DERF progress report

2025

Save the Children

CISU CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

The Danish Emergency Relief Fund (DERF) provides humanitarian funding to Danish Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and their implementing Global South partners not receiving other humanitarian funds from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Originally established in 2017 by the Danish MFA, the DERF is therefore a rapid and flexible funding mechanism.

The principle of the DERF is to contribute to saving lives and alleviate suffering of people affected by humanitarian crises. The DERF was designed based on humanitarian trends, the Danish strategy for development and humanitarian aid, as well as international humanitarian principles and standards. The DERF foundation rests on the 2024-revised Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and the commitments expressed under the Grand Bargain.

The fund is managed in a consortium of CISU – Civil Society in Development (lead) and Save the Children Denmark (SCD). The Steering Committee of the DERF consists of the two consortium partners acting as co-authors of the annual statement in the beginning of this report.

This document reports on progress of the DERF during the year 2025. It consists of four chapters:

- Chapter one: General data on grants provided
- Chapter two: Performance against the result framework
- Chapter three: Highlighted topics
- Chapter four: Statement of accounts

At the end of the report the partners offer a brief DERF outlook highlighting some perspectives of importance for the DERF in 2026 and beyond.

Further details about the annual accounts of the DERF are made available as annexes to the report.

Abbreviations

AA	Anticipatory Action
AB	Advisory Board
AC	Assessment Consultant
BIMS	Business Integrity Management System
CBA	Cash-Based Assistance
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCAM	Climate Change Adaptation Modality
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
CoC	Code of Conduct
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DERF	Danish Emergency Relief Fund
EA	Early Action
FSL	Food Security & Livelihoods
GC	Grant Committee
HQAI	Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative
IDP	Internally Displaced People
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MT	Management Team
NFI	Non-food Items
PSHEA	Protection against Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
RMSP	Risk management strategy and plan
RR	Rapid Response
SCD	Save the Children Denmark
WASH	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
QA	Quality Assurance
QI	Quality Improvements
QMS	Quality Management Systems
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territory

Statement by the DERF Steering Committee

From a humanitarian perspective, 2025 was unfortunately a continuation of, and in many cases, an expansion and escalation of, several man-made conflicts. The DERF Progress Report of 2024 asserted that many humanitarian crises that started in 2023 or before worsened during 2024. It would not be an understatement to double down on this assertion by adding new conflicts or a resurgence of hostilities and human suffering to this unfortunate trend. This view is echoed by the statement that *“The world is experiencing the highest number of conflicts since the end of the Second World War, with rising violence against civilians and shrinking humanitarian space in many contexts.”*[1]

The humanitarian sector is facing unprecedented challenges, both in terms of the number and extent of crises it is expected to respond to, but also due to the severity of funding cuts starting with the dismantling of USAID and the ripple-effect on traditional mainstay donors such as the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCDO), the Dutch or German Foreign Ministries.

In addition to a growing number of conflicts, climate related crises continue to affect a large number of people in various parts of the world. In 2025 drought as well as floods affected Somalia, with cyclone Chido the latest to affect the coastal provinces of Mozambique while drought and wildfires wreaking havoc in South America. The weather continues to cause extreme hydrometeorological disaster events affecting people in vulnerable positions with already limited coping mechanisms. In many cases, climate related crises converge with conflicts or hostilities adding to human suffering with prime examples being in Mozambique (Cabo Delgado), the Horn of Africa (Somalia/Somaliland, Ethiopia, Sudan) and in South Asia (Afghanistan & Pakistan).

In 2025, the DERF managed to assist 129.250 people in need of humanitarian support. Of these 52% were women. The partnerships between Danish CSOs and local CSOs around the world form the backbone of the successes of the DERF. The existing partnerships between civil society actors are also the reason why the DERF can act timely and is a relevant modality when a crisis hits. Often, partners are already engaged when a crisis occurs, and in this way a relatively small grant from the DERF can locally make a significant difference. 34 out of 35 DERF grants awarded in 2025 were implemented through local partner organisations, corresponding to 97% of all grants.

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[1] Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Peace Index (2025). Identifying and Measuring the Factors that Drive Peace. Sydney, June 2025. https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wpcontent/uploads/2025/06/Global-Peace-Index-2025-web.pdf

Chapter 1: General data on grants provided

The DERF four-year contract extension (2025-2028) and associated reporting data – starting with this report – align reconciled 2025 grant expenditure with intervention achievements, combining final narrative report and intervention achievements with approved final financial reports for the 2025 calendar year. Therefore it is important to underline the reference to finalised grant contracts of the DERF and actual grants awarded during the course of 2025.

In 2025, as part of the Rapid Response (RR) modality, DERF grants supported a total of 32 different interventions under a total of 10 calls for applications. In addition to this were three Anticipatory Action (AA) interventions responding to droughts and wildfires in Somalia and Bolivia, respectively.

The following table provides an overview of the calls opened in 2025 and the number of interventions supported through awarded grants under each call. The table also shows the amount of the DERF funds allocated under each call.

Table 1: Name & type of calls, amount spent per call, number of interventions and countries per call

Calls	Amount granted DKK	# of grants	Countries supported
25-002-RO Cyclone Chido in Mozambique	2.464.728	2	Mozambique
25-003-SP Armed Conflict Sanaag Region Somaliland	1.683.427	4	Somaliland
25-004-SP Humanitarian Emergency in DR Congo	1.499.265	2	Uganda
25-006-SP Spike in the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank	3.937.629	4	Palestine (oPt)
25-007-RO Myanmar Earthquake	3.991.244	4	Myanmar
25-008-RO Floods in Somalia	1.572.618	4	Somalia
25-009-SP Forced Population Movement to Afghanistan	2.250.584	4	Afghanistan
25-011-RO Monsoon Floods in Pakistan	1.499.657	3	Pakistan
25-014-SP-Displacement Crisis in Mozambique	1.498.137	2	Mozambique
25-016-RO-Earthquake Response in Eastern Afghanistan	1.144.937	3	Afghanistan
Total:	**21.542.226**	**32**	

All calls for proposals were in 2025 opened based on alerts received from DERF users. During 2025 the DERF received 17 alerts compared to 14 the year before – and in 2025 DERF activated ten of these.

A total of only three calls were opened in response to weather-related disaster events (Somalia, Mozambique & Pakistan), with five calls related to conflict (Somaliland, DR Congo, oPt, Afghanistan and Mozambique).

Compared to 2024 the weather-related crises were more geographically confined in 2025 although to a certain extent challenges remain for DERF to adequately assess the variability and hence specific geographic impact of, for example, cyclones, floods and droughts over time. As an example, seasonal cyclones affecting the coastal areas of Mozambique are showing a trend in impacting countries and areas further inland (Zimbabwe, Malawi) as the weather systems impact new geographic regions. This makes disaster response and opening calls for proposals with limited geographic scope increasingly difficult. The same applies to slow onset droughts affecting primarily Somalia, yet with creeping longer-term impacts on eastern areas of Ethiopia and northern areas of Kenya.

As illustrated in the tables below, the calls for applications having been awarded the largest share of the total 2025 DERF funds do not necessarily coincide with having the most grants.

