

# DERF DANISH EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND

## Funding Guidelines

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Save the Children



CISU

CIVIL SOCIETY IN  
DEVELOPMENT

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# 1. Introduction

The Danish Emergency Relief Fund (DERF) is a funding mechanism established in 2017 by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), following a tender process and a recent contract extension effective for 2025-2028. It is managed by CISU – Civil Society in Development, in a consortium with SCD – Save the Children Denmark.

The DERF gives Danish CSOs without a strategic partnership with the MFA access to funding to respond to humanitarian crisis situations around the world.

When a humanitarian crisis occurs, CSOs, through partner organisations, are active in the crisis area. Their presence and local knowledge put the organisation in a position to reach the people affected by the crisis and to act fast and efficiently in responding to emergency needs. In doing so, the DERF becomes an important vehicle to enable local actors to meet the needs of affected populations.

Rapid and flexible humanitarian funding of the DERF makes it possible for organisations to apply for funding in a timely manner to respond to crises. DERF funding is for humanitarian responses in all countries eligible to receive official development assistance (OECD/DAC list) and without predetermined sectoral limitations. The allocation of funds is based on humanitarian principles and standards.

The DERF is committed to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on quality and accountability, and the application of the four humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. The nine commitments of the CHS describe what communities and people affected by crises can expect from those who support them. Therefore, the DERF has integrated them into the granting cycle, including the assessment criteria.

## CORE HUMANITARIAN STANDARD

*Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of the CHS and an understanding of the nine commitments of the minimum standard.*



## 1.1 Objective and principles of the DERF

The objective of the DERF is *to prevent the loss of life and escalation of suffering among people affected by acute humanitarian crises.*

This is reflected in the two funding modalities

- a) **Rapid Response (RR), responding to acute humanitarian crises.**
- b) **Early Action (EA), acting in anticipation of humanitarian crises.**

The DERF provides rapid and flexible funds to support lifesaving interventions through localised humanitarian response and assists particularly vulnerable groups of people among populations at-risk of, or already affected by, an acute humanitarian crisis. This is further described in the following three fundamental principles of the DERF.

### 1.1.1 Principle of supporting vulnerable groups

With the notion of “Leaving No One Behind”, the DERF funds humanitarian interventions which focus on assistance to particularly vulnerable groups among crisis-affected populations. This means to ensure that interventions are inclusive, gender-sensitive, impartial, and contribute towards addressing specific and differentiated emergency needs and/or protection challenges experienced by the affected persons to be assisted.

#### EXAMPLES OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

Vulnerable groups may include, but are not limited to extremely poor, people with disability, minorities, socially marginalised people, female headed households, pregnant and lactating women, children, elderly people, refugees, internally displaced people, host communities, and people living in hard-to-reach areas.

*Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of the vulnerable groups in the context they work in and propose adequate ways of addressing their particular needs.*

### 1.1.2 Principle of supporting Local Leadership

The DERF strongly supports the localisation commitment the humanitarian sector made as part of the Grand Bargain. The DERF supports lifesaving interventions through locally led humanitarian response. The terms Local Leadership, Localisation, and Locally Led Humanitarian Response are used interchangeably.

#### DEFINING LOCALISATION

The DERF understands localisation as an approach to make aid more effective and able to meet the needs of people affected by crises. Local leadership is a way of recognising and respecting local actors to address the needs of affected people. Local leadership is thus understood as a process of changing power within the humanitarian system towards the local actors and for local actors to better involve crisis-affected people in decisions that affect them.

Local leadership can be strengthened through partnerships, financial support, capacity strengthening, active participation in decision-making, and through coordination. All five elements are key to local leadership. The DERF supports local leadership in the following ways:

**Partnerships:** The DERF supports equitable partnerships with local partners and based on locally identified needs.

- *Interventions must be based on an existing partnership with a local civil society actor. This enables the partnership to act fast and to ensure more direct access to the people affected by a humanitarian crisis.*
- *The DERF defines who can be a local or national implementing partner in chapter 2.2.2 of these guidelines.*
- *The DERF only accepts self-implementation by Danish CSOs, if they can document to be the best placed, have access to the target group, and clearly enhance the involvement of local actors. Self-implementation is only possible once per country, giving the organisation a one-time chance to build the capacity of local actors to act as the implementing partner organisation the second time they apply for DERF funding.*
- *Description of the humanitarian context and needs assessment must be written and signed by the local partner organisation.*

**Financial resources and support:** The mandate of the DERF does not allow direct funding to partners in the crisis areas/ intervention countries. However, to ensure financially localised humanitarian responses, the DERF transfers as high a proportion of the grants as possible to local actors, according to the following thresholds:

- *At least 60% of the budgeted funds must benefit the crisis-affected population (budget lines 1-7).*
- *At least 80% of the budgeted funds must be spent in the crisis area.*

**Capacity:** The DERF supports capacity strengthening of local actors, hereunder the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action, and their ability to effectively respond to the needs of people affected by crises.

- *Applicants must ensure that local actors are involved in interventions, apply their local capacities, and strengthen them where needed in support of a locally led humanitarian response.*

**Participation and decision-making:** DERF supports that local actors actively participate and are actively involved in decisions that affect them.

