

IFRC-DREF Operational Parameter for Drought Anticipation and Response

“Drought DREF”

Guidance – Version #2 – September 2024



Introduction

In the last decade, IFRC and partners within the broader Membership have supported different reviews, evaluations, and studies to identify capacities, needs, best practices and innovative approaches to address slow onset disasters and protracted crises. Findings from these initiatives provide a broad range of solutions and address drought, epidemics, and population movement – however compounding factors surrounding these situations complicate how to address them collectively.

In 2021, as part of its Strategic Ambition and in line with the above, the IFRC-DREF set as one of its key strategic objectives to increase the value of the DREF in protracted, slow onset and complex events. This led to a consultative process to determine how the IFRC-DREF could leverage its position with donors and National Societies to contribute to providing more consequential support to the cause, while ensuring sustainability of the Fund. As part of the DREF Review Process which led to the DREF Evolution, a concept note was drafted and approved on Adapting the DREF Grants Mechanism for Slow Onset disasters and Protracted Crisis. The concept note provided options to adapt the DREF grants to better respond to slow onset disasters, using drought and food insecurity situations as a stepping-stone, while also considering potential steps to expand this approach to other situations such as epidemics and population movement.

In September 2022, the IFRC-DREF launched the Drought DREF operational parameter as part of its Evolution. This document provides guidance on how IFRC-DREF shall provide support towards drought and drought-related natural disasters, while learning and building the robustness of the operational parameter as we implement it, adapting the design as necessary to make it better able to provide relief and early recovery support to affected communities to enable them to protect their livelihoods and consumption.

All IFRC-DREF Procedures remain applicable when using this operational parameter, except for the amended [implementation timeframes](#) and [early recovery](#) support which are allowed exclusively for this Drought DREF parameter. As such, this document should be read in conjunction with the [IFRC-DREF Procedures](#) and [Application Guidelines](#).

General definitions

1. Slow-onset disaster/crises

Several international organisations and aid agencies have different slow-onset disaster definitions tailored to fit their mandates. According to UNFCC and the UNHCR's [master glossary of terms](#), a slow-onset disaster is a disaster that evolves gradually from incremental changes occurring over many years or from an increased frequency or intensity of recurring events. They relate to environmental degradation processes such as droughts and desertification, increased salinization, rising sea levels or thawing of permafrost.

OCHA on the other hand, defines [slow-onset emergencies](#) as one that does not emerge from a single, distinct event but one that emerges gradually over time, often based on a confluence of different events.

Based on above two definitions by reputable agencies, slow onset disasters/crisis can include drought, food insecurity, gradually deteriorating political situations leading to conflict, disease outbreaks, escalating and protracted conflicts and displacement amongst others.

2. Drought

According to the [World Meteorological Organization \(WMO\)](#), drought is a deficiency of precipitation (intensity) from expected or “normal” that extends over a season or longer period of time (duration).

The [World Health Organization](#) provides additional insights by stating that drought is a prolonged dry period in the natural climate cycle that can occur anywhere in the world. It is a slow-onset disaster characterized by the lack of precipitation, resulting in a water shortage.

Drought can lead to decreased water quantity and quality, severe health conditions including malnutrition, food insecurity due to its negative impact on agriculture, loss of buying power, migration and a damaged environment. The effects of drought can also be protracted, with multiple episodes sometimes spanning across several years, during which there is a need for humanitarian interventions before and after identified peak periods.

¹ By its nature, the IFRC-DREF can only be used for time-bound interventions. The IFRC-DREF acknowledges that in most places around the world, drought & food insecurity have long-lasting effects and DREF-funded interventions may will not be able to resolve the issue, hence its focus on ensuring support in mitigating the

3. IFRC-DREF definition of slow-onset

As part of the IFRC-DREF allocation process, it is important to differentiate between slow and rapid onset disasters and crises, to allow appropriate allocation parameters to be actioned for the National Societies.

As such, the **IFRC-DREF defines a slow onset disaster or crisis as one which manifests over several months or years, in a gradually incremental and often invisible process, imposing collective stress to affected communities and resulting in wide humanitarian impact. Such disasters/crisis often have unknown speed/ending timing and multiple drivers.** This definition will be the guiding line for IFRC-DREF in developing this guidance document and when accessing applications for funding.

4. Drought DREF parameter

This is an **IFRC-DREF operational parameter which provides National Societies with funding to support the implementation of anticipatory and response actions aimed at mitigating¹ the impact of a (foreseen) peak** in drought, food insecurity and water shortage, with the aim of protecting lives, livelihoods and recovering key productive assets.

