three months of the Myanmar earthquake response. It examines how far the response was timely, contextually relevant, and aligned with MRCS priorities, and how effectively IFRC systems supported delivery.

As per the Terms of Reference (ToR) the evaluation focuses on two areas:

1. the appropriateness and efficiency of the initial relief response, including decision-making, relevance of assistance, and the contribution of global tools and network support; and
2. the effectiveness of preparedness and readiness measures at national, regional, and global levels, including the support provided by the Myanmar Country Delegation (CD) and the Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO), the functioning of key global mechanisms, and the use of regional capacities.

It covers activities from 28 March to 27 June 2025, with a geographic focus on MRCS headquarters and Mandalay. Findings draw on inputs from MRCS, PNS, and IFRC staff at country, regional, and global levels, and are detailed in the Evaluation Framework Matrix (Annex IV).

METHODOLOGY

The RTE employed qualitative methods, supported by limited quantitative data, to assess the first three months of the Myanmar earthquake response. The approach followed the IFRC 2024 Evaluation Framework, ensuring both timeliness and analytical rigor.

Key data collection methods included document review and key informant interviews. Documents reviewed comprised Emergency Appeals (EA), operational reports, and IFRC/MRCS policies. A total of 55 interviews were conducted with MRCS, IFRC, and PNS staff, with interviews being semi-structured to allow for flexibility. AI-assisted analysis supported the identification of key themes.

Preliminary findings were shared in an initial observation session and validated through two follow-up sessions with MRCS and IFRC participants, ensuring accuracy and feedback integration.

Triangulation of interviews, documents, and validation sessions ensured reliability and helped minimize bias. All interviews were conducted with strict confidentiality, with no identifying data shared. Personal data was protected, and all recorded materials will be destroyed after final report approval. The evaluation adhered to the IFRC's Fundamental Principles, ensuring integrity and respect for participants.

A two-day co-creation workshop with APRO technical staff helped refine findings and identify actions to strengthen regional response. Although not a data collection exercise, the workshop provided useful insights into systemic issues.

LIMITATIONS

Restricted access to Myanmar due to visa constraints meant that the evaluation team could not conduct in-country visits, limiting direct observation, informal engagement with staff and volunteers, and the ability to fully capture contextual nuances. This affected the depth and richness of some findings. To mitigate this, the team relied on triangulation of secondary data and remote interviews with MRCS, IFRC, and PNS staff across different levels. Additionally, the restrictive environment made it difficult for those not on the ground to always grasp operational complexities fully, and this was reflected in some interviews. Despite these constraints, the evaluation applied a robust methodological approach to maintain the validity and relevance of the findings.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

The following key conclusions summarise the main conclusions drawn from the evaluation. They reflect cross-cutting patterns related to operational performance, decision-making, coordination, and the use of global mechanisms. They are not exhaustive, and several additional important conclusions are presented and analysed in the full report. Together, these conclusions underpin the report's recommendations.

1. **Early MRCS Mobilization:** MRCS demonstrated strong early response capacity, utilizing its branch networks, volunteer mobilization, pre-positioned stocks, and domestic financing mechanisms to act quickly despite operational constraints.

2. **Global Activation and MRCS Needs Alignment:** Global activation moved faster than local consultations, leading to misalignment between IFRC global decisions (such as appeal scale) and MRCS's operational needs. This misalignment delayed critical strategic decisions.
3. **Localization and Operational Decision-Making:** The decision to launch a CHF 100 million appeal was not fully aligned with MRCS's operational capacity. Earlier integration of localization practices could have ensured better alignment with MRCS's ability to absorb resources.
4. **Impact of Political and Structural Constraints:** Political sensitivities, visa restrictions, and regulatory challenges hindered operational agility, particularly in surge deployment and procurement, slowing down response efforts.
5. **Effectiveness of Global Tools (ERF/IRP):** The Emergency Response Framework (ERF) and Immediate Response Protocols (IRP) enabled rapid activation but were not fully understood at all levels within IFRC, leading to confusion and delays in their practical implementation.
6. **Surge Systems and Myanmar Context:** Surge systems, particularly ERUs, were not fully suited to Myanmar's political and operational context. There was a need to adapt global surge models to prioritize advisory and hybrid roles over large-scale clinical deployments.
7. **In-Country IFRC and PNS Contribution:** IFRC's in-country staff and PNS played a crucial role in maintaining operational continuity while international surge personnel were delayed due to visa constraints and other access challenges.
8. **Strengthened MRCS-IFRC Partnership and Improved Complementarity:** The response demonstrated a strengthening partnership between MRCS and IFRC, with clearer complementarity emerging after initial misalignment.
9. **MRCS-Led Recovery Strategy:** MRCS demonstrated strong leadership in developing a community-grounded recovery strategy, though its effectiveness was constrained by misaligned timelines, delayed communication, and limited internal coordination during the transition.
10. **Weaknesses in PGI Leadership:** Gaps in Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) leadership and safeguarding systems weakened early identification of at-risk groups and created avoidable risks, particularly for staff and volunteers during the early response phase.
11. **Volunteer Capacity and Well-Being:** MRCS volunteer mobilization was critical, but volunteers faced fatigue and insufficient rest periods. There were gaps in safety systems and inadequate insurance coverage during large-scale deployments.
12. **Humanitarian Diplomacy and Disaster Law Impact:** While humanitarian diplomacy and Disaster Law were actively engaged to address access barriers, their influence was limited by Myanmar's complex political environment. Despite attempts at diplomatic engagement, especially with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and regional actors, the effectiveness of these efforts in easing visa, customs, and movement restrictions was constrained. A more strategic and integrated use of regional diplomatic mechanisms could enhance future responses in similarly restricted contexts.

LESSON LEARNED

The following lessons learned highlight key insights from the evaluation, focusing on critical operational improvements and areas for future strengthening. These lessons offer valuable takeaways for enhancing decision-making, coordination, and response effectiveness in future emergencies.

1. **Integrating Experience-Based Readiness with Preparedness Systems:** MRCS branches responded fastest when drawing on practical knowledge. While the earthquake response confirmed that practical readiness supports rapid mobilisation even with incomplete plans, combining experience-based readiness with formal preparedness systems strengthens overall operational readiness.
2. **Effectiveness of IRP and ERP Tools:** The earthquake highlighted that without prior staff training and shared understanding, global tools like the IRP and ERP lead to procedural confusion and delays, underlining the need for earlier training and familiarisation.
3. **Humanitarian Diplomacy and Disaster Law:** Humanitarian diplomacy, including Disaster Law, remains an underutilised tool. Stronger regional diplomacy and systematic Disaster Law engagement could have eased visa, customs, and movement restrictions in Myanmar, improving the operational environment.
4. **In-Country IFRC and PNS Human Resources:** In-country IFRC and PNS staff provided strategic value when international surge personnel were delayed. Strengthening in-country PNS capacity and mapping resources can mitigate deployment delays during access-constrained emergencies.
5. **Decentralised Volunteer Networks:** Local volunteers remain the strongest asset in restricted-access contexts, as seen in the earthquake response. Their critical role should be further recognised and protected, as they consistently reached affected populations first.
6. **Surge Personnel Contextual Literacy:** Surge personnel must understand host National Society culture and decision-making norms. The earthquake reaffirmed that surge effectiveness depends on adapting to the host culture, hierarchy, and political sensitivity.
7. **Absence of Hazard-Specific Contingency Planning:** Gaps from earlier responses were evident in the earthquake, reinforcing the need for hazard-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and preparedness plans to reduce delays during future crises.
8. **Coordination Overload:** When multiple IFRC platforms activate simultaneously, it leads to coordination overload. This occurred during the earthquake response and highlights the need for clearer coordination structures to avoid overwhelming country teams.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are designed to strengthen future IFRC and MRCS operations, responding to key conclusions and lessons learned from the 2025 Myanmar earthquake response. These recommendations aim to improve decision-making, coordination, localization, surge management, and humanitarian diplomacy, as well as addressing gaps identified during the evaluation.

Recommendation: Strengthen Decision-Making Alignment: Introduce a pre-decision consultation process between Geneva, APRO, the CD, and MRCS before finalizing ERF-triggered strategic decisions (e.g., appeal scale, categorization). This process should include a pre-activation checklist focusing on operational feasibility, access constraints, and MRCS's operational realities.

Recommendation: Address Internal Pathway Delays: Implement bottleneck checks across CD, APRO, and Geneva to identify and unblock delays in surge deployment and procurement, including human resources (HR) classifications and ERP workflows. This will ensure faster validation of routine actions while maintaining necessary risk controls.

Recommendation: Operationalize Fast-Track Approval Authorities: Clarify and operationalize fast-track approval authorities under the IRP for HR classifications, job description changes, and exceptional procurement. Establish an expedited decision pathway at APRO and Geneva for timely action and alignment with operational needs.

Recommendation: Enhance Surge Deployment Effectiveness: Strengthen surge deployment effectiveness in complex operational environments by requiring pre-deployment briefings on ERF/IRP roles, political sensitivities, and operational constraints, with a focus on Myanmar-specific context. Confirm deployment modalities with MRCS and the CD before mobilization, prioritizing advisory or hybrid models.

Recommendation: Revise ToRs for Technical Working Groups: Revise the TORs and decision mandates of Movement technical working groups to clarify roles, escalation pathways, and MRCS leadership authority. Also, establish an early-phase information bridge to support joint decision-making via simple reporting templates.

Recommendation: Strengthen Real-Time Evidence Flow: Simplify branch reporting formats, provide translation and connectivity support, and ensure rapid integration of early field data into joint operational decisions. Implement a 72-hour rapid reporting template for initial assessments in high-risk branches.

Recommendation: Create Myanmar-Specific Deployment Parameters: Develop Myanmar-specific deployment parameters for ERUs and surge profiles, clarifying feasible clinical scope, advisory and supervisory roles, administrative requirements, and deployment pathways. These parameters should be agreed upon with MRCS and the Country Delegation in advance.

Recommendation: Strengthen Formal Preparedness Systems: Develop hazard-specific contingency plans, earthquake-focused SOP, and clear early decision mandates across MRCS and IFRC teams. Conduct annual readiness exercises and provide practical orientation on these procedures for staff during preparedness and deployment processes.

Recommendation: Integrate PGI and Safeguarding in Workflows: Integrate PGI and safeguarding actions into relief, health, and cash workflows from the outset. This should include early briefings, risk checks, and clear duty-of-care arrangements for staff and volunteers, with dedicated capacity during scale-up phases.

Recommendation: Strengthen Humanitarian Diplomacy and Disaster Law: Strengthen humanitarian diplomacy through technical engagement with authorities, integrated with

Disaster Law expertise, to ease administrative barriers related to visas, customs, and movement, aligned with MRCS's auxiliary mandate.

Recommendation: Formalize Informal Coordination Practices: Formalize successful informal coordination practices, such as Viber groups and troubleshooting channels, by clarifying their purpose, core participants, and linkages to formal coordination structures for future use in emergencies.

Recommendation: Standardize Volunteer Safety Package: Establish a standard pre-deployment safety package for volunteers, covering WASH handling protocols, PPE standards, and safeguarding requirements. Ensure consistent application by MRCS branches prior to field mobilization.

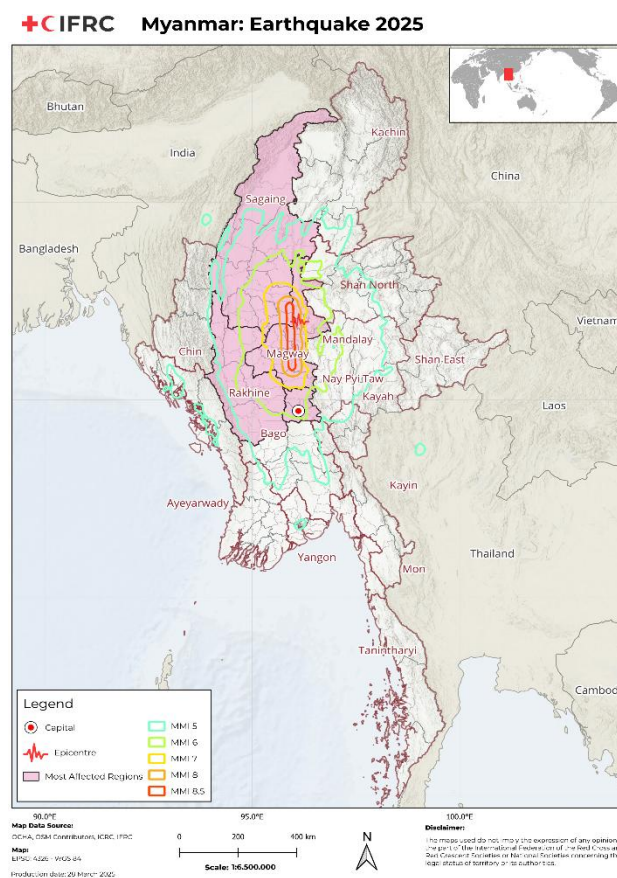
Recommendation: Strengthen MRCS-Led Recovery Strategy: Strengthen MRCS-led recovery strategy and planning through technical working groups by clarifying phased decision points, roles, and escalation pathways. Enhance two-way communication between MRCS HQ, branches, the CD, APRO, and Movement partners for timely, context-appropriate technical support during the transition from response to recovery.

1 INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

On 28 March 2025, a 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, with its epicentre located in Sagaing region, very close to the city of Mandalay. A strong 6.7 magnitude aftershock followed twelve minutes later, intensifying the destruction and rupturing part of the Sagaing Fault. Severe shaking was reported across Sagaing, Mandalay, Southern Shan, Naypyidaw, and Bago Regions, with tremors felt in Thailand and southern China. The earthquake struck areas already affected by ongoing conflict, displacement, climate disasters, and economic hardship, heightening the disaster's overall impact.¹ It also occurred within a highly complex operating environment, where humanitarian actors faced longstanding restrictions on access, movement, and international presence.

According to the current authorities, Department of Disaster Management (DDM), by late April, more than 3,700 deaths and 5,000 injuries had been confirmed, with over 200,000 people displaced and approximately 150,000 buildings damaged or destroyed, including schools, hospitals, and religious structures. Infrastructure damage, particularly to roads, bridges, and communication networks, were severely impacted as were rescue operations and relief access in the first weeks after the earthquake. Entire towns in the central corridor sustained extensive structural collapse, while aftershocks continued to threaten weakened buildings.²



¹ United States Geological Survey (USGS), Earthquake Event Page: M 7.7 – Myanmar, April 2025.

² Department of Disaster Management (DDM), Situation Report, 22 April 2025.

The disaster compounded Myanmar's pre-existing humanitarian crisis. Many of those affected had already been displaced by conflict, climatic disaster, or economic disruption, and the earthquake further strained food security, livelihoods, and access to essential services. Seasonal risks such as monsoon rains, flooding, and landslides increased the likelihood of secondary crises in vulnerable areas. The wider political context also shaped the response environment. The majority of areas most affected by the earthquake in Myanmar remained under the control of military authorities, who maintained strict requirements for visas and access approvals, although during the relief phase internal travel permissions were generally not required in government-controlled areas. These administrative constraints contributed to delays for international responders and underscored the central role of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) staff and volunteers during the first months of the operation.

The March 2025 earthquake is widely considered the most destructive in Myanmar in over a century, with long-term repercussions for housing, public health, and broad national recovery.³ Taken together, the scale of the disaster and the pre-existing restrictive operating environment and humanitarian conditions significantly influenced both the pace and design of the response.

RED CROSS RED CRESCENT RESPONSE

During the first three months covered by this Real-Time Evaluation (RTE), the MRCS led operations across the five most affected regions, supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), principally through the Myanmar Country Delegation (CD) and more than thirty Participating National Societies (PNS). These achievements were realised despite major operational, administrative, and access constraints. MRCS and the wider IFRC network delivered assistance at scale while managing these impediments throughout the response.