- *All applications are assessed on how target groups can provide feedback and are engaged in decision-making about the implementation throughout the intervention.*
- *Flexible funds for activities are made available but require engaging the target group in decision-making about the prioritisation and use of these funds.*

**Coordination:** The DERF promotes and expects greater presence and influence of local actors in coordination.

- *Implementing partners are expected to be part of the local and/or national coordination mechanisms.*
- *Applicants may include relevant coordination costs for the implementing partner into the DERF budget.*

### 1.1.3 Principle of Do No Harm to people and their environment

The DERF highlights the importance of applicants to be aware of the effect that any involvement and assistance will have on others and on the environment. Local civil society actors working with vulnerable people affected by crises must be aware of the position and role they play in the specific context and acknowledge their own biases. The aim is to minimise any negative impact on people and the environment and increase the positive impact.

The DERF supports efforts to manage risks associated with humanitarian action. This includes safeguarding the persons involved in the intervention and protecting the crisis-affected people from misconduct such as sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH). A well-designed intervention will ensure a detailed orientation of its organisational values, principles, and conduct towards the people it works with, hereunder particularly vulnerable people.

The CISU Code of Conduct, which can be found on CISU's website, provides an overall framework on safeguarding requirements and obligations of organisations seeking funding from any of the CISU-managed pools of funds, including the DERF. The CISU website includes a dedicated accountability site, with an overview of the requirements and recommendations for applicants, grantees and partners within accountability, e.g. safeguarding, anti-corruption, complaint mechanism etc. For each of the areas, the site covers accountability areas, clauses from the Danish MFA, as well as guidance, best practice and process descriptions to be used by grantees. Requirements and obligations to prevent and respond to risks of misconduct are further specified in the DERF grant management guide, the grant contract, and other relevant DERF publications.

*Applicants must demonstrate extensive knowledge of the context and understanding of how their interventions have consequences for the people affected by crisis and for the environment. Applicants must demonstrate how they safeguard people they work with.*

## 1.2 Funding modalities

The DERF can support lifesaving interventions through two modalities:

**a) Rapid Response (RR)** responding to an acute humanitarian crisis. This modality addresses the humanitarian needs amongst particularly vulnerable populations during or immediately following a humanitarian crisis. This could be disasters or crises related to climate change, as well as other natural or man-made disasters.

**b) Early Action (EA)** acting in anticipation of humanitarian crises. This modality supports interventions that act in anticipation of crises, mitigating the effects such crises are predicted to have on particularly vulnerable populations. The anticipated crisis must be documented by recognised forecasting sources.

The largest part of the DERF funding pool is reserved for the **Rapid Response** modality, which can be activated through an alert / call system. Any user of the DERF may submit an alert about a particular humanitarian crisis using credible sources of information in order to justify a call for applications. If an alert is assessed eligible, the DERF opens a call for applications.

Annually, DKK 4,8 million are set aside for the modality of **Early Action**. The modality is for small lifesaving interventions that act in anticipation of a humanitarian crisis. These crises are predominantly caused by weather- and climate change related hazards. Applications can be submitted on an ongoing basis.

Each modality is described in detail in chapters three and four.

## 1.3. Categories of humanitarian crises

The Rapid Response modality can be activated for the following types of humanitarian crises:

### A slow onset humanitarian crisis

- Examples are droughts as experienced in the Horn of Africa, leading to large-scale food insecurity.

### A rapid onset humanitarian crisis

- Examples are flooding events experienced in Sierra Leone, Niger, and Sudan, or the numerous cyclones or typhoons causing widespread destruction in Mozambique or the Philippines.

### A spike in a protracted humanitarian crisis

- Examples are refugee crises, where attacks cause a new spike in the protracted crisis, leading to affected persons fleeing to neighbouring countries or a sudden and significant escalation in hostilities between warring parties as witnessed in Myanmar, Mozambique or in Ukraine.

Note that the DERF is not able to provide funds for protracted humanitarian crisis situations. With protracted DERF understanding equals 'over a prolonged period of time'. The mandate of the DERF is limited to interventions that start within a period of three months from the start of a crisis or a spike in a crisis.

### DEFINITION OF HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

"A humanitarian crisis is an event or series of events that causes harm to the physical, mental, social, and economic well-being of a large group of people, exceeds their ability to cope using their own resources, and how complex it is to fill such gap by the humanitarian responders" (source: INFORM Severity Methodology)



PHOTO: RAHMA ISLAMIC RELIEF

## 2. Who is eligible to apply for DERF funding

### 2.1 Overall eligibility

All Danish CSOs who do not have a partnership agreement with the Danish MFA are eligible for DERF funding. Danish CSOs must demonstrate that they have relevant access, capacity and expertise to assist people affected by crisis through partnerships with local or national implementers or in exceptional cases through their own organisation (self-implementation).

The Danish CSO and the implementing partner(s) must follow these DERF guidelines and their supporting guides. They must also demonstrate knowledge of the CHS, as well as efforts contributing to realising the localisation ambitions as described under the core principles of the DERF.

### 2.2 Requirements for applying to the DERF

#### 2.2.1 Requirements for the Danish CSO

The DERF accepts applications from CSOs based in Denmark. This means that the following minimum requirements (laid down by the Danish MFA) must be met:

- The organisation needs to be private and must have a legal and organisational domicile, as well as activities in Denmark.
- The chairperson or most members of its governing body must be Danish citizens or foreigners with residence permit and home address in Denmark.
- The organisation must have existed for at least one year.
- When applying for funds up to DKK 500.000, the organisation must have a minimum of 25 paying members or contributors in Denmark. When applying for more than DKK 500.000, the requirements are 50 or more.
- The organisation must have an approved set of statutes.
- The annual accounts of the organisation must be subject to auditing.

The governing body of the Danish CSO must be able to take on full responsibility for the application and for any potential grant awarded by the DERF.