The Drought DREF parameter blends both the Anticipatory and Response pillars of the IFRC-DREF, allowing for relevant multisectoral mitigation and response actions (including early recovery) to be implemented in a single operation.

For areas affected by high levels of poor access to food, high levels of loss in crop yields and livestock/livestock production, sharp decrease in water and fodder availability and access, it is recommended to be guided by the [Integrated Phase Classification \(IPC\) Acute Food Insecurity Scale](#), which has become the global standard for the classification of chronic and acute food insecurity. It is used principally to inform decisions on resource allocation and programming globally and within countries, especially for countries experiencing recurrent or protracted food crises². In regions/countries experiencing drought/food insecurity/water shortage which are not covered by IPC analysis, ensure to indicate the relevant expert sources for your analysis to support the application.

impact of these crises and protecting the lives and livelihoods of those affected through anticipation and response actions.

² Refer to [Annex 2](#) for IPC Food Insecurity Scale or consult the [IPC Famine Fact Sheet](#)

Eligibility considerations when applying for the Drought DREF parameter

To ensure sustainability of the operational parameter and given that the IFRC-DREF is an emergency intervention tool, the following four considerations will be assessed when reviewing requests under this parameter: i) IPC (or relevant equivalent) categorisation, ii) determining the peak period, iii) specific crisis types covered and iv) key features of the crisis. Please note that the IFRC crisis categorization per Emergency Response Framework (ERF) is still required to determine the adequate funding threshold as recommended in the DREF Procedures.

Emergency categorization per IPC or relevant equivalent ³	Determining the Peak period	Specific crisis types covered	Key features of the crisis
Under this parameter, anticipatory actions are eligible only for situations categorized as stressed (IPC 2 or equivalent) with a high risk of worsening into a crisis (phase 3). The National Society must provide expert analysis showing the likelihood of deterioration and how the anticipatory actions will mitigate these risks. Response actions are eligible for situations categorized as crisis, emergency, or catastrophe/famine (IPC phase 3 or above) and can be implemented. If a situation reaches crisis/emergency/catastrophe levels, but there are still stressed areas, the National Society can implement both anticipatory and response actions.	The peak period in a crisis is when an existing situation worsens, potentially leading to a humanitarian emergency. This is often characterized by poor food consumption, crop and livestock losses, decreased water and fodder availability, and environmental degradation. It often results in negative coping strategies, with more people or regions experiencing drought conditions within about six months. Identifying this period, with support from expert sources⁴ is crucial for applying for the Drought DREF parameter to determine the crisis phase and necessary activities to implement.	Below slow-onset disaster types will be covered under this operational parameter: - Drought or desertification - food insecurity, - water shortage, Moreover, a clear linkage between the existing disaster/crisis and (foreseen) effects on communities will be required from National Societies applying to use this parameter.	• The crisis/disaster, like slow onset crisis, must be the result of a stress, not a shock, with incremental changes over time. • The stress should be generated by multiple and/or compounded drivers and aggravating factors (e.g. socioeconomic factors). • Drivers and aggravating factors become apparent through continuous events, and/or by the increase of frequency of recurrent events. • Slow-onset crisis cause <u>new</u> people in need (PIN). • Slow-onset crisis consequences can be mitigated through early response activities. • Determining the projected peak period will help the National Society to identify the exact moment in time when the crisis manifests and requires anticipatory actions or humanitarian response.

³ IFRC-DREF acknowledges that there are various expert sources of information to support confirmation of a drought, food insecurity and water shortage. A non-exhaustive list of expert sources is provided in [Annex 1](#) below.

⁴ See examples of expert sources in [Annex 1](#) below.

What should trigger an application for Drought DREF?

The need to ensure the provision of comprehensive humanitarian services to drought and drought-related crises, which often would not be feasible if the intervention solely focuses on the emergency response. The National Society would have to provide a plan which includes anticipatory actions, immediate response and early recovery activities, depending on the relevance of the activities in the specific situation for the area. Moreover, the National Society must, from the conception of the plan, include a linkage to a longer-term strategy or to the Unified Planning to ensure that the gains from the IFRC-DREF operation will be built upon, with the vision to continuously work on reducing the impact of drought and its effects on the targeted communities.

As such, it is mandatory to incorporate a draft transition or exit strategy from the initial submission of the IFRC-DREF application, and for operations with a response element, to share a more robust transition plan in a separate document as seen below under the [Transition, Planning and Lessons Learned](#) section.