IFRC launched a CHF 100 million Emergency Appeal (EA) on 31 March 2025 as a 24-month operation targeting 100,000 people⁴. MRCS deployed over 560 trained volunteers from township branches to conduct search and rescue, triage, first aid, and referrals, supported by mobile clinics. MRCS also distributed drinking water, installed temporary latrines, and conducted hygiene promotion.⁵

By 30 June 2025, MRCS and the IFRC network had reached more than 192,480 people across the affected regions. Assistance included relief items for 98,000 people, 1.3 million litres of safe water, health services for over 13,000 people, multipurpose cash grants to 23,424 households, and emergency shelter support to 156,836 people. Psychosocial support teams established child-friendly spaces and provided counselling, while early recovery planning began for shelter, livelihoods, and WASH.⁶

Membership contributions were significant. Forty-two rapid response and ERU specialists were deployed across key sectors. PNS supplied tents, household kits, and water purification units, while the Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO) provided surge capacity in planning, monitoring,

³ IFRC, Operational Update No. 2: Myanmar Earthquake (MDRMM023), May 2025.

⁴ IFRC, Emergency Appeal – Myanmar: Earthquake (MDRMM023), 30 March 2025.

⁵ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Operational Update No. 2: Myanmar Earthquake (MDRMM023), May 2025.

⁶ IFRC, Operational Update No. 3

and security. Coordination mechanisms were formalised under a Federation-wide approach, with MRCS maintaining operational leadership⁷.

2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE REAL TIME EVALUATION

As per the Terms of Reference (ToR), the RTE assesses the quality and appropriateness of decisions and actions taken during the first three months of the operation, examining feasibility, alignment with MRCS priorities, and coherence with IFRC readiness.

Objective 1: Assess the appropriateness and efficiency of the initial relief response and interventions

- To what extent did IFRC decision-making processes ensure contextual relevance, timeliness, and operational efficiency?
- Were the relief interventions provided to affected communities appropriate and timely, and were corrective actions taken to address unmet needs, gaps, and operational challenges?
- How effective were IFRC global response tools and procedures in enabling timely and contextually appropriate humanitarian action, including leveraging support from the IFRC Network and advancing the Agenda for Renewal?

Objective 2: Assess the effectiveness of preparedness and readiness measures prior to the earthquake response (domestic, regional, global)

- How effective were the IFRC CD) efforts to strengthen MRCS systems, capacities, and the preparedness of staff and volunteers to respond in line with their auxiliary role and Fundamental Principles?
- To what extent did APRO have adequate systems, tools, and processes in place to support MRCS and the CD in the immediate earthquake response?
- How adequate and functional were IFRC internal mechanisms and global response tools (e.g., EA guidelines, Emergency Response Framework [ERF], Immediate Response Protocols [IRP]) in enabling timely, efficient, and contextually appropriate response?
- To what extent could regional capacities of Southeast Asian National Societies be leveraged to enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency?

Additional specifics are presented in the Evaluation Framework Matrix (EFM) presented in Annex IV.

The evaluation covers activities under the Emergency Appeal from 28 March to 27 June 2025. The geographic scope includes MRCS headquarters and Mandalay region.

Inputs were drawn from MRCS leadership and staff, PNS engaged in the response, and IFRC staff at global, regional, and country levels

3 METHODOLOGY

The RTE used primarily qualitative methods, complemented by limited quantitative data, to produce a rigorous, evidence-based assessment reflecting the complexity and scope of the

⁷ IFRC, Operational Updates and Real-Time Evaluation ToR: Myanmar Earthquake Operation, July 2025.

objectives. Innovative tools and, where appropriate, participatory approaches supported inclusivity, transparency, and stakeholder engagement. AI-assisted systematisation supported analysis, trend identification, and triangulation.

Aligned with the IFRC 2024 Evaluation Framework, the Evaluation Framework Matrix consolidated key ToR questions and linked them to verification indicators. It examined cause-effect linkages, decision-making processes, and observed changes, while allowing in-depth responses from interviewees. Although the EFM provided a comprehensive structure, depth of inquiry varied according to time, interviewee availability and roles, and issue complexity. The approach included document review, EMT consultations, and key informant interviews.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following methods were utilized in the data collection process:

Secondary Data Analysis (see Annex 1 for a complete list of documents reviewed): The evaluation relied on a significant amount of secondary data analysis to establish context, highlight key issues, and complement other methods. Sources included:

- Emergency Appeals, Operational Updates, in-country documents, weekly reports, end-of-mission reports and programme and operation evaluations.
- Relevant IFRC strategic, policy, and procedural documents.
- Minutes from relevant meetings and workshops (as made available).
- MRCS strategic plans, programmes, and evaluations.

Key Informant Interviews (KII): KIIs were the primary data collection method, as field visits to Myanmar were not feasible. Interviewees were selected through purposive sampling, a targeted approach used to identify individuals with direct knowledge of the operation. The team conducted both individual and group online interviews and, during the visit to the APRO office, in-person interviews, ensuring the collection of high-quality information. A total of 55 interviews were conducted with the following constituencies (see Annex II for a complete list of people interviewed):

- MRCS technical and leadership staff at relevant levels -9 interviews
- Myanmar IFRC CD – 7 interviews
- IFRC staff APRO – 20 interviews
- IFRC staff global - 9 interviews
- PNS leadership and technical staff – 10 individual/group interviews

Clear protocols guided the semi-structured interviews. The tool was built around a focused set of guiding questions rather than a fixed questionnaire. It relied on broad discussion topics and allowed flexibility for new issues to emerge, with many questions generated dynamically in response to interviewees' comments. Interviews began with the stakeholder list provided by IFRC but also allowed for a snowballing effect, whereby additional informants were identified during the process. Where appropriate, KIIs included simple timelines to situate perspectives and improve recall. AI-assisted systematization was applied to cluster themes and trends and to ensure findings and conclusions were evidence-based.

Between 2 and 23 October 2025, all or part of the consulting team was in Kuala Lumpur (KL) to conduct interviews with key personnel in the Regional Office and the CD, as well as to advance report preparation.

Co-Creation Workshops: A 2-day workshop was held with key technical staff from the APRO at the end of the visit to KL. Please refer to Annex III for a detailed report on the workshop. The objectives of the workshop were:

1. Develop a shared vision of what a stronger regional response system should look like, grounded in the preliminary RTE findings, strategic priorities, and existing frameworks.
2. Identify and prioritize key actions needed to strengthen the regional readiness and response system, considering administrative, financial, political, and operational dimensions.
3. Build collective momentum by exploring practical ways to sustain energy and follow-through beyond the workshop.

Preliminary observations/findings session: An initial online session was held with key stakeholders at the end of the field visit to APRO. The purpose was to present initial observations and findings that the evaluation team identified.

Formal findings/conclusion and recommendation validation sessions: Two online validation sessions were held, one with MRCS staff and one with IFRC network participants, to formally review, discuss, and suggest adjustments to the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, all of which were incorporated into the draft report.

DATA ANALYSIS AND TRIANGULATION

To ensure the credibility and reliability of findings, the evaluation team employed systematic triangulation across data sources, methods, and stakeholder perspectives. Evidence gathered through KIIs was cross validated against monitoring data and documentary sources. This multi-layered verification process minimized bias and strengthened the validity of conclusions, ensuring that findings reflected a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the operation's performance.

Qualitative data analysis was conducted through thematic grouping of evidence gathered from KIIs and document reviews. The evaluation team applied an inductive and deductive approach to identify recurring themes, patterns, and explanatory factors related to the questions identified in the ToR and the EFM. This iterative process ensured the internal validity of the findings, allowing the evaluation to produce balanced, evidence-based conclusions and actionable recommendations.

DATA PROTECTION

Data protection was a priority throughout the evaluation. No personal data was shared with IFRC or MRCS, and no identifying information will appear in submitted documents. All recorded or transcribed files will be destroyed once the final report has been approved. The evaluation team will adhere to the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, ensuring confidentiality, evidence-based findings, and respect for the principle of 'Do No Harm' when engaging with interview respondents.

LIMITATIONS

Several limitations and risks were identified during the design phase of the RTE. Most were mitigated; however, certain factors still affected the collection of high-quality information.

Limitation / Risk	Mitigation Measures Taken
<p>Restricted Access to Myanmar: Due to visa constraints (two to three months required to obtain these), the RTE team could not conduct field visits reducing the ability to directly observe activities, engage informally with staff and volunteers, and capture contextual nuances. This certainly affected the richness and quality of some of the findings. The absence of in-country presence also meant that both the evaluation team and some stakeholders not based in affected areas had to rely on second-hand perspectives, making it harder at times to fully appreciate operational complexities.</p>	<p>The evaluation team relied on triangulation of secondary data and online interviews with MRCS, country-based IFRC and PNS staff at different levels. Presentation of findings through in-person and online preliminary observation sessions aided in ensuring initial validity, and formal validation sessions with MRCS and IFRC stakeholders were used to test and refine findings.</p>
<p>Contextual Sensitivities: The restrictive and humanitarian context in Myanmar may affect the type of information stakeholders are comfortable sharing.</p>	<p>The evaluation team employed strict confidentiality safeguards as well as avoided sensitive probing; questions were framed in a neutral, non-judgmental manner while still addressing relevant thematic areas.</p>

4 KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The report is structured around two principal findings areas, each covering a consolidated set of ToR-derived questions. Overlapping questions are addressed within a single narrative where relevant. The ToR questions for each findings area are presented in the relevant sections. Findings that relate to multiple themes may be referenced across sections. The structure has been refined to strengthen coherence and analytical flow. Only limited quantitative data are referenced, and no interviewees are identified to maintain confidentiality.

4.1. CROSS-CUTTING FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RESPONSE

Several overarching factors shaped how the response unfolded, including institutional relationships, the application of new global tools, and decision-making structures across MRCS, PNS, the CD, APRO, and Geneva. The following section describes how these factors contributed to variability in efficiency, coordination, and direction.

Delivering Under Pressure: Positive Early Response Performance

Despite the complexity of the context, the Myanmar earthquake operation was widely viewed by respondents as a strong and timely response, particularly compared with Cyclone Mocha (May

2023) and Typhoon Yagi (September 2024). MRCS mobilised rapidly through its Emergency Response Team (ERT) network, pre-positioned supplies, the Emergency Management Fund (EMF), and contingency funding from Danish RC and Swedish RC. The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was opened over the weekend, and branches activated quickly, establishing an early and visible presence across Mandalay and parts of Sagaing. Respondents described this mobilisation as faster than in previous responses. Branches acted quickly at the outset, while headquarters mobilised support functions, coordinated partners and branches, and deployed technical teams to reinforce field operations. As highlighted by one PNS staff member, “Branches showed strong and immediate response capacity, acting quickly even before HQ was fully mobilized.” Even where international mechanisms faced delays, including visa delays, surge misalignments, and procurement bottlenecks, MRCS leadership, local knowledge, and support from in-country PNS and IFRC sustained early relief services.

Early operational continuity relied largely on MRCS preparedness and branch capacity, with first-month expenditures mainly covering staff, volunteers, and mobilisation costs such as fuel. Operations were sustained through existing staff, volunteers, pre-positioned stocks, and in-kind donations, supported by IFRC capacity deployed alongside MRCS teams in the field. Global IFRC funds were available within the first week, and MRCS redirected funds from another EA, easing immediate constraints. APRO, partner National Societies in Myanmar, and the Country Delegation reinforced this phase through coordination, technical support, and stabilising deployments.

APRO coordinated regional assistance offers, facilitated the release of pre-positioned household kits from the KL hub, and maintained daily communication with the CD. The CD, operating in a complex coordination environment, worked with MRCS to launch the emergency appeal, provide global visibility to humanitarian needs, brief diplomats and donors, deploy operational staff, facilitate surge requests, oversee early procurement, support the bilateral pipeline, and act on a no-regrets basis. Geneva mobilised substantial in-kind assistance on a no-regrets, high-risk basis, including arranging flights and shipments outside the standard ERP system to accelerate the movement of relief items. Together, APRO, the CD, and Geneva helped convene members and partners, align messaging, and stabilise coordination as the operation expanded. One PNS partner aptly described this as “Coordination scored a 4 out of 5 — improving and driven largely by individual relationships and goodwill rather than formal tools.”

Decision-Making Structures and Their Effect

Decision-making across MRCS, the CD, APRO, and Geneva shaped the pace and coherence of the response. While the IFRC system activated rapidly, including early red categorisation and launch of the Federation-wide EA, several respondents noted that early decisions would have benefited from closer consultation with MRCS, the CD, and regional teams to align with operational realities and constraints. As one surge member reflected, “There were moments when decisions were made before the country team had enough information from the field.”

Several areas of decision-making, including surge deployments, procurement, and categorisation workflows, were slowed by administrative layers and overlapping approvals across Geneva, APRO, and the CD. Interviewees described processes requiring multiple validations and repeated submissions across systems, contributing to delays at critical points.

Unclear or parallel pathways created uncertainty over authority. Respondents described instances, corroborated by surge case studies and coordination records, where responsibility for approvals across Geneva, APRO, Bangkok, and the Country Delegation was not clearly defined, leading to bypassed line management, duplication, and delayed resolution. Decisions taken at higher levels without early structured consultation made it harder to align expectations with operational realities. As one surge member noted, “Sometimes we genuinely did not know whether an approval needed to come from Geneva, APRO, or the CD.”

Discussions on ERU deployment reflected differing views on feasibility and added value. While IFRC global leadership expressed interest in deploying ERUs, MRCS, the CD, APRO, and in-country PNS highlighted visa restrictions, licensing requirements, political sensitivities, regulatory uncertainty, and existing international medical capacity. ERU team leaders conducted assessments, concluding that, except for health, full ERU deployment would add limited value relative to cost. Targeted technical and advisory support was prioritised, underscoring the need to adapt surge modalities to Myanmar’s context.

Heightened political sensitivities increased scrutiny and review layers, with some authorisations reviewed at multiple IFRC levels, contributing to uncertainty over approval authority and slower decisions.

The CD’s functional and administrative capacity made it difficult to process the volume of decisions and approvals from multiple levels. Respondents noted that existing systems assumed levels of role specialisation and administrative support that were hard to sustain during a red-level emergency. The system was at times perceived as over-centralised, with roles between APRO and Geneva not always clear. Some interviewees felt senior leadership occasionally managed aspects remotely, contributing to slower problem-solving and reduced agility. These dynamics increased the burden on in-country IFRC staff and influenced surge, procurement timing, and overall efficiency in the early phase.

Applying the ERF and IRP: Progress and Key Challenges

The rollout of the updated ERF and IRP represented a major shift in how the IFRC manages rapid-onset emergencies. In Myanmar, the IRP enabled early system-wide activation and senior-level coordination, rapid disbursement of funds to MRCS, and no-regrets logistics and local procurement. The ERF provided a structured decision-making framework, including triggers for EA development, categorisation, and global coordination. Respondents noted that mobilisation would likely have been slower without these tools. As one interviewee noted, “The ERF helped us move quickly at the start, even if people were still figuring out how to use it.”

Several interviewees highlighted gaps in understanding the new systems. The IRP was approved and rolled out globally on the same day it was first activated for the Myanmar earthquake, limiting prior dissemination, training, and institutional readiness at country, regional, and global levels. As one IFRC operations coordinator explained, “The ERF and IRP reforms were not well understood by many involved in the response. Although the IRP simplified procedures, awareness and consistent implementation were limited.”

The Myanmar response also exposed operational pressures linked to early categorisation. In line with the ERF, Red categorisation was activated based on crisis severity before finalisation of the Emergency Operational Strategy Plan. Respondents noted that early categorisation increased

scrutiny and expectations, placing pressure on the system to scale quickly and slowing some authorisations as multiple IFRC levels sought assurance before approving expenditures and deployments. This scrutiny, intended to strengthen oversight, added review layers and contributed to delays during the early phase.

Logistics and supply chain staff reported similar challenges in operationalising the tools. Although the IRP was activated on the day of the earthquake, some teams only became aware of the activation and its flexibilities after the peak response period. As one supply chain staff member noted, “IRP activation was not immediately understood by everyone involved, and operational teams were not sufficiently trained or comfortable with ERP usage, creating bottlenecks and forcing workarounds.” When ERP processes caused delays, teams sometimes used manual or email-based procedures to maintain momentum.