#### 2.2.2 Requirements for the implementing partner

Implementing partners must follow the DERF definition of being a local or national organisation, which is in line with the global definition of a local actor within the Grand Bargain.

Local or national partners must form part of civil society in the crisis area concerned. These may be local CSOs, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), citizens' groups, trade unions, networks, social movements or the like.

#### WHO CAN BE A LOCAL OR NATIONAL IMPLEMENTING PARTNER?

The DERF follows the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) humanitarian financing localisation marker to determine who can be a local or national implementing partner. All local and national organisations operating in the crises area, which are not affiliated with an international NGO may be implementing partner. If a local partner maintains independent fundraising and governance systems, it is not considered to be affiliated with an international NGO merely because it is part of a network, confederation, or alliance.

#### 2.2.3 Requirements for the partnership

The humanitarian intervention must be carried out in collaboration between one or several CSOs from Denmark and one or several implementing partners from the crisis-affected area, except in cases where self-implementation by Danish CSOs has been approved.

New partnerships cannot qualify for DERF funding. With the justification of starting interventions rapidly and knowing each other's capacities beforehand, the Danish CSO must already have experiences of collaborating with the proposed implementing partner. This may be interventions funded by donors or through own fundraising.

Additional implementing partners without budget responsibilities may be new to the partnership and should always be justified in terms of added value.

Funds are disbursed to the Danish CSO (the grantee), but an implementing partner must oversee/operate day-to-day management. It is important that the partnership between Danish CSOs and implementing partner(s) can support the achievement of the objective of the DERF, and applications

should therefore be proportional to the capacities of the partners. It is expected that the grantee, who holds the contract with the DERF, ensures that this is reflected in the partnership. The grantee has the overall responsibility of ensuring that the grant is managed and reported on according to the contractual obligations with CISU.

The grantee must ensure that all partners and others that receive part of the granted funds are not included on the prevalent UN's or EU's anti-terrorism/sanctions lists.

### 2.2.4 Self-implementation by the Danish CSO

In exceptional cases, the Danish CSO can be eligible for self-implementation. To apply, the Danish CSO must live up to the following, additional criteria:

- must have established access to crisis-affected populations through own localised presence in the area, where the intervention is to take place. This can be a country office, local branch or similar,
- must demonstrate that it is the best placed implementer of the particular intervention,
- must describe how involvement of local actors will be ensured and enhanced.

The DERF can fund self-implementation by a Danish CSO only once in the same country if the above criteria are assessed to have been fulfilled. This time limit is to provide the Danish CSO with reasonable opportunity to establish partnerships and increase the participation of local or national actors to promote localised response and capacities.

## 2.3 To qualify for DERF funding

The DERF assesses the organisational capacity of Danish applicants to assess if the applied funding ceiling by the Danish applicant is suitable and in line with organisational ability and experience. It is the capacity and experience of the Danish applicant which forms the basis of the funding ceiling assessment. The information assessed is part of the organisational description (stamdata) on the Vores CISU platform. Thus, keeping this information up to date is crucial for achieving a correct organisational capacity assessment.

The organisational capacity of Danish applicants is assessed when applying for an intervention. The pre-qualification system as it was known under the previous DERF guidelines no longer applies.

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## Funding ceilings

The DERF caters for a wide range of organisations, from very small voluntary associations to large CSOs with professional, full-time staff. To give all a fair chance of funding support, the DERF operates with three funding ceilings, where the smallest ceiling requires only little previous experience and the highest ceiling more experience and thus more demanding standards and proof of ability.

### The ceilings are:

1. Up to DKK 199.999 per intervention and maximum DKK 1 million per year.
2. Between DKK 200.000 and 749.999 per intervention and maximum DKK 3 million per year.
3. Between DKK 750.000 and 1.5 million per intervention and maximum DKK 4 million per year.

## 2.3.1 Funding ceilings and minimum requirements per ceiling

The table below describes the minimum requirements needed to qualify for a funding ceiling.

## 2.3.2 Assessment criteria for qualifying for DERF funding.

When applying for a grant, the DERF (external Grant Committee) assesses the organisational capacity of the Danish CSO and its partners before assessing the intervention itself. This is done by a) assessing the fulfilment of the minimum requirements per funding ceiling, and b) assessing the organisational data provided, applying the following assessment criteria:

1. The extent to which the applicants demonstrate relevant experience and expertise with development and/or humanitarian interventions. This includes organisational capacities such as financial standards as well as management of external funding and donations.
2. The extent to which the applicants demonstrate that approaches to, and systems for monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning are in place and applied.
3. The extent to which the applicants demonstrate the application of systems, experience and expertise required to ensure robust risk management (including anti-corruption and anti-terror procedures) as well as security, safety and safeguarding (including PSEAH and anti-child labour/child protection) at the organisational level (all staff and/or volunteers included) and at the level of the target group (crisis-affected people and communities).

Funding ceilings	Up to DKK 199.999 per intervention and max. DKK 1 million per year	Between DKK 200.000 and 749.999 per intervention and max. DKK 3 million per year	Between DKK 750.000 and 1.5 million per intervention and max. DKK 4 million per year
Minimum requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Danish CSO must have documented experience with implementing at least one development and/or humanitarian intervention.</li> <li>■ The Danish CSO must fulfil CISU's requirements for financial management.*</li> <li>■ The Danish CSO must have a track record of having managed funds for interventions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Danish CSO must have documented experience with implementing more than one development and/or humanitarian intervention.</li> <li>■ The Danish CSO must fulfil CISU's requirements for financial management.*</li> <li>■ The Danish CSO must have a track record of managing funds above DKK 200.000 for interventions within the last financial years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Danish CSO must have documented experience with implementing humanitarian interventions.</li> <li>■ The Danish CSO must fulfil CISU's requirements for financial management.*</li> <li>■ The Danish CSO must have a track record of managing external funds (donor funds or funding with the same requirements with regards to the level of financial management systems) above DKK 1 million within the last financial years.</li> </ul>

\* Please refer to the DERF Grant Management Guidelines for details about CISU's financial management requirements.

