

2026

*Streamlining
feedback, promoting
ownership and trust:*

Evidence from 1 year of the IFRC-DREF Feedback Process



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1. Introduction

Launched in September 2024, the IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) Feedback Process **received 115 answers** from **National Societies (NSs), IFRC staff, and Partner National Societies (PNSs)** within its first year. From **all 5 regions**, **participants shared** their experiences with the IFRC-DREF - including footprint of the tool, its procedures, and its guidelines. Feedback

was collected through targeted one-time surveys - one for National Societies and one for IFRC personnel - and a continuously accessible feedback box, linked to the GO Platform. This summary compiles findings from all three tools, and shares insights on the linkage of the feedback and the DREF Procedures and upcoming 2025-2030 Strategic Ambition.

115

responses from
5 regions

53%

of responses from
National Societies

41%

of responses from
IFRC Staff

6%

of responses from
PNSs

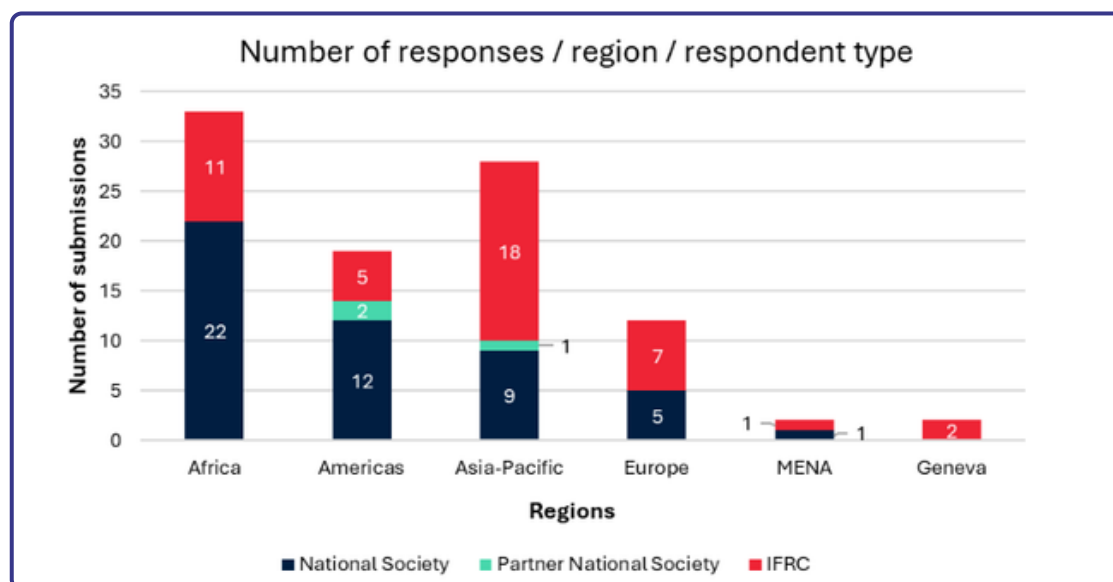


1.1 Profile of respondents

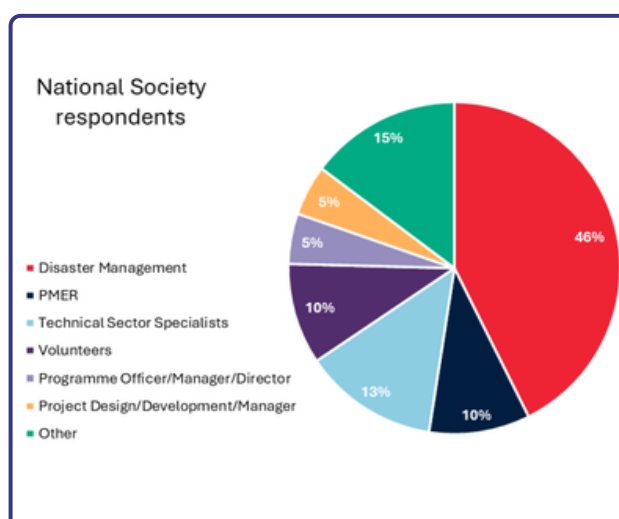
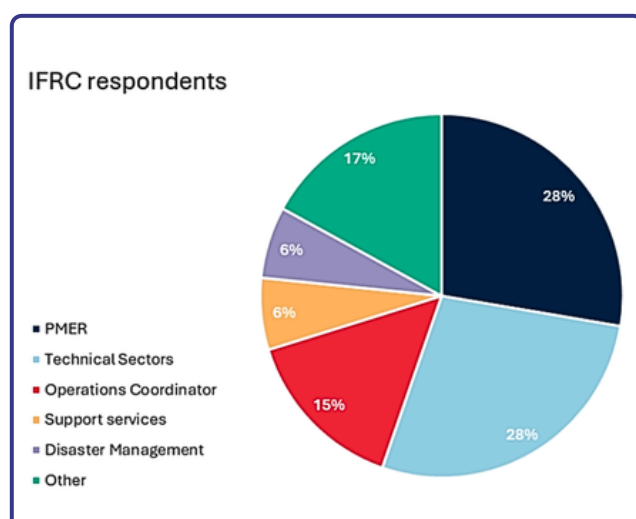
Considering all feedback tools, **National Societies** account for most answers - **53%, followed by IFRC staff - 41% of all answers**, while **Partner National Societies** accounted for **6%** - the smallest share.

Breakdown – answers from region and profile of respondents:

- **Asia-Pacific** region accounts for **28 responses**, with 18 from IFRC.
- **Americas** region had **19 answers** mostly from **National Societies**.
- The **Europe** region had **14 answers**, with 2 from Geneva.
- The **MENA** region generated the fewest responses (2).
- **Africa** had the highest participation with **33 answers**.
- 19 answers to the feedback box did not specify their region.



1.2 Respondent Roles and Functional Profiles



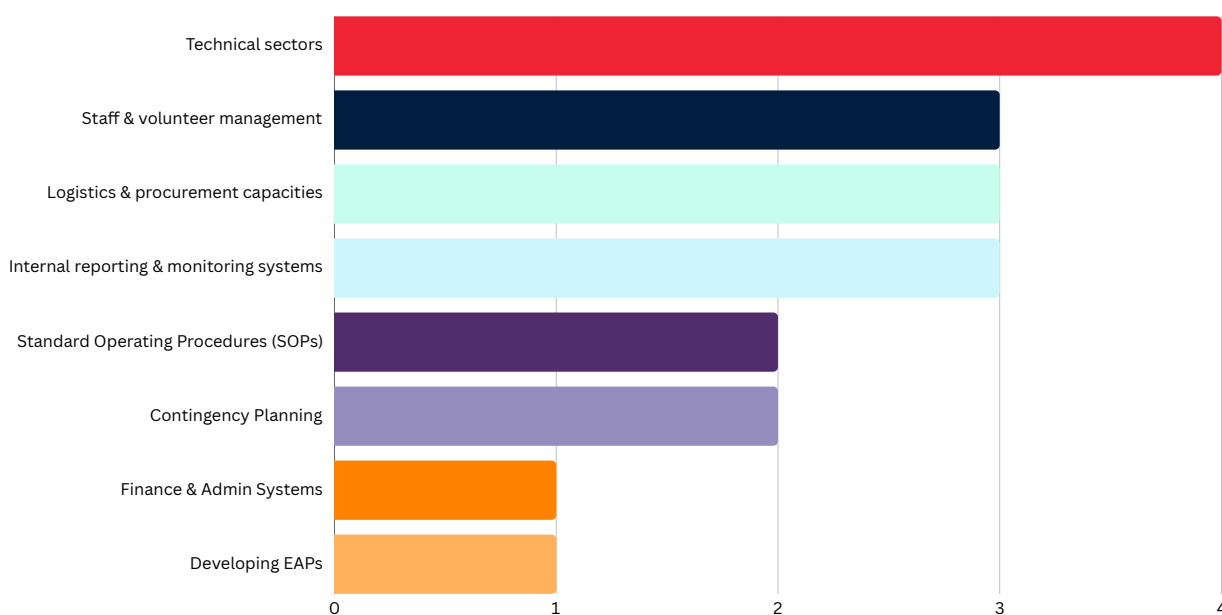


2. Key findings and trends

2.1 Staff and Volunteer Management / Capacity Strengthening

How did the Implementation of an IFRC-DREF Operation contribute to strengthening the National Society's operational capacity?

Implementing a DREF Operation has contributed to strengthening the National Society's operational capacity in



Source: Questionnaire for implementing National Societies.