While IRP pre-classified job profiles supported faster deployment, visa restrictions, classification delays for non-standard profiles, and HR administrative issues reduced time gains. Emphasis on standard surge assets also created pressure to deploy ERUs that were not always suited to Myanmar’s political and regulatory constraints, including foreign clinical licensing and movement authorisations. Overall, the tools added value, but their effectiveness depended on visa pathways, international security clearance, staffing capacity, and coordination with MRCS.

IFRC–International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Coordination Dynamics

Although the ToR does not explicitly request assessment of IFRC–ICRC dynamics, interviews indicate the relationship shaped several aspects of the response. Coordination was complicated by differing perspectives among MRCS, IFRC, and ICRC on categorising affected areas and applying the Seville Agreement 2.0 (SA 2.0) and the co-convener model in a concurrent conflict and disaster context. While the co-convener framework was formally activated, respondents noted it was difficult to operationalise, with prolonged discussions, multiple review layers, and delays in clarifying roles and responsibilities in the early phase. These dynamics slowed coordination, increased transaction costs for MRCS, and diverted senior attention at a critical moment.

Respondents described the relationship as functional but strained, with longstanding structural tensions resurfacing around access and visibility. Although cooperation improved over time, these dynamics required sustained management attention across IFRC levels.

4.2. INITIAL RELIEF RESPONSE: APPROPRIATENESS AND EFFICIENCY

4.2.1 Decision-making: Contextual Relevance, Timeliness and Operational Efficiency

This section addresses the following evaluation question:

ToR question: To what extent did IFRC decision-making processes ensure contextual relevance, timeliness, and operational efficiency?

Contextual Relevance and Early Decision Dynamics

Decision-making in the early phase reflected strong institutional ambition and decisive leadership, while also showing a tendency toward top-down decisions that limited early contextual grounding. The earthquake on 28 March 2025 triggered immediate activation of the

MRCS EOC and a CHF 100 million EA the following day. This demonstrated the IFRC's ability to act quickly under the ERF but also showed how rapid global activation could outpace local consultation. Several respondents noted that the system moved at global speed while country teams were still establishing ground realities. As one interviewee explained, "decisions were already being taken globally while the situation in Mandalay was still unfolding hour by hour."

In the first week, decisions on the Appeal's scale and focus were shaped mainly through discussions between Geneva, APRO, and the CD before MRCS had completed rapid assessments. This sequencing meant global processes initially drove national ones. While the speed of the Appeal launch reflected the ERF's utility, MRCS had limited opportunity to validate assumptions early on, leading to adjustments once field data became available.

The Appeal's scale became a point of differing views. While the higher funding target aimed to reflect needs and support resource mobilisation, many interviewees across MRCS, the CD, and APRO felt it would have benefitted from closer alignment with operational capacity and context. As one interviewee noted, "The ambition was understandable, but the scale needed to match what was actually possible in the country at that moment." Several respondents also felt localisation principles, which emphasise the National Society's role in defining scope, were not sufficiently centred early on.

Others argued that a larger Appeal served ethical and diplomatic purposes by signalling solidarity and supporting a multi-year recovery perspective. One respondent observed that "if capacity is insufficient, the system should focus on building it rather than lowering expectations." A smaller group considered the higher Appeal appropriate given the scale of needs and longer-term recovery requirements.

IRP activation also influenced early decision-making. Designed to accelerate finance, HR, and supply-chain processes, it delegates more authority to country and regional levels and clarifies decision lines. In practice, it supported timely action for routine approvals within CD and APRO thresholds. Where escalation remained necessary, effects varied. Some escalations mitigated risk without major delay, while others, particularly HR classifications and job description adjustments, caused bottlenecks due to single approval points and temporary staff unavailability, exposing gaps in contingency arrangements. Several respondents also noted review steps that slowed processes without clearly adding value. These factors contributed to uneven decision speed despite the IRP functioning as intended.

Administrative requirements continued to slow some decisions, including HR classifications, job descriptions, contract approvals, low-value procurement and finance approvals under ERP/WBS, and authorisations for data sharing and field travel. Respondents noted these depended on higher-level validation not because of IRP design, but because routine controls remained centralised, limiting lateral problem-solving and contributing to uneven efficiency.

The response also served as a stress test for ERF and IRP reforms, as this was the first Red Emergency under the revised ERF and occurred before the IRP was fully rolled out. Practical understanding varied across CDs and departments. Limited familiarity with the tools slowed decisions even when IRP flexibilities were available. Staff were sometimes unclear how Red Cross categorisation translated into authority, prioritisation, or required actions. As one operations staff member noted, "people were trying to follow procedures they didn't fully

understand yet, so things got slowed down unintentionally.” This uneven procedural literacy contributed to inconsistent implementation early on.

At the same time, MRCS drew on lessons from earlier emergencies, including Cyclone Mocha (2023) and Cyclone Nargis (2008), which had led to clearer branch mobilisation procedures. These nationally anchored systems supported faster early action and helped ground the response in context while global tools were still being interpreted.

As MRCS leadership increasingly informed operational direction, localisation and contextual alignment improved. Early steering relied mainly on leadership judgement, branch inputs, and access and political constraints, as formal assessments and consolidated PMER products became available later and had limited influence on initial priorities. Over time, stronger assessment and reporting systems helped refine targeting, accountability, and recovery planning rather than shape early priorities.

Speed of Decision Making

IFRC decision-making was notably fast in the first 72 hours, supported by pre-established procedures and readiness mechanisms. The Appeal was approved, surge teams alerted, and coordination calls initiated, demonstrating the system’s ability to act decisively when triggers were clear.

While speed was achieved, the information informing early decisions was uneven. Rapid assessments were shared quickly but were not consistently integrated into joint planning or MRCS-led resource allocation. Decision-makers often relied on precedent and experience rather than real-time evidence, contributing to early overestimation of operational scope. Coordination meetings began immediately, and clearer delegation lines in subsequent weeks helped balance urgency with accuracy, though pressure for quick decisions sometimes outweighed local validation. Several partners noted that some operational and technical decisions were taken without full consultation with those closest to the situation, reflecting the tension between urgency and contextual grounding. These dynamics affected internal workflows but did not determine geographic targeting, which was shaped mainly by access constraints imposed by authorities.

Operational Efficiency

Procedural literacy varied across departments, affecting process speed and efficiency. Staff in HR, logistics, and procurement reported uncertainty about how ERF and IRP rules applied to their functions, leading to repeated clarifications and slower workflows. Although actions were initiated quickly, limited familiarity delayed implementation; efficiency improved as procedures became clearer.

Decision-making efficiency depended on how authority, coordination, and communication structures were understood across the system. Several factors influenced this dynamic:

Overlapping structures and unclear lines of authority. Interviews and validation sessions indicated that the coexistence of the Emergency Task Force, operations coordination mechanisms, and technical working groups sometimes created uncertainty around decision-making and partner engagement. Some staff described early coordination as “crowded” and occasionally confusing. These perceptions reflected inconsistent understanding of how

mechanisms were meant to interact, though they were not documented in formal coordination records.

Decision-making forums. Many respondents noted that larger coordination meetings served mainly for information sharing rather than operational decisions. In MRCS and IFRC validation sessions, participants indicated these meetings often lacked a clear decision mandate, reflecting institutional norms where decisions are seldom taken in large fora. Smaller technical groups were more effective in resolving bottlenecks and aligning logistics.

Data and communication flow. Branch-level data often arrived too slowly to inform early IFRC decisions due to translation delays, connectivity limitations, and reporting constraints, reinforcing reliance on existing models rather than live feedback. Validation participants similarly noted that slow data flow contributed to decisions made with limited evidence.

PNS engagement followed a mixed model, with some partners using IFRC surge mechanisms and others working bilaterally with MRCS. Some interviewees associated uneven IFRC information flow with delays in procurement, logistics, and staffing. Documentary records indicate that geographic targeting was shaped primarily by access restrictions rather than internal coordination. As national plans were formalised, IFRC membership coordination increasingly helped prevent duplication and align support with MRCS priorities. Once Movement technical groups stabilised, coordination became clearer and more collaborative. PNS reported greater collaboration as MRCS leadership and IFRC decision pathways stabilised, and structured consultation improved coherence while allowing differentiated contributions.

Respondents from IFRC and MRCS observed greater clarity as roles and responsibilities stabilised after the first weeks, supported by additional staff and systems. Operational decisions were increasingly delegated, technical groups became more decisive, and coordination between Geneva, APRO, and the CD Yangon improved. Respondents described a shift from parallel early efforts to a more unified approach as the response moved beyond start-up. Efficiency was highest in smaller, issue-focused spaces with clear authority and accountability. While procedures provided structure, adaptability often came from relationships and informal collaboration. Validation participants emphasised that informal coordination frequently produced faster, more practical solutions than formal processes in the initial weeks.

Cross-Cutting Factors Affecting Decision-Making

Several systemic factors shaped decision-making across relevance, timeliness, and efficiency:

Readiness and capacity gaps. Early MRCS decision-making was constrained by limited branch-level contingency planning, incomplete job descriptions, variable staff readiness, and several key vacant positions at senior level, including the absence of a Secretary General and gaps in health and HR leadership. These factors contributed to greater reliance on centralised decisions and reduced early autonomy.

Risk aversion and accountability culture. Although the ERF and IRP aimed to accelerate action, limited familiarity at country and regional levels with IRP flexibilities meant some decisions continued to be escalated. For delegate post classifications, escalation reflected formal HR compliance requirements rather than risk aversion, as approvals could only be granted at HQ. Respondents identified two constraints: the absence of pre-classified delegate job profiles early in the response, and the lack of backup classification capacity at HQ, creating a single point of

failure when the main classification staff member was on prolonged leave. These factors slowed some HR decisions despite rapid national recruitment.

Institutional ambition vs operational reality. Early system-wide ambition, particularly on appeal scale and surge structures, at times outpaced field realities. Although MRCS ultimately agreed, several leaders described initial reservations and later adjustments as operational and logistical constraints became clearer.

Security management. Security was a cross-cutting coordination issue shaping perceptions around decision-making. The absence of a harmonised IFRC–ICRC security framework created uncertainty for some PNS on authority and duty of care. IFRC and MRCS respondents indicated that security did not delay operations or access, but several PNS reported reduced confidence and hesitancy to deploy without a common Movement framework. This underscored the need to integrate security communication into decision-making and coordination rather than manage it in parallel.

Overall, the response showed that strong systems can enable speed but do not automatically ensure contextual precision. Decision-making improved as MRCS leadership, real-time data, and technical groups gained influence, helping balance structure with adaptive action.

4.2.2 Relief Interventions

This section addresses the following evaluation question:

ToR question: Were the relief interventions provided to affected communities appropriate and timely, and were corrective actions taken to address unmet needs, gaps, and operational challenges?

Timeliness and Appropriateness of Interventions

MRCS mounted a rapid, contextually grounded response, mobilising within hours and leveraging its branch network, volunteers, pre-positioned stocks, and domestic contingency funds, particularly in Mandalay and Sagaing. Respondents linked this to long-term decentralisation and strong branch capacity, especially in Mandalay. Some branch staff reported frustration in the first two to three weeks over delayed decisions on dispatching items from Yangon. This contrasted with more variable performance of some international surge and technical mechanisms, while IFRC fundraising and early financial transfers were widely regarded as timely. As one respondent noted, “Branches showed strong and immediate response capacity, acting quickly even before HQ was fully mobilized.” Despite the earthquake occurring about a week before an extended national holiday, MRCS leadership regrouped remotely, activated the EOC within hours, and convened coordination meetings in Yangon within 24 hours with IFRC and Movement partners. Validation participants highlighted strong readiness in Mandalay and Sagaing as key to early speed, while lower readiness in Naypyitaw, Bago, and Shan contributed to slower responses there.

Geographic reach remained uneven. MRCS reached 31 of 55 affected townships, mainly in areas under government control where branches were established. As with other organisations operating in Myanmar, access to some conflict-affected and sensitive areas was constrained by the broader environment rather than MRCS or IFRC decisions. Formal assessments were not

permitted in some zones, and MRCS relied on verbal reports and observation. As one staff member noted, “We were blind in some areas, relying on rumours and phone calls because no formal assessment was permitted.”

Access constraints also affected international deployments. While formal government approvals were not required for delegate movement, internal MRCS recommendations and short visa durations sometimes limited early field deployment. One coordinator observed, “Surge delegates often arrived with one-week visas and were stuck in Yangon unable to deploy to the field.” These constraints reflected the wider regulatory environment affecting all implementers. The earthquake nevertheless opened limited access to previously restricted areas such as Mingun in Sagaing Township. MRCS and IFRC staff emphasised that access conditions, not internal decision-making, primarily determined the geographic scope and pace of relief in the first month.

Volunteer Mobilization and Readiness

MRCS’s decentralised branch network demonstrated strong immediate response capacity, in some cases acting before headquarters was fully mobilised. Interviews indicate that ERT volunteers were activated rapidly and that a large volunteer workforce was mobilised within the first two days to distribute pre-positioned stocks and use existing health and WATSAN equipment.

Validation participants cautioned that readiness varied by branch, with some relying on ad-hoc mobilisation and reinforcement from outside affected areas. Volunteer availability was influenced by youth migration, economic hardship, and fatigue from past responses. In Mandalay, university students helped fill gaps, though some had received only brief induction shortly before the earthquake.

Fatigue accumulated among volunteers and staff, with one coordinator noting that teams worked five to six weeks without a day off. Minor safety incidents were reported, including a chlorine-handling incident linked to water treatment, highlighting the need for clearer safety guidance during rapid mobilisation. MRCS maintained annual IFRC volunteer accident insurance, though respondents noted the need for stronger and more comprehensive protection systems during large-scale deployments.

Resource Mobilisation as an Enabler

Domestic resource mobilisation played a critical but uneven role in the early earthquake response. Drawing on prior capacity strengthening in MRCS’s Resource Mobilisation Unit, leadership and staff activated domestic fundraising within hours, including corporate donations, QR-based individual giving, embassy-linked contributions, and social media campaigns. These channels provided quick liquidity and were faster to activate than international systems. Domestic contingency funds supported immediate branch disbursements, and strong banking relationships enabled same-day transfers despite public holidays, sustaining operations in the first weeks. In parallel, the IFRC appeal generated rapid donor interest, supported by early messaging on MRCS’s operational capacity, which reinforced MRCS’s role as the central national responder and unlocked donor confidence through IFRC channels.

The Resource Mobilisation Strategy itself did not guide the response. Although it existed as a broad framework, it had not been operationalised, and fundraising relied on familiar channels

rather than structured mechanisms. Digital systems used in previous emergencies were not restored, and efforts to activate an alternative international platform stalled due to provider risk concerns and transfer restrictions. MRCS therefore relied largely on domestic and direct fundraising, which was responsive but manual and labour-intensive. The absence of a functional international online donation channel and misalignment between domestic fundraising and the IFRC EA created parallel reporting, increased the workload of an already stretched team, and constrained overall fundraising potential despite strong early results.

Supply Chain and Logistics Performance

Early distributions relied heavily on pre-positioned stocks and regional resources. Six containers prepared for Typhoon Yagi were already in port, allowing immediate dispatch. This readiness enabled rapid action but underscored the need for more systematic regional preparedness. Administrative procedures caused some delays; as one logistics delegate noted, “Sea imports encountered delays due to port authorities not understanding exemption processes.” These were mainly procedural and compounded by movement permissions and infrastructure damage, including to key bridges between Mandalay and Sagaing, which slowed early transport.

MRCS and IFRC operated on a no-regrets basis in the first 24 hours, moving goods within two to three days, faster than typical clearance timelines. A temporary customs waiver and coordination with authorities, including expedited documentation through the National Disaster Management Committee, enabled this speed. The KL warehouse, co-located with the UNHRD hub, supported several flights and vessel shipments in the first week. Some intermittent delays persisted, particularly for sea imports due to administrative misunderstandings. MRCS and IFRC emphasised that movement permissions and infrastructure damage, rather than internal decisions, were the main constraints on reaching some areas.