# 3. DERF funding modality: Rapid Response

## 3.1 Purpose and content of the modality

The Rapid Response modality (RR) funds humanitarian interventions responding to the impact of natural disasters or man-made crisis situations. The aim of the modality is to save lives based on localised humanitarian response and to support particularly vulnerable groups affected by crises.

In support of local leadership, it is a requirement that the implementing partner writes the context analysis of the intervention. This includes a description of crises scenarios and the expected needs of the affected population and vulnerable groups.

Danish CSOs can apply for funding through the RR modality for interventions up to DKK 1,5 million, depending on the funding ceiling their organisational capacity qualifies for, as described in chapter 2.3.

The period of an RR intervention from start to end of implementation may not exceed six months. Under exceptional circumstances and with thorough justification an intervention may be extended with up to three months in order to ensure proper completion of implementation.

### Flexible funds for activities

In support of local leadership, the DERF makes it possible (optional) for applicants to plan with flexible funds for activities. The purpose of these funds is to enhance the possibility for increased participation and community involvement in the decision-making about how to use these funds.

Applicants may budget with up to 10% of the Total Cost (budget line 13) for flexible funds. When implementing, flexible funds may only be used for managing a process of community involvement in the decision-making about these funds, and for implementing the activities as per the decision taken by the community.

Besides the process itself, flexible funds must only be spent on lifesaving humanitarian activities and must support the outcomes of the intervention.

## 3.2 Alerting the DERF to open a call for applications

The key trigger of the RR modality is the occurrence of either of the following three categories of humanitarian crises: a rapid onset crisis, a slow onset crisis, or a spike in a protracted crisis.

The RR modality is activated through the DERF call system, enabling the DERF to open a call for applications within a short timeframe. A call is triggered in response to one of the following:

1. an international or national appeal from UN, governments or similar. The DERF assesses appeals to open a call.
2. an alert raised by a Danish CSO and their partner(s). This must be done by sending the DERF an alert through the Vores CISU platform. The document to be used (Alert Note) and a guidance note on how to raise an alert can be found on the DERF website.

Alerts must be submitted timely through the Vores CISU platform to respond in a way that implementation of potential interventions can begin within three months of the identified start of a humanitarian crisis. This usually means that an alert must be raised within the first four to six weeks of a crisis / a spike in a protracted crisis.

The DERF assesses incoming alerts within three working days. From the day an alert is received, if an alert is assessed to be eligible for opening a call, a call will be opened within a week.

The following **five criteria** are used to assess whether the appeal or alert will activate the DERF to issue a call for applications:

1. Critical unmet emergency and/or protection needs exist.
2. Particularly vulnerable persons or groups exist among the crisis-affected populations.
3. Timeliness of potential DERF funded interventions.
4. Significant funding gaps exist.
5. DERF fund availability.

Calls for applications are announced on the DERF website. Organisations can also subscribe to a mailing-list for receiving direct information when the DERF opens a new call – this is to be found on the DERF website, the DERF MyNewsDesk.

The call document will describe the crisis, the humanitarian needs and the vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the call document will specify how long the window for submitting applications is open. Calls are on average open for applications for two to three weeks, depending on the three months' timeframe.



**ILLUSTRATION: THE RAPID RESPONSE PROCESS**

Applications are assessed in the order they are received. With the argument of being a rapid funding mechanism, the DERF does not wait with approving applications until the closing date of a call window. This also means that applications are not compared with each other but solely assessed based on the below mentioned criteria (chapter 4.4).

### 3.3 How to apply (responding to a call for applications)

Applications for interventions are submitted through the Vores CISU platform during the call period, being the time from the DERF opens a call until its closing date. The following information is needed when applying:

A. General information about the applicant (must always be checked for needed updates since last time of applying for CISU/DERF grants). Also, general information and contact information about the local implementing organisation must be entered.

B. Information about the planned intervention:

1. Basic information about the intervention must be entered.
2. An application form with detailed information must be submitted through the system.
3. Annexes to the application include a) a signed cover page, b) the context description written and signed by the implementing partner, and c) the intervention budget.

Specific formats must be used, all of which are available on the DERF website.

### 3.4 Criteria for assessing applications

Applications will be assessed in two steps: first the capacity of the Danish CSO is assessed. This is done based on the criteria described in chapter 2.3.2 and results in a decision on the applicable funding ceiling.

Thereafter, the intervention application is assessed.

There are five assessment criteria to assess Rapid Response interventions. See the table on the following page.

### 3.5 Assessment and selection of applicants

When receiving an application, the following steps are taken to assess the application:

1. The DERF grant management screens the application for administrative errors before forwarding it to an external assessment consultant. The screening includes, among other things, a check of:
  - a. If formal requirements to application and budget are followed.
  - b. If the Danish partners statutes and latest annual accounts are uploaded.
  - c. If the Danish partner lives up to CISUs financial requirements.
  - d. If the application is based on an existing partnership.
  - e. If at least 60% of the budgeted funds will benefit the crisis-affected population (budget lines 1-7)
  - f. If at least 80% of the budgeted funds are planned to be spent in the crisis area.