Although a total of four calls awarded a combined 16 grants, 4 grants for each call, the call disbursement ranges from DKK 1.572.618 for the Somalia flood response to DKK 3.991.244 for the Myanmar Earthquake. This difference relates partly to the number of applications received, those approved as well as maximum grant limits specified by DERF. The crisis context, severity, the number of potential applicants and their relative experience with DERF grants also influence the overall call budget and subsequent grant limit. As an example, the DERF call responding to cyclone Chido in Mozambique saw only two grants but at a total of DKK 2.464.728 awarded but this due to having two seasoned DERF users and their local partners being very experienced in providing humanitarian assistance as well as a large-scale natural disaster once again affecting large parts of Mozambique's 2.470 km coastline – one of the longest in Africa.

Table 2: Number of grants awarded per call as % of total (DKK)

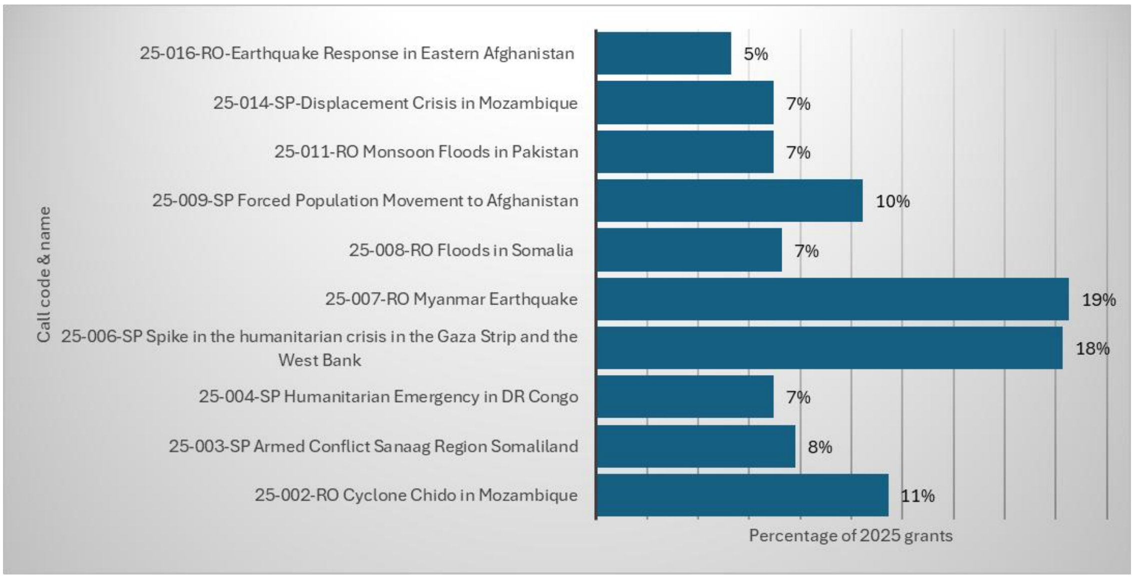
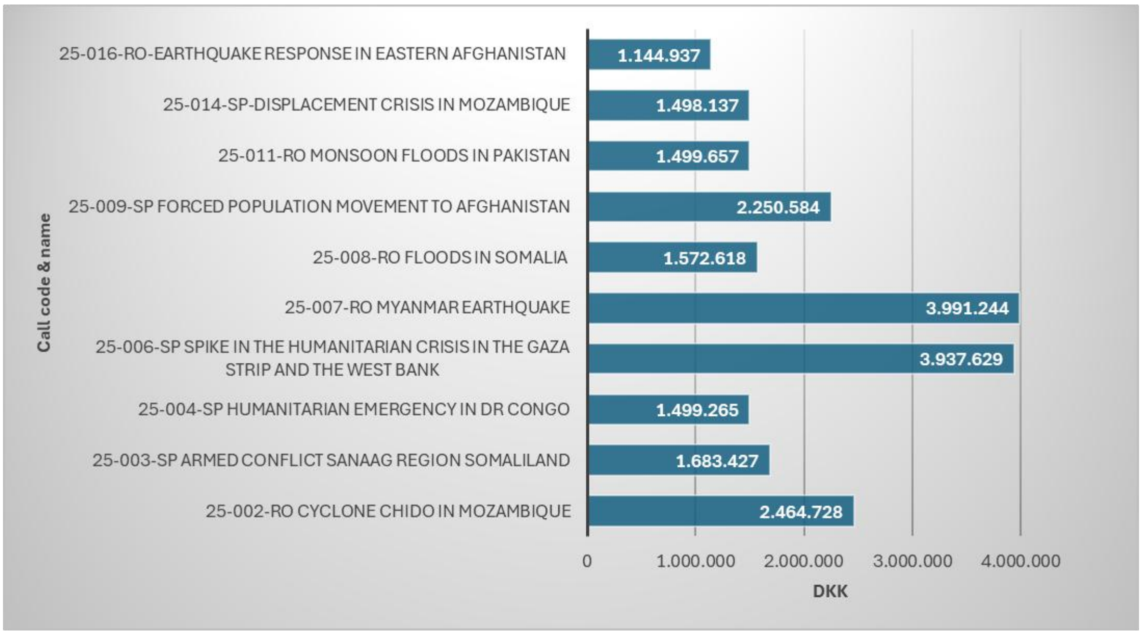


Table 3: Total amounts granted per call in DKK



Although only three calls were opened to respond to weather-related disasters, natural disasters (also counting earthquakes) resulted in an even split between the number of calls responding to natural disasters or crises and the calls responding to conflicts. Also, in terms of total grant amount, there was a 50/50 percent split between natural and manmade disaster response supported by DERF in 2025.

South and Southeast Asia received 40% of total funding, corresponding to DKK 8,886,422, closely followed by African countries, which received DKK 8,718,175 or 39% of total funding. The remaining 18% (DKK 3,937,629) was allocated to the Middle East through interventions in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). African countries benefited from a total of 16 grants with two of these being additional to Rapid Response (RR) in the form of Anticipatory Action (AA) grants in Somalia (linked to droughts).

In addition to the 32 awarded grants for RR in 2025 the Anticipatory Action (AA) modality received a total of 11 applications, of which only three were awarded grants. Aside from two AA grants for Somalia, one grant was in anticipation of spreading wildfires in several of Bolivia’s so-called departments.

Funding ceilings: The DERF continued to apply funding ceilings to align the requirements of small and large interventions. Less experienced organisations continued to be able to relatively simply qualify for implementing interventions below DKK 200,000. Organisations that applied for above DKK 1 million needed a track record of similar-sized interventions and demonstrated humanitarian experience.

In 2025, just two interventions were approved below DKK 200.000 (both Afghanistan), while four interventions were above DKK one million (oPt, Myanmar & Mozambique). Similar to previous years, the majority of interventions, namely 26, were in the middle funding ceiling bracket between DKK 200.000 and DKK one million. This is obviously also guided by the fact that DERF in most instances sets a maximum application upper limit under each call, for example that each applicant/partnership may only apply for DKK 500.000 in order to offer more partnerships a chance to obtain funding for a proposed intervention.