Identifying a trigger to allow the release of IFRC-DREF funds helps the IFRC to determine the most appropriate time to spend humanitarian funds to protect vulnerable population from a potential threat and/or to assist affected communities following the drought peak period. Having clear triggers when Drought DREF requests are submitted, ensures that humanitarian funds will be used appropriately and that we can be accountable (in a position to justify why this expenditure fits the "no-regret" approach). It also helps to clarify the timeliness of the funds request and proposed intervention.

Note 1: It is mandatory for all sources of information and (needs) analysis to be shared with the application, to ensure common and agreed understanding of the situation.

Note 2: Eligibility of trigger dates will be considered within standard IFRC-DREF Procedures for slow-onset crisis/disasters.

Note 3: While it is important to situate these triggers within the in-country vulnerability context, it is key to ensure that the situation is mainly aimed at averting or responding to a humanitarian situation. Several factors contribute to the vulnerability and livelihood stressors of households facing recurrent drought, including low levels of formal education, high dependency on rainfed crop or livestock production as the primary livelihood source, lack of diversification beyond crops and livestock, poor access to safety nets and agricultural inputs, limited access to institutions and support services, reduced access to forage and forage resources, and environmental degradation.

Examples of eligible triggers:

Identified triggers to prompt a request for an IFRC-DREF allocation under the Drought DREF operational parameter shall include at least one of the following (relevance per IFRC-DREF pillar marked), bearing in mind that the more information and/or triggers met, the stronger the case for a DREF allocation:

Indicator	Anticipatory Actions	Response Actions
Local or International rainfall forecast: Seasonal or monthly rainfall forecasts might indicate expected lower rainfall than normal for the coming season/month with a certain degree of probability for specific geographical areas. Ideally, a performance analysis of this source of forecast indicating how often rainfall deficiency really happened when it was predicted in the past few years can add credit to this information. Those reports cannot constitute a trigger unless they are combined with complementary information on the current status of the crops, vegetation, soil moisture, stock of grains, performance of previous harvest, IPC analysis, such as: A) Local or International (Satellite) data on rainfall performance: Such data provides satellite-based information from precipitation datasets with gauged rainfall observations at a daily and wet season time scale. Information from such tools concerning the ongoing season or the past season can help to analyse risks (or worsening) of drought and can be combined with other analysis to determine if this could lead to a humanitarian situation. B) Data on vegetation status: Such data provides information about the vegetation status and its growing, revealing the greenness of the biomass, thickness of vegetation cover, etc. An example of such tool is the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI). Information from such tools can help to analyse risks (or worsening) of drought and can be combined with other analysis to determine if this could lead to a humanitarian situation. C) Performance reports of previous harvests or any other aggravating factors: Such reports must be validated and approved by relevant Government/organization departments, highlighting the impact of the previous failed harvests and how that could worsen and might lead to a humanitarian crisis or worsen an evolving one. The issue date of such DREF request should use the issue date of the rainfall forecast.	✓	✗
The Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI): This is a widely used index to characterize meteorological drought on a range of timescales. On short timescales, the SPI is closely related to soil moisture, while at longer timescales, the SPI can be related to groundwater and reservoir storage. Issue date of the SPI can be used as a trigger date for launching anticipatory actions.	✓	✗
Performance reports of previous harvests or any other aggravating factors: Such reports must be validated and approved by relevant Government/organization departments, highlighting the impact of the previous failed harvests and how that could worsen and might lead to a humanitarian crisis or worsen an evolving one. The release date of the harvest performance result report will be considered as trigger date.	✓	✓

Government declaration of emergency: While this declaration can serve as a trigger, the National Society must include a needs analysis (corroborated by verifiable expert sources) indicating how the situation might lead to a humanitarian crisis or worsen an existing one. The declaration of emergency and links to expert reports MUST be included to the request folder as supporting documents. The date of the declaration of emergency will be considered as trigger date.	✗	✓
Joint emergency needs assessments and analysis reports: Jointly conducted with Government or other organizations, such reports must be formally validated and approved by various participating agencies, including the National Society leadership within the framework of assessments and made available for consultation. When conducted solely by the National Society, it is advisable to also provide any relevant verifiable expert needs analysis indicating how the situation might lead to a humanitarian crisis or worsen an existing one. The release date of the assessment report will be considered as trigger date.	✗	✓
Official alerts from relevant national meteorological/agricultural/water services in country: This must contain a factual analysis determining the need for anticipatory or response actions, including a needs analysis from the National Society of how the situation might lead to a humanitarian crisis or worsen an existing one. The release date of the assessment report will be considered as trigger date.	✓	✓
Official reports from specialized humanitarian agencies: Secondary data analysis from reports of specialized agencies such as UNICEF, Action Against Hunger (ACF), etc, alerting on the need for anticipatory or response actions, including a needs analysis of how the situation might lead to a humanitarian crisis or worsen an existing one. The release date of the secondary data analysis or assessment report will be considered as trigger date.	✓	✓
Government request for support: The relevant National and/or decentralized government agriculture and water services expressly request for National Society assistance for communities. The National Society shall ensure that it provides any relevant verifiable expert needs analysis indicating how the situation might lead to a humanitarian crisis or worsen an existing one. The date when the request letter is signed will be considered as trigger date.	✗	✓