IFRC Surge and ERU Deployments

The IFRC’s global surge mechanism was widely seen as delayed and poorly adapted to the Myanmar context. Visa restrictions and administrative barriers left many delegates in Yangon or KL. As one logistics coordinator noted, “We had people stuck in KL for weeks. The visa rules kept changing and no one could get clarity.” These delays limited early embedding with MRCS and increased reliance on in-country IFRC and PNS staff. As another respondent observed, “The surge system assumes you can move people quickly. In Myanmar, you simply can’t. The model doesn’t fit the operating reality.”

By contrast, several bilateral partners and the IFRC country office deployed faster by using in-country or regional staff familiar with the context and visa pathways that could be activated more quickly. This helped fill coordination and technical gaps while global surge was delayed. Some PNS, however, used diplomatic or business visas arranged through embassies outside MRCS coordination, reducing visibility over arrivals, roles, and alignment with agreed arrangements.

MRCS leadership considered pressure from Geneva to deploy ERUs and large surge teams not always suited to local realities. Although foreign medical personnel can generally operate clinically in Myanmar, MRCS could not finalise licensing with the Ministry of Health in time for ERU clinicians to practice under MRCS. The Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) Clinical ERU deployed to Mandalay in mid-April therefore shifted from direct service delivery to advisory and mentoring roles. MRCS teams delivered most clinical services, while ERU support focused on

medical logistics, training materials, and systems strengthening, contributions that were widely valued despite clinical restrictions.

Several IFRC members had advised against large-scale ERU deployments and recommended smaller, regionally deployable teams aligned with access and administrative constraints. The experience highlighted the tension between global mechanisms oriented toward visibility and standardisation and the need for contextual flexibility and regional surge grounded in national leadership, particularly where access constraints determined feasibility.

Respondents also noted that some early interactions reflected assumptions misaligned with national realities, creating friction or perceptions of externally driven decisions. Examples included expectations that ERUs could operate clinically without resolved licensing, assumptions that visa and access processes would follow standard patterns, and early pressure for visibility before MRCS completed rapid assessments. Stakeholders stressed that in a politically complex, access-constrained context, effectiveness depends on humility, active listening, and alignment with MRCS leadership.

Quality and Cultural Relevance of Relief

Relief interventions largely matched immediate community needs and were culturally appropriate. MRCS adapted support for monks, nuns, other religious communities, and vulnerable groups, ensuring religiously sensitive distributions. Multi-purpose cash assistance was highly valued for meeting urgent needs and supporting early home repairs.

Donor pressure to disburse funds quickly created tension between quality and expenditure. MRCS and partners accepted some unsolicited donations, including tents and medical items unsuited to local conditions. These contributed to warehouse congestion and additional administrative work. As one supply chain staff member noted, “Accepting that large in-kind donation went against the principle of ‘do no harm’—it created extra work and slowed the pipeline.” MRCS later disposed of unusable goods through internal procedures, and validation participants agreed that managing unsolicited items placed avoidable pressure on logistics and diverted staff time.

Despite these challenges, respondents agreed that MRCS’s cultural competence, local knowledge, and rapid mobilisation enabled relevant and dignified distributions. Community acceptance and trust were consistently cited as key comparative advantages.

Implications for ERF and IRP Application

The Myanmar response highlighted gaps between the intent of both the ERF and the IRP and their operational execution, but in different ways. For the IRP, the primary challenge was limited familiarisation and readiness, which constrained effective use of the tool in the early phase. For the ERF, challenges related less to awareness and more to decision-making dynamics and the adaptability of international surge mechanisms to a highly constrained operating context. Together, the experience underscores the need not only to strengthen preparedness and literacy around these frameworks, but also to further contextualise and adapt their application so that principles of timeliness, subsidiarity, and local leadership can be realistically applied in complex, access-constrained emergencies.

4.2.3 Global Response Tools and Procedures

This section addresses the following evaluation questions:

ToR question: How effective were IFRC global response tools and procedures in enabling timely and contextually appropriate humanitarian action, including leveraging support from the IFRC Network and advancing the Agenda for Renewal?

ToR question: How adequate and functional were IFRC internal mechanisms and global response tools (Emergency Appeal guidelines, ERF, IRP) in enabling timely, efficient, and appropriate response?

Effectiveness and Adaptation of Global Mechanisms

The IFRC's global response architecture, including ERUs, rapid response personnel, and surge mechanisms, was activated almost immediately after the earthquake. The appeal launched on 31 March for CHF 100 million, with CHF 2 million from the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) released within 24 hours. Within ten days, international personnel were identified across operations, PMER, logistics, and health.

Although systems were activated within 48 hours, deployment into Myanmar was constrained mainly by visa management. Visa-on-arrival arrangements were initially agreed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs based on partner lists, with two-week visas issued. One-month extensions were later granted for some surge personnel, followed by a six-week extension negotiated through consolidated lists coordinated by the RC/HC, with MoFA as focal point. Despite this, the visa environment remained unpredictable and administratively demanding. By mid-April, approvals slowed and became more selective due to shifts in the external political context and evolving documentation requirements requested by MRCS, rather than internal IFRC processes. Interviewees reported inconsistent guidance across embassies and ministries, often without written instructions. In some cases, staff were advised to apply for business visas outside MRCS and MOH channels, creating parallel processes and additional workload. Some managers noted that early warnings on visa uncertainty were not fully considered. Surge personnel frequently waited 10 to 14 days in KL or Bangkok for clearance, and at one point more than 20 staff were on standby in Yangon awaiting travel authorisation.

Access to operational areas added delays. MRCS required case-by-case recommendation letters for international staff travelling to affected areas as part of internal risk management, with letters used to notify authorities. Some townships were temporarily off-limits, and inter-regional movement required separate endorsements. Several delegates therefore supported operations remotely for extended periods, including PMER and logistics staff working from KL for up to three weeks.

MRCS branch networks and volunteers sustained the early response, supported by IFRC and PNS staff already in country while surge teams awaited clearance. Once visas were approved, IFRC coordinated with MRCS on recommendation letters, accommodation, and onward travel to enable rapid field deployment before visa expiry.

Rapid Response personnel provided critical capacity in the first month, but continuity varied and required management. While most rotations aimed for two to three months, some shorter deployments and early handovers required recalibration among Geneva, APRO, and Yangon.

Interviewees noted that surge systems provide speed but rely on continuity, clear handovers, and integration with National Society structures, including MRCS Operations Management Unit (OMU) and disaster management functions. Respondents also highlighted gaps in surge rosters and application processes and noted the potential value of remote surge modalities for technical roles in complex, access-constrained contexts.

HR, Procurement, and Finance Systems

The effectiveness of global mechanisms depended heavily on HR, procurement, and finance systems.

The IRP primarily accelerated the transition from surge to post-surge staffing rather than initial rapid deployments. Pre-classified job descriptions for key longer-term roles allowed contracts to be issued quickly without full recruitment, with some post-surge staff contracted within 48 hours. However, time gained was partly offset by job classification and grading requirements in ERP. All roles still required entry, validation, and approval across Geneva and APRO, often taking seven to ten days before deployment authorisation. HR staff described the process as “fast on paper but slow in practice,” with some delegates already in Yangon or KL awaiting clearance. Delegates also recalled that “contracts had been issued but ERP steps still held us back,” although later delays were mainly linked to visa approvals rather than ERP alone.

Procurement and logistics: Pre-positioned stocks from the IFRC KL warehouse supported 5,150 households in the first distribution cycle, showing the value of regional readiness. Local procurement for 4,800 additional kits led by MRCS took longer than planned due to vendor registration and coordination between MRCS and IFRC systems. Delays were also linked to approval steps within IFRC systems, limited familiarity with IRP procurement provisions, and the early-stage rollout of ERP, which had gone live in June 2024 with training still ongoing. While some consignments needed extra internal clearances, access constraints and transport conditions were the main factors affecting final delivery.

Finance and accountability: ERP approval chains initially slowed disbursements but streamlining by mid-April reduced transaction times from nine to five days. Real-time tracking improved donor reporting and transparency.

Overall, these findings reflect a trade-off between control and speed: global systems strengthened accountability but limited responsiveness during the most time-critical phase.

Coordination Across the Membership

Coordination among IFRC global tools, MRCS, and PNS partners improved as the operation progressed. In the first days, coordinated sectoral support was already discussed, but surge and ERU teams often worked in parallel to MRCS technical departments, creating overlap in health, logistics, and communications. Joint planning and shared operations tracking at the MRCS EOC later improved alignment. A full-time Membership Coordinator was also deployed for the first three months, which IFRC staff described as crucial for managing coordination in a high-intensity response.

Membership coordination was formalised through daily, then weekly, Partners’ Meetings, which grew from about 20 participants in April to over 30 by June. Initially focused on information sharing, these meetings increasingly helped resolve bottlenecks and align procurement, staffing,

and sectoral support. By June, most coordination shifted to MRCS-chaired Movement sector and technical groups in health, shelter, livelihoods, and logistics, with IFRC, PNS, or ICRC as co-leads. This reflected a move toward clearer national leadership.

Several PNS described the early months as marked by tension, noting that IFRC sometimes advanced its own activities and visibility while some PNS awaited guidance to engage. These tensions eased as coordination forums matured, though some partners felt IFRC initially acted more as an implementer than a facilitator, a perception noted in several interviews.

Overall, coordination strengthened in the first three months, evolving from fragmented arrangements to a more unified, MRCS-led approach. Clearer roles emerged through Movement sector and technical groups, which supported joint planning and decisions. The experience showed that formal mechanisms, alongside trust-based communication, were key to a coherent Red Cross Red Crescent response.

Lessons for the Agenda for Renewal

The Myanmar operation generated clear lessons on IFRC's global systems within the Agenda for Renewal. The ERF and IRP supported early activation and coherence, but reliance on ERP exposed rigidity in finance and HR approvals. Interviews and validation discussions noted that some administrative steps did not match operational urgency, and ERP configuration, including limits on simultaneous data entry, created delays when multiple actions were required.

Despite these constraints, the operation showed the value of global mechanisms when adapted to context. Surge teams filled urgent gaps while local staff were recruited, and MRCS adjusted its response approach. ERUs provided important health and WASH expertise, and ERP supported transparent financial tracking in the early months. This combination of global support and MRCS national leadership, backed by the country delegation and Movement partners, was widely viewed as a strength.

By June, MRCS led operations across 30 townships, with global assets integrated under national coordination. This indicated progress toward localisation and showed that global tools can reinforce national leadership when used flexibly and through shared decision-making.

Overall, the response both validated and stress-tested IFRC's evolving architecture. ERF and IRP enabled rapid activation and strategic clarity. ERP ensured financial control but slowed some transactions. Surge and ERU deployments added value within constraints but required stronger continuity and localisation. These experiences suggest that the effectiveness of global systems depends less on design than on operational flexibility and the ability to maintain accountability while adapting to context.

4.2.4 Protection, Gender and Inclusion: Integration, Gaps, and Emerging Improvements

Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) integration during the Myanmar earthquake response evolved from an initially under-resourced, ad hoc effort to a more structured component of the operation. Although PGI commitments were articulated in the EA and Operational Strategy, PGI mainstreaming lagged in the first month due to capacity gaps, delayed surge, and limited access.

No dedicated PGI focal point was initially present in-country, and MRCS's PGI lead simultaneously covered PMER and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), a

workload described in interviews as “unsustainable” and “impossible to manage during a major emergency.” The absence of early PGI leadership contributed to several gaps. Sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) were not collected systematically in the first month, limiting targeting and identification of at-risk groups. Early rapid assessments, particularly in camps and informal settlements, risked under-counting vulnerable groups. Several MRCS and IFRC staff confirmed that initial volunteer deployments were male dominated, requiring targeted advocacy by APRO PGI advisers, PNS, and senior MRCS staff to increase women’s participation.

Document review confirmed related gaps, including weak safe referral pathways, inconsistent safeguarding, and the absence of standardised PGI-sensitive distribution protocols early in the response. Similar concerns had been noted during the Typhoon Yagi response.

Progress accelerated from mid-May. The PGI surge delegate, delayed by visa and HR processes, provided remote support before onboarding new MRCS and IFRC PGI staff. While remote support was not ideal, it enabled rapid orientation, introduction of PGI tools, and engagement with sector teams. The arrival of the IFRC PGI/Safeguarding Senior Officer and an MRCS PGI Coordinator, partly funded by Australian Red Cross, marked a turning point, with PGI increasingly integrated into assessments, distributions, and volunteer management.

Advances included improved SADDD collection, inclusion of PGI risks in reporting, and adjustments to distributions based on community feedback. Volunteer welfare also improved, with health insurance introduced for deployed teams for the first time following advocacy from the IFRC field engagement coordinator.

- Several areas remain incomplete and require sustained support:
- Strengthening SADDD collection and analysis, still constrained by context and operations
- Developing and operationalising safe referral pathways
- Completing safeguarding checklists and child safeguarding risk assessments, completed within six months but previously identified as gaps
- Ensuring the welfare of MRCS volunteers and staff engaged since the onset

Overall, the response highlighted both the importance of PGI in a complex environment and the vulnerabilities that arise when PGI leadership and systems are not in place early. Later recruitment of dedicated PGI staff showed that progress is possible but also underscored the need to resource and institutionalise PGI before major emergencies.

4.3. PREPAREDNESS AND READINESS

4.3.1 MRCS Systems and National Readiness

This section addresses the following evaluation question:

ToR question: How effective were the IFRC CD’s efforts to strengthen MRCS systems, capacities, and preparedness of staff and volunteers to respond in line with their auxiliary role and Fundamental Principles?

The MRCS demonstrated strong practical readiness grounded in its nationwide branch network, operational experience, and domestic financing. Although formal preparedness systems were

uneven, the response was widely viewed as more effective than during Cyclone Mocha and Typhoon Yagi. MRCS activated its EOC within hours of the 28 March 2025 earthquake despite the disruption of an upcoming national holiday, reconnecting leadership through informal digital channels. Trained volunteers were rapidly deployed for search and rescue, triage, and first aid, with substantial mobilisation within 48 hours. This enabled operations across five affected regions and early relief before international mechanisms were fully functional. Pre-positioned stocks, including six containers from the Typhoon Yagi response, and domestic contingency funds supported this mobilisation.

Institutional preparedness, however, varied. Earthquakes were not included in MRCS contingency planning, and much preparedness knowledge remained experiential rather than codified. Branch leaders noted early actions followed “what we knew from the last disaster.” Several interviewees highlighted a disconnect between operations and preparedness, where contingency plans, job descriptions, and safety and security protocols existed but were not systematically applied. Tools were unevenly institutionalised across branches, limiting reliance on formal readiness. The absence of an earthquake-specific contingency plan was repeatedly cited as a key gap, pointing to a broader disconnect between readiness narratives and frontline realities.

The EMF enabled early operational continuity when the IFRC Appeal had launched but funds had not yet arrived. Finance staff, however, noted risks linked to EMF procedures, including reliance on informal trust and a small number of senior individuals, with documentation standards not always applied consistently.

Volunteer mobilisation remained central but involved risks. Many volunteers reported fatigue and limited rest cycles. Rest periods “were discussed but not enforced,” and duty-of-care gaps persisted, including incomplete insurance coverage and uneven understanding of safety procedures. Volunteer injuries highlighted these weaknesses.

IFRC CD Support to MRCS Preparedness and Readiness

The CD supported MRCS preparedness before the earthquake through periodic technical accompaniment in disaster management, logistics, and PMER, including revised reporting templates and light training on assessment tools. A Preparedness for Effective Response process had been completed in 2022 with IFRC and PNS support. These inputs helped standardise some practices but did not amount to a sustained preparedness programme. Interviewees described MRCS readiness as “instinctive,” noting that early response capacity stemmed mainly from branch networks and experiential knowledge rather than systematic IFRC-led strengthening.