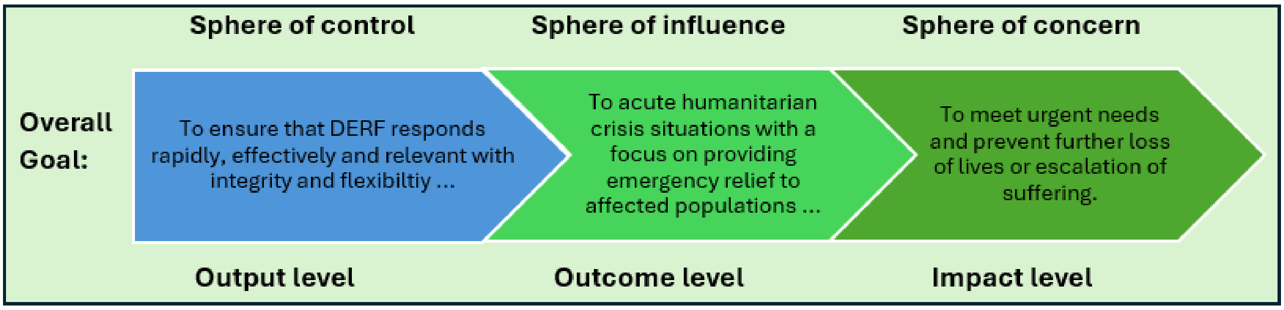
These upper limits are part of case-by-case deliberations and consider overall call provisions as well as the number and type of organisations likely to apply for funding. When organisations have previously applied for DERF funding or are new to the DERF but demonstrate capacity to apply for above DKK 200.000, they will typically apply under the middle funding ceiling. The DERF maintains the belief that humanitarian grants should be manageable for smaller ‘frontline’ CSOs in order to stay manageable and promote better quality and alignment with humanitarian and DERF principles.

Chapter 2: Performance against result framework

In this chapter the DERF reports on achievements within the result framework formulated in the agreement between the DERF and the Danish MFA. The result framework operates with indicators on impact level, outcome level and output level. The three levels form the following three sub-chapters (2.1, 2.2, 2.3).

The result framework follows the logic of the Theory of Change, which divides the overall goal of the DERF into three different spheres. Each sphere forms a level in the result framework, where the administration of the fund, calls and modalities form the output level, the crises and criteria for applying to the DERF form the outcome level, and the beneficiaries and content of the interventions constitute the impact level.

Illustration 5: Summary of the Theory of Change of the DERF



The dataset used to substantiate the impact of the DERF in 2025 is derived from the reports of 41 DERF interventions having submitted final narrative and financial reports and had them formally approved in 2025. This approach to DERF annual progress reporting to the Danish MFA ensures correlation between intervention activity achievements, financial expenditure and therefore approved grant closure for the calendar year.

2.1 Results on impact level

Table 6: Impact level of the result framework (2025 revision)

Impact level	2023	2024	2025
Impact 1: Further loss of lives and escalation of suffering have been prevented			
Indicator 1: Total and composition of target group reached, disaggregated by gender/age	102.026 people 57.625 women 50.285 youth 29.221 refugees	123.406 people 72.695 women 89.002 youth 75.507 refugees	129.250 people 67.077 women 61.751 youth 78.220 Refugees
Indicator 2: Modes of assistance supported by the DERF	Cash: 10 grants Voucher: 2 grants Goods: 20 grants Services: 21 grants	Cash: 15 grants Voucher: 0 grants Goods: 22 Services: 18	Cash: 15 grants Voucher: 4 grants Goods: 26 grants Services: 15 grants
Impact 2: DERF funded interventions contribute to meet urgent needs of people affected by crisis			
Indicator 3: % of implementing organisations who are part of coordination	81%	85%	89%
Indicator 4: Humanitarian sectors engaged in through DERF grants interventions	WASH: 16 grants FSL: 11 grants Health: 8 grants Nutrition: 14 grants Shelter: 8 grants Education: 1 grant	WASH: 15 grants FSL: 9 grants Health: 17 grants Nutrition: 21 grants Shelter: 14 grants Education: 2 grants	WASH: 18 grants FSL: 12 grants Health: 16 grants Nutrition: 27 grants Shelter: 11 grants Education: 2 grants

	Protection: 6 grants	Protection: 6 grants	Protection: 5 grants
Indicator 5: # of interventions that manage to adjust to changing needs	26 grants (81%)	31 grants (76%) Several grants had 2 or more adjustments	21 grants (60%)
Impact 3: Particularly vulnerable groups have been reached			
Indicator 6: # of vulnerable persons targeted through DERF interventions	84.621 vulnerable people (mix of all types)	86.381 vulnerable people ('types' no longer part of indicator)	121.390 vulnerable people
Indicator 7: # of DERF interventions that include refugees / IDPs / host communities	22 grants included this target group	22 grants included this target group (69%)	21 grants included this target group (60%)

Preventing further loss of lives and escalation of suffering

The total number and composition of target groups reached in 2025 were reported across all interventions, with data disaggregated by gender and age. As illustrated in table above, the number of people reached in 2025 is very similar to the figures from 2023 and 2024. The figures for 2025 are based on 35 interventions / reports, three more than the year before (2024). It needs to be stressed that the majority of DERF interventions support well below 5.000 individuals, respectively, and therefore relatively few interventions can distort population figures. For 2025, it was for example evident that just five interventions collectively reached an estimated 56.000 individuals or 44% of all 35 grants. Part of the explanation for such distortion lies in the nature of the intervention such as strong support to health services provision as well as counting entire households as primary beneficiaries or target groups, for example when rehabilitating water wells benefiting entire communities.

When looking at the composition of the target groups, 52% of the individuals reached in 2025 were women while 48% were youth (including children) – the proportion of youth stands in stark contrast to the proportion for 2024 which was 71%. Concurrently, 93% of the people reached in 2025 were described as vulnerable (see also table 8).

The number of refugees, IDPs and host communities reached was in 2025 (78.220 people) very similar to previous years. The types of crises the DERF responded to in 2025 show comparable trends in terms of displacement and crisis drivers. The numbers depend on many factors, such as the types of activities a grantee identify for a certain type of crisis with both manmade (conflict) and natural disasters (e.g. floods and earthquakes) typically characterised by refugee and/or IDP 'status' among intervention target populations.

Of grants reported on in 2025, 54% included cash-based assistance (CBA) as part of their interventions. This is a slightly higher proportion compared to the year before (49%) albeit for a greater number of interventions in 2025. The trend in applying CBA (i.e. cash and/or vouchers) therefore seems relatively constant also if the DERF continues to promote and nudge users in trying out or at least combine CBA with other modes of assistance (MoA). At the same time, 74% of the grants decided to provide goods, while 43% included services as part of their intervention.