Globally, the majority of National Societies agreed that **implementing DREF funds had a strong impact in strengthening its “Technical sectors” (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; Shelter; Health; etc.)**, and a **somewhat positive impact in staff & volunteer management, logistics & procurement capacities and internal reporting and monitoring systems.**

On the lower end, users have highlighted that implementing IFRC -

DREF funds had little benefit on their respective finance/admin systems, while the development of Early Action Protocols (EAPs) has not been indirectly strengthened by DREF.

Within the open-ended questions, users have recognized DREF's contribution to **strengthening visibility, improving response experience, and IFRC-NS collaboration:**

“The fund flexibility enables swift responses. The operational approach also puts efforts for local capacity building, which strengthens preparedness and response capabilities for NS. In sum my perception of IFRC DREF operations is highly positive but need more capacity building services on accountabilities and transparency which develops the trust of organization and community.” - **NS, Asia Pacific**

“Strengthening the NS strengthens the secretariat, but I believe that with the support of the IFRC, the Councils and the NS can strengthen areas and sectors that are not their strong points. This would be a specific component of strengthening that the NS could choose as an area of intervention.” - **NS, Americas**

A dominant theme among user National Societies has also been the **need for capacity strengthening** and training on DREF Planning, but also on **financial management** and accountability.

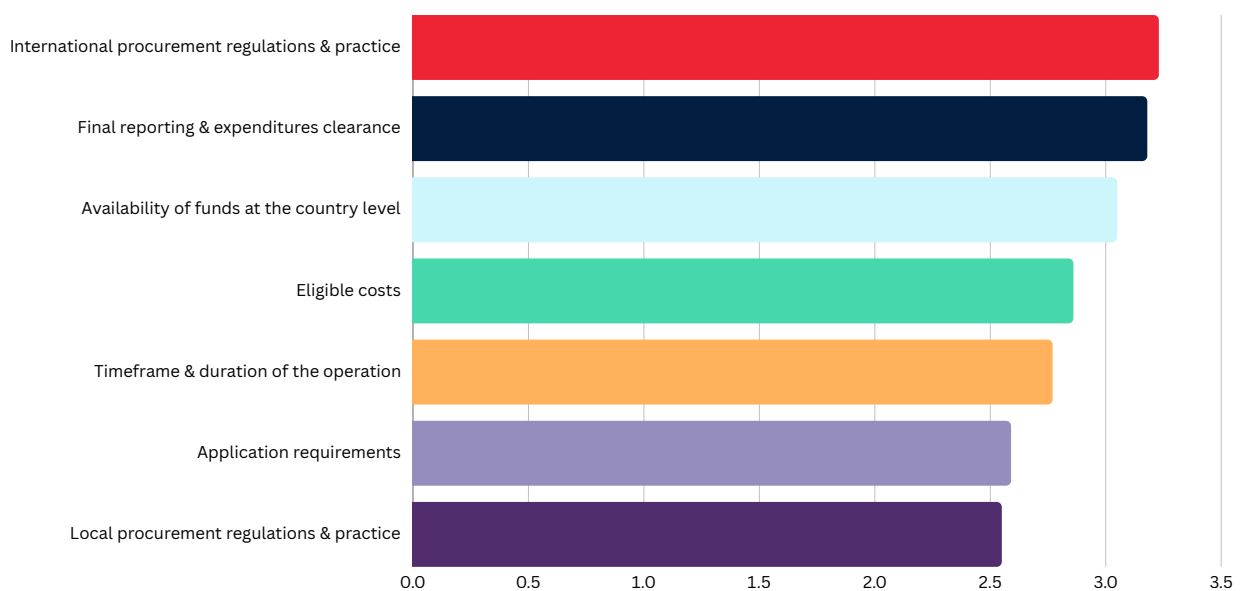


What are the main hindrances for an agile response through the IFRC-DREF?

Overall, National Societies' responses show limited variation across categories, indicating that **challenges are perceived as consistent rather than concentrated in a single area.** Within this relatively even distribution, financial and administrative procedures,

rated slightly higher, emerge as the most significant challenge. Although no element is perceived as a minor challenge (below 2.5 score), local procurement regulations and application requirements are perceived as comparatively less challenging.

Main challenges for an agile response through IFRC-DREF funds:



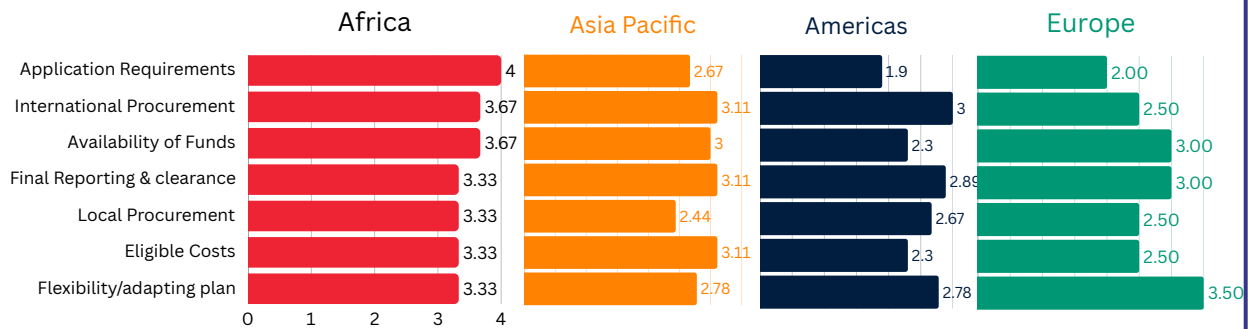
1 = low obstacle | 5 = high obstacle. Source: Questionnaire for implementing NSs.



However, the regional breakdown of answers from National Societies allows for a deeper understanding of the

challenges and capacity gaps, as consistent challenges stood out in each region:¹

Regional - challenges for an agile response through IFRC-DREF funds:



1 = low obstacle | 5 = high obstacle. Source: Questionnaire for implementing NSs.

- **In Africa**, application requirements stand out as the major challenge, with all respondents giving it the highest grade;
- **In the Americas**, no respondent highlighted a severe constraint (rated above 3) - yet international procurement is the only hindrance rated 3.0;
- Respondents from the **Asia Pacific** consistently rated administrative and financial processes as significant barriers - with the highest rate to final reporting;
- **Europe** highlighted a lack of flexibility in the use of funds, with fewer procurement or cost-related barriers.

Open-ended answers from National Societies have complemented this by highlighting persistent challenges in procurement and logistics:

“Logistics and movement are always a high cost. DREF funding split needs to be reviewed to take into account the small island states where access to some remote island affected is not favorable with high costs of transportation in the country.”
- NS, Asia Pacific

Some respondents highlighted the need for procedural changes to allow faster and more context-specific procurement:

“Purchases should allow more autonomy to the NSs in acquiring certain items, according to the country's situation.”
- NS, Americas

1. No answers for MENA are available, as no NS from MENA has answered the final survey.

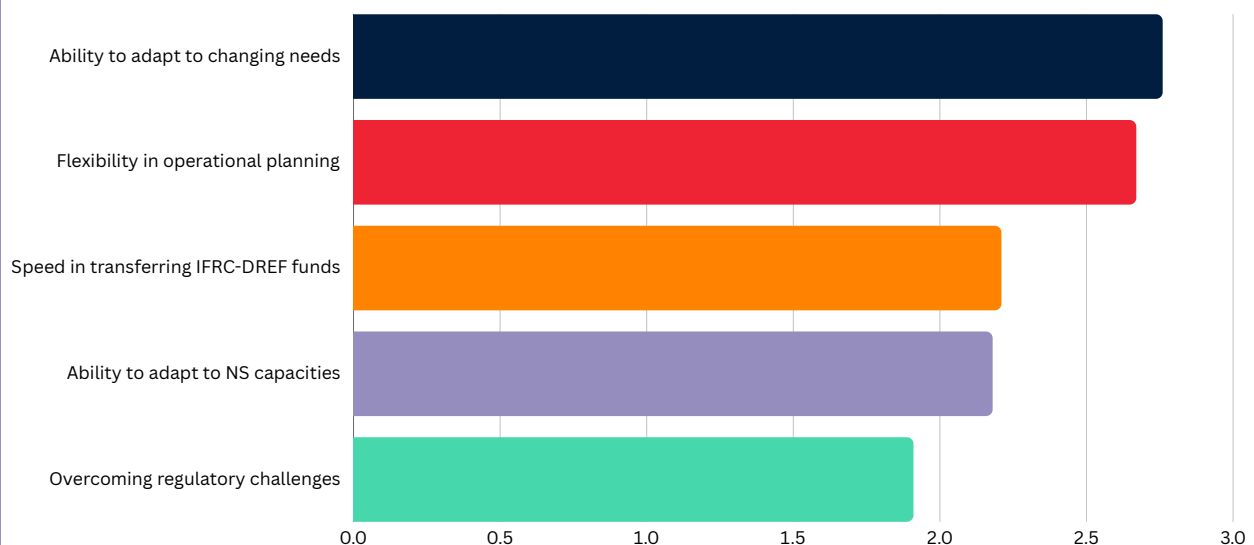
How relevant is IFRC-DREF in supporting National Society response efforts? (Insights from IFRC Staff)