Example of non-eligible triggers:

- 'Below average' rainfall based on seasonal forecasts
- Historical drought affected contexts where this has become the way of living, and no humanitarian crisis is foreseen or experienced.
- 'Standard' El Nino/La Nina conditions which are part of seasonal changes.
- IPC or FEWSNET reports alone is not sufficient as trigger for drought conditions.

How to apply for Drought DREF?

The application procedure is same as for a Response IFRC-DREF request and must be completed through the GO Platform.

The IFRC-DREF Team has amended the narrative and budget templates to allow integration of anticipatory actions elements into response operations when the disaster onset is marked as slow. The same template will be used for the Drought DREF application template.

Recommendation for faster review process

National Societies which have a contingency plan on the same hazard (single or multi-hazard) will be able to compile all above information much quicker and are more likely to propose coherent and realistic plans. Therefore, it is highly recommended for National Societies to have an up-to-date Contingency Plan in place.

If the contingency plan exists, the supporting document should be shared with the Drought DREF request.

IMPORTANT

A National Society is eligible to Drought DREF parameter **only once in two years**, as the intervention has the potential to cross over a calendar year. The next application for the same should be an EAP, regardless of number of years since the last request.

Implementation phases

Before the projected Peak period – Mitigation Actions • Maximum Lead time = 6 months • Minimum Lead time = 1 month	A National Society can request the Drought DREF based on above mentioned triggers, buttressed by relevant expert sources, showing that in the next few months, a newly identified or existing drought or food insecurity situation will most likely experience a sharp increase in specific geographic areas, with potential to lead to or worsens an existing humanitarian crisis. It is mandatory for the analysis and or information presented to clearly highlight how if no mitigation or response actions are implemented, a humanitarian situation is likely to ensue. As relevant, also highlight how an existing humanitarian situation may deteriorate. Hence, the information needs to focus on impact to livelihoods, food/water security rather than simply highlighting forecast or lack of water alone. Note: The mitigation actions implemented in this phase, can, as relevant, continue into the response phase in geographical areas which have not reached the peak of the impact yet, provided the main objective of impact mitigation is preserved (see note 2 below).
In the Peak period – Response and Early Recovery • Maximum timeframe = up to 12 months	A National Society can request for Drought DREF when they have expert analysis showing that a specific area is experiencing a peak in a newly identified or existing drought or drought-induced crisis situation, causing a humanitarian crisis in the affected area. Again, it is mandatory that the analysis and or information clearly demonstrates how the drought is causing a humanitarian crisis (food insecurity, diseases linked with water shortages, forced displacement, etc). As relevant, also highlight how an existing humanitarian situation may deteriorate. Hence, the information needs to focus on impact rather than simply highlighting the drought alone. Notes: 1) The response actions envisaged in this phase MUST consider early recovery with a purpose to engage communities into transition from the emergency intervention, but also to ensure ownership of the gains for sustainability purposes. 2) Acknowledging the fact that the evolution of a drought and its humanitarian impact are not similar in all regions, and that some areas might be facing the peak period while others have not reached this stage yet, a National Society can envisage implementing both mitigation and response activities in different areas at the same time to address the needs in the most appropriate way.

Activity types – 3 main blocks

Block 1 – Anticipatory (Mitigation) Actions

This block should focus on activities which will prevent or mitigate the expected impact of the disaster on the most vulnerable population, not yet impacted by the disaster, but exposed and at high risk of being impacted. Focus should be on activities which ensure **protection of people and livelihoods ahead of and/during the peak period of the drought**.

It is essential to demonstrate that the National Society has the capacity to implement the proposed activities under block 1 within the given timeframe and that the operational context is conducive.