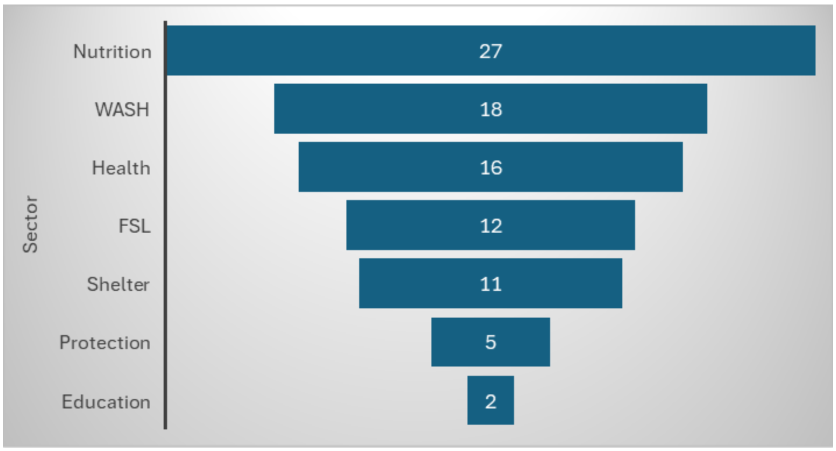
Somewhat similar to figures in 2023 and 2024, 37% of the grants chose to focus their intervention on a single MoA. The remaining 22 grants combined two or more modes of assistance. Similar to DERF reflections in the 2024 report, it remains arbitrary as to what defines and is taken to be a 'service' by the DERF users and not surprisingly many applicants indicate a number of MoA as they relate to humanitarian sectors and with a natural overlap, exemplified by 'goods, health and nutrition' categories often indicated when providing food items or water to targeted crisis-affected populations. The DERF remains flexible as to whether interventions apply one or several modes of assistance. Applicants are still required to justify their choice of MoA as part of their intervention strategies and the chosen MoA are often in focus in discussions during the obligatory Experience Exchange (named DERFA) online meetings where peer-to-peer learning is facilitated by CISU advisers. In addition, some intervention implementors may in fact broaden their assistance 'package' dictated by the 10% flexible fund option, allowing target populations dignified freedom of choice or simply through needs-based priorities as post-disaster scenarios evolve.

Meeting urgent needs of people affected by crisis

There is a growing number of DERF-funded interventions that are part of coordination mechanisms. Since 2022, this number has steadily increased, reaching 85% in 2024 and for 2025 a full 89%. Effective coordination remains essential to ensure that humanitarian assistance is timely, targeted, and complementary. It helps avoid duplication, strengthens overall impact, and promotes collaboration with relevant humanitarian actors and structures. The trend shows that DERF interventions are increasingly aligned with broader response efforts and implemented in close cooperation with national and international stakeholders. This reflects a strong commitment to the humanitarian principle of coordination and has been further emphasised as part of updated 2026 DERF application and reporting formats, on the basis of the 2024 CHS revision and CISU's Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI) renewal audit conducted in late 2025.

The number of grants within the different humanitarian sectors must be seen in the context of the specific crisis they responded to. Most grants included nutrition (27 grants), WASH (18 grants) and health (16 grants) as sectors typical of their intervention. While many grants provided in contexts characterised by conflict support interventions through shelter assistance (oPt, Myanmar & Afghanistan), a number of interventions responding to natural disasters also contribute to shelter support related to, for example, the impacts of typhoons (Southeast Asia) or extensive floods (East Africa, South- and Southeast Asia).

Table 7: Number of grants which included a particular humanitarian sector



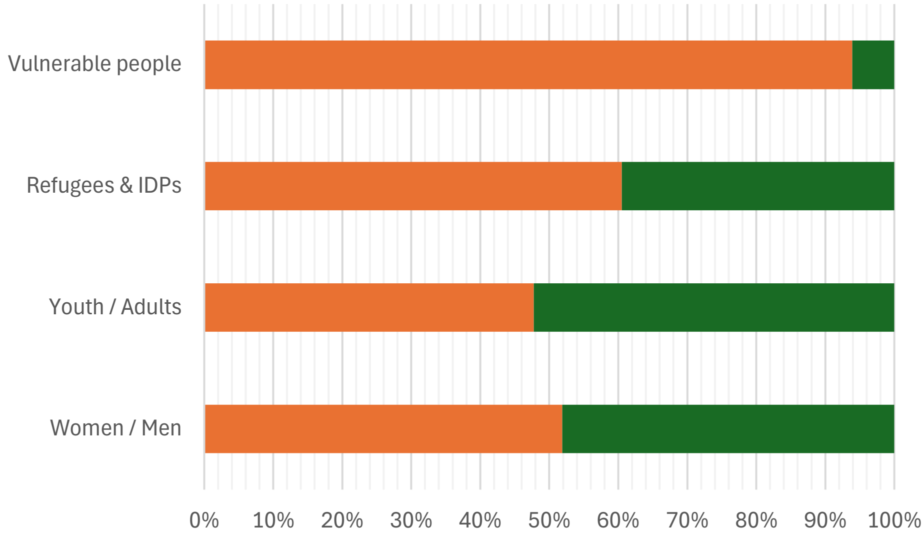
Overall, 83% of the interventions included two or more sectors in their response, following a practice to address several needs of their target group as well as indication/perception of overlapping sectors (e.g. WASH, health and nutrition).

In 2025, 21 grants – representing 60% of all funded interventions – managed to adjust to changing needs during implementation. In keeping with data from the 2024 progress report, this figure represents a further decrease also compared to 2022 and 2023. Whereas volatile and unpredictable humanitarian contexts require the ability to adapt the submission of amendment requests to CISU only becomes necessary with more significant changes to intervention budget or when the target group, or their location, change significantly. It is common that amendment requests relate to no-cost extensions of intervention period and typically due to access constraints (e.g. conflict or flooding impacting infrastructure, security/safety and logistics) or challenges pertaining to the sourcing and procurement of goods or simply to facilitate meaningful activity completion and post-distribution monitoring.

Reaching particularly vulnerable groups

Each proposed and granted intervention has its unique description of vulnerability. Women, girls, female headed households, pregnant and lactating women, women with small children, elder as well as disabled are most often mentioned as part of the vulnerable group. It is with this in mind that slightly more than half (52%) of the total target group are indicated as women.

Table 8: Disaggregation & proportion of target groups for 2025 (percentage of a total 129.250 individuals)



Like previous years, most interventions utilise own or combine with external assessment of vulnerabilities as selection criteria for support, while a few describe entire communities as vulnerable and assist these collectively. In many countries with pronounced, multi-layered and pervasive vulnerability, such as the occupied Palestinian territories, Somalia/Somaliland, Myanmar and Afghanistan it remains extremely difficult not to regard entire local populations as particularly vulnerable, making identification and selection a complex exercise. In Afghanistan, existing fragility is almost permanently a driver where not uncommon hazards, such as floods or earthquakes, turn into larger scale disaster events.

2.2 Results on outcome level

Table 9: Outcome level of the result framework

Outcome Level	2023	2024	2025
Outcome 1: Civil Society Organisations are responding to humanitarian crisis			
Indicator 8: # and type of humanitarian crisis the DERF is responding to (disaggregated by	5 climate related 4 conflict related 6 rapid onset 1 slow onset 3 spikes	6 climate related 5 conflict related 5 rapid onset 2 slow onset 4 spikes	3 climate related 5 conflict related 6 rapid onset 0 slow onset 4 spikes

climate / conflict related and rapid onset / slow onset / spike)			
Indicator 9: # and size of Danish CSOs and implementing organisations that manage to access grants	11 small CSOs 8 medium CSOs 11 large CSOs	10 small CSOs 7 medium CSOs 13 large CSOs	1 small CSOs 9 medium CSOs 11 large CSOs
Outcome 2: Civil society contributes to reduce the impacts of climate change related hazards (previous: Humanitarian Principles are followed by grantees)			
Indicator 10: # of interventions that significantly contribute to climate change adaptation action	N/A – new indicator	7 interventions	6 interventions
Indicator 11: # of civil society organisations that respond to weather related hazards	N/A – new indicator	22 Danish CSOs and 36 local implementing partners	8 Danish CSOs and 8 local implementing partners
Outcome 3: Localisation is strengthened through DERF supported responses			
Indicator 12: % of DERF grants spent in crisis area	88%	88%	90%
Indicator 13: % of DERF interventions which are implemented by local partner organisations	98%	94% (30 out of 32 interventions)	97% (34 out of 35 interventions)

CSOs responding to humanitarian crisis

In 2025, the rapid response modality of the DERF formed the basis for applications to six rapid onset crises and four spikes in protracted crises. In the table below you can see the specific calls opened under each category.