2. An external consultant assesses the application, based on the described criteria, and formulates a recommendation for approval/rejection. This process includes the assessment of the organisational capacity of the Danish CSO (for the funding ceiling) and the assessment of the intervention application.
3. A Grant Committee external to the DERF grant management at CISU assesses the application and the recommendation by the assessment consultant. The Grant Committee takes the decision on the funding ceiling and on the final approval/rejection of the application.
4. The DERF grant management at CISU communicates the decision to the applicant.
5. If the Grant Committee gives conditions to be fulfilled before a final approval, the response from the applicant to those conditions is assessed by an external assessment consultant.

The assessment period from submission of an application until approval and signature of contract is approximately 12 workdays, not including the days where the DERF waits for an applicant to respond to conditions given related to the final approval.

Rapid Response interventions must start implementing within seven days of receiving funds.

Assessment criteria to assess Rapid Response interventions	
<b>1. Relevance</b>	<p>1.1 The intervention is needs-based and relevant in the context where the intervention is implemented.</p> <p>1.2 The purpose of the intervention is aligned with the objective and principles of the DERF.</p> <p>1.3 The intervention is locally coordinated.</p>
<b>2. Target group</b>	<p>2.1 The target group is clearly defined as particularly vulnerable people affected by crisis and selected based on transparent criteria.</p> <p>2.2 The target group can provide feedback and is throughout the intervention engaged in decision-making about the implementation.</p>
<b>3. Expected results</b>	<p>3.1 Intervention activities and expected results are timely, clear, and coherent.</p> <p>3.2 The approach and methods of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) are suitable for documenting expected results.</p> <p>3.3 Intervention related risks to people and their environment are identified and mitigation measures described.</p> <p>3.4 The intervention ensures that people are safeguarded, can report concerns and complaints, and have them addressed.</p>
<b>4. Partnership</b>	<p>4.1 The implementing organisation(s) have relevant experience, capacities, and resources to manage and implement the intervention of the applied scope and size.</p> <p>4.2 The implementing organisation(s) are locally anchored and form part of civil society in the country where the intervention is implemented.</p> <p>4.3 The roles, responsibilities, and contributions of partners and involved actors are clear and described in detail.</p> <p>4.4 If self-implementing,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the Danish CSO must be best placed to this specific intervention in this specific context,</li> <li>b) the intervention must enhance participation of local actors, and</li> <li>c) the Danish CSO must have access to the target group.</li> </ol>
<b>5. Cost level</b>	<p>5.1 The cost level is reasonable, considering the expected results, the context, the target group, and the size of the intervention.</p>

## 4. DERF funding modality: Early Action

### 4.1. Purpose and content of the modality

The modality of Early Action (EA) is funding humanitarian interventions in the timespan between being able to document early warning signs and before a humanitarian crisis becomes a reality. The DERF defines Early Action as the window of opportunity to act ahead of a predicted, potential humanitarian crisis. It can function as a bridge between disaster risk reduction and preparedness on the one hand and crisis response on the other.

Under this modality, interventions:

- reduce the consequences of an expected disaster or crisis, mitigating humanitarian impact on people and/or
- contribute to prevent that a natural hazard develops into a humanitarian crisis.

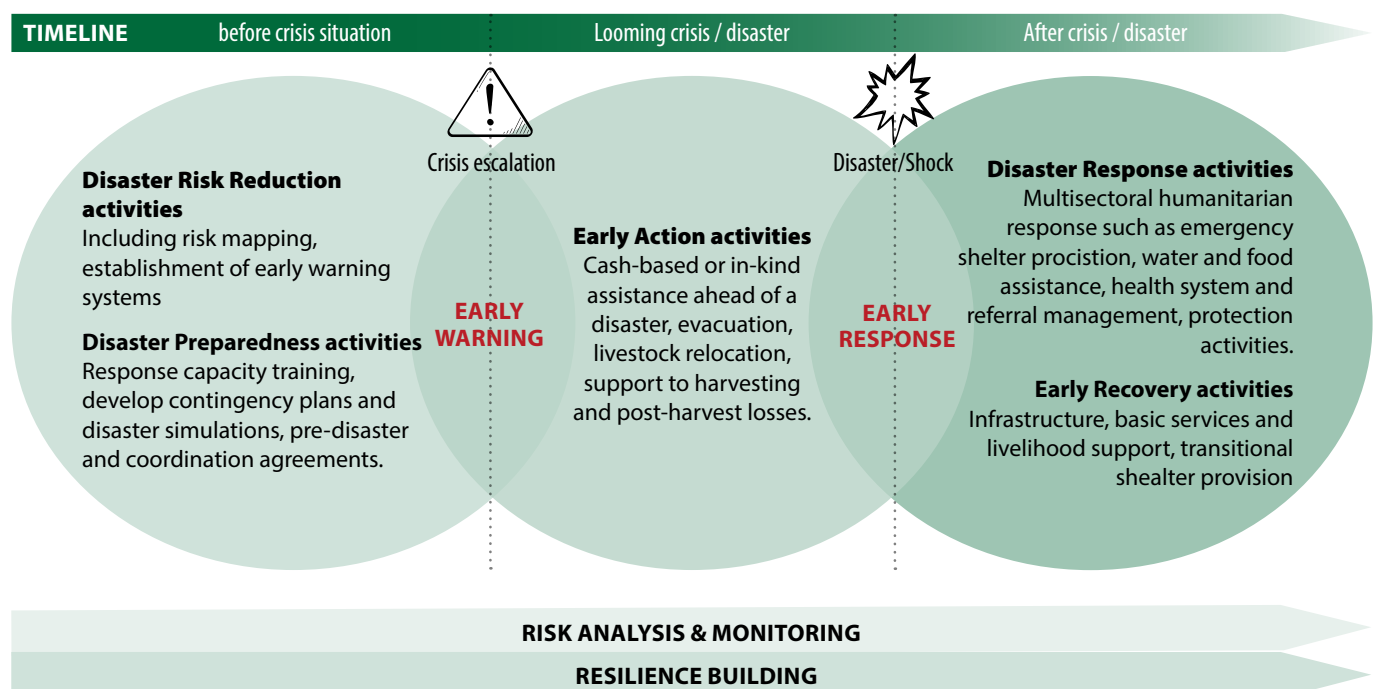
Early Action is understood as a lifesaving modality. It is also a crisis-averting modality and has per definition always a no-regret dimension, meaning that an intervention must be of value for the population most likely to be affected, also in the case that the anticipated crisis does not happen as expected.