Global answers from IFRC staff acknowledge IFRC-DREF's key relevance in its adaptability and responsiveness to evolving contexts, hand in hand with its flexibility. This is complemented by open-ended comments on specific areas where this flexibility could be further strengthened in practice: a few answers point to overly standardized operational design and difficulties in incorporating non-traditional interventions. This rigidity limits innovation and reduces community relevance:

“The activities planned are the same in all DREFs, it has to be discussed with other stakeholders and be innovative to meet the needs of the affected people.”
-IFRC Staff, Asia Pacific

The lowest rates on DREF's relevance regards DREF's capacity in supporting National Societies to overcome regulatory challenges.

Rates on IFRC-DREF relevance in supporting NSs response efforts linked to:



1 = low relevance | 5 = high relevance. Source: Questionnaire for IFRC Staff.

- "Flexibility" had the most consistent rate across regions, showing that this is universally the strongest aspect of DREF; element regarding DREF's relevance, while staff from Geneva and from MENA region rated this the highest.
- Speed of fund transfer is the issue with the strongest regional variance: staff from both Africa and the Americas region rated this the lowest
- Open-ended comments have further indicated that concerns about the speed of fund transfers were strong in the Africa region:

“Due to IFRC procedures, funds are transferred after more than 2 weeks following approval of the DREF, and usually after one month of the start of the event. NS's inability to manage funds received continues to be used as an eligibility criterion where Rapid Response staff can contribute to saving lives while strengthening the host NS.”
-IFRC Staff, Africa.

- The role of the IFRC-DREF in supporting National Societies to overcome regulatory challenges scored consistently low across all regions;

Interestingly, the results show that responses are more closely aligned among IFRC staff in similar roles across regions than among respondents within the same region:

Perceptions of IFRC-Staff on DREF's relevance, across roles/positions:

Role	Highest rated	Lowest rated	What this indicates
Admin/Finance /Logistics	Speed of Funds / Flexibility (3.5)	Regulatory Challenges (2.50)	DREF regarded as a flexible tool, but procurement systems are a key barrier.
Disaster Manager	Adaptability/ Flexibility / Adaptation (3.3)	Regulatory Challenges (1.7)	Positive regard on DREF's core operational elements, but procurement systems are a key barrier.
Operations Coordinator	Adaptability (3.0)	Regulatory Challenges (1.7)	Positive regard on DREF's core operational elements, but procurement systems are a key barrier.
CEA/NSD	Flexibility (3.0)	Speed of Funds (1.5)	CEA is uniformly positive, but NSD responses reveal severe dissatisfaction with fund flow and adaptability.
Technical Sectors	Adaptability (2.8)	Adaptation to NS Capacity (1.9)	Strong operational endorsement but see limits in support of NS capacity.
PMER	Adaptability (2.9)	Regulatory Challenges (1.6)	Overall low scores across all categories, with strong operational endorsement, yet administrative issues remain a barrier.

1 = low relevance | 5 = high relevance. Source: Questionnaire for IFRC Staff.

- Community Engagement and Accountability, Program Coordinators, Support Services had consistently high scores, indicating strong perceived relevance and operational value – all these roles have rated “adaptability & flexibility” the highest;

“Based on relevant needs and requirements during the emergency phase, I believe DREF plays a vital role in optimizing fastest delivery schedules.”
-IFRC Staff, Asia Pacific.

- The answers from Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting were generally most critical of administrative processes, with moderate ratings on operational flexibility;

“Financial and procurement procedures should be reviewed. There are many cases services were delayed due to finance and procurement process.”
-IFRC Staff, Asia Pacific.

- National Society Development (NSD) scores are extremely low across the board except for flexibility. NSD staff and technical sectors are aligned on their perception of DREF’s adaptation to NS Capacity, all with low scores in this area.

“I believe that DREF operations only involve risk management teams, and this prevents other issues from being addressed. If other teams were involved, these issues, which I understand are not a priority for the operations teams, could be addressed.”
-IFRC Staff, Americas.



2.2 Quality of interventions and efficiency of the DREF tool:

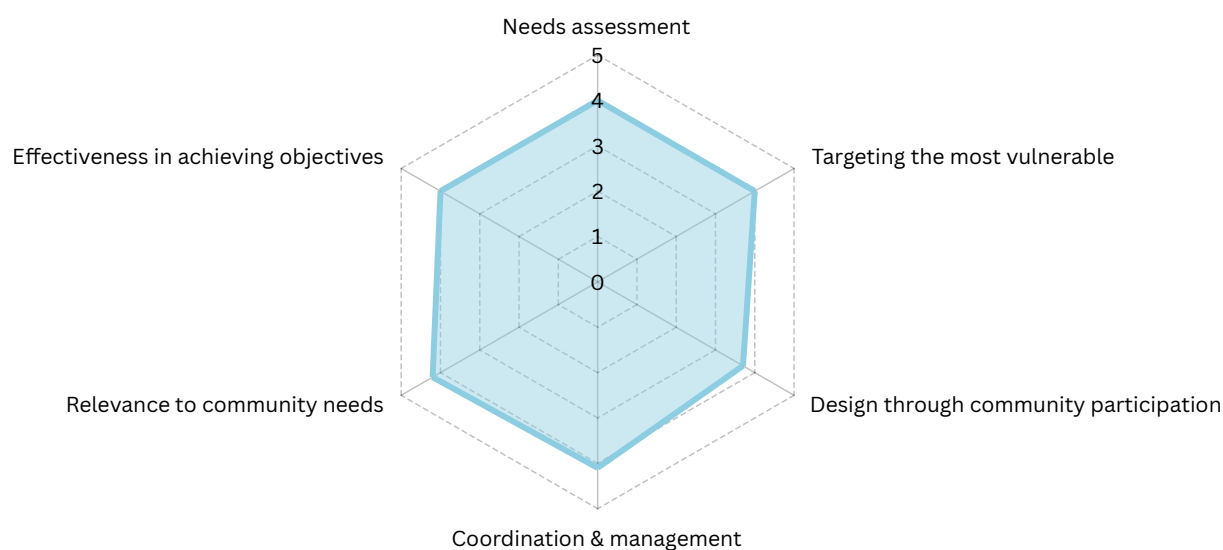
	Global Avg.	Lowest	Highest
The overall quality of IFRC-DREF operations in my region is high? (NSs)	367	3,8 (Africa)	4 (Europe)
The quality of IFRC-DREF operations in my region maintains a high standard in supporting NS? (IFRC Staff)	373	3,6 (Asia Pacific)	4,3 (Africa)

Overall, both National Societies and IFRC staff rated the quality of IFRC-DREF operations highly. Answers among NSs have shown a small regional variation (0.2 points between lowest and highest), suggesting a consistent experience of operational quality across regions. In contrast, perceptions among IFRC staff vary more markedly by region. While National Societies in Africa reported the lowest regional score, IFRC staff in Africa expressed the most positive assessment

of operational quality. **This shows a potential perception gap between National Societies and IFRC staff within the same regions, particularly in Africa.**

When asked about the quality of specific components, National Societies had generally a positive rating. The relevance of interventions received the highest rating (4.2), while “targeting and design through community participation” received the lowest score (3.7).