Table 10: Calls opened for type of crises (rapid & spikes in protracted crises, respectively)

Rapid onset crisis	**Spike in a protracted crisis**
Tropical Cyclone Chido	Armed Conflict in Sanaag Region/Somaliland
Myanmar Earthquakes	Humanitarian Emergency in DR Congo
Floods in Somalia	Spike in Humanitarian Crisis in oPt
Forced Population Movement to Afghanistan	Displacement Crisis in Mozambique
Monsoon floods in Pakistan	
Earthquake Response in Eastern Afghanistan	

The distribution between types of crises follows the trend of previous years for rapid onset and protracted crises calls. The spikes in protracted crises are not surprisingly related to conflicts and hostilities with Somaliland, DR Congo, the oPt and northern Mozambique experiencing longer-term crises. The DERF continued to respond to 'less visible' crises also if external assessment processes necessitate an ability to rely on a fair volume of credible humanitarian impact sources such as UN-OCHAs Flash Updates, IOM Displacement Matrices, UNHCR and Red Cross Red Crescent reports. None of the five slow onset crisis alerts submitted to DERF during 2025 were activated – the alerts were all related to drought with four focusing on Somalia/Somaliland and the fifth on Mozambique. The main reasons for not activating these alerts and turning them into calls relate to the relative abnormality levels or severity of expected and unfolding dry seasons.

As alluded to in chapter 1, the number of climate related, or rather, weather-related crises responded to in 2025 was down to three from six in 2024 and five in 2023. And whilst the natural and manmade disasters or crises are equally split in 2025, geophysical disasters such as the two significant tectonic earthquakes responded to in Myanmar and Afghanistan, respectively, add to the vulnerability and impact of hydrometeorological hazards (floods, droughts, heatwaves, wildfires and cyclones/typhoons).

The DERF continues to be equally accessible for small as well as for large CSOs. The definition of who is a small or a large CSO is based on their organisational annual turnover: small CSOs have an annual turnover below DKK 200.000, medium-sized have a turnover between DKK 200.000 and 1,5 million, and large CSOs have an annual turnover from DKK 1,5 million and above.

Applying this definition in fact means that almost all of the DERF users who applied for funding as a small CSO during the previous years, have now moved to the medium- or large-sized CSO category. For the same reason, the number of large CSOs has increased compared to the previous years (see table 11 below for organisational details).

In 2025, 21 Danish CSOs received DERF grants, which is 8 fewer than the number of CSOs receiving grants in 2024. Obviously, one can argue that geographical location of crises and presence of existing partnerships will influence how many and which organisations apply for DERF funding, but the decrease in organisations is also a product of the fact that a few organisations work across different regions included in separate calls, with one Danish CSO receiving four DERF grants for response interventions in oPt, Uganda, Somaliland and Pakistan – with four different implementing partners and in connection with both conflict and weather-related crises.

Table 11: Names of grantees per size of CSO

Small CSO	Medium CSO	Large CSO
Myanmar Action Group Denmark	Action for Relief and Development (ARD)	Aktion Amazonas
	Somali Rehabilitation and Development Association (SORADA)	Dansk Folkehjælp
	Charity for Life	Danish Muslim Aid
	Dansk Afghanistan Komité	Danner
	Dansk Afghansk Humanitær Forening	International Aid Services (IAS)
	Iftin Organisation	IWGIA
	Somalisk Forening for Genopbygning (OFROSOM)	MMCC Global
	Rajo Organisation	Støtteforeningen Det Danske Hus i Palæstina
	Rebuild Aid Foreningen	Tandsundhed Uden Grænser (TuG)
		Vedvarende Energi
		Baptistkirken i Danmark

Contributing to reducing the impact of climate change

In 2025, six interventions were assessed to *significantly* contribute to climate change adaptation action. Strictly speaking humanitarian interventions and grants awarded under the DERF do not require or expect activities to be relevant under an adaptation 'lens' also if one can argue that such spin-offs are desirable. The relative absence of capacity building activities for target groups entail that DERF grants are destined to their intended lifesaving objectives, with aspects of long-term impact and sustainable changes somewhat curtailed by short term assistance provided within equally short timespans. Expressed differently, just 28% of the grants awarded by the DERF in 2025 were related to climate change or weather-related events and responded to resulting humanitarian crises. This is a marked decrease of 40% compared to the previous year with 2025 marked by many grants falling into the armed conflict category and a total of 7 grants in response to the Myanmar and Afghanistan earthquakes. As with previous years, it is common that humanitarian crises are made up of several key drivers converging resulting in outright disasters where conflict and hydrometeorological hazards converge with devastating effects on regions, countries and localities where entire populations are already struggling to meet their essential and most basic needs.

Table 12: Number of grants and amounts granted in relation to weather-related disaster events

Weather-related disaster events / hydrometeorological hazard	# of grants	Amount granted
25-002-RO Cyclone Chido in Mozambique / cyclone & flooding	2	2.464.728
25-008-RO Floods in Somalia / flooding	4	1.572.618
25-011-RO Monsoon Floods in Pakistan	3	1.499.657
Total	**9**	**DKK 5.537.003**

Aspects of hydrometeorological disaster events and their attribution to climate change remain immensely complex. For some disaster events there are a significant number of scientific studies indicating the links between a given disastrous weather event and climate change (e.g. the La Niña phenomenon transitioning to that of El Niño at the end of 2025 moving into 2026) and for others these constitute natural variation in weather patterns.

The DERF remains challenged by the nature and extent of cyclone and flooding events as a basis for deciding which countries to include as part of the respective calls for proposals as alluded to in chapter one above.

In 2025, 8 Danish civil society organisations and 8 local implementing partners responded to weather-related hazards through 9 interventions. One of these partnerships was awarded both one RR and one AA grant for interventions related to drought and flooding in Somalia.

Strengthening localisation through supported responses

For completed 2025 grants, 90% of the budgeted funds allocated were spent in the crisis areas, with 85% calculated as having directly benefited the crisis-affected population. These figures exceed the DERF's minimum requirements (80% and 60% respectively) and constitute a steadily increasing trend based on percentages recorded in 2023 and 2024.

One of DERF's finest qualities is epitomised by its strong support to localised disaster or crisis response. This includes focus on implementation through mutual partnerships, a significant percentage of funds reaching the affected populations, as well as pushing an enabling environment in support of strengthened inclusion and local leadership.