In the months before the earthquake, the CD maintained coordination channels, facilitated access to regional technical teams, and ensured pre-positioned stocks and supplier frameworks remained valid. Support during Cyclone Mocha and Typhoon Yagi included refresher trainings and testing procurement workflows, with incremental gains carried into the earthquake response. However, scenario planning, lesson learning, readiness drills, and systematic use of tools such as the ERF remained limited due to intermittent preparedness efforts, recurring emergencies, and incomplete institutionalisation of procedures.

Once the earthquake struck, the CD supported early procurement authorisations, documentation, and coordination with APRO and Geneva. It helped activate readiness mechanisms, coordinate surge requests, and engage donors and diplomats, while supporting MRCS on communications, Movement coordination, and National Society Development linkages. These actions contributed to early readiness and positioning.

Interviewees noted that although core operations staff were in place, overall staffing was stretched for a red-level emergency. This was described as a structural constraint in sudden large-scale responses where demands expand faster than standing capacity.

A key constraint was ambiguity at the interface between IRP and ERP. Both systems were not yet well understood, as ERP had gone live less than a year earlier and IRP was newly introduced. HR, logistics, and procurement teams were uncertain how far IRP flexibilities could diverge from standard ERP workflows. In several cases, accelerated pathways were not applied because ERP approval chains remained unchanged and some staff were hesitant to act outside the system. Several surge delegates described the IRP as “activated but not operationalised,” indicating a gap between policy intent and practice. These ambiguities slowed translation of global tools into practical support for MRCS.

Summary Assessment

Taken together, MRCS’s performance reflected strong community presence, domestic financing, experiential knowledge, and volunteer engagement, supported but not consistently enabled by IFRC preparedness systems. National readiness often compensated for gaps in global and regional mechanisms, highlighting both the strength of MRCS’s operational culture and the need for preparedness systems that are fully institutionalised, understood, and applied across departments.

4.3.2 Regional and Global IFRC Support Systems

This section addresses the following evaluation question:

ToR question: To what extent did the APRO have adequate systems, tools, and processes to support MRCS and the CD in the immediate earthquake response?

APRO played a key supporting role in the early earthquake response, mobilising regional coordination structures within hours and maintaining daily communication with the CD. Interviews noted that early actions, including convening surge discussions, coordinating PNS assistance, and liaising with regional technical teams, helped stabilise the IFRC’s initial posture. APRO also supported release of pre-positioned stocks from the KL warehouse and facilitated procurement planning for additional NFIs, demonstrating the regional logistics hub’s capacity. These efforts were particularly important in a context of political instability, access constraints, and ongoing conflict, and while global systems faced political and procedural constraints, APRO served as a bridge in the early phase.

APRO’s internal readiness and surge management were uneven. Although staffing levels were formally adequate, activation coincided with partial team availability, requiring acting arrangements until surge support arrived. Staff described this as a temporary stretch typical in sudden-onset emergencies. Several noted this was the largest regional activation since Mocha, with systems improved since then but still stretched in the earliest phase.

Pressures were compounded by multiple coordination platforms, including Membership, surge taskforces, and internal IFRC meetings, which some staff described as duplicative and exhausting. Running these fora in parallel created uncertainty about participation and decision authority. The regional EOC provided essential coordination but faced a growing workload as visa and movement delays increased reliance on regional systems. Compared with Cyclone Mocha and Typhoon Yagi, APRO showed stronger procedural discipline and more consistent information management, especially in surge contracting, ERP processing, and coordination with Geneva and Yangon. Nonetheless, interviews noted recurring constraints on agility, including visa delays, ERP classification and approvals, and dual clearances for procurement and finance that slowed deployment and transactions despite early activation.

Coordination Between the Regional Office and Country Delegation

Coordination between APRO and the CD improved as the operation progressed, though early coherence was uneven. In the first two weeks, the CD, already stretched by the scale of the response, received a high volume of requests from APRO and Geneva. Staff described coordination as “parallel rather than integrated,” with surge taskforces, membership meetings, and technical groups operating without fully aligned decision pathways. This contributed to differences between leadership perceptions of smooth coordination and the more fragmented reality described by staff.

As roles stabilised and MRCS’s operational plan became the main reference, APRO’s support grew more targeted. Technical teams helped refine sector plans, clarify reporting, and align surge with MRCS priorities. Daily meetings among MRCS, APRO, and the CD created a more predictable rhythm, reducing duplication and improving situational awareness. Despite IRP activation, both APRO and the CD were uncertain how IRP authorities interacted with ERP approvals, particularly for surge contracting and procurement. This often led to escalations rather than lateral solutions, reinforcing wider findings that the IRP was “activated but not operationalised,” with uneven procedural literacy across HR, logistics, and procurement.

Learning From Previous Operations

APRO’s and the CD’s experience from Cyclone Mocha and Typhoon Yagi informed improvements in information management and clearer surge classification, though these were not fully institutionalised. Readiness measures developed after Mocha, including regional rosters, UNHRD warehouse integration, and updated Membership coordination models, were applied again. However, staff acknowledged these lessons were only partly embedded. While Mocha highlighted the need for simpler surge pathways, Myanmar’s restrictive visa environment again caused delays beyond the reach of existing procedures. Surge personnel faced unclear documentation requirements, shifting rules from authorities, and inconsistent internal guidance, underscoring the limits of procedural improvements under external constraints. Staff turnover and competing priorities in several APRO units also slowed full integration of learning.

Role and Limitations of Humanitarian Diplomacy

Humanitarian diplomacy was a cross-cutting feature of the response, influencing efforts on visas, customs, and access within persistent political and administrative constraints. Those regularly engaging with Myanmar authorities and regional bodies such as ASEAN and the AHA Centre cautioned that sustained engagement over the past four years has not necessarily shifted

government positions. Interviews and validation discussions nonetheless confirmed that humanitarian diplomacy was active and multi-layered, combining national, regional, and Movement-level efforts.

In-country efforts included:

- IFRC Country Delegation briefings with embassies and the UN system
- the IFRC Regional Director’s visit within two weeks to engage authorities and support access negotiations
- engagement by the Head of Delegation and senior CD staff with the diplomatic community
- the CD humanitarian diplomacy manager facilitating visas and liaising with authorities
- regular APRO–CD humanitarian diplomacy huddles
- MRCS maintaining independent channels with ASEAN representatives and the People’s Republic of China

Within these constraints, several interviewees suggested APRO could have pursued additional regional engagement to reinforce MRCS and CD negotiations. Examples raised included support for simplified entry pathways and visa extensions, quicker resolution of customs and tax exemption issues at ports, and reinforcing recognition of MRCS’s auxiliary role to help expand humanitarian space early on.

Overall, humanitarian diplomacy was active at multiple levels, but its influence on core political determinants of access remained structurally constrained, limiting how far national or regional engagement could alter visa, customs, and access regimes.

Summary Assessment

APRO provided essential operational leadership, technical support, and coordination continuity during a complex and politically sensitive emergency. Early actions helped stabilise the response, though effectiveness was constrained by staffing gaps, procedural bottlenecks, and visa and movement decisions controlled by national authorities. A restricted access environment further limited the operational space for regional and global support. Validation discussions noted that while diplomacy could improve clarity and consistency, it could not fundamentally change sovereign restrictions, highlighting the structural nature of these barriers.

In sum, the experience highlights the need to strengthen APRO’s dual technical and humanitarian diplomacy roles while recognising the limits of regional advocacy in a context where access restrictions imposed by authorities cannot realistically be altered.

4.3.3 Global Mechanisms and Tools

This section addresses the following evaluation question:

ToR question: How adequate and functional were IFRC internal mechanisms and global response tools (Emergency Appeal guidelines, ERF, IRP) in enabling timely, efficient, and appropriate response.

The performance of IFRC global mechanisms in the Myanmar earthquake response was mixed. The EA, ERF, and IRP enabled rapid activation and early visibility, but their operational impact was limited by context-specific access barriers, procedural bottlenecks, and uneven organisational readiness. As noted elsewhere, overlapping coordination platforms, complex approval chains, and varied familiarity with global tools reduced the coherence and speed these mechanisms were meant to provide. Verification discussions indicated that while some elements worked as intended, overall effectiveness was uneven and strongly constrained by political access limitations affecting movement and deployment.

Activation and Speed of Global Tools

Global systems were activated quickly, with the EA launched within 24 hours and surge roles mobilised soon after. This provided early strategic direction but outpaced MRCS assessments and required later recalibration. Despite IRP activation, HR contracting, procurement, and ERP approvals slowed deployment. Several delegates described the system as “activated but not operationalised,” particularly due to ERP approval steps that delayed deployments despite early activation, a pattern echoed in validation workshops.

Adapting Global Tools to the Myanmar Context

The political and external administrative environment significantly constrained surge teams and ERUs. Visa restrictions and short durations prevented many delegates from embedding with MRCS during critical early weeks, underscoring the limits of standardised global assets in politically complex settings. These constraints were compounded by internal bottlenecks, including dual approvals, vendor registration requirements, and risk-averse compliance practices that slowed procurement and HR processes despite early activation.

Operational reliance therefore shifted to MRCS volunteers and to IFRC and PNS staff already in Myanmar, whose local presence and contextual knowledge sustained early operations. Short surge rotations and cumulative workload from previous responses also created intermittent continuity gaps in some technical areas, pointing to the need for stronger localisation, longer deployments, and selective use of remote surge in highly constrained contexts.

Contribution to MRCS Leadership

When aligned with national leadership and able to operate within access restrictions, global mechanisms added value. Surge teams supported planning, IM, logistics, PMER, health, and WASH, ERUs provided clinical and technical services, and financial systems ensured accountability for early expenditures. However, MRCS’s decentralised readiness, including rapid volunteer mobilisation, domestic financing, and strong branch networks, was the main driver of the early response. Global tools became more effective once MRCS consolidated an operational plan that clarified priorities and sequencing, allowing surge, ERU, and technical support to align under national leadership, as noted in validation workshops.

Summary Assessment

Global mechanisms provided strategic structure and technical support but were constrained by access barriers and internal procedures. Their effectiveness depended less on design than on adaptability to the political context and alignment with MRCS leadership. The experience reinforces the need for:

- more flexible, regionally adaptable surge and ERU models, including remote deployments
- streamlined HR and procurement processes
- clearer operationalisation of IRP authorities
- pre-negotiated regional access arrangements
- earlier and deeper dissemination of global tools with National Society leadership in MIC and follow-up fora to ensure shared understanding and ownership

Overall, the Myanmar response highlights the need to continue shifting from standardised activation tools toward more agile, context-sensitive mechanisms that support national leadership in politically complex emergencies.

4.3.4 Leveraging Regional National Societies

This section addresses the following evaluation question:

ToR question: To what extent could regional capacities of Southeast Asian National Societies be leveraged to enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency?

Regional Solidarity and Mobilization

Regional solidarity across Asia was evident from the earliest phase of the Myanmar earthquake response. National Societies from Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Japan, Korea, Cambodia, China, and Hong Kong quickly offered financial, technical, and operational support to MRCS, reflecting peer relationships and regional preparedness frameworks supported by APRO. Within two weeks, several surge and bilateral offers were channelled through APRO, while others were mobilised bilaterally or directly with MRCS and authorities.

Interviews and validation discussions noted that although regional frameworks enabled rapid offers, early coordination on needs and specifications was uneven. Some in-kind items arrived without prior alignment, reducing usability and adding logistics burden. APRO mobilised neighbouring National Societies through established mechanisms, but visa procedures, clearance requirements, and internal coordination reduced the timeliness of some deployments, consistent with wider challenges noted in this report.

Constraints on Regional Deployment

Access restrictions and visa delays limited the rapid use of regional capacity. Sensitive-area classifications and authority oversight meant some delegates waited weeks in Bangkok or KL for entry, while others could not obtain visas in the first three months. One respondent noted that “a

regional surge mechanism is being developed to prioritize deployments from countries with easier access and faster mobilization,” reflecting efforts to strengthen regional readiness.

Although regional support was available, alignment with evolving needs was uneven, and high staff turnover within MRCS reduced its capacity to absorb external support. Interviews identified visa and field travel requirements as a persistent source of inconsistent information, with differing guidance from MRCS, IFRC, APRO, and embassies contributing to delays.

Operational Contributions from Regional National Societies

Once deployed, regional and neighbouring National Societies provided operational support. In some cases, proximity and cultural familiarity aided collaboration with MRCS branches, though this was not consistent and some relationship challenges were noted.

A key example was the JRCS Clinical ERU, active in Mandalay and Sagaing by mid-April. Working alongside MRCS medical staff and over 200 volunteers, it supported a fixed clinic and mobile outreach. Between 12 April and 15 June, MRCS, with ERU technical and logistical support, treated over 2,300 patients and delivered mobile health services across seven townships, demonstrating the value of combining international technical capacity with national delivery systems.

Bilateral Engagements with Authorities

Alongside Movement-coordinated efforts, some PNS used bilateral channels for entry and access, which interviewees said reduced visibility over arrivals, roles, and alignment with MRCS coordination. The Red Cross Society of China deployed through bilateral arrangements with Myanmar counterparts outside IFRC coordination. JRCS also engaged directly with the Ministry of Health on ERU licensing and customs clearance, which supported imports but occasionally created ambiguity around coordination and reporting. More broadly, some partners pursued embassy or bilateral visa pathways that sometimes sped up access but contributed to parallel coordination environments and reduced Movement cohesion.

Limits of Regional Integration

Most regional deployments occurred through bilateral outreach or APRO’s surge tracking rather than a predefined regional mechanism. Variations in contracting, insurance, and cost-recovery slowed deployments, and the absence of a standing Asia roster or pre-negotiated secondment templates meant mobilisation relied heavily on goodwill rather than predictable systems. Ambiguity between IFRC, ICRC, and PNS roles, noted earlier, further reduced efficiency, and the lack of a defined co-convenor structure added difficulty in conflict-affected areas. These factors constrained optimal use of regional and global capacities.

Coordination and Human Resource Pressures

Competing demands within the Country Delegation constrained early coordination with regional partners. The CD managed surge deployment, finance, and resource tracking simultaneously, limiting sustained engagement. Coordination improved through Movement Partners’ Meetings and APRO-led briefings, but early information-sharing delays hindered alignment, echoing challenges noted elsewhere in the report.

Advancing Regionalization

The earthquake reaffirmed regional solidarity while exposing structural and administrative limits that reduced its impact. APRO's readiness tools, including surge mapping, risk watch, and regional coordination platforms, offered a useful framework but were only partly applied in practice. Interviews suggested that expanding localisation to include regionalisation could enable neighbouring National Societies to act as first-line responders within the broader membership system. The experience showed that while regional capacity and intent were strong, effectiveness depended on predictable systems for visas, contracting, and rapid deployment, and on consistent integration with MRCS and IFRC structures.

4.3.5 IFRC Support in Addressing Political and Economic Restrictions

This section addresses the following evaluation question:

ToR question: How did the IFRC support MRCS in addressing political and economic restrictions that constrained timely and effective humanitarian delivery?

The IFRC supported MRCS at country, regional, and global levels in navigating political and economic restrictions affecting the earthquake response. This support provided administrative, diplomatic, and procedural backing, but its impact was constrained by Myanmar's restrictive operating environment and by internal IFRC bottlenecks.

CD Support for Administrative and Access Navigation

The IFRC CD provided the most direct support to MRCS in addressing external access constraints. It worked with the MRCS Partner Relations Department on visa applications, travel permissions, and customs queries, and supported documentation for surge personnel. The CD also coordinated with MRCS on requirements for international staff movement, including recommendation letters, which limited the ability of international teams to embed in field operations. Despite proactive engagement, most restrictions remained unchanged, underscoring the limited influence of humanitarian arguments in a politically driven access environment.

Regional Office: Advocacy, Operational Backstopping, and Diplomatic Opportunities

APRO provided operational and technical support to the CD and MRCS in navigating access barriers. Regional teams helped troubleshoot visa delays, supported customs queries, and monitored access issues affecting surge personnel in KL or Bangkok, maintaining regular dialogue with the CD to adjust deployment sequencing as conditions changed. Verification discussions noted that APRO's humanitarian diplomacy was active but had limited influence on restrictions, though earlier or more assertive engagement with ASEAN mechanisms, diplomatic missions, or regional networks might have eased some administrative uncertainties at the margins, representing a potential missed opportunity to complement national-level negotiations with regional advocacy.