Examples of eligible block 1 activities/costs:	<i>Preparation / set-up for early actions</i> • Rapid assessment and scenario planning • Stakeholder mapping (identification of roles and responsibilities and actions) and coordination • Raising awareness within the communities (early warning messages) • Strengthening drought early warning information coordination and dissemination • Pre-crisis market assessment • Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments • Community targeting and registration • Community mobilization through CEA • Set up monitoring framework and system • Procurement of stock required for early actions (local and quick procurement only) • Mobilisation and training for staff and volunteers (as long as it is directly related to the early actions and the NS has previous experience delivering this activity) • Coordination with national/local authorities and partners • Procurement of Financial Service Providers (FSP) • Branch support is encouraged, (volunteers, special logistics, warehouse, transportation, personnel costs) • Requests for additional coordination, operational management or humanitarian diplomacy support, either from sister National Societies through the Rapid Response, or through fast-tracked contracts from the Secretariat. <i>Implementation of early actions</i> • Monitoring of drought and drought-related crisis triggers and impact (including in relation to water availability and access, prices, fodder, livestock health, etc.) • Repairs/protection/construction of basic water infrastructure if possible or other sustainable and cost-efficient means of improving availability/supply and access to water, coupled with WASH promotion. • Preventive crop management (e.g. short-term water conservation and provision of drought tolerant seeds – can be done through CVA)
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	• Preventive livestock management (e.g. water and feed supply, basic health, herd management – can be done through CVA - information on/facilitation of destocking) • Sensitization on drought-sensitive farming and herd management techniques and appropriate crop types, complementing preventive crop and livestock management • Nutrition sensitization for preventive purposes, including hygiene and sanitation awareness • Facilitation of access and use of public/private services (incl. information) for livestock destocking. For further information on eligible anticipatory actions under the DREF , kindly consult the Drought section of this document: https://ifrcorg.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/IFRCSharing/EYBehOLrv_ZAhNiN8E5tR9ABtMjhkntczcVI7aMT4phJIA?e=IAbGXA
Examples of non-eligible block 1 activities:	○ Generic multipurpose cash grants without any sensitization on the purposeful use to mitigate impact of drought ○ Cash for food (especially as a one-off grant)⁵ • Activities that focus on an early response which do not mitigate the effects of drought or food insecurity • Preparedness for early actions, preparedness for response are ineligible as those activities are longer term activities and should be implemented following the PER approach for instance.

Block 2 – Response Actions

This block should focus on activities which ensure **survival of people and their livelihoods during the peak period of the drought**. As necessary, some mitigation actions may continue in this period, provided it is clearly proven how these actions save lives and livelihoods.

It is essential to demonstrate that the National Society already has the capacity to implement the proposed activities under block 1 and 2 within the given timeframe, and that the operational context is conducive.

Examples of eligible block 2 activities/costs:	<i>Preparation / set-up for response actions</i> • Mobilization and deployment of volunteers • Emergency needs assessments • Community targeting and registration • Market assessment • Community mobilization through Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and/or Emergency and Recovery Livelihoods Assessment and Response Option Analysis (ERLA) <i>Implementation of response actions</i>
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⁵ There is often little monitoring of the actual use of one-off cash grants and for the purpose of this operation type, it is useful to establish monitoring systems on the use of cash and gauge usefulness on a monthly basis as needs might change.

	• Food assistance (minimum 3 months and up to 6 months maximum)⁶, coupled where relevant with nutrition awareness-raising (including sensitization on hygiene and sanitation) • Multi-use water provisioning, coupled with WASH awareness • Health and nutrition assistance • Provision of drought tolerant seeds and farming tools (can be done through CVA and should be aligned to planting seasons) • Awareness-raising on simple and improved short-term soil moisture/water conservation and farming and livestock management techniques and on drought resilient crop types • Short-term soil moisture conservation actions • Facilitation of public/private services for (or direct implementation of) restocking of sold/dead livestock e.g. small ruminants (can be done through CVA) Support activities • Monitoring and evaluation • Review meeting with stakeholders (coordination) • Branch support is encouraged, (volunteers, special logistics, warehouse, transportation, personnel costs) • Requests for additional operational management support, from sister National Societies through the Rapid Response. • Procurement of items for response activities (?)
Examples of non-eligible block 2 activities:	• Signature of FSP agreements (it must be existing) • Preparedness for Effective Response assessment/ activities • Disaster risk reduction activities • Stock piling (not distributed as part of early action) • eVCA • Purchase of fixed assets

⁶ It is estimated that providing food assistance (in-kind or through CVA) for 3 less than months does not enable families to come out of 'survival mode' in which the drought or drought-related crisis might have push them, hence they remain at risk of adopting exposed to negative coping mechanisms strategies. Moreover, providing food assistance for more than 6 months might limit the National Societies funding envelope and funding for mitigation and/or early recovery activities, given these actions need to remain within the framework of IFRC-DREF cost-efficiency considerations. This timeline also ensures that the cash grants maintain their life-saving purpose and do not serve as a safety net activity.