The modality may be applied in humanitarian situations that can be predicted or forecasted – these will in almost all instances be linked to weather- and climate change related hazards. Forecasts can flag an imminent hazard (such as drought) or warn of the impact of hazards (such as acute food insecurity associated with drought).

Applications to the EA modality have to be substantiated by recognised forecasting sources. The EA modality is designed in order to act swiftly when the early signs of a disaster or crisis start to appear. Recognised warning and forecasting services can help to improve predictability and to provide the needed information.

#### EXAMPLES OF USEFUL WARNING AND FORECAST SERVICES / PLATFORMS:

- Start Network:  
[www.startnetwork.org/start-fund/alerts](http://www.startnetwork.org/start-fund/alerts)
- ACAPS:  
[www.acaps.org/countries](http://www.acaps.org/countries)
- IRI/LDEO Climate Data Library:  
[www.iriidldeo.columbia.edu/](http://www.iriidldeo.columbia.edu/)
- Integrated Food Security Phase Classification:  
[www.ipcinfo.org/](http://www.ipcinfo.org/)
- INFORM:  
[www.drmmc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index](http://www.drmmc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index)
- The Humanitarian Data Exchange (UN OCHA):  
[www.data.humdata.org/](http://www.data.humdata.org/)



If anticipating a slow-onset crisis, it may be difficult to determine whether a response still is in anticipation of, or responding to, a humanitarian crisis. Therefore, interventions linked to a slow-onset crisis may fall within either of the two DERF modalities, depending on the particular context.

EA interventions may include activities that build resilience of affected people as well as social cohesion within affected communities and for communities to act as 'first responders' to humanitarian crises. This includes activities which focus on emergency preparedness. However, interventions must not exclusively consist of resilience-building activities, which would be more associated with long-term development interventions such as those supported through the CISU-administered Civil Society Fund (CSF).

In support of local leadership, it is a requirement that the implementing partner writes the context analysis of the intervention. This includes forecasted and early warning scenarios, as well as the expected needs of the crisis-affected population and vulnerable groups.

Danish CSOs can apply to the EA modality for interventions up to a maximum DKK 400.000. Applications are received on an ongoing basis and not through the alert/call system pertaining to the RR modality. In special circumstances, the DERF may choose to open a call for EA applications. A call for EA applications would commonly be based on converging, credible forecasting or early warning sources pointing at an increasing likelihood of extreme weather-related events potentially resulting in a significant humanitarian crisis. Examples could be natural disasters such as those caused by the annual monsoon season in Asia or changed weather patterns attributable to the El Niño or La Niña phenomenon.

The period of an EA intervention from start to end of implementation **may not exceed four months**. Under certain circumstances an intervention may be extended by up to two months to ensure proper completion of implementation.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE AS A RISK AMPLIFIER

The difference between disaster events caused by 'normal', often seasonal, weather fluctuations such as recurrent flooding or drought and those linked to climate change is linked to attribution. In other words, the underlying causes of a weather-related disaster. The DERF users respond to, or in anticipation of, significant disasters or crises, many of which due to weather events characterised by increasingly altered patterns, frequency or intensity – most of these events are substantially linked to climate change.

#### Flexible funds for activities

In support of local leadership, the DERF makes it possible (optional) for applicants to plan with flexible funds for activities. The purpose of these funds is to enhance the possibility for increased participation and community involvement in the decision-making about how to use these funds.

Applicants may budget with up to 10% of the Total Cost (budget line 13) for flexible funds. When implementing, flexible funds may only be used for managing a process of community involvement in the decision-making about these funds, and for implementing the activities as per the decision taken by the community.

Flexible funds may however only be spent on lifesaving humanitarian activities and support the objectives or outcomes of the approved intervention.

## 4.2 How to apply

Applications for interventions are submitted through the Vores CISU online platform. The following information is needed when applying:

1. General information about the Danish applicant (must always be checked for updates needed since last time of applying for CISU/DERF grants). Also, general information and contact information about the local implementing partner(s) must be entered.
2. Information about the planned intervention:
  - a. Basic information about the intervention must be entered.
  - b. An application form with detailed information must be submitted through the system.
  - c. Annexes to the application to be uploaded include
    - a) a signed cover page, b) the context description written and signed by the implementing partner, and c) the intervention budget.

Specific formats must be used, all of which are available on the DERF website.