The IFRC-DREF operation had a good quality regarding the following components:



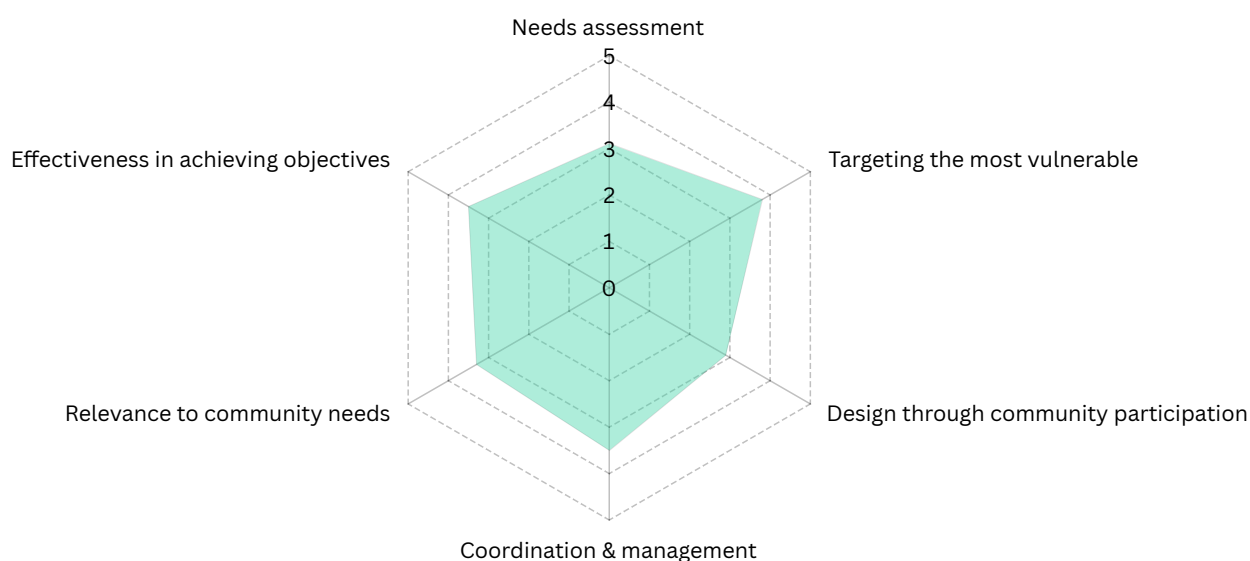
Source: Questionnaire for implementing National Societies.

These findings are complemented by open-ended answers, in which National Societies highlighted the need to strengthen community feedback mechanisms in order to better align operations with community needs.

“I believe that the way in which DREFs are formulated has been a formula of predetermined actions that is not based on a comprehensive assessment of the context, which means that there is no opportunity to implement innovative activities that are better suited to community needs. Community participation and feedback are limited or absent. The measurement of program quality is weak (...).” -**Partner NS, Americas.**

Compared with the National Societies' perspective on the quality in different components, **IFRC staff** provided overall lower ratings, with scores below 4 in each category - indicating a more critical take from this group against IFRC-DREF's footprint. Similarly to National Societies, IFRC-Staff also views “targeting the most vulnerable” as the strongest aspect of DREF operations, while “designing operations through community participation” was scored the weakest. Open-ended answers indicate limited National Society capacity, feasibility-driven planning, and tight operational timelines are key factors constraining meaningful community participation in the design phase of IFRC-DREF operations. This alignment suggests shared recognition of both the system's core strengths and its persistent gaps.

The quality of DREF funded operations has high standards regarding:



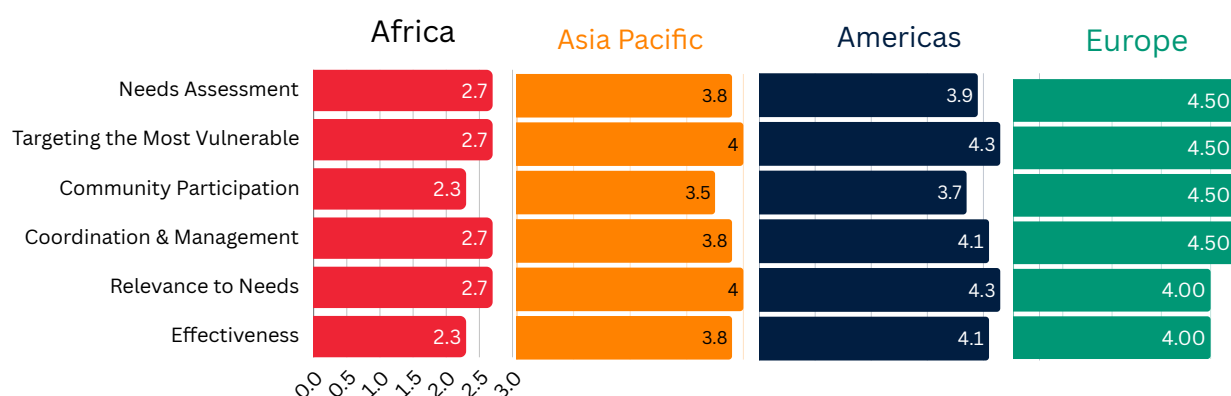
Source: Questionnaire for IFRC Staff.

Deepening down on this particular question, the regional analysis of answers by National Societies, shows a meaningful discrepancy in ratings, which can inform future efforts from IFRC regional and global offices on quality in IFRC-DREF Funded operations. National Societies from the Africa region have given the lowest ratings across all categories, driven primarily by one respondent with systematically very low scores. The Americas and Europe had consistently high answers, while all regions generally agree on the

high quality of interventions when targeting the most vulnerable – a significantly higher grade in the Americas and in Asia Pacific. Despite discrepancies, **the significantly lowest rating among all regions remains on community participation:**

“The short time between the onset of the disaster and the time the DREF is launched does not allow for community participation in the design process.” -IFRC Staff, Africa

Regional - The IFRC-DREF operation had a good quality regarding:



1 = low quality | 5 = high quality Source: Questionnaire for implementing National Societies.



How effective is the delivery of specific components of IFRC-DREF operations?

NSs vs. IFRC Staff views on the effective delivery of components:

Component	Grade – NSs	Grade – IFRC Staff
Humanitarian services are delivered on time	3.36	3.24
Humanitarian services are relevant to the needs of the people	3.86	3.77
Most of the targeted population is reached	3.86	4
The assistance provided meets the intended objectives	3.86	3.78

Source: Questionnaire for implementing National Societies, questionnaire for IFRC Staff.

The National Society and IFRC Staff ratings across the components were generally high, but no component reached a global average above 4, indicating satisfaction is strong; it is not absolute. IFRC staff and National Societies show a high degree of alignment in their perceptions of effectiveness, with differences of only 0.1–0.2 points. Consistent with earlier findings on delays in fund transfers, “timeliness” received the lowest score, reinforcing that speed of delivery remains a key challenge. The analysis of open-ended questions has presented strong concerns from users about delays in the delivery of humanitarian

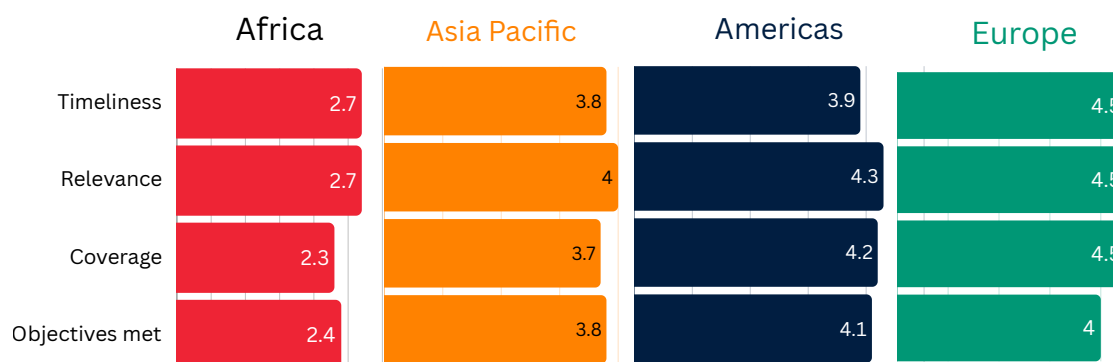
services under DREF, which can limit their ability to meet urgent needs. Respondents linked these delays to slow fund transfers, bureaucratic internal procedures, and rigid or overly short implementation timelines:

“Delays caused by the late fund transfers, or procurement procedures that are not fit for emergencies are affecting the delivery of the operations.
-IFRC Staff, Europe & Central Asia

The breakdown of regional answers from National Societies has shown that across regions, perceptions of

DREF **quality** and **effectiveness** are closely aligned:

Regional - Effective delivery of components of IFRC-DREF operations:



1 = low efficiency | 5 = high efficiency Source: Questionnaire for implementing NSs.

Regions with strong scores in needs assessment, targeting, and coordination results, while Africa shows persistently low ratings across both quality and effectiveness dimensions. Asia Pacific shows moderate but consistent effectiveness in delivering timely, relevant, and objective-driven assistance. Europe, Americas also report high effectiveness in delivering timely, relevant, and objective-driven assistance.