Block 3 – Early Recovery Actions⁷

This block should focus on activities which ensure **early recovery of people and their livelihoods following the peak period of the drought**. As necessary, some mitigation actions may continue in this period, provided it is clearly proven how these actions save lives and livelihoods.

It is essential to demonstrate that the NS already has the capacity to implement the proposed activities under block 1, 2 and 3 within the given timeframe and that the operational context is conducive.

Examples of eligible block 3 activities/costs:	<i>Preparation / set-up activities:</i> • ??? <i>Implementation of recovery actions:</i> • MPC for recovery of key household productive assets (sold/lost during drought), complementing other early recovery activities listed below • Rehabilitation of water points/sources if possible or other sustainable means of improving water availability/supply, coupled with gender-sensitive support to community water management. • Health and nutrition assistance • Provision of drought tolerant seeds and farming tools (can be done through CVA and should be aligned to planting seasons) • Awareness-raising on simple and improved soil moisture/water conservation and farming and livestock management techniques and on drought resilient crop types • Soil moisture conservation actions • Facilitation of public/private services for (or direct implementation of) restocking of sold/dead livestock e.g. small ruminants (can be done through CVA) • Provide support to community groups (women, youths, etc) to facilitate implementation and ensure sustainability of actions. • Cash for drought-resilient/climate-smart community assets <i>Support activities</i> • PDM, Lesson Learning, Transition/Exit planning • Monitoring & Reporting • Evaluation and coordination for sustainability strategy • Branch support is encouraged, (volunteers, special logistics, warehouse, transportation, personnel costs) • Requests for additional coordination, operational management, humanitarian diplomacy support, from sister National Societies through the Rapid Response. • Procurement of items for early recovery activities (?)
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⁷ Note that early recovery actions can be conducted (as relevant) during the response phase. The examples here are mainly guiding to ensure that each Drought DREF application providing response actions takes early recovery into account from onset of the response, within the framework of IFRC-DREF Procedures.

Examples of non-eligible block 3 activities:	• Signature of FSP agreements (it must be existing) • Preparedness for Effective Response assessment/ activities • Disaster risk reduction activities • Stock piling (not distributed as part of early action) • Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (eVCA) • Purchase of fixed assets above CHF 10,000 • Long-term programming • Preparedness for early actions and /or response are ineligible as those activities are longer term activities and should be implemented following the PER approach for instance. • Readiness activities: ensure that a National Red Cross Red Crescent Society has the capacity to act in time (for AA or for response). It is part of the wider preparedness spectrum.
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Complementarity with EAP and simplified EAP operations

While maintaining complementarity is important, National Societies which have an activated EAP or sEAP for one of the crisis types highlighted in this guidance document (when triggers are met and anticipatory actions are being implemented), will not be able to apply for block 1 activities as part of the Drought DREF. This is to ensure there is limited risk of double funding for same activities, considering that if there is an activation, this would mean the relevant peaks have been reached and a response would be more relevant.

Targeting

As guided by the DREF Evolution which adapts how to use DREF funding for slow onset disasters and protracted crises, while however bearing in mind the sustainability elements for the Fund, it is recommended to have a very targeted approach when applying for the Drought DREF Parameter.

As such depending on the crisis's categorisation per IFRC Emergency response Framework (ERF), National Societies should focus their intervention on directly targeting families with enough services to address the effect of the crisis and put in place referrals and connections that sets communities on the path to longer-term wellbeing, through a transition strategy into either the Unified plan or other longer-term programmes.

Likewise, the number of people targeted by the early actions must be realistic. It should be proportionate to the capacity of the National Society and the time available to implement those actions.

The request should indicate the number of people to be reached by the early actions and the number of people to be reached by the life-saving activities and early recovery (=response) separately, specifying whether those numbers overlap or not.

Eligible implementation timeframe(s)

This DREF parameter allows for an overall implementation timeframe of up to 18 months as seen below:

- Early Actions = up to 6 months before identified peak period
- Response = up to 12 months after identified peak period (inclusive of early recovery activities and transition/exit plan from the IFRC-DREF Operation).