## 4.3 Criteria for assessing applications

Applications will be assessed in two steps: first the capacity of the Danish CSO is assessed. This is done based on the criteria described in chapter 2.3.2 and results in a decision on the funding ceiling. This is applicable even though the total amount to apply may not exceed DKK 400.000.

Thereafter, the intervention application is assessed. There are five assessment criteria to assess EA interventions. See the table on the following page.

## 4.4 Assessment and selection of applicants

When receiving an intervention application, the following steps are taken to assess the application:

1. The DERF grant management screens the application for administrative errors before forwarding it to an external assessment consultant. The screening includes, among other things, a check of:
  - a. If formal requirements to application and budget are followed

- b. If the Danish partners statutes and latest annual accounts are uploaded.
  - c. If the Danish partner lives up to CISUs financial requirements.
  - d. If the application is based on an existing partnership.
  - e. If at least 60% of the budgeted funds will benefit the crisis-affected population (budget lines 1-7)
  - f. If at least 80% of the budgeted funds are planned to be spent in the crisis area.
2. An external consultant assesses the application, based on the described criteria, and formulates a recommendation for approval/rejection. This process includes the assessment of the organisational capacity of the Danish CSO (for the funding ceiling) and the assessment of the intervention application.
  3. A Grant Committee external to the DERF grant management at CISU assesses the application and the recommendation by the assessment consultant. The Grant Committee takes the decision on the funding ceiling and on the final approval/rejection of the application.
  4. The DERF grant management at CISU communicates the decision to the applicant.
  5. If the Grant Committee gives conditions to be fulfilled before a final approval, the response from the applicant to those conditions is assessed by the external assessment consultant.
- The assessment period from submission of an application until approval and signature of contract is approximately 12 workdays, not including the days where the DERF waits for an applicant to respond to conditions given related to the final approval. If the anticipatory action is needed within fewer days/shorter window, the DERF cannot approve such application.
- Early Action interventions must start implementing within seven days of receiving funds.

Assessment criteria to assess Early Action interventions	
<b>1. Relevance</b>	<p>1.1 The intervention is based on credible forecasts and relevant in the context of the expected humanitarian crisis.</p> <p>1.2 The purpose of the intervention is aligned with the objective and principles of the DERF.</p> <p>1.3 The intervention is locally coordinated.</p>
<b>2. Target group</b>	<p>2.1 The target group is clearly defined as particularly vulnerable people expected to be affected by crisis and selected based on transparent criteria.</p> <p>2.2 The target group can provide feedback and throughout the intervention engaged in decision-making about the implementation.</p>
<b>3. Expected results</b>	<p>3.1 Intervention activities and expected results are timely, clear and coherent.</p> <p>3.2 The approach and methods of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) are suitable for documenting expected results.</p> <p>3.3 Intervention related risks to people and their environment are identified and mitigation measures described.</p> <p>3.4 The intervention ensures that people are safeguarded, can report concerns and complaints, and have them addressed.</p>
<b>4. Partnership</b>	<p>4.1 The implementing organisation(s) have relevant experience, capacities, and resources to manage and implement the intervention of the applied scope and size.</p> <p>4.2 The implementing organisation(s) are locally anchored and form part of civil society in the country where the intervention is implemented.</p> <p>4.3 The roles, responsibilities, and contributions of partners and involved actors are clear and described in detail.</p> <p>4.4 If self-implementing,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the Danish CSO must be best placed to this specific intervention in this specific context,</li> <li>b) the intervention must enhance participation of local actors, and</li> <li>c) the Danish CSO must have access to the target group.</li> </ol>
<b>5. Cost level</b>	<p>5.1 The cost level is reasonable, considering the expected results, the context, the target group, and the size of the intervention.</p>

# 5. Implementation, monitoring and reporting

## 5.1 Responsibility of the Danish CSO

When a Danish CSO is awarded a DERF grant they become a DERF grantee. The grantee is obliged to comply with a series of conditions and requirements for management of funds, as described in the DERF Grant Management Guide and related guides. The way the organisation has managed, administered and reported on previous interventions funded by the DERF and other CISU funds will form part of the organisational track record and is part of the assessment of the organisational capacity.

The Danish CSO board carries full responsibility for the DERF grant being dutifully managed by the organisation and its implementing partner(s). This includes ensuring that partner organisations follow the standing regulations. The board has to ensure that funds are managed in accordance with the DERF regulations and the basis for approval. The board's responsibility includes to guard against corruption, irregularities and of safeguarding the people involved in and benefiting from the intervention. Financial management procedures must follow the principles for good governance and accountability, including proper internal controls, bookkeeping, accounting and audits. This means that the Danish CSO must ensure financial monitoring of the intervention throughout the intervention period and that the grant accounts are subject to external auditing, as applicable. For further details, please refer to the DERF Grant Management Guide and related guides.

## 5.2 Implementation

During implementation, Danish CSOs and the implementing partners shall be guided by the humanitarian principles, and specifically by the CHS. All are obliged to familiarise themselves with the standard.

Concerning administrative and managerial issues, the DERF Grant Management Guide describes the regulations that must be followed. The guide includes regulations for contact with the DERF grant management, adjustments to an intervention, budget re-allocation, cooperation agreements, bank accounts, payments and audit requirements. The guide and other related guides and formats on the DERF website must be read and understood prior to submission of an application to the DERF. All Danish CSOs and partners are obliged to ensure that they check for latest updates of these on a regular basis.