Summary of IFRC Support: Contributions and Structural Limits

At the global level, the IFRC sought to adapt internal mechanisms to Myanmar's political constraints. Activation of the ERF and IRP provided a framework for accelerated decision-making, contract processing, and financial flows. Geneva teams adjusted deployment

expectations for surge personnel and ERUs, and global HR and logistics teams worked to manage changing government documentation requirements. However, procedural ambiguity and uneven understanding of how IRP authorities interacted with ERP rules slowed approvals, limiting how quickly global support translated into operational impact.

Global-Level Policy Flexibility and Adjustments

Across levels, IFRC support helped MRCS navigate political and economic restrictions through administrative facilitation, technical troubleshooting, and advocacy. Its impact was limited by:

- political restrictions that could not be negotiated away, including visa constraints and limits on foreign clinical practice
- internal bottlenecks in HR, procurement, and surge deployment that reduced agility
- underuse of regional diplomatic channels that might have eased some administrative delays without changing core political constraints

Ultimately, MRCS's delivery depended more on its volunteer network, domestic financing, and community presence than on the international system's ability to overcome political barriers. At the same time, the IFRC Country Delegation's presence provided direct support in surge coordination, procurement authorisations, finance, and humanitarian diplomacy, mitigating some constraints even though structural limitations remained.

4.3.6 Recovery Planning Processes and Operational Implications

The transition from relief to recovery reflected clear strategic intent, collaborative effort, and operational constraints. Interviews and documents indicate broad agreement that moving early toward recovery matched community needs and the operating context. Recovery discussions began relatively quickly, and documents such as the Meta-analysis of Recovery Assessments and the MRCS Earthquake Response and Recovery Strategy 2025–2027 provided a structured basis for decisions.

Early planning emphasised simplicity and contextual relevance, focusing on cash assistance, targeted relief, essential health services, and strengthening branch capacity. As one respondent noted, “the intention from the start was to keep the strategy simple and rooted in what people actually needed.” The MRCS Earthquake Response and Recovery Strategy 2025–2027 reflects this through community-centred, multi-sector, and risk-informed approaches.

Recovery planning also drew on a broad evidence base. The Meta-analysis of Recovery Assessments synthesised multiple datasets to identify priority areas, sectoral needs, and MRCS comparative advantages. Respondents valued this evidence-led approach; as one noted, the meta-review “helped bring coherence to the many different assessments” and supported clearer prioritisation.

Some constraints affected pace and coherence. Communication gaps delayed alignment with field leadership during the early shift to recovery. One respondent noted this “complicated decision-making,” while another observed that “some technical support did not fit the context,” including shelter approaches less suited to Sagaing. These views pointed to the need for stronger contextualisation and consultation with branches.

Capacity pressures within MRCS also influenced planning. Staff managed multiple responsibilities, and several described the period as overstretched, slowing elements that

required cross-departmental coordination. Still, the MRCS Earthquake Response and Recovery Strategy 2025–2027 set out recovery priorities, risk mitigation, and resilience pathways. As one interviewee stated, “Recovery only gained momentum once everyone aligned behind MRCS’ strategy; before that, timelines and expectations were all over the place.”

A few interviewees were more critical. One said the shift to recovery “was not as smooth as it could have been,” citing workload pressures and the need for earlier agreement on priorities and sequencing. Together with documentary evidence, this suggests that while the direction was supported, earlier alignment and facilitation could have improved the process.

Overall, recovery planning combined early strategic thinking, solid evidence, and strong MRCS leadership with constraints linked to communication, contextualisation, and capacity. Despite these, the resulting strategy reflects sustained effort to base decisions on evidence, engage communities, and define a path from relief to recovery and resilience.

5 KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Integrating Experience-Based Readiness with Preparedness Systems: Across Cyclone Mocha, Typhoon Yagi, and the 2025 earthquake response operations, a clear set of lessons has emerged about what most strongly shapes the effectiveness of IFRC and MRCS operations. Together, they show that successful response relies on a blend of practical experience, aligned systems, and context-appropriate support, while also highlighting opportunities to strengthen readiness and coordination.

- **Integrating Experience-Based Readiness with Preparedness Systems.** Practical, experience-based readiness and formal preparedness systems are most effective when combined. Operations such as Mocha and Yagi showed that MRCS branches respond fastest when drawing on practical knowledge, while the earthquake confirmed that practical readiness enables rapid mobilisation even when formal contingency plans are incomplete. Experience across these operations shows that institutional preparedness and lived operational knowledge complement one another, strengthening readiness when both are in place.
- **IRP and ERP tools cannot function effectively without prior staff training and shared understanding.** Earlier disasters showed uneven literacy of global tools. The earthquake confirmed that activation without preparedness results in procedural confusion and delays.
- **Humanitarian diplomacy, including Disaster Law engagement, remains an underused potential enabler of access in politically constrained emergencies.** Earlier crises in Myanmar and the region demonstrated the value of diplomatic engagement. The earthquake suggests that stronger regional diplomacy and more systematic Disaster Law engagement could, even to a limited degree, have supported visas, customs processes, movement arrangements, and the overall operating environment.
- **In-country IFRC and PNS human resources provide strategic value during access-constrained emergencies.** During the earthquake, IFRC and PNS staff already in-country assumed key technical and coordination roles while international surge was delayed by visa and movement constraints. Strengthening and mapping in-country PNS capacity in advance can significantly mitigate deployment delays.

- **Early national leadership is decisive but must be matched by aligned global processes.** Previous emergencies highlighted MRCS’s capacity for rapid national action. The earthquake reaffirmed this while again exposing misalignment when global systems activate ahead of national assessments.
- **Decentralised volunteer networks remain the strongest operational asset in restricted-access contexts.** As seen in Mocha, Yagi, and the earthquake, local volunteers consistently reached affected populations first. This underscores the need to further protect these volunteers while recognising the essential role they already play.
- **Surge personnel require deeper cultural, contextual, and National Society literacy to be effective.** The response reaffirmed that surge personnel must understand host National Society culture, decision-making norms, and institutional arrangements. In Myanmar, differences in communication styles, hierarchy, and political sensitivity required careful adaptation to ensure effective integration.
- **Domestic contingency financing enables earlier action than international mechanisms.** MRCS’s EMF allowed distributions to begin before DREF, surge, or appeal resources were available, reaffirming lessons from earlier responses.
- **Absence of hazard-specific contingency planning creates avoidable delays.** Gaps noted during Mocha and Yagi reappeared, confirming the need for hazard-specific SOPs and preparedness plans.
- **Coordination overload is a recurring issue when multiple IFRC platforms activate simultaneously.** As seen in Mocha, parallel Movement, membership, surge, and technical meetings overwhelmed country teams and blurred authority lines.
- **Surge mechanisms continue to be hindered by visa and access constraints and cannot rely on speed alone.** From Mocha to the earthquake, political barriers repeatedly disrupted surge readiness. Surge added value once deployed, but impact depended more on access and integration than on activation speed. The response also reaffirmed that remote and hybrid surge can provide meaningful support when access is constrained.
- **Strong logistics hubs accelerate early response, but procurement systems remain a bottleneck.** The KL warehouse again enabled rapid dispatch of pre-positioned stocks. However, international procurement delays persisted due to ERP approvals, vendor registration, and clearance processes. IRP helped contracting and mobilisation but had limited effect on procurement timelines shaped by system design and external constraints.
- **Learning remains overly dependent on individuals rather than institutionalised systems.** As after Mocha and Yagi, institutional memory improves response quality, but turnover leads to knowledge loss when learning is not formalised.
- **Security coordination remains a recurring gap.** Security coordination highlighted the importance of clarity and shared risk understanding. While security management did not directly delay access, some PNS reported uncertainty around frameworks, risk thresholds, and authority lines that influenced deployment and duty-of-care decisions. The experience shows that strong internal IFRC coordination and a shared security plan with the host National Society are essential for consistent communication and partner confidence.

6 KEY FINDINGS

The following are prioritized recommendations from the Consultant Team, highlighting key issues identified during the evaluation. Many apply to IFRC at different levels, MRCS, or both, and cut across themes. For clarity, each recommendation notes in brackets the intended component; these are not directed at specific individuals or departments, as this is for each partner to determine internally. Readers are encouraged to review all recommendations and note linkages among them.

CROSS-CUTTING FACTORS

- 1 MRCS demonstrated strong early response capacity, grounded in its branch networks, volunteer mobilisation, pre-positioned stocks, and domestic financing mechanisms, enabling rapid action despite political and logistical constraints.
- 2 In-country IFRC and PNS provided essential technical and operational continuity while international surge deployments were delayed, highlighting the value of established partnerships and in-country presence of experienced staff when access constraints limit global mechanisms.
- 3 Early domestic financial mobilisation, including support from embassies, domestic private sector actors, and individual giving, was critical in bridging early liquidity gaps before international funding flows became operational.
- 4 Security coordination challenges, particularly the absence of a harmonised Movement security framework and uneven internal communication within IFRC, contributed to inconsistent guidance and varying levels of confidence among some members and PNS during the early phase, placing additional coordination demands on MRCS and the IFRC Country Delegation.
- 5 The ERF and IRP provided structure and early speed, yet their practical effectiveness was constrained by uneven understanding of activation requirements across Geneva, APRO, and the Country Delegation, and by procedural hierarchies that limited lateral decision-making and slowed operational agility.
- 6 Standard surge and ERU deployment models were not well suited to Myanmar's political and regulatory environment, requiring adaptation toward advisory, hybrid or remote modalities rather than standard clinical or operational profiles.
- 7 Although consultations took place with MRCS, the CD, and APRO, the final decision to launch a CHF 100 million appeal was taken at central level and was not fully supported by country and regional leadership at the time. The ambition behind the decision reflected institutional expectations and real needs, but interviews indicate that concerns about MRCS operational capacity and absorption were not sufficiently reflected in the final scale. The experience underscores the need for stronger alignment between localisation commitments and early strategic decisions.
- 8 Gaps in PGI leadership, safeguarding systems, and volunteer duty-of-care weakened early identification of at-risk groups and created avoidable operational and duty-of-care risks during the early phase of the response.

INITIAL RELIEF RESPONSE

- 9 Internal procedural bottlenecks across HR, procurement, finance, and ERP systems, compounded by overlapping coordination structures and unclear lines of authority, slowed the translation of early ERF and IRP activation into operational support and created avoidable delays in procurement, logistics, and surge deployment, even as ERP enabled rapid fund transfers and transparent mobilisation tracking.
- 10 Relief interventions were relevant and culturally appropriate, but uneven geographic access and the burden created by unsolicited in-kind donations posed operational challenges.
- 11 Surge and ERU deployments were constrained by visa restrictions, licensing requirements, and limited contextual understanding among some incoming personnel.
- 12 The effectiveness of surge personnel was limited by insufficient contextual, cultural, and organisational understanding, reducing early integration with MRCS systems.
- 13 Early Membership coordination was weakened by inconsistent information-sharing and unclear communication roles across IFRC, MRCS, and partners.
- 14 Global mechanisms, ERUs, surge teams, and ERP processes added value only once adapted to national leadership and contextual realities, demonstrating that flexibility and alignment with MRCS-led systems are essential to their effectiveness.

PREPAREDNESS AND READINESS

- 15 MRCS readiness was strong in practice but uneven in formal preparedness systems. Hazard-specific contingency plans, earthquake-specific SOPs, safety protocols, and clearly defined early decision roles were not fully institutionalised. As a result, early response relied heavily on institutional memory and experiential knowledge rather than documented and consistently applied procedures, limiting coherence and consistency during the initial phase.
- 16 The IFRC CD provided important preparedness support, but its effectiveness was constrained by the scale of the emergency and by uncertainty about how IRP and ERP rules applied in practice.
- 17 APRO played a stabilising role through regional logistics, surge coordination, and technical support. Its effectiveness was shaped by high coordination demands, multiple concurrent coordination platforms, and the limited impact of regional humanitarian diplomacy within a highly constrained political context.
- 18 Regional National Societies demonstrated strong support, yet their deployment was slowed by visa restrictions, administrative delays, and the absence of predictable regional mobilisation and contracting mechanisms.
- 19 IFRC support at country, regional, and global technical and coordination levels helped MRCS navigate political and economic restrictions, but structural national constraints

shaped the operational environment more strongly than international systems could mitigate.

- 20 MRCS demonstrated early leadership in developing a community-grounded recovery strategy, drawing on extensive assessment data and strong branch inputs. However, the process was affected by misaligned timelines across the membership, delays in communication, technical guidance that did not always match local conditions, and coordination and absorption pressures that contributed to uneven progress during the transition.
- 21 While humanitarian diplomacy and Disaster Law were actively engaged to address access barriers, their influence was limited by Myanmar's complex political environment. Despite attempts at diplomatic engagement, especially with ASEAN and regional actors, the effectiveness of these efforts in easing visa, customs, and movement restrictions was constrained. A more strategic and integrated use of regional diplomatic mechanisms could enhance future responses in similarly restricted contexts.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The following table presents the key conclusions of the evaluation and shows how each is grounded in the corresponding findings. The conclusions synthesise cross-cutting patterns across the operation, while the bullet-point findings indicate the specific evidence underpinning each conclusion. Together, they provide a clear bridge from the evaluation's evidence base to the recommendations that follow.

Conclusion	Supporting Findings
C1. Early MRCS mobilisation was a major strength and significantly enhanced the timeliness of the response.	F1: F2: F3
C2. Global activation moved faster than contextual grounding, leading to early misalignment between emerging MRCS operational needs and IFRC decision-making.	F5: F7
C3. Administrative processes and unclear authority across IFRC global, regional, and country structures delayed implementation despite strong intentions to act quickly.	F9: F10: F17 uneven.
C4. Structural and political sensitivities reduced agility, particularly in surge deployment and procurement.	F4: F6: F11: F19
C5. Localisation strengthened over time as MRCS-centred actions and leadership increasingly shaped operational direction.	F14: F21
C6. Data flow limitations impeded early evidence-based decision-making and reinforced reliance on assumptions and precedent.	F10: F12: F13

C7. Coordination structures across MRCS, IFRC, and the Movement were initially crowded and duplicative, but stabilised as roles and processes became clearer.	F13: F18
C8. The ERF and IRP added value by enabling rapid activation but were unevenly understood, limiting their early effectiveness.	F5: F17
C9: The response was constrained by gaps in formal preparedness systems, including the absence of hazard-specific contingency planning and earthquake SOPs. MRCS showed strong practice-based readiness, but limited institutionalisation reduced early coherence and predictability.	F15: F16: F17
C10. Surge systems were not fully suited to the Myanmar context, and global tools required adaptation to national constraints.	F6: F11: F12
C11. Strong relationships, informal problem-solving, and individual leadership compensated for formal system constraints.	F18: F20
C12. Despite delays in some processes, the operation benefited from committed leadership at MRCS, IFRC, and PNS levels that sustained momentum.	F2: F20
C13. The response demonstrated a strengthening partnership between MRCS and IFRC, with clearer complementarity emerging after initial misalignment.	F: F14: F20
C14. The transition from response to recovery showed that MRCS can provide early strategic direction, but effectiveness depends on timely alignment and coordinated support across the membership.	F20
C15: Humanitarian diplomacy and Disaster Law were key factors in navigating the political and administrative challenges of the Myanmar earthquake response. While efforts were made at the national and regional levels, these actions were limited in their ability to directly influence access constraints. Strengthened and more proactive regional diplomacy, combined with ongoing engagement with Disaster Law principles, could enhance future operational effectiveness by reducing bureaucratic barriers and supporting smoother access to critical areas.	F21

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations translate the evaluation’s findings and conclusions into clear, actionable steps to strengthen future operations. They are realistic within the Myanmar context and support improvements in decision-making, coordination, localisation, surge management, and protection systems. Each recommendation indicates what should change, how progress can be measured, who should lead, and an indicative timeline. Together, they provide practical ways to enhance the effectiveness, timeliness, and coherence of IFRC and MRCS responses to major emergencies.