In 2025, 97% of the grantees had implemented their interventions through local partner organisations. Only one grantee was self-implementing which is consistent with latter year levels. Having an overwhelming majority of local implementing partnerships demonstrates the strength of the DERF to reach the local CSOs or CBOs close to the crises affected populations. At the same time, the proportion of intervention funds directly reaching the affected populations remains substantial and stable with self-implementation from 2026 onwards only permitted once in a DERF 4-year funding cycle.

To continue to promote and nudge users to consistently adopt and adhere to the localisation agenda, implementing organisations are required to develop the local context description, annexed to the application and the DERF pilot of flexible funds for locally prioritised activities and a 5% lump sum for local administration has now 'graduated' into becoming a standard albeit optional feature of all DERF applications and something that is discussed both as part of the mandatory DERF experience exchange meetings as well as addressed as part of 2026 reporting formats. The DERF management believes that the flexible funds assist in allowing the promotion of community participation and decision-making in the use of granted funds, while the shared lump sum allows local partners full discretion over the use of funds, thereby enhancing ownership, autonomy and flexibility in DERF-funded interventions.

2.3 Results on output level

Table 13: Output level of the result framework

Output Level	2023	2024	2025
Output 1: Humanitarian funding provided for Rapid Response (RR) and Anticipatory Action (AA) interventions			
Indicator 14: (new indicator) Amounts granted, and number of grants provided under the Anticipatory Action (AA) modality	N/A (new indicator)	No AA granted interventions (7 applications rejected)	Three out of 11 AA applications were granted (27%)
Indicator 15: (new indicator) Amounts granted, and number of grants provided under the Rapid Response (RR) modality	N/A (new indicator)	DKK 28.770.853 41 intervention grants	DKK 22.435.158 (35 intervention grants incl. three AA grants)
Output 2: Timeliness in approval of applications and disbursement of funds			
Indicator 16: (new indicator) # applications are approved within an average of 12 working days	* See the section "Timeliness in approval of applications and disbursement of funds" on page 16.		
Indicator 17: (new indicator) # of days from signature of grantees contracts until disbursement of funds			
Output 3: Support services provided to DERF grantees			
Indicator 18: (new indicator) # of grantees who received technical backstopping services through phone or email	* See the section "Support service provided to DERF grantees" on page 17.		
Indicator 19: (new indicator) # of grants that received technical backstopping through DERF monitoring visits	5 – Two in Somaliland, two in Kenya, one in Honduras 5 – Danish grant holders	2 - Two in Uganda 1 – Danish grant holder	4 - Two in Somalia and two in Pakistan. 3 – Danish grant holders

Humanitarian funding provided

In 2025, three of the applications submitted under the AA modality were awarded grants. A total of 11 AA applications were received, seven of which were for Somaliland/Somalia with three Somali diaspora organisations reapplying with intervals of a few months, tied to the prevalent droughts in Somalia.

The DERF management has revised the modality coming into effect from 2026 alongside the revision of DERF Guidelines and formats. Apart from making applications more worthwhile by increasing the maximum allowable grant budget to DKK 400.000/intervention, the DERF has also enabled its 'Early Action' intervention proposals to combine preparedness and anticipatory activities – although recognising that disaster management phases remain complex and not easily distinguishable. Although having about a third of the AA applications approved in 2025 is an improvement compared to none in 2024, there is growing evidence that the DERF may not be ideally geared towards AA type funding, whereas emergency relief and recovery may well be increasingly relevant, both from a synergistic and collaborative 'phase approach', breaking orthodox and siloed barriers, but also when bridging gaps from humanitarian assistance to longer-term development *en par* with the bygone era of 'Linking Relief, Recovery and Development' (LRRD).

The number of grants awarded under the RR modality reached 32 in 2025. As with previous years, the RR modality remains the primary mechanism for DERF grant allocations. While up to DKK 4 million are annually earmarked for anticipatory action (and DKK 4.8 million in 2026), the vast majority of DERF funding continues to be channelled through the RR modality as a response to the impacts of acute humanitarian crises.

The 2025 RR application/grant approval rate was comparatively high with 67% (61% in 2024) while just 27% for AA applications. As always, average approval rates fluctuate depending on individual calls and the number of applications received. As an example, the call *Flooding in East Africa Region* had a total of 17 applications with 10 approved (59%) and seven rejected. Conversely, the call *Drought Crisis in the Philippines* had a total of four applications with only one successful in being granted (25%). Having said that, the call *Floods in South and Southeast Asia* had a total of eight applications, all of which were approved and received grants. As opposed to previous years, 2024 did not see any opened calls without any successful applications, also if two of the calls (conflicts in Mozambique and Lebanon) were characterised by having only one successful application per call.

Timeliness in approval of applications and disbursement of funds

During 2026, CISU identified two key challenges with the indicators 16 and 17 that were not apparent during the rollout of the new results framework in 2025.

First, both indicators are open to multiple interpretations. For indicator 16, it should capture the timeliness of assessing all applications, not only those that result in grants. For indicator 17, clarification is needed on whether the calculation starts from contract signature or approval, and whether "disbursement" refers to CISU's transfer to the Danish grantee or the onward transfer to partners. This ambiguity affects the DERF reporting, as it limits the consistency, comparability, and reliability of reported data and requires careful qualification of results.

Second, these ambiguities are compounded by system limitations. CISU's case-handling system does not directly track processing time, which must instead be calculated from multiple steps in the workflow (e.g. application submission, screening, clarification rounds, assessments, approvals, and fulfillment of conditions).

CISU will finalize a review in late summer/early autumn 2026 to define revised indicators that are both meaningful and feasible to track within the system. This is expected to strengthen the DERF reporting onwards by improving clarity, consistency, and data reliability.

Support service provided to DERF grantees

In relation to indicator 18, CISU has also identified a challenge, as specific logging of technical backstopping via telephone and email cannot meaningfully be carried out by CISU, partly due to the separation of administrative 'helpline' duties between grant managers and advisers and because repetitive backstopping from the same users – often first-time DERF applicants or grantees – would lead to significant variation bias. However, CISU is currently looking into the possibility of tracking emails sent to the dedicated DERF email account, as well as the traffic to and readership of the DERF news on the CISU website and newsletter. Data that are available and will be reflected in the revised results framework in early autumn 2026 are the advisory sessions, DERFA (Experience Workshop for DERF grantees and partners), as well as the call meetings, which CISU invites participants to when opening calls in new areas and/or sectors.

DERF nevertheless continued in 2025 to monitor the provision of technical and grant management support services to applicants and partners through the data that are available. The volume of emails received through both the dedicated DERF mailbox and directly by the DERF team demonstrates the continued demand for technical support and grant management assistance. In 2025, CISU introduced a new platform for DERF News, replacing MyNewsDesk.

Similar to earlier years, a considerable portion of the DERF team's work in 2025 involved delivering grant management support and technical assistance to both grantees and applicants. Throughout the year, all 35 grantees received support, primarily through telephone consultations and communication via the dedicated DERF email account. This support was provided by the DERF advisory team, including the two management team members engaged through advisory agreements as well as the financial management specialist. Guidance covered technical matters related to alerts, funding calls and applications, comments on draft proposals, and explanations provided following unsuccessful applications. In 2025, DERF conducted 18 advisory sessions. This represents a decrease compared to 22 advisory sessions in 2024 and 25 in 2023. The reduction should be seen in light of the continued provision of support through regular telephone and email communication, which remained the primary channel for day-to-day guidance and assistance.