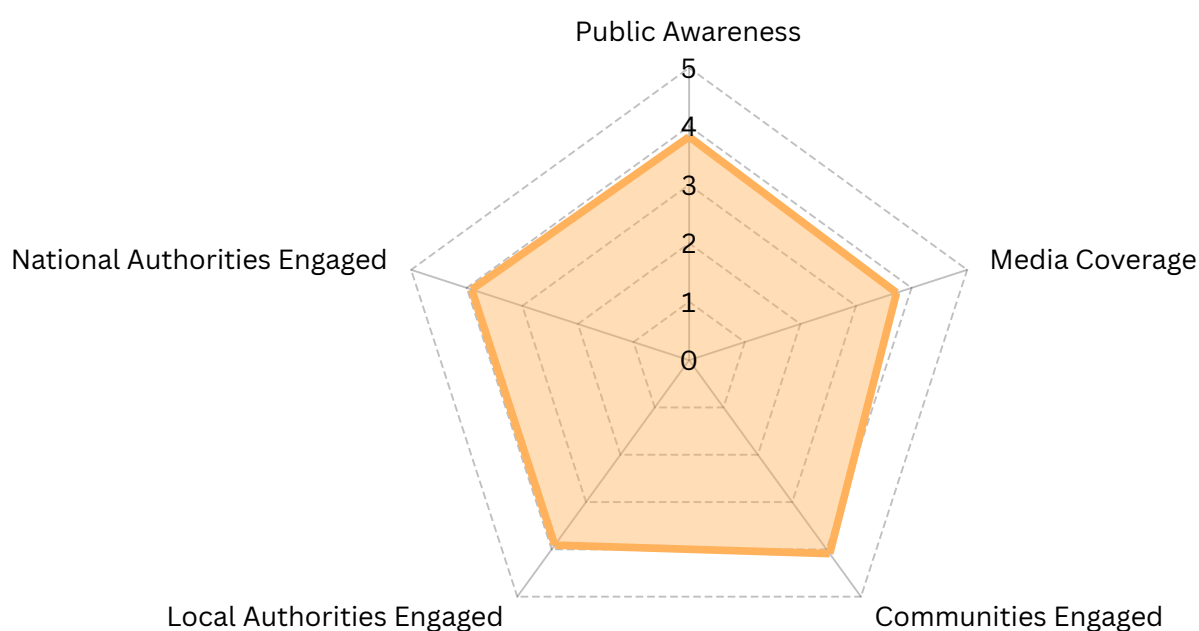
How does the IFRC-DREF enhance the visibility and positioning of your National Society?

National Societies had a generally positive perception on how implementing the IFRC-DREF funds improved their positioning. The strongest rated component was “positioning with the communities engaged”, which reached a global rate above 4, and the highest rated added value of the DREF across all regions. This is closely followed by engagement with authorities (both local and national), only 0.2 points behind. This aligns with the findings of open-ended questions

where National Societies credited IFRC - DREF for increasing their visibility and positioning:

“DREF funds provide greater visibility, as they allow the National Society to be seen from a more humanitarian perspective in emergency situations.” **-National Society, Americas.**

Footprint of IFRC-DREF on NS external engagement & visibility:

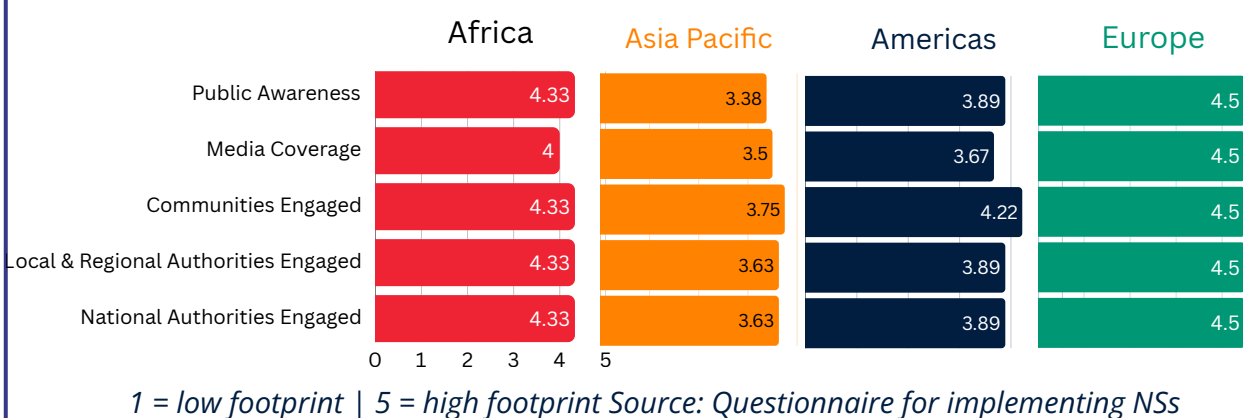


Source: Questionnaire for implementing National Societies.

The regional breakdown under this question shows strong appreciation for IFRC-DREF's visibility and positioning across regions, with National Societies in Africa giving particularly high scores - significantly higher than previous ratings for effectiveness and operational quality. This suggests that even where operational performance faces

challenges, DREF - supported actions are still seen as visible and well-recognized. In contrast, National Societies in the Asia Pacific region provided the lowest visibility-related scores, which may indicate that coordination and communication efforts are less consistent or less prominent in some operations.

Regional: footprint of IFRC-DREF on NS external engagement & visibility:



The **answers from IFRC Staff on the footprint of IFRC-DREF on visibility and positioning** have acknowledged that supporting National Societies in implementing IFRC-DREF funds allows IFRC to demonstrate a leadership role in emergency response and preparedness, while strengthening partnership with National Societies and coordination with authorities. As one respondent stated:



“The DREF has been an important tool in terms of positioning the IFRC, but also in positioning National Societies as relevant humanitarian actors that can access swift and agile funding to meet the immediate and most pressing needs of affected populations.” - **IFRC Staff, Americas.**

The funds seem to have a significantly smaller footprint in strengthening IFRC's positioning in policy discussions and decision making.

Footprint of supporting implementation of DREF funds in IFRC positioning:

Positioning Component	Global Average
Demonstrating leadership in emergency response & preparedness	4.24
Strengthening partnerships with National Societies	4
Enhancing coordination with local & regional authorities	4
Building strategic alliances with other humanitarian organizations	3.58
Increasing influence in policy discussions & decision-making	3.52

1 = low positioning | 5 = high positioning Source: Questionnaire for IFRC Staff.

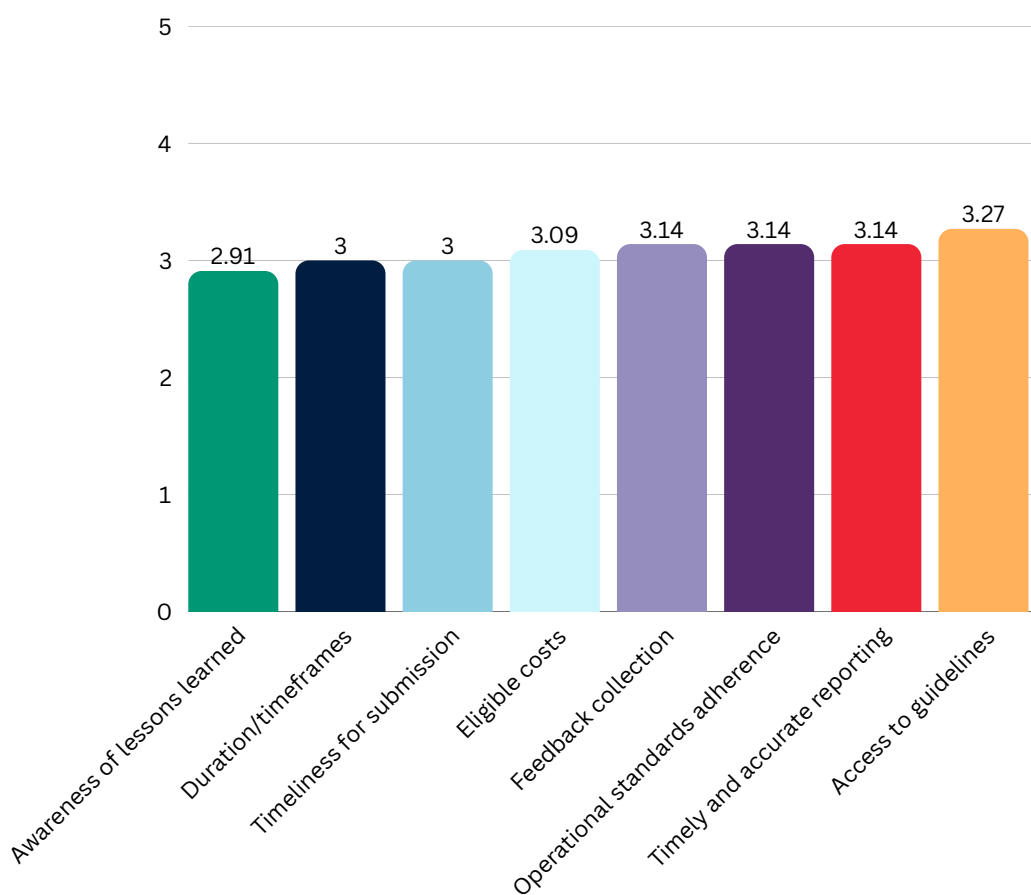


2.3 Challenges on implementation and DREF criteria

How challenging was the compliance of the following IFRC-DREF guidelines and procedures elements?