To benefit from the full 18 months timeframe, National Society must plan to implement activities under all three blocks, following the implementation phases highlighted in in [Annex 3](#). As such, the timeframe per operation launched will highly depend on the type of activities planned and the envisioned impact for such an operation. This will ensure IFRC-DREF operations with minimal activities are not kept open for lengthy periods for doubtful reasons. There is also a need to maintain relevance and speed of DREF-funded operations. **Note:** A transition plan is mandatory for Drought DREF, and it is the responsibility of the Project manager to follow up on this with support from Operations teams in the Region.

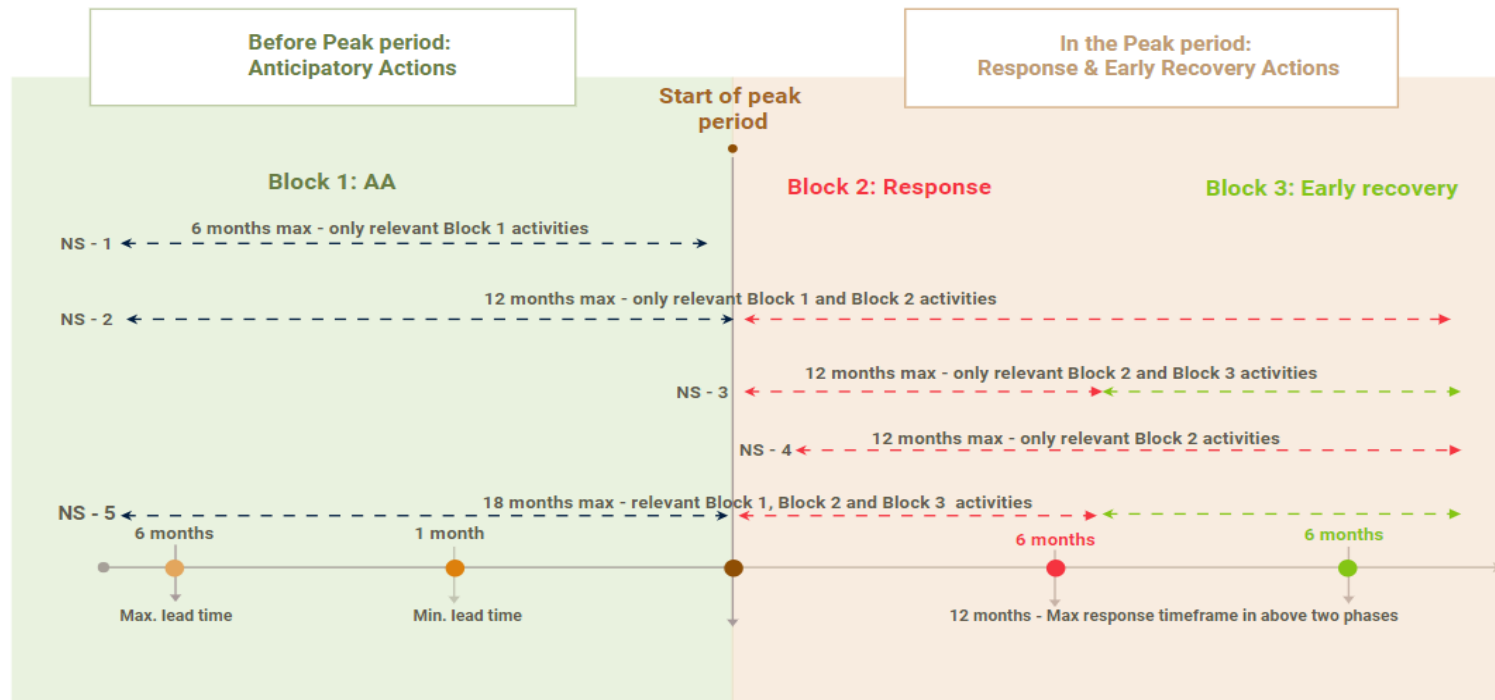


Figure 1 Example of implementation phases and eligible timeframes

Transition, Planning and Lessons Learned

These types of operations should not become a multi-year standard in cases where droughts are common hazards. The opportunity to address humanitarian needs at scale should come in hand with a transitional planning process, considering the realities of field implementation, National Society capacities up to branch level, and participation of internal and external actors. This last point focuses synergies with Membership initiatives in place, other organisations present in the areas of intervention and official social protection schemes (where available).

