

# *Supporting communities before and after disasters*

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# IFRC-DREF

IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund



years

# OUR UNWAVERING COMMITMENT:



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network. We support local Red Cross and Red Crescent action in more than 191 countries, bringing together more than 16 million volunteers for the good of humanity. Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our unparalleled community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality.

Building on these foundational values, the IFRC established the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (IFRC-DREF) in 1979. **IFRC-DREF is an efficient, transparent, and truly localized way for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to access**

## IN 2023:

More than

**CHF 74  
MILLION**

disbursed

**88%**

for response  
activities

**12%**

for  
anticipatory  
action

**160**

operations  
supported

**> 100**

operations classified  
as small-scale  
disasters

# *Local action, global reach.*

## **international funding when national resources are insufficient.**

The IFRC-DREF has served as a pillar of support for National Societies emergency response for more than four decades and is now one of the oldest humanitarian pooled funds in the world.

Originally designed to respond to small- and medium-sized disasters, the fund has evolved to include support for anticipatory action. Acting before a disaster allows us to respond even more effectively to different crises - saving more lives and livelihoods, minimizing impact, and preventing suffering.

The introduction of IFRC-DREF Insurance has further strengthened the fund. This insurance mechanism allows access to additional financial resources ensuring the fund remains solvent and effective even during periods of extraordinary need. This evolution of the fund exemplifies our dedication to providing timely and effective assistance, reinforcing the IFRC's mission to alleviate human suffering.

**As we celebrate 45 years of the fund, we also celebrate the local humanitarian action of our member National Societies, and the communities they support before, during and after disasters and crises.**

**14.6  
MILLION  
PEOPLE**

**supported  
globally**

**90  
NATIONAL  
SOCIETIES**

**empowered**

**National Societies  
are the direct  
recipients of  
82%  
of IFRC-DREF  
allocations**

# WHY SUPPORT IFRC-DREF?

1.

## ONE FUND, TWO PILLARS

**IFRC-DREF is unique in offering both anticipatory action and disaster response in a single fund.** The Response Pillar not only addresses small- and medium-scale disasters but also provides crucial initial funding that bridges the gap until additional support can be secured through IFRC Emergency Appeals.

Meanwhile, the Anticipatory Pillar focuses on effective early actions that save lives and reduce disaster impacts before they occur. **The IFRC aims to allocate 25% of IFRC-DREF funding to the Anticipatory Pillar by 2025.**

2.

## FAST, EFFICIENT, TRANSPARENT, AND LOCALIZED

The IFRC-DREF, a humanitarian pooled fund supported by diverse donors, enables faster and more targeted funding decisions.

**IFRC-DREF requests can be approved within 24 hours and disbursed in less than 72 hours.**

**82% of IFRC-DREF allocations are directly transferred to and implemented by National Societies.** This significantly reduces operational costs and ensures that most resources go directly to humanitarian work at the community level, where they are needed most. IFRC oversight ensures full accountability and transparency, as well as careful risk management.

# 3.

## A SAFETY NET FOR NATIONAL SOCIETIES

In a disaster, the number one priority is speed. IFRC-DREF empowers National Societies to respond quickly and effectively, knowing that resources are forthcoming.

This support grants them the flexibility to strategize and make decisions, ensuring rapid aid deployment. Additionally, it positions National Societies as vital local responders when disasters occur, enabling them to effectively execute their role as humanitarian auxiliary to authorities. Through this support, National Societies can better serve the communities at greatest risk, ensuring that support reaches the people who need it the most.

# 4.

## INNOVATIVE INSURANCE: SECURING IFRC-DREF'S WORK

The IFRC, in partnership with Aon and the Centre for Disaster Protection, has pioneered an insurance policy tailored to protect the IFRC-DREF by supplying a financial backstop when needed.

The insurance allows the fund to access extra financial resources when disaster demands exceed a specific threshold. This ensures the fund stays solvent and responsive, even during periods of extraordinary need. Such predictability is crucial for planning and delivering timely humanitarian aid.