Globally, no single element of the IFRC-DREF guidelines stood out as a major challenge for National Societies, with none of the categories approaching the highest difficulty ratings. Similarly, no component was consistently perceived as entirely unchallenging (rated below 2.5). While variation across categories was small, the areas rated as relatively more challenging were “Access to guidelines,” “Duration and timeframes of operations,” and “Adherence to operational standards.” Conversely, “Awareness of lessons learned” and “Eligible costs” were rated as the least challenging, though the difference between these and the highest-rated challenges was lesser than 0.25 points - indicating that National Societies perceive the challenges as evenly distributed across elements.

Challenges on abiding to the IFRC-DREF guidelines/procedures

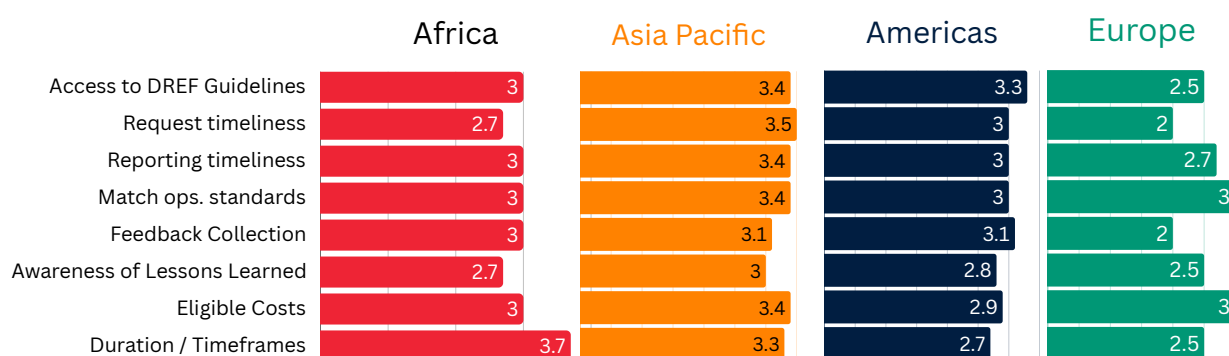


1 = low challenges | 5 = high challenges. Source: Questionnaire for implementing NSs.

The regional breakdown of the challenges has shown a significant variation of challenges among regions – reflecting specific capacity gaps that can be explored for capacity strengthening. Asia Pacific is the region facing the most consistent challenges, with rates above global average in most categories: “Timeliness of request submission” and

“Timeframes of the operation” were perceived as the main challenges. Europe region respondents indicated consistently low rates across each category, with the least challenging “Timeliness of request submission” still rated above 2 - this contrast discloses uneven capacities across regions and highlights where additional support may be most needed.

Regional breakdown - Challenges on abiding to the IFRC-DREF guidelines/procedures



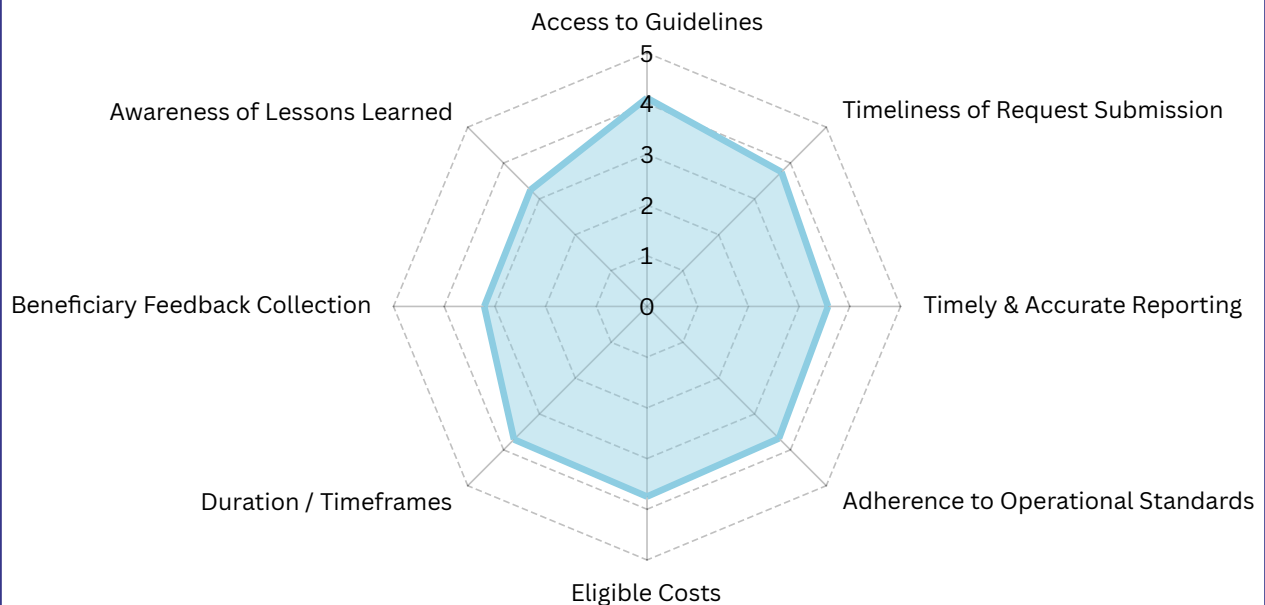
Source: Questionnaire for implementing National Societies.

The survey for **IFRC Staff** gathered insights on IFRC-DREF Procedures and Guidelines through the opposite perspective, by asking “**the guidelines of the IFRC-DREF are respected to meet accountability standards**”. On that regard, “Access to guidelines” stood out as the most complied element, followed by “Eligibility of costs”, and “Request submission timelines”. Beneficiary feedback collection and awareness of lessons learned were rated as the less complied elements – matching perspectives gathered on the questions

about quality and effectiveness (previous section). In their open-ended responses IFRC staff highlighted the need to strengthen both of these aspects:

“Community should be involved from assessment to implementation period. Their feedback needs to be collected in a greater amount, and we need to learn lessons from that.”
-IFRC Staff, Asia-Pacific

Complied elements from DREF procedures and guidelines:



Source: Questionnaire for IFRC Staff.

The comparison of National Society and IFRC Staff perspectives shows that both groups generally agree on areas of weakness - particularly beneficiary feedback mechanisms and the integration of lessons learned - yet they significantly disagree in how they interpret the access and adherence to DREF guidelines. This points to relevant gaps on focused capacity strengthening.

The breakdown of challenges across roles reveals significant variation in how compliance with DREF Procedures and Guidelines is perceived. Operations Coordinators consistently provide lower scores than most other roles, indicating a negative experience with National Society adherence - particularly regarding beneficiary feedback collection (rated at 2.25), two points below the rate provided by Support Services (4.25). In contrast, Support Services staff reported the highest levels of perceived compliance, including the highest score (5.0) for access to procedures and guidelines, with the highest rates across all categories.



IFRC-Staff on compliance to procedures/guidelines, by roles/positions:

Role / Group	Access	Timeliness	Reporting	Operational Standards	Beneficiary Feedback	Lessons Learned	Eligibility of Costs	Timeframes
Ops. Co.	3.5	3.75	3.25	3.5	2.25	3.5	4	3.25
Technical Teams	4.33	3.44	3.22	3.22	3.11	3	3.89	3.78
PMER	3.89	3.78	3.56	3.78	2.89	2.78	3.33	3.22
Program Co.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Support Services	5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.5	4.5
NSD + CEA	4	4.5	4	4	4	3.5	3.5	4
Program Co. + DM	4.33	4.17	4	4.17	4	4	3.83	4.17

1 = low compliance | 5 = high compliance Source: Questionnaire for IFRC Staff.