DERF also continued its practice of organising Experience Exchange Workshops (DERFA) during 2025. Participation in at least one workshop remained a requirement attached to each DERF grant, meaning that organisations were expected to participate every time they received DERF funding. The workshops were conducted online and served as a platform for shared learning among organisations working in humanitarian contexts. They provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on implementation experiences, discuss operational challenges, and exchange lessons learned and practical approaches with both the DERF team and other grantees. By facilitating dialogue between organisations facing comparable humanitarian contexts and constraints, the workshops contributed to cross-organisational learning and helped strengthen the quality of ongoing interventions.

Capacity strengthening also formed an important part of the support available to DERF applicants and grantees. Throughout 2025, CISU continued to offer a range of training opportunities relevant to humanitarian organisations, including courses on travel security, monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL), grant management, compliance with CISU financial requirements, effective monitoring visits, PSHEA (Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse), and codes of conduct addressing corruption and misconduct. These training courses were delivered as part of CISU's broader capacity development programme and were available to all CISU members and grantees, including organisations receiving DERF funding.

Chapter 3: Highlighted topics

Humanitarian funding under pressure

The year 2025 marked a significant shift in the global humanitarian funding landscape. Major reductions in international humanitarian assistance, particularly following the closure of large parts of USAID programming and reductions among several traditional donor governments, created increased uncertainty across the humanitarian sector. Humanitarian organisations around the world were forced to scale down operations, reduce staffing, and prioritise increasingly limited resources.

For the DERF, these developments reinforced the importance of maintaining a flexible funding mechanism capable of providing timely support to smaller and medium-sized civil society organisations and their local partners. While the DERF cannot compensate for large-scale global funding reductions, the fund continued to provide targeted support in situations where relatively modest grants enabled local actors to respond rapidly to urgent humanitarian needs.

The funding situation also highlighted the importance of strengthening local capacities and partnerships. As international funding becomes increasingly constrained, locally led responses remain essential for ensuring continued humanitarian access and assistance to crisis-affected populations. The developments observed during 2025 further underline the relevance of funding mechanisms that can channel resources quickly and efficiently to organisations already present in crisis-affected areas and capable of responding when new emergencies emerge.

Local partnerships in an increasingly restricted humanitarian space

Humanitarian access continued to be challenged in many of the contexts where DERF-supported interventions were implemented during 2025. Armed conflict, insecurity, restrictions, damaged infrastructure, and population displacement affected the ability of humanitarian actors to reach crisis-affected populations in a timely and safe manner. In several contexts, humanitarian organisations also faced growing operational constraints linked to security concerns, logistical challenges, and reduced international presence.

Against this backdrop, local partnerships continued to demonstrate their value. Of the interventions completed and reported on in 2025, 97% were implemented through local partner organisations. These partnerships remain one of the defining characteristics of the DERF model and an important factor behind the fund's ability to support rapid humanitarian responses in diverse and often difficult operational environments.

Local organisations are frequently present before a crisis occurs, remain engaged throughout the response phase, and continue their work long after international attention has shifted elsewhere. Their proximity to affected communities provides contextual knowledge, established relationships, and an understanding of local dynamics that are difficult to replicate through externally driven responses. In many cases, local organisations are also better positioned to navigate access constraints and maintain dialogue with communities and local authorities.

The importance of these partnerships became evident across several of the crises supported by the DERF in 2025. Whether responding to conflict-related displacement, floods, earthquakes, or other humanitarian emergencies, local implementing organisations played a central role in identifying needs, facilitating access, mobilising communities, and delivering assistance to affected populations.

Humanitarian crises beyond the headlines

The humanitarian crises receiving the greatest international attention are not always those where humanitarian needs are most acute. While major emergencies in contexts such as Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan continued to dominate international media coverage and donor attention in 2025, many other crises remained largely absent from global headlines despite having severe humanitarian consequences for affected populations.

The DERF continued to play an important role in supporting responses to crises that received comparatively limited international attention. Several of the calls opened during 2025 responded to situations that, while serious in terms of humanitarian impact, generated relatively limited media coverage and international funding. Examples include the armed conflict in the Sanaag region of Somaliland, displacement linked to insecurity in northern Mozambique, flooding in Somalia, and the population movements affecting eastern Afghanistan.

These crises often share a number of characteristics. They affect populations that are already vulnerable due to poverty, displacement, recurrent climate shocks, or prolonged instability. They also tend to occur in contexts where humanitarian needs are significant, but where international attention and funding are directed elsewhere.

The crises supported by the DERF in 2025 illustrate an important characteristic of the fund. Rather than focusing exclusively on high-profile emergencies, the DERF also enables responses to humanitarian situations that may receive limited international attention despite substantial humanitarian needs. This includes both geographically remote crises and crises that have become protracted to the extent that they attract less donor and media interest over time.

Supporting such crises is particularly important at a time when global humanitarian needs continue to increase while available funding is becoming more constrained. In these circumstances, there is a risk that smaller or less visible crises receive insufficient attention despite substantial humanitarian needs among affected populations.

The experiences from 2025 reaffirm the importance of maintaining funding mechanisms that are able to respond not only to major international emergencies, but also to crises that risk falling outside the focus of the broader humanitarian system. By remaining responsive to alerts originating from civil society actors with direct knowledge of local contexts, the DERF contributes to ensuring that humanitarian needs are addressed regardless of the level of international attention they receive.

Quality Management, Business Integrity Management and Accountability

DERF's operations are underpinned by robust systems for quality management and business integrity, ensuring that funds are managed transparently, effectively, and in line with international standards. The

Quality Management System (QMS), based on CISU's Code of Conduct (CoC), brings together key principles on accountability, transparent fund management, and capacity strengthening. This is complemented by a Business Integrity Management System (BIMS), which integrates financial management, internal controls, audit procedures, and grant management processes.

Together, these systems form an integrated framework that is continuously strengthened through monitoring, learning, and internal controls. This ensures high standards of accountability and efficiency and supports continued donor confidence.

Strengthened Code of Conduct

In 2025–2026, CISU completed a comprehensive revision of its Code of Conduct, significantly strengthening its accountability framework.

Key improvements include:

- A clearer and more structured complaints system, with defined categories, written submission requirements, and set timelines for case handling
- A strengthened whistleblowing mechanism aligned with Danish and EU legislation, ensuring protection for whistleblowers as well as due process for those reported
- Enhanced reporting obligations for grant recipients, including requirements to report investigations and reputational risks
- Stronger safeguards for independence and conflict-of-interest management, including in cases involving CISU's Board

These updates provide a more robust and transparent framework for handling risks, complaints, and misconduct.

HQAI CHS Re-Verification and Results

In 2025, CISU successfully renewed its verification against the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), confirming a high level of commitment to quality and accountability. Performance has improved significantly since the previous audit, with weaknesses reduced from one major and eleven minor findings in 2022 to no major and five minor weaknesses in 2025/2026.