#	Recommendation	Responsible	Timeline
R1	Strengthen decision-making alignment by introducing a pre-decision consultation process between Geneva, APRO, the CD, and MRCS before finalising ERF-triggered strategic decisions, including appeal scale and categorisation. This process should be supported by a short, jointly reviewed pre-activation checklist that focuses on operational feasibility, access constraints, and implementation capacity, ensuring that MRCS's operational realities are fully integrated into early strategic decisions.	MRCS HQ / IFRC CD / APRO / IFRC Geneva Ops	6 months
R2	Strengthen IFRC early-phase internal pathways by introducing targeted bottleneck checks across CD, APRO, and Geneva to identify and unblock delays in surge deployment and procurement during scale-up, including HR classifications, procurement thresholds, and ERP workflows. These checks should enable faster validation of routine actions while maintaining necessary risk controls	IFRC Geneva (HR/Ops/SC M) / APRO / CD	6–9 months
R3	Clarify and operationalise the fast-track approval authorities provided under the IRP for HR classifications, job description changes, and exceptional procurement during emergencies, with a clearly defined expedited decision pathway at APRO and Geneva to ensure timely action and alignment with operational needs.	IFRC Geneva Ops & HR/APRO/CD	9–12 months
R4	Strengthen surge deployment effectiveness in complex operational environments by requiring pre-deployment briefings on ERF/IRP roles, political sensitivities, and operational constraints, with Myanmar-specific context where relevant. Make this briefing a condition for surge roster inclusion. Confirm deployment modalities with MRCS and the CD before mobilisation, prioritising advisory or hybrid models where needed to align with local realities.	IFRC Surge, Health, SCM/MRCS	6–12 months
R5	Revise the TORs and decision mandates of Movement technical working groups to clarify roles, escalation pathways, and MRCS leadership authority in both	MRCS/IFRC CD/APRO	3–6 months

	preparedness and crisis phases. Establish a light early-phase information bridge for high-risk branches to send priority updates (e.g. access constraints, urgent gaps) to MRCS HQ, the CD, and APRO via a Viber-based template, supporting timely joint decision-making.	technical units	
R6	Strengthen real-time evidence flow by simplifying branch reporting formats, providing translation and connectivity support, and ensuring rapid integration of selected early field data into joint operational decisions between MRCS, the CD, and APRO. Introduce a 72-hour rapid reporting template (Viber-based) for initial assessments, piloted in three high-risk MRCS branches before national roll-out.	MRCS/ IFRC PMER/IM	9-12 months
R7	Create Myanmar-specific deployment parameters for ERUs and surge profiles, clarifying feasible clinical scope, advisory and supervisory roles, administrative requirements, and deployment pathways. These parameters should be agreed with MRCS and the Country Delegation and validated in advance to inform future activations.	IFRCHQ/ APRO	12 months
R8	Strengthen formal preparedness by developing hazard-specific contingency plans, earthquake-focused SOPs, and clearly defined early decision mandates across MRCS and IFRC teams. Conduct annual scenario-based readiness exercises and ensure that relevant staff receive concise, practical orientation on these procedures as part of preparedness and deployment processes.	MRCS/CD/AP RO	12 months
R9	Integrate PGI and safeguarding actions into relief, health, and cash workflows from the outset, including early briefings, risk checks, and clear duty-of-care arrangements for staff and volunteers. Where feasible, ensure dedicated capacity is available to support PGI, safeguarding, and safe programming during scale-up phases.	MRCS/IFRC PGI Unit/APRO	6–9 months
R10	Strengthen humanitarian diplomacy through discreet, technical engagement with authorities, integrated with Disaster Law expertise, to support the easing of administrative barriers related to visas, customs, and movement, in accordance with MRCS’s auxiliary mandate under national law.	IFRC CD/MRCS Leadership/ APRO	9–12 months
R11	Formalise successful informal coordination practices, such as standing Viber groups and rapid troubleshooting channels, by clarifying their purpose, core participants, and linkages to formal coordination structures so they can be activated quickly in future emergencies.	IFRC CD/MRCS	3–6 months

R12	Establish a standard pre-deployment safety package for volunteers, covering rapid WASH handling protocols, PPE standards, and safeguarding requirements, and ensure consistent application by MRCS branches prior to field mobilisation.	MRCS HQ/Branches /IFRC CD and APRO.	6–12 months
R13	Strengthen MRCS-led recovery strategy and planning through existing technical working groups by clarifying phased decision points, roles, and escalation pathways, and by reinforcing two-way communication between MRCS headquarters and branches, as well as between MRCS, the CD, APRO, and Movement partners, to ensure timely, context-appropriate technical support during the transition from response to recovery.	MRCS HQ (OMU/DM), IFRC CD, APRO Technical Units	3 months

9 CONCLUSION

The Myanmar earthquake response reaffirmed the central role of MRCS as a locally rooted first responder able to mobilise rapidly even under severe political and operational constraints. Its volunteer network, domestic financing mechanisms, and branch-level readiness enabled action at a speed that international systems could not match. The IFRC Country Delegation and APRO provided steady technical, administrative, and coordination support throughout the early weeks, complemented by timely global backing that helped frame the overall strategic direction of the response. Together, these efforts enabled continuity in critical services despite a highly challenging environment.

The response also revealed areas where systems can evolve. Global tools such as the ERF, IRP, and surge mechanisms provided early structure, but their effectiveness was shaped by visa barriers, procedural requirements, uneven procedural literacy, and the complexity of aligning multiple levels of decision-making. These challenges point to the need for clearer guidance, stronger preparedness-phase humanitarian diplomacy, context-adapted surge models, and more predictable regional and in-country support arrangements. Strengthening these elements will help ensure that the speed and authority intended by global tools consistently translate into operational agility in constrained operating environments.

Despite the obstacles, the response demonstrated significant strengths: rapid MRCS mobilisation, meaningful contributions from regional and in-country PNS, improved information management compared with previous operations, and the willingness of IFRC teams at all levels to adapt systems in real time. The collective experience highlights a clear path forward: invest earlier in preparedness, align global mechanisms more closely with national leadership, and build on the strong foundations that enabled success in Myanmar. With these lessons applied, the Red Cross Red Crescent is well positioned to deliver even more effective, coherent, and context-aware humanitarian action in future emergencies.

ANNEXES

Annex I. List of Documents Review

IFRC Frameworks and Strategies

1. IFRC, Emergency Response Framework
2. IFRC, Immediate Response Protocol
3. APRO Readiness & Preparedness (PowerPoint presentation)

Earthquake Operation Documents

4. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake Disaster Brief, 28 March 2025
5. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake Disaster Brief, 4 April 2025
6. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake Disaster Snapshots, 2 & 3
7. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake Flash Updates 1-3
8. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake Emergency Appeal
9. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake Emergency Appeal Operational Strategy
10. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake Operational Updates 1-3
11. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake Response Infographic 1 May 2025
12. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake SitReps 1-3, 5-8
13. IFRC, Myanmar Earthquake & Flood Typhoon Yagi Weekly Reports 3-16
14. IFRC, Surge Handover Report - Operations Coordinator, Cassie Stephens
15. IFRC & MRCS, Myanmar Earthquake – Recovery Approach Presentation
16. MRCS, Myanmar Earthquake Sitreps, 1-8, 10-13, 16
17. MRCS, Myanmar Earthquake Response and Recovery Strategy Plan (2025-2027)
18. MRCS, Myanmar Earthquake Recovery Conference Presentation
19. Austrian Red Cross Society, ERU WASH Sitreps 1-2
20. Danish Red Cross Society, ERU Logistics SitReps 1, 3
21. Danish Red Cross Society, ERU OSH SitReps 1, 3 & 4
22. Japanese Red Cross Society, ERU Health SitReps 1, 3-9
23. Regional Task Force, Myanmar Earthquake Minutes of Meeting, weeks 1-11
24. Regional Task Force, Myanmar Earthquake Meeting Presentations, weeks 1-13
25. Australian Red Cross, Myanmar Earthquake End of Assignment Report - Sally Chapman
26. Australian Red Cross, Myanmar Earthquake End of Assignment Report - Cassie Stephens
27. EQ Response - Partners' Coordination Meeting X5

Infographics

28. IFRC, Myanmar Civil Unrest Operations, 8 February 2022
29. IFRC, Operation Update Myanmar Civil Unrest January – May 2022, 11 October 2022
30. IFRC & MRCS, Operation Update Myanmar Civil Unrest January – May 2022, produced 11 October 2022
31. IFRC & MRCS, People reached during MRCS's complex emergency operation, February 2021 – May 2022
32. IFRC & MRCS, People reached during MRCS's complex emergency operation – Supported by IFRC, February 2021 – May 2022
33. IFRC & MRCS, People reached during MRCS's complex emergency operation – Supported by RCRC Movement Partners, February 2021 – May 2022

Other

34. IFRC, AP Team Meeting Myanmar Update, 19 March 2021
35. MRCS Strategic Plan 2021-2025
36. Cyclone Mocha Operation Lesson Learned Workshop Report
37. Evaluation of the IFRC's Myanmar Complex Emergency Appeal Operation Final Report
38. Myanmar Earthquake 'Big Picture' Report on the Meta-analysis of Recovery Assessments
39. Myanmar discussion paper. Big picture – transitioning from relief into recovery efforts (October 2025)
40. MRCS Earthquake Response and Recovery Strategy Plan (2025–2027)
41. MRCS Presentation Recovery Conference (PowerPoint presentation)
42. Presentation - The Recovery Approach Geneva (PowerPoint presentation)
43. MRCS-Pre disaster meeting_12.6.25 (PowerPoint presentation)
44. Myanmar EQ IFRC Network Delegate Plan (PowerPoint presentation)
45. IFRC Crisis Categorization Indicators 3 (PowerPoint presentation)
46. HCT key messages - Myanmar earthquake - 8 May 2025
47. Ops Tracking Tool 6 Months report

Annex II. List of Key Informant Interviews

IFRC Geneva

Name	Title
Caroline Holt	Director - Disaster Climate and Crisis
Cecilie Terraz	Director Global Humanitarian Services and Supply Chain Management
Christina Duschl	Senior Officer - Operations Coordination
Florent Del Pinto	Head - DREF, Quality and IM
Karl Jullisson	Global Security
Lorenzo Violante Ruiz	Consultant, Operational Movement and Membership Coordination
Nikola Jovanovic	Coordinator - Partnerships and Innovation, Global Humanitarian
Sabrina Desroches	Senior Officer - Surge Capacity, Operations Coordination Global Humanitarian Services and Supply Chain Management
Sumiko May	Senior Officer - National Society Response Capacity Strengthening
Xavier Castellanos	Under Secretary General - National Society Development and Operations Coordination (NSDOC)

IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office

Name	Title
Afrhill Rances	Communications Manager
Alexander Matheou	Regional Director
Alice Ho	Regional Head of PMER
Anne-Sophie Pétri	Coordinator - Large Scale Disaster and Crises
Farah Zainuddin	Operation Coordinator - Southeast Asia
Felipe Delcid	Manager - Emergency Operations
Hanne Marie Mathisen	Regional Head - Humanitarian Diplomacy and Regional Liaison
Helen Brunt	Coordinator - Migration and Displacement
Joy Singhal	Head of HDCC
Juja Kim	Deputy Regional Director
Nur Hayati Ahmad	Surge Coordinator

Priska Apsari Primastuti	Regional Coordinator - Emergency Health
Vinod Muniandy	Coordinator • Asia Pacific - Programmes and Operations
Szu Tzane Lee	Coordinator, Regional Disaster Preparedness • Asia Pacific - Programmes and Operations
Laura Verges	Resource Mobilization Development Coordinator • Country Delegation for Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

IFRC Myanmar

Name	Position
Akayi Thant	Finance Senior Manager
Christie Samosir	Former Operations Manager
Farah Atiqah	PMER Delegate
Francesca Capoluongo	Field Engagement Coordinator, 1 st Rotation Membership Coordinator, 2 nd Rotation
Hajime Matsunaga	Relief Coordinator
Jonathan Brass	Operations Manager
Kyaw Oo Khine	Support Service Manager
Marie Manrique	Former Programme Coordinator
Nadia Khoury	Head of Delegation
Necephor Maghendi	Former Head of Emergency Operations
Pan Thazun	Senior Officer, Operational Support
Sara Elithy	Programme Coordinator
Susanne Klitgaard	Supply Chain Coordinator

Surge Deployment

Name	Title
Cassie Stephens	Operations Coordinator, 2 nd Rotation – Australian Red Cross
Fabrice Vandeputte	Membership Coordinator, 1 st Rotation – Danish Red Cross
Fadzli Saari	PMER Coordinator – IFRC APRO
Hemanathan	Deputy Operations Manager / Deputy HEOps – Norwegian RC

Nagarathnam

Luke Caley	Assessment Coordinator - IFRC
Noriko Tomabechi	ERU Clinical Unit Advance Team Leader – Japanese RC
Susanne Klitgaard	Supply Chain Coordinator *– Danish Red Cross

Partner National Society

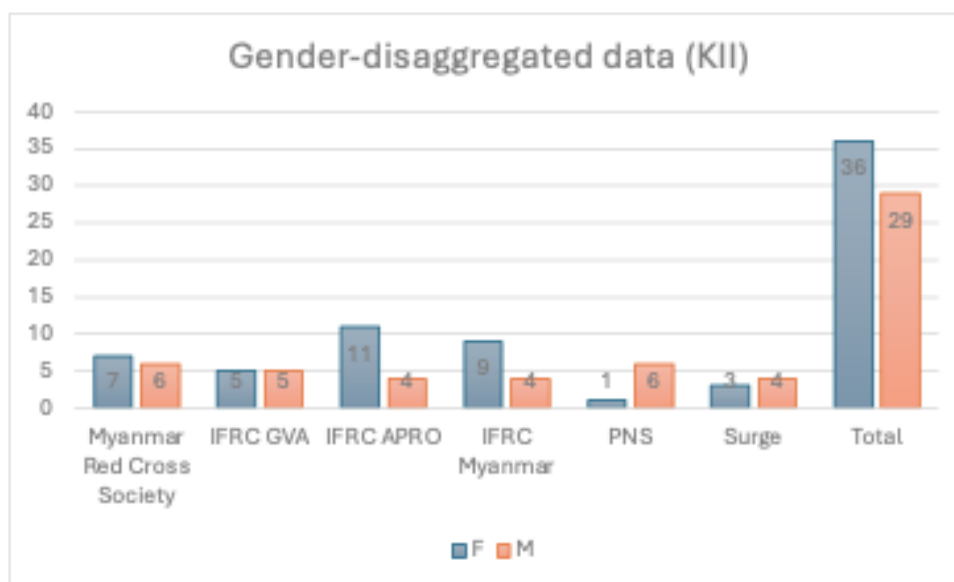
Name	Title
Erwin Guillergan	Country Representative - Norwegian Red Cross
Fabio Beltramini	Former County Representative - Danish Red Cross
Finbarr Sweeney	Country Representative - German Red Cross
Hannaleena Pölkki	Membership Coordination and Funding - Country Manager - Finnish Red Cross
Rico Wallenta	Former Country Representative- Swedish Red Cross
Sergei Boltrushevich	Programme Delegate - Danish Red Cross
Wirakhman Somantri	WASH Delegate – Danish Red Cross (formerly Swedish Red Cross)

Myanmar Red Cross Society

Name	Title
Aye Aye Nyein	Director, Assistant SG
Dr. Zayar Naing	Deputy Director – Disaster Management
Ei Ei Khaing	Deputy Director – Finance Department
May Sanda Myo	Director – Resource Mobilisation
Moe Thida Win	Director – Disaster Management
Prof. Dr. Tin Maung Hlaing	Earthquake Operation Head – MRCS Yangon
Professor Dr. Myo Nyunt	President
San Mya Thida	Program Manager ROMU
Si Thu Toe Nyunt	Deputy Director – Disaster Management
Than Zaw	Deputy Director – Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Thein Tun Saung	Mandalay Region RC Advisory Committee Chairman
Thin Thin Aung	Deputy Secretary General
Win Lei Phyu	Manager – Partner Relations

Gender Desegregation

Institution	F	M
Myanmar Red Cross Society	7	6
IFRC GVA	5	5
IFRC APRO	11	4
IFRC Myanmar	9	4
PNS	1	6
Surge	3	4
Total	36	29



Annex III. Co-Creation Workshop

1. Purpose and Context

This workshop was convened to translate a range of inputs, including evaluation findings from the Myanmar earthquake response, into actionable priorities for strengthening the Asia Pacific regional response system. The evaluation findings served as an important evidence base to inform discussion, but the workshop process was broader in scope, drawing equally on participant experience, institutional frameworks, and forward-looking system considerations. The focus was therefore not on validating findings, but on using them, alongside other inputs, to identify priority areas and co-create practical actions for improved readiness and response.