3. Way forward

How can the collected feedback drive improvements to the IFRC Emergency Operations and the DREF tool?

The journey of establishing a two-way feedback mechanism for the IFRC-DREF lays beyond the 2024-2025 period. This work extends to the coming 2026-2030 DREF Strategic Ambition and contributes to IFRC's Renewal and new Way of Working by providing insights on efficiency, localization, and accountability to the communities.

3.1. Linkage with IFRC-DREF Procedures:

The insights from users and IFRC staff implementing IFRC-DREF funded operations provide data-oriented insights on the improvement of the DREF tool, and the implementation of its 2025-2030 Strategic Ambition. However, it is relevant to note that many challenges were already touched by the IFRC-DREF Procedures approved in June 2025, detailed below:

Findings from the feedback process:

1. Changes in the timeliness of fund transfer:

Delays in the transfer of funds and rigid criteria were major concerns among respondents. Many operations are impacted because funds arrive too late, often after communities begin recovering, undermining IFRC-DREF's effectiveness. There is a need for faster fund transfers, streamlined requirements, early partial releases of funding, and systems matching the reality of emergency response. These adjustments are seen as essential to operational efficiency and impact.

Key feedback:

IFRC funds are transferred after more than 2 weeks following approval of the DREF, and usually after one month of the start of the event. NS inability to manage funds received continues to be used as an eligibility criterion where Rapid staff can contribute to save lives while strengthening the host NS.

Response from new DREF Procedures:

- Review of Imminent DREF Modality: Eases access to funding by merging the Application and PFA (Section 5.1).
- Introduction of the Emergency Advance Payment Request, with two available tracks for NSs (Section 6.1).
- Introduction of the "Eligibility and Compliance" step during review of requests, approving an initial 25% allocation within less than 24h.

Findings from the feedback process:

2. Limitations of the CHF 100/person cap – New CHF 150 ratio:

Respondents called for more flexibility in the current CHF 100 ratio per person targeted - the fixed CHF 100 per family does not reflect varying household sizes or needs and is seen as limiting the humanitarian impact of IFRC-DREF operations.

Key feedback:

Size of families are not the same: single-headed, some women-headed, some 3 to 4 and above. Allocation of 100 CHF per family is not eligible and rational. This can be modified according to the needs of assessment and family status.

3. Limitations on eligible costs – New flexibility on the asset purchases

Feedback highlights the need to change current cost eligibility criteria to allow context-relevant purchases, especially during emergencies. Several respondents emphasized that current rules on what can or cannot be funded create delays in meeting real-time needs. There is a request for higher-value asset procurement and operational supplies like mobile phones, IT equipment, and evaluation tools. Others stressed that cost eligibility rules should better reflect country-specific contexts and emergency realities, allowing for timely purchases without excessive administrative checks.

Key feedback:

Size of families are not the same: single-headed, some women-headed, some 3 to 4 and above. Allocation of 100 CHF per family is not eligible and rational. This can be modified according to the needs of assessment and family status.

Response from new DREF Procedures:

- The cap per person targeted is being reviewed, with changes to be addressed on the new IFRC-DREF Guidelines, under work. The guidelines will set a new cap of CHF 150/person targeted.

- Purchase of up to CHF 10,000 in assets for the National Society needed for the implementation of the operation are now eligible with DREF Funding for Early Action Protocols and Response DREF (Section 9.5).

Findings from the feedback process:

4. Funding of NS/IFRC salaries

Respondents underlined that IFRC-DREF operations often require support from IFRC staff or Delegation teams whose work is critical to implementation. There's a call to fund these positions as part of the operation.

Key feedback:

The possibility of DREF supporting HR cost for at least one staff for the duration of the operation will help reduce workload and increase efficiency.

Response from new DREF Procedures:

- IFRC Staff (including Technical Support) and/or National Society staff dedicated to the implementation of the operation shall be funded by the IFRC-DREF in accordance with IFRC's Costing Principles (section 9.7).



3.2. Linkage with DREF 2026-2030 Strategic Ambition:

Complementary, the insights from the Feedback Process can help to unpack different activities under IFRC-DREF's 2025-2030 Strategic Ambition, as challenges and gaps presented by IFRC Staff and National Societies fall under its different areas:

Strategic Objective 1: Closer to People – Strengthening Quality, Accountability, and Maximizing Impact through enhanced localization:

Target:

IFRC-DREF operations have a better demonstrated impact through enhanced localization and strengthened quality across the overall process and implementation

Key actions:

Develop and monitor additional indicators for localization / Develop quality initiatives to improve planning, assessment, targeting, monitoring, delivery and reporting on all IFRC-DREF funded operations / Develop an impact framework to mainstream impact across the operation cycle; from the application to the final evaluation.

Insights from the Feedback process have shown that DREF is widely valued for:

1. Supporting National Society visibility with communities;
2. Strengthening technical sector capacity.
3. Regarding planning, interventions are perceived as relevant; targeting the most vulnerable is strong.

However:

1. Adaptation to National Society capacity scores low;
2. Administrative and financial processes are seen as misaligned with local realities;
3. Design through community participation is consistently the lowest-rated quality element;

Localization is therefore experienced as delivery through National Societies, not decision-making with National Societies and communities. Planning is technically fair, but not sufficiently participatory.



Strategic Objective 3: Increasing Efficiency through Cash Prepositioning and Forecast-Based Supply Chain Financing

Target:

Operations become faster and more efficient through supply chain optimizing actions and cash prepositioning in the most vulnerable and disaster-prone countries (up to 3–5% of total funds).

Insights from the Feedback process have shown consistent bottlenecks:

1. “Timeliness” is the lowest-rated delivery component by both NSs and IFRC staff, consistently flagged as a constraint. This indicates that efficiency issues occur before implementation.
2. Financial and administrative procedures are rated among the top hindrances to agile response; Regulatory and procurement challenges are consistently rated low;
3. Supply chain and procurement issues are uneven across regions;

The data from the process can help IFRC to identify potential countries/regions under this objective and link this ambition to challenges voiced by user National Societies, for instance on the delays in fund transfer and procurement.

Enabler 1: Synergies with National Society Development and Capacity Building

Target:

National Societies demonstrate measurable improvement in sustainability, preparedness, and operational quality through the integrated use of IFRC-DREF operational learnings and National Society Development (NSD) support mechanisms.

Key actions:

Institutionalize the synergies with Capacity Building Fund / National Society Investment Alliance / Establish a shared repository of lessons learned from DREF operations and their application to NSD planning / Support National Societies to develop integrated operational and development plans leveraging multiple funding streams.

The feedback has shown that implementing IFRC-DREF operations contributes positively to several areas (i.e. Staff and volunteer development), while it has limited effects on finance and admin systems.

- The feedback shows no systematic handover of learnings from DREF implementation to experience with National Society Development instruments - this suggests opportunities for NSD linkage;
- Respondents have acknowledged a significant weakness in the integration of feedback and learning into future planning;

Enabler 2: Enhancing Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

Target:

IFRC-DREF supported operations integrate real-time community feedback, ensuring that voices of affected communities directly inform operational decisions and funding adaptations.

Key actions:

Develop a standardized CEA feedback framework with guidance and adaptable tools for National Societies / Support the roll-out of community feedback mechanisms in IFRC-DREF supported operations / Build analytical systems to consolidate CEA data for continuous improvement at IFRC-DREF level.

Insights from the feedback process have shown that overall quality, relevance, and coverage of DREF operations are consistently rated high. However, community participation and beneficiary feedback are the lowest-rated quality components, identified by both National Societies and IFRC staff as weak points.

Illustrative comment:

Enhancing community feedback and complaint mechanisms, ensuring their accessibility and responsiveness, could improve trust and program effectiveness. Additionally, promoting more systematic involvement of affected populations in decision-making processes—beyond needs assessments—would enhance ownership and sustainability of interventions.

This signals that *technical quality* is stronger than *participatory quality*; Both IFRC-DREF implementing National Societies and IFRC Staff consider the collection of beneficiary feedback a major challenge regarding the quality of the operations, with low scores on the attention to communities on the design of the interventions. Moreover, answers from IFRC-Staff have alerted for generally perceived little compliance when collecting feedback from the communities.