**In 2024, IFRC-DREF insurance was a finalist and the only humanitarian fund listed among the Sustainable Finance Awards for Best 'Environmental, Social and Government/Sustainability' Initiative of the Year: Social Aspects.**

# Legacy of Impact:

As we  
commemorate  
our past, we set  
our sights on an  
ambitious goal:  
to annually  
allocate

**CHF 100  
MILLION**

to National  
Societies by 2025.

This ambition reflects the IFRC's unwavering commitment to enhancing global disaster response and resilience, ensuring that crucial support reaches **communities in need around the world, both before and when crises strike.**

## HOW IT STARTED:

IFRC-DREF was first used during **Colombia's 1979 flood relief efforts**, financed by contributions from National Societies.

1979

1979

1985

2001

2001

2003

At the IFRC's General Assembly, new rules for the IFRC-DREF were adopted, with a fund target of **10 million Swiss francs**.

Nearly four decades of growth and impact later, the goal is **100 million Swiss francs**.

## FROM LOANS TO GRANTS:

If a disaster did not trigger an international Emergency Appeal, National Societies had to repay the funds provided by IFRC-DREF. This requirement was eliminated in 2003, **allowing for more flexible and rapid response to disasters.**

# 45 YEAR OF IFRC-DREF

**First disaster operations in Timor Leste:** In 2005–2006, Timor Leste Red Cross Society, founded in 2000, carried out **its first disaster response operations with a help of IFRC-DREF allocation.** These efforts established the National Society as a key humanitarian partner to the government.

**Over the past 45 years, more than 140 National Societies have accessed the fund.**

2005

2018

**IFRC updated the IFRC-DREF procedures to increase the allocation limit beyond the previous 300,000 Swiss franc cap.** This change was designed to better support National Society responses, particularly in cases of silent emergencies.

2019

2019

2022

**The new ceiling of 2 million Swiss francs for red-scale loans was used for the first time** in 2023 when IFRC-DREF rapidly allocated 2 million Swiss francs each to the National Societies in Türkiye and Syria following devastating earthquakes.

2023

2023

IFRC launched the Forecast-based Action by the IFRC-DREF, establishing a separate financial pool **within the fund for enabling early actions.** This strategic development was later integrated as a pillar for IFRC-DREF under the “One Fund, Two Pillars” approach.

## ONE FUND, TWO PILLARS:

The IFRC Governing Board approved a key revision to the IFRC-DREF rules, firmly positioning anticipatory action as an integral part of the fund. **IFRC aims to allocate 25% of IFRC-DREF funding to the Anticipatory Pillar by 2025.**

2018

2022

## IFRC-DREF INSURANCE:

The IFRC in partnership with Aon and the Centre for Disaster Protection has pioneered a groundbreaking approach: **an innovative insurance policy tailored to protect the IFRC-DREF by supplying a financial backstop when needed.**

2023

# #DREF*in*ACTION

Dive into the heart of action with the 2023 stories from the field.



## URUGUAY

In 2023, facing a severe water crisis worsened by climate issues, the Uruguayan Red Cross used IFRC-DREF funding for essential assessments to ensure that responses matched the needs on the ground.

**Explore the story:**





## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

During the first quarter of 2023, floods remained the most frequent type of disaster supported by IFRC-DREF. The fund's support is vital when disasters like the Bosnia floods escape widespread notice and donor attention.

**Explore the story:**



## PHILIPPINES

The Mayon Volcano in the Philippines started erupting lava in June 2023. The Philippine Red Cross turned to Imminent IFRC-DREF, a modality designed to act before disasters strike.

**Explore the story:**



## NIGERIA

In the midst of a severe food crisis in Africa, IFRC-DREF supports initiatives like the Nigerian Red Cross' Mothers' Club, where women like Amina find community and vital assistance.

**Explore the story:**



## Vanuatu

Vanuatu experienced back-to-back Category 4 cyclones, Judy and Kevin, in March 2023. Thanks to the anticipatory actions implemented by the Vanuatu Red Cross, communities were well-informed and prepared to respond.

**Explore the story:**



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