While this annex complements the main evaluation report, it is designed to stand on its own as a record of the workshop's objectives, methodology, and substantive outputs.

2. Workshop Overview

The workshop was conducted over two days and brought together IFRC regional leadership, country delegation representatives, thematic leads, and technical specialists engaged in readiness, preparedness, surge, humanitarian diplomacy, and emergency response.

The structure followed a deliberate progression from sense-making to action:

- **Day 1** focused on shared understanding, including reflection on key inputs (evaluation findings, participant experience, and relevant frameworks), visioning of a stronger regional response system, clustering and prioritization of broad areas, and exploration of alignment with existing frameworks.
- **Day 2** focused on translating priority areas into concrete actions, examining administrative, political, financial, and operational dimensions, and identifying ways to sustain momentum beyond the workshop.

3. Objectives and Key Questions

The workshop objectives were to:

- Develop a shared vision of a stronger regional response system.
- Use multiple inputs to identify priority areas for readiness strengthening.
- Translate priority areas into practical, time-bound actions.
- Foster collective ownership and momentum for follow-up and implementation.

Key questions guiding the process included:

- What system-level issues most constrain regional readiness and response?
- Where are the most critical leverage points for improvement?
- What actions are feasible in the short, medium, and longer term, and who should carry them forward?

4. Methodology

4.1 Workshop Design

The workshop applied a facilitated co-creation methodology, combining plenary reflection, small-group work, clustering exercises, and prioritization tools. Evaluation findings were presented as one structured input, alongside participant experience, operational realities, and institutional frameworks.

The design emphasized progression from:

1. Reflection and sense-making,
2. Visioning and prioritization, to
3. Action identification and sequencing.

4.2 Data Collection

Workshop outputs were generated through:

- Annotated tables reflecting discussion of key inputs,
- Flipcharts capturing resonant issues, gaps, and additional insights,
- Visioning outputs describing features of a stronger system,
- Clustered and prioritized thematic areas,
- Action tables documenting proposed actions, indicative timelines, and responsible roles.

4.3 Synthesis and Limitations

Outputs were synthesized thematically and reflect collective perspectives and agreed directions, rather than formal commitments. As a participatory exercise, results indicate priority actions and ownership signals, not finalized implementation or resourcing decisions.

5. Workshop Results

The primary results of the workshop were the co-creation and prioritization of actionable outputs under three domains where participants reached the strongest convergence and readiness to move forward:

1. Surge, Regional and Sub-regional Mechanisms
2. Humanitarian Diplomacy (HD)
3. Management and Leadership

5.1 Surge – Regional and Sub-regional Mechanisms

Participants agreed on the need to rebalance surge models in Asia Pacific, with stronger emphasis on regional and sub-regional mechanisms, complemented by global surge where appropriate. Outputs focused on evidence generation, system clarity, professionalization, and predictable resourcing.

Table 1. Surge – Workshop-agreed actions, responsibilities, and timelines

Priority Actions	Primary Ownership	Supporting Roles	Indicative Timeline
Comparative and feasibility study on regional vs global surge, including Regional ERU	Surge Coordinator	Lead SP2, Head of HDCC	6 months
Asia Pacific Surge Roadmap (2026–2028)	Surge Coordinator	Lead SP2, APRO thematic leads, NS reps, Volunteer Dev.	6 months
Learning and development plan for Rapid Response Personnel	Surge Coordinator	APRO thematic leads	6 months
NRT database aligned with volunteer database	Surge Coordinator	Volunteer Development Coordinator	6 months
Annual updating of RRMS and surge readiness	Surge Coordinator	APRO	Ongoing
Dissemination of surge information to Members, NSs, delegations	Surge Coordinator	APRO	Ongoing
Launch Regional Emergency Response Unit	Surge Coordinator	Lead SP2, APRO WASH	12 months
Concept for expansion of Regional Deployment Fund	Surge Coordinator	Lead SP2	6 months
Surge as standing agenda in sub-regional DM networks	Lead SP2	Surge Coordinator	6 months
Surge as standing agenda in sub-regional leadership meetings	Lead MSU	Lead SP2, Surge Coordinator	6 months
Engagement with regional mechanisms (e.g. AHA Centre, ERAT)	HoD CCD Jakarta	Partnerships, Surge Coordinator	12 months

5.2 Humanitarian Diplomacy (HD)

Humanitarian Diplomacy was identified as a critical enabling function requiring clearer operationalization within readiness and response systems.

Table 2. Humanitarian Diplomacy – Workshop-agreed actions, responsibilities, and timelines

Priority Actions	Primary Ownership	Supporting Roles	Indicative Timeline
Confirm SA 2.0 focal point aligned with HC4A	Annisa, Alice	RD, DRD	2 months
Ensure MCA in conflict/disaster overlap contexts	SA 2.0 Focal Point	ICRC	18 months
Integrate HD into AP Regional Readiness Plan	HDCC	Regional HD Head, Geneva HDiE	1 month
Amplify HD in country-level readiness plans	RD	HoDs	2 months
Pre-agreed lighter emergency procedures with authorities	HoDs	NS leadership	Ongoing
Operationalize HD in ERF (checklists, roster, SOPs)	ERF Responsible (Geneva)	HDiE focal point	6 months
Ensure HD in all task forces in red emergencies	HDCC	Ops leads	Ongoing
HD workshop for communications staff	Regional Head	HD Regional Head	6 months
Reflect HD in EA and operational strategies	HDCC	Regional & delegation HD focal points	Ongoing
Reflection study on HD in recent emergencies	PMER	Regional HD Head, HoDs	9 months

5.3 Management and Leadership

Management and leadership outputs were intentionally **directional rather than task-based**, reflecting the systemic nature of leadership accountability.

Table 3. Management and Leadership – Priority directions and ownership

Priority Actions	Primary Ownership	Supporting Roles	Indicative Timeframe
Brief and align senior leadership on workshop outcomes	RD	DRD, Heads of Unit	≤1 month
Clarify governance, escalation, and decision-making authority	Regional Leadership	Geneva, HoDs	Medium-term
Strengthen cross-functional leadership (incl. corporate services, SCM)	Regional Leadership	Heads of Support Functions	Ongoing

Promote anticipatory leadership (reflection, simulations, learning)	Regional Leadership	PMER, Surge, HD	Ongoing
Translate regional priorities to country level	RD / HoDs	Country Delegations	Ongoing

5.4 Linkages with Main Report Recommendations

Several workshop outputs directly overlap with, reinforce, or operationalize recommendations in the main evaluation report, including:

- Surge regionalization and ERU feasibility,
- Professionalization and preparedness of surge personnel,
- Operationalization of Humanitarian Diplomacy for access and coordination,
- Alignment between ERF, readiness planning, appeals, and operations,
- Leadership clarity, governance, and decision-making.

The workshop therefore functioned as a bridge between evaluative conclusions and implementable action, adding detail on ownership, sequencing, and timelines.

6. Accountability, Validation and Follow-up

For Surge and Humanitarian Diplomacy, accountability is explicitly articulated through Primary Ownership, supporting roles, and indicative timelines. For Management and Leadership, accountability rests collectively with senior regional leadership, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of the issues addressed.

The actions and priorities emerging from this workshop represent a regional-level co-creation exercise and require further validation. All proposed actions, timelines, and ownership arrangements should be validated and refined in consultation with relevant country and cluster delegations to ensure contextual appropriateness, feasibility, and alignment with existing plans and capacities.

7. Conclusions

The workshop successfully moved from diverse input to shared priorities and concrete action directions in the three critical domains. While not a formal implementation plan, it establishes clear direction, ownership signals, and momentum for strengthening the Asia Pacific regional response system. The actions and priorities outlined above reflect regional-level consensus and should be validated and refined in consultation with relevant country and cluster delegations prior to implementation.

8. Workshop Participants

1. **Jan Gelfand** - Lead evaluator and independent consultant
2. **Juja Kim** - Deputy Regional Director APRO
3. **Felipe Delcid** - Thematic Lead, Evolving Crisis and Disasters APRO
4. **Annisa Marezqa** - Regional Head, Membership Services APRO

5. **Priska Apsari Promastuti** - Regional Coordinator, Emergency Health APRO
6. **Afrhill Rances** - Communication Manager APRO
7. **Hanne Marie Mathisen** - Regional Head, Humanitarian Diplomacy and Regional Liaison APRO
8. **Fadzli Saari** - Coordinator, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting APRO
9. **Christie Samosir** - Cash & Voucher Assistance (CVA) Delegate APRO
10. **Nur Hayati Ahmad** - Coordinator, Surge Learning and Development APRO
11. **Alice Ho** - Regional Head, PMER and Quality Assurance APRO

Annex IV: Evaluation Framework Matrix

The Evaluation Framework Matrix brings together the questions from the Terms of Reference and the supplementary questions developed by the team, aligning them with indicators for verification. It serves as a tool to ensure consistency, coherence, and rigour in guiding data collection. While it provides a comprehensive framework, the level of detail addressed for each question will depend on the time available and the accessibility of relevant information.

ToR Reference	Guiding Questions (as per the ToR)	Supplementary Questions	Indicators for Verification
Objective 1: Appropriateness and Efficiency	To what extent did IFRC Secretariat decision-making processes ensure contextual relevance, timeliness, and operational efficiency?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did IFRC decision-making processes support or hinder the response in the first three months? Were there coordination gaps across HQ, Regional, and Country levels? To what extent were lessons from past operations applied, How was the balance between speed, accountability, and inclusivity managed? How appropriate was IFRC Secretariat decision-making and support, and how effectively did it contribute to the MRCS response? How did IFRC processes and decisions impact the work undertaken by PNS both in country and those contributing? How were there priorities accounted for and utilized to strengthen the operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from op situation reports/ key decision documents and timelines. KIIs with IFRC, MRCS and key PNS staff on efficiency and relevance both in decision-making and facilitating a coordinated implementation plan. Consistency between decision timelines and operational milestones. KIIs with MRCS and IFRC staff on Secretariat contributions to operational effectiveness.
Objective 1: Appropriateness and Efficiency	Were the relief interventions provided to affected communities appropriate and timely, and were corrective actions taken to address unmet needs, gaps, and operational challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How timely and appropriate were the interventions, and how were gaps or unmet needs addressed? What challenges were faced and what, if any, corrective actions taken to address these? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline data from operation updates/sit reps. KIIs with MRCS, IFRC, and PNS staff on appropriateness and timeliness.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were particular groups overlooked or underserved in the first three months, and if so, why? Were any adjustments made to address these? • To what extent were interventions timely in reaching remote and vulnerable communities? • How were unmet needs and operational gaps identified and addressed by the IFRC Network? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of corrective actions and follow-up results. • Records of identified gaps and corrective measures documented in sitreps/appeal revisions.
<p>Objective 1: Appropriateness and Efficiency</p>	<p>How effective were IFRC global response tools and procedures in enabling timely and contextually appropriate humanitarian action, including leveraging support from the IFRC Network and advancing the Agenda for Renewal?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were global tools (e.g., ERUs, Rapid Response) deployed in ways appropriate to the Myanmar context? • How effective were surge mechanisms and were adaptations made to suit local needs? • How did coordination with Movement partners and external actors work in practice? • How did the Secretariat support MRCS in coordinating and engaging with internal and external stakeholders for an effective and timely response? • Were the IFRC Network’s working modalities, tools, and procedures fit for purpose for the remainder of the operation? • To what extent are global, regional, and in-country response systems, tools, and decision-making processes fit for purpose in complex humanitarian settings? • What improvements can be made to these systems, tools, and processes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of ERU and Rapid Response deployments (who, when, where). • KILs with staff on contextual relevance of global tools. • Partner coordination documents and any after-action reviews. • KILs on coordination effectiveness and feedback on adequacy of working modalities. • Comparative analysis of response systems in complex emergencies (desk review + KILs).
<p>Objective 2: Preparedness and Readiness</p>	<p>How effective were the IFRC Country Delegation’s efforts to strengthen MRCS systems, capacities, and the preparedness of staff and volunteers to respond in line with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What training, systems, or resources were in place before the earthquake? • Where were the main gaps in MRCS readiness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of pre-earthquake trainings, systems, and resources. • KILs with MRCS and IFRC staff on effectiveness of preparedness.

their auxiliary role and Fundamental Principles?

- How effective was IFRC support in strengthening MRCS preparedness?
- To what extent did the Country Delegation enhance MRCS readiness and preparedness, considering Myanmar's complex operational reality?
- Review contributions to strengthened systems, capacities, and staff/volunteer preparedness, in line with auxiliary role and Fundamental Principles.

- Evidence of capacity-strengthening initiatives and MRCS staff/volunteer perceptions.

**Objective 2:
Preparedness
and
Readiness**

To what extent did the IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office have adequate systems, tools, and processes in place to support MRCS and the Country Delegation in the immediate earthquake response?

- What role did the Regional Office play in supporting MRCS immediately after the earthquake?
- Were the systems, staffing, and tools adequate to the scale of the crisis? How effective was regional coordination with the Country Delegation?
- What were the key differences in relief delivery between Cyclone Mocha/Yagi operations and the earthquake response?
- How were learnings from past operations applied to improve delivery?

- Records of Regional Office support provided (HR, logistics, technical).
- KIIs with Regional Office and Country Delegation staff.
- Evidence of timeliness and adequacy in operational reports.
- Comparative document review of Cyclone Mocha, Yagi, and Earthquake ops.

**Objective 2:
Preparedness
and
Readiness**

How adequate and functional were IFRC Secretariat internal mechanisms and global response tools (e.g., Emergency Appeal guidelines, ERF, IRP) in enabling timely, efficient, and contextually appropriate response?

- How effective were the Emergency Appeal guidelines, ERF, and IRP in enabling timely response?
- Were these global mechanisms adapted for the Myanmar context? Are there any changes that should be adopted so that they are better adapted for future operations?
- Were there challenges in mobilizing resources through the Appeal?
- How effective are IFRC regional and global systems and processes (policies, frameworks, ERU/Surge, HR,

- Documentation of Emergency Appeal development and approval timelines.
- Evidence of ERF and IRP application in the operation.
- KIIs with Secretariat staff on adaptability and adequacy.
- Review of policy/framework application (ERF, IRP) and timeliness of approvals.

technical assistance, decision-making) in ensuring MRCS effectiveness?

**Objective 2:
Preparedness
and Readiness**

To what extent could regional capacities of Southeast Asian National Societies be leveraged to enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency?

- How were regional/sub-regional or global NS capacities mobilized to support the response? Were there any systems, tool, procedures or resources in place prior to the earthquake that were utilized and adapted for the Myanmar context?
- Were there challenges or limitations in leveraging regional solidarity?
- Did regional NS contributions provide timely and relevant technical capacity?
- What support did Southeast Asian National Societies provide to the earthquake operation, and how can IFRC better leverage regional capacities?

- Records of regional surge.
- KIIs with Regional Office and PNS staff on regional support.
- Coordination documents showing effectiveness of contributions.
- Records of regional NS contributions (technical, financial, surge) and effectiveness.

**Objective 2:
Preparedness
and
Readiness**

Contextualization

- How did the Secretariat support MRCS in addressing political and economic restrictions that constrained timely and effective humanitarian delivery?

- Documentation and KIIs on access challenges and advocacy efforts.