It is recommended that at least three months before the end of the timeframe, National Societies supported by the Membership, work on a Transition Plan. The plan should be published, if possible, within the final IFRC-DREF operation report as an annex, to promote it towards donors. Moreover, the Transition Plan could be taken into account as part of the Unified Planning to ensure due follow-up of longer-term actions and sustainability of the gains from the DREF operation. Some initial principles suggested to consider this approach include:

- **National Society Strategy and Annual Plan:** National Society ownership and localisation efforts remain the core of any action supported by the IFRC Secretariat. All operational or support considerations for the transition must be framed within the interest, capacities, partnerships, and strategic direction of the National Society.
- **Membership Coordination:** While there is no easy way to consider this at the start of any operation, at least after the first three months, it will be important to start identifying and leveraging opportunities as soon as the peak of the emergency is over.
- **External Coordination:** Most medium and long-term needs will not be addressed either by National Societies, or Movement partners. Aspects of the operation and future programming outside of the National Society strategy with/by other actors should be highlighted in this plan.
- **Business Continuity and Longer-term Risk:** Drought and drought-related crisis are often present in areas with complex situations that compound the humanitarian impact of natural hazards. Although mapping and mitigating all risks remains unrealistic in any context, a simple triage scheme should be considered to prioritize activities and/or quickly shift attention and resources to emerging needs.

The objectives of the lessons learned workshop should remain focused on establishing how relevant these Drought DREF operations are, identifying success and challenge points and lessons from them, and most importantly, how these can be integrated into longer-time National Society planning and the Unified Plan. As such, the lessons learned workshop will be an indispensable tool to guide the development of the Transition Plan of the National Society, and should be carefully considered, prepared for, and implemented beyond the National Society and the Secretariat if possible.

Finally, but the most important, special attention should be paid National Society Development and Volunteering support, which is in most cases the most underfunded aspect of operations and longer-term programming mechanisms. Tending to these gaps should be considered as a priority for these plans and peacetime global funding mechanisms, such as the IFRC Capacity Building Fund, or the National Society Investment Alliance such be approached.

Reporting requirements

All National Societies applying and receiving funding for this special DREF parameter agree to the following reporting conditions:

- Mandatory 6th month Operation Update (if timeframe exceeds 6 months)
- Mandatory Transition plan (can be submitted as attachment in Email, but must be reflected in the Operation update and/or Final Report)
- Final Report (per IFRC standard reporting procedures).

IMPORTANT

Given the timeframe and various implementation phases of such an operation, it is key to have a strong monitoring strategy. The monitoring strategy must be elaborated as part of the application and clearly explained in the narrative.

Funding thresholds (budget)

The funding limits will be aligned to established thresholds for IFRC-DREF operations, i.e. CHF 500,000 for yellow level crises and CHF 1,000,000 for orange level crisis, naturally guided by the needs and activity types proposed in the application. Please note that budgeting for EAP or simplified EAP will follow the appropriate guideline for such operations.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Examples of expert sources for drought and drought-induced conditions

- [Famine Early Warning Systems Network \(FEWS NET\)](#)
- [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#)
- [Cadre Harmonisé](#)
- [IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre \(ICPAC\)](#)
- [National Integrated Drought Information System \(NIDIS\)](#)
- [ASEAN Specialized Meteorological Centre \(ASMC\)](#)
- [Regional Climate Center \(RA II Region\)](#)
- [North Eurasia Climate Centre \(NEACC\)](#)
- Specialized Government Bodies (report must be attached)
- Specialized International Humanitarian Agencies (report must be attached)
- National Society Assessments (report must be attached)
- [IFRC Global Risk Watch](#)

Annex 2 - IPC Acute Food Insecurity Scale – Severity levels

THE IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY SCALE

The IPC Acute Food Insecurity scale has become the **global standard for the classification of acute food insecurity**. It is used principally to inform decisions on resource allocation and programming globally and within countries, especially for countries experiencing recurrent or protracted food crises.

IPC Phase 1 None/Minimal	IPC Phase 2 Stressed	IPC Phase 3 Crisis	IPC Phase 4 Emergency	IPC Phase 5 Catastrophe/ Famine
Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Households either: Have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; or are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.	Households either: Have large food consumption gaps which are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; or are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation.	Households experience an extreme lack of food and/or cannot meet other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident. For Famine Classification, area needs to have extremely critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.

Annex 3: Illustration of Drought DREF Implementation phases