Enabler 6: Strengthening National Societies' Capacities

Target:

By 2030, National Societies accessing DREF have benefited from standardized, interactive training and demonstrating improved operational quality and learning capacity.

Actions:

Revise and update IFRC-DREF training materials and develop e-learning modules accessible globally / Facilitate peer exchange among National Societies through communities of practice / Integrate lessons from operational reviews into continuous capacity strengthening.

Access to DREF guidelines is rated as one of the biggest challenges among National Societies, yet IFRC operational roles (Operations Coordinators; Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting) consistently rate actual compliance and quality lower than support functions.

- This indicates capacity gaps are about awareness and about practical application in real operations.
- National Societies are delivering operations but not consistently retaining or reusing learning.
- IFRC-DREF operations generate experience, but without structured learning, that experience does not consistently translate into improved quality.



3.3. What comes next? Key learnings and recommendations

From 2026 onwards, the IFRC-DREF Feedback Tool will be maintained as a permanent feedback channel. Aligned with the DREF Strategic Ambition and IFRC's broader Renewal agenda, the findings can support the development of indicators and action plans under each strategic objective and enabler, while also serving as a monitoring instrument to track progress and measure change over time. While many of the insights shared by National Societies and IFRC staff relate directly to IFRC-DREF procedures, guidelines, and the 2026-2030 strategic ambition, others fall outside these frameworks and can be used to guide improvements on broader IFRC teams and Partners.

Recommendation 1

Close the Feedback Loop with responding National Societies.

Addressed to the IFRC–DREF Team.

Rationale

The credibility of the IFRC-DREF Feedback Process depends on whether National Societies and IFRC teams can clearly see how their inputs influence decisions, IFRC-DREF and IFRC procedures, and operational improvements. Several concerns raised through the process have already informed revisions to the 2025 DREF Procedures and ongoing discussions linked to DREF's Strategic Ambition.

Action points include:

1. Close the feedback loop and strengthen accountability to users:

- Develop key messages to National Societies, including changes covered by the procedures on what was already done and what comes next on the scope of the ambition;
- Promote dissemination sessions of the findings, with clear channels for additional feedback and Frequently Asked Questions;
- Develop and disseminate a concise "You said, We did" summary highlighting how feedback has already informed procedural changes and ongoing workstreams.

2. Building on ongoing efforts

- Use existing regional DREF forums, webinars, and operational meetings to share recurring findings, clarifications, and updates linked to the revised procedures;
- Consolidate recurring questions and operational challenges raised through the feedback process into short FAQs and operational guidance shared through the GO Platform;
- Maintain regular communication with National Societies and IFRC teams on issues that are under review, ongoing, or outside the scope of DREF Strategic direction;
- Use recurring feedback trends to inform future revisions of DREF guidance, procedures, and operational priorities.

Recommendation 2

Review how current IFRC procedures related to Finance, Procurement, Logistics are applied in DREF contexts, with a view to clarifying flexibilities, simplifying processes where possible, and strengthening practical guidance and support to National Societies, especially those with limited procurement capacity.

Addressed to the IFRC–DREF Team, Finance, Supply Chain, CASH, and administrative functions.

► **DREF Strategic Ambition linkage:**

- **S.O.3.** Increasing Efficiency through Cash Prepositioning and Forecast-Based Supply Chain Financing;
- **S.O.4.** Supporting National Societies in complex and protracted crises through predictable funding;

Rationale

Feedback across all regions has suggested challenges on financial and administrative procedures within IFRC Emergency Operations- particularly procurement requirements - as a constraint to timely response. It is essential to review how structural financial and administrative challenges can affect National Societies' access to DREF funds. Beyond reviewing IFRC processes, teams could consider how to streamline internal administrative processes of frequent users, to tackle frequent bottlenecks.

Proposed action points include:

1. Building on ongoing efforts:

- Consolidate guidance and communicate the new flexibilities on finance and administration introduced through the revised DREF Procedures (i.e. emergency advance payments, eligible costs, etc);

- Connect with respective IFRC teams to develop short operational guidance notes addressing the most recurring procurement, reporting, and administrative bottlenecks identified through the feedback process;
- Use regional operational platforms and support service discussions to systematically capture and escalate recurring implementation constraints;
- Strengthen operational follow-up and practical support to National Societies facing repeated procurement, reporting, or financial management challenges.

2. DREF 2026-2030 Strategic Ambition:

- Ensure feedback from National Societies is triangulated with predictive analytics used to inform cash and preparatory financing in supply chains. Under S.O3, ensuring challenges are incorporated in its action plan;
- Establish linkages between the feedback process and the National Society Investment Framework, where findings from the feedback process can inform the NSIF and serve as an additional source of data on National Societies. This linkage could help to bring forward information on challenges, bottlenecks and potential risks faced by National Societies, facilitating targeted investment where needs are greatest.

Recommendation 3

Systematic linkage of DREF operational learnings into National Society readiness and SOPs.

Addressed to the IFRC–DREF Team, NSD Team, PMER, Technical Sectors.

► **DREF Strategic Ambition linkage:**

- **E.1** Synergies with IFRC’s National Society Development and Capacity Building Fund ;
- **E.6** Strengthening National Societies’ Capacities

Rationale

National Societies have highly recognized the value of operational learnings in the context of DREF Operations. However, there seems to be little institutionalization of lessons learned from DREF operations within National Societies, limiting their contribution to long-term preparedness and operational quality.

Proposed action points include:

1. Building on ongoing efforts:

- Socialize the regional breakdown of findings from the IFRC-DREF Feedback Process with regional PER and NSD Teams, to strengthen the practical follow-up of lessons learned exercises by identifying operational actions and preparedness gaps emerging from DREF operations;
- Review and streamline the methodology of Lessons Learned Workshops for DREF-funded operations, to enable an action-oriented capture of challenges and learnings, linked with NSD tools as a follow-up pathway.

2. DREF 2026-2030 Strategic Ambition:

- Use existing operational learning, NSD, and preparedness initiatives to better connect DREF experience with longer-term institutional strengthening, encouraging National Societies to integrate operational learnings into SOPs, contingency plans, volunteer systems, and preparedness planning;
- Capture and document recurring operational lessons across regions to support future operational planning and readiness efforts. Promote peer exchange between National Societies facing similar operational challenges and hazards;
- Use feedback to identify priority clusters for the development of tailored capacity building plans based on identified challenges and strengths;
- Adapt the DREF Mainstream training package to tackle challenges and frequent questions from users regarding DREF. A “Module” approach allows for adaptation of capacity building activities according to users and regions.

Recommendation 4

Embed broader quality assurance and accountability frameworks into operational decision making - beyond tick-box exercises.

Addressed to IFRC delegations and regional structures – including DREF focal points.

► **DREF Strategic Ambition linkage:**

- **E.2** Enhancing Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)
- **E.3** Promoting Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) and Safeguarding

Rationale

Across responses, users have highlighted how core quality activities - such as needs assessments, community feedback mechanisms, protection, gender and inclusion, and safeguarding - can be frequently incorporated “tick-box” requirements rather than core operational elements.

IFRC delegations, regional structures – including DREF Team, and technical teams are advised to IFRC delegations, regional structures – including DREF Team, and technical teams are advised to embed these practices within broader quality assurance and accountability frameworks, linking them to operational decision-making, learning, and performance management rather than standalone reporting requirements.

Proposed action points include:

- Link the findings from the Feedback Process with baseline data from DREF-PGI review and GTS tool, to inform role-based and region-based prioritization for follow-up actions under these works.
- Build on the “Launch events” as platforms for the inclusion of quality assurance in operations, ensuring meaningful community participation in these occasions and better positioning with the communities from the onset.

Recommendation 5

Use the DREF Feedback Tool as an institutional learning input, beyond a DREF monitoring mechanism.

From 2026, the DREF Feedback Tool will remain in place as a permanent feedback mechanism, gathering insights on operational quality and capacity development that go beyond DREF. IFRC-DREF Team, and IFRC technical departments can benefit from integrating feedback findings into broader planning, learning, and accountability processes, using the data to inform strategic decision-making.

- Use the Feedback Process to monitor trends linked to localization, operational quality, efficiency, and accountability over time;

- Further position the Feedback Process as a continuous institutional learning mechanism supporting IFRC Renewal and implementation of the DREF 2026–2030 Strategic Ambition;
- Maintain the DREF Feedback Box linkage with the DREF application in the GO Platform, gathering user inputs on the processing of the requests;
- Set-up automatic reminders in DREF Applications, for implementing National Societies to access the feedback box.





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