This progress is driven in particular by CISU's strategic focus on localisation. CISU promotes equitable partnerships by strengthening the role of local actors as decision-makers, including through "reverse lead" approaches. Partnerships are characterised by mutual trust, clearly defined roles, and shared learning, while communities are actively engaged in project design and adaptation. This contributes to more relevant, sustainable, and accountable interventions.

A defining feature of CISU's positive verification result is its strong performance on localisation-related CHS commitments. The HQAI audit highlighted that CISU has moved beyond policy commitments to practical implementation by systematically strengthening the role of local actors in decision-making, programme design, and implementation. This includes piloting "reverse lead" approaches, as well as ensuring that partnerships are based on mutual accountability and shared learning. The audit further recognised that CISU consistently involves communities in identifying needs and adapting interventions, thereby reinforcing participation, relevance, and accountability. While some gaps remain in ensuring consistent communication and community awareness, the findings confirm that localisation is a key driver of CISU's improved CHS performance and a central element of its approach to quality and accountability.

CISU's 2026–2028 plan of action targets the remaining five minor gaps identified through the HQAI CHS verification. The focus is on strengthening consistency and systematisation by embedding improvements into existing processes:

CHS Area	Key Gap Identified	Core Action Focus
Communication & Consent (1.5)	Inconsistent informed consent practices	Strengthening informed consent practices in communication and fundraising. Revised guidelines, monitoring tools, and partner training
Community Engagement (1.6)	Lack of a coherent participation approach	Enhancing transparency and meaningful participation, including a stronger focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. Updated application and reporting formats with DEI focus
Data Management & Proctection (4.3)	Limited assessment of partner data capacity	Integrating data management and protection into grant assessments and providing clearer guidance and tools
Staff Behaviour/Safeguarding Awareness (5.2)	Limited monitoring of community awareness	Ensuring communities understand expected staff behaviour and standards Strengthened guidance, training, and monitoring
SEAH Reporting (8.5)	Inconsistent monitoring of reporting mechanisms	Strengthening monitoring of safe and accessible reporting mechanisms for staff and volunteers and learning systems

Rather than introducing new systems, these improvements are integrated into existing grant management, monitoring, and learning frameworks, ensuring sustainability and alignment with CHS principles.

DERF Monitoring

CISU conducts regular oversight visits on behalf of DERF to ensure compliance and strengthen the capacity of grant recipients and their partners. Visits are both targeted and sample-based and coordinated across CISU funding instruments to maximise learning.

In 2025, monitoring included third-party visits in Somalia—enabling oversight in highly inaccessible areas—as well as direct DERF team monitoring visits in Pakistan. These efforts strengthened accountability, risk management, and dialogue with partners.

Financial Management

An external review by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2026 confirmed that CISU's financial systems are robust, fully compliant, and well-integrated. These systems provide a reliable foundation for DERF, ensuring transparency, efficiency, and strong financial oversight.

Digital Systems and Data Management

CISU continues to strengthen its digital infrastructure, including the “Vores CISU” platform, which serves as a central hub for applications, guidance, and capacity-building. This improves accessibility, transparency, and efficiency for grant recipients.

Additional online resources—such as dedicated guidance on accountability and financial management—further support partners in meeting standards and applying good practice.

Overall

DERF continues to operate within a strong and continuously improving accountability framework. Significant progress in CHS compliance—driven notably by strengthened localisation practices—combined with targeted improvements in safeguarding, communication, and data management, ensures that DERF-funded interventions remain accountable, locally grounded, and aligned with international standards.

Chapter 4: Statement of accounts

The DERF was originally won in a tender by CISU in consortium with Save the Children DK from the Danish MFA for a four-year period (2021-2024) with annual allocations of 25 mill. DKK for the DERF to be approved on the Danish Finance Act on an annual basis. The original contract was extended in agreement between the consortium and the MFA for four additional years, i.e. 2025-2028.

The original budget for 2025 was 25 million DKK. The updated budget for 2025 included the unused funds for general administration and programme support, as per agreement with the Danish MFA, a total of 107.348 DKK.

The annual accounts for 2025 shows the following utilisation of the 2025 updated budget:

Main Categories		Orig. Budget (Not audited)	Updated Budget (Not audited)	Accounts	Balance
A	General administration	1.383.358	1.383.358	1.383.358	-
B	Programme support	889.142	889.142	889.142	-
C	DERF Pool of funds	22.727.500	22.834.848	22.834.848	-
D	Total Annual Budget & Account	25.000.000	25.107.348	25.107.348	-

The percentual division between the main categories has been adapted in the updated budget, and the annual accounts for 2025 are in line with the agreed division between the main categories as shown below.

Main Categories		Orig. Budget %	Updated Budget %	Accounts in %
A	General administration	5,5%	5,5%	5,5%
B	Programme support	3,6%	3,5%	3,5%
C	DERF Pool of funds	90,9%	90,9%	90,9%
D	Total Annual Budget & Account	100%	100%	100%

The unused funds as well as the provisions for future grants and expenses will be transferred to the coming years, i.e. 2026 -2028, the extension period of the DERF and re-allocated to the relevant budget lines in the updated budgets as per agreement with the Danish MFA.

For further details on the annual accounts, the DERF grants and the external auditor’s assessment, please refer to the annexes to this report.

Outlook

The humanitarian outlook for 2026 remains deeply concerning. Armed conflicts continue to affect large parts of the world, while the frequency and severity of weather-related disasters show little sign of diminishing. At the same time, the international humanitarian system is facing unprecedented financial constraints. The gap between humanitarian needs and available resources is expected to widen further, forcing humanitarian actors to make increasingly difficult prioritisation decisions.

Against this backdrop, the role of civil society organisations and locally led humanitarian action is likely to become even more important. Local organisations often remain present and operational when international actors reduce their footprint or face access constraints. The DERF therefore expects continued demand for flexible funding mechanisms that enable rapid responses through existing partnerships between Danish and local civil society organisations.

The year 2025 marked the beginning of a new four-year funding period for the DERF. The extension provides an opportunity to build on the experiences and learning generated during previous years while continuing to adapt to a rapidly changing humanitarian environment. Particular attention will be given to maintaining the quality, relevance and timeliness of the fund while ensuring that the DERF remains accessible to both established and emerging humanitarian actors.

The DERF also expects continued discussions across the humanitarian sector regarding localisation, humanitarian financing and the relationship between preparedness, anticipatory approaches and emergency response. As these discussions evolve, the DERF will continue to engage with its users, partners and the wider humanitarian community in order to ensure that the fund remains relevant and aligned with the needs of crisis-affected populations.

While the challenges facing the humanitarian sector are considerable, the experiences from 2025 demonstrate the continued value of flexible and partnership-based approaches to humanitarian action. The DERF remains committed to supporting civil society organisations in delivering timely, accountable and locally led humanitarian assistance to people affected by crises around the world.

Annexes

Annex 1: DERF Annual Accounts 2025, including grant specifications (PDF and Excel)

Annex 2: DERF Long-form Audit Report 2025 (as per the contract requirements)

Annex 3: CISU Long-form Audit Report 2025 (covering CISU and the pool of funds)

Annex 4: CISU Organisational Accounts 2025

Annex 5: HQAI RA Summary Report 2026

Annex 6: HQAI RA Annex Report 2026

Annex 7: CISU HQAI Management Response 2026