## 5.3 DERF supervision and monitoring

DERF has the duty to supervise the management of DERF funds granted. This is undertaken primarily through review of reports, financial accounts, as well as the financial and managerial practices of Danish CSOs and their implementing partner(s). However, DERF is also obliged to conduct periodic monitoring visits to the Danish organisation, the implementing partner(s) and DERF interventions, where possible. Furthermore, the DERF may engage in thematic evaluations as well as invite for 3rd party monitoring of its granted interventions.

### 5.3.1 DERF support to Danish CSOs

The DERF provides online support to users and grantees. For this, the DERF website is the entry point, where support can be requested through an online form. Through access to the online platform Vores CISU users can also request for DERF advisory sessions. The website also includes a FAQ section, as well as links to interesting resource sites and different quality standards for inspiration.

### 5.3.2 DERF (CISU) accountability and complaint mechanism

Accountability is a key focus area for organisations working in civil society, development, and humanitarian aid. Increasingly, donors and the broader community require organisations to have an ethical code of conduct.

The DERF accountability system follows CISUs regulations and is described in the CISU Code of Conduct, which can be found on the DERF website.

The CISU Code of Conduct includes details about prevention of corruption and fraud, safeguarding people (including sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment), CISUs anti-child labour policies as well as the anti-terrorism procedures.

The CISU/DERF online complaint mechanism is accessible through the CISU website.

Procedures on how to file a complaint concerning DERF grants, grantees, partners and CISU staff etc. are described in the CISU Code of Conduct and must be submitted through the complaint mechanism on the CISU/DERF website.

The CISU/DERF procedures for handling complaints, whistleblowing and reporting on irregularities are to be found in the CISU Code of Conduct.

As part of the responsibilities of CISU as a manager of pools of funds, a special learning site on accountability is to be found on the CISU website: <https://cisu.dk/en/funding/accountability/>

It is the responsibility of the Danish grantee to ensure that the grantee as well as the local implementing partners have policies and procedures in place regarding these matters. Furthermore, Danish grantees and their partners have a particular responsibility to ensure that the target groups of grants are not subjected to abuse, exploitation, or harassment.

On the learning site, grantees and implementing partners can read about various topics related to accountability. For each topic, information, examples, and what CISU offers in terms of capacity building in that area are described.

### Reporting irregularities and complaints:

The reporting of irregularities must be submitted by mail to [indberet@cisu.dk](mailto:indberet@cisu.dk) with the grant reference number in the email subject heading.

It is mandatory for the governing body/board of the Danish CSO to immediately notify CISU:

- If significant difficulties arise in the implementation of the intervention, including problems regarding compliance with the approved budget.
- If significant problems arise in the organisation's relationship with the recipient country's authorities, partner(s), staff or volunteers.
- If there is well-founded suspicion or detection of theft, fraud, corruption, misuse, or similar irregularities.

All DERF grantees are very welcome to contact CISU if an intervention encounters problems, enabling CISU to guide on how to report the problems and how to pursue a solution.

## 5.4 Reporting, learning, and evaluation

For all interventions, sufficient resources for monitoring, learning and evaluation must be included in the application and budget when applying for DERF funding.

Reports are submitted through the online platform Vores CISU. For all DERF grants, a final narrative report and the final audited accounts must be submitted at the end of the intervention. Reports must include reflections on lessons learned and how such could be used to improve future humanitarian interventions as per the format. The final audited accounts must be submitted as per the formats and guidelines. All formats can be found on the DERF website, and the grantee is obliged to ensure that the current versions from the website are used upon submission.

Experience sharing meetings, the so-called 'DERFA' are organised between grantees to review and capture lessons learned during implementation. Participation usually includes the Danish CSOs and the implementing partners. Preparation, participation and follow up on these is mandatory for each grant.



# ANNEX: EXAMPLES ON LIFESAVING ACTIVITIES (RAPID RESPONSE)

Guidance Note on lifesaving activities (non-exhaustive) which can be relevant in DERF interventions as adapted to the specific context within which the intervention is to take place. The list is adopted from the UN CERF (Central Emergency Response Fund) Life-Saving Criteria & Activities per sector.

HUMANITARIAN SECTOR	LIFE-SAVING ACTIVITIES	WHEN THESE CONDITIONS ARE PRESENT
<b>Agriculture in Emergencies</b>	Provision of inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and tools in emergency contexts to restore food security and production capacity.	Agricultural activities which have a direct and immediate impact on restoring and protecting food availability and the livelihoods of particularly vulnerable people at risk of, or affected by, the emergency.
	Survival of productive animals in emergency situations. Examples include emergency vaccination, initial re-stocking, de-stocking, and water and supplementary feeding for animals.	Applicable when animal husbandry is a primary source of livelihood and essential for nutrition, transport, and ploughing for particularly vulnerable people at risk of, or affected by, the emergency.
	Flood and drought related response. Examples include emergency embankments, spot repair of agricultural infrastructure and other emergency inputs.	Time-critical interventions to protect or ensure food security of particularly vulnerable people at-risk of, or affected by, the emergency.
<b>Camp Co-ordination and Camp Management</b>  In the case of rapid onset emergencies or where displacement leads to camps/sites, immediate set up of Camp Coordination and Camp Management functions to support a response.	Establishment of camps/communal settlements to support the stabilization of affected populations.	All communal settings resulting from a disaster or complex emergency. Should be coordinated with the relevant cluster/sector
	Initial profiling/registration of populations in communal settings including camps, collective centres and other sites.	Context of specific emergency response. Should be coordinated with the relevant cluster/sector.
	Advocate for humanitarian access to allow lifesaving activities to be conducted in communal settings.	Should be coordinated with the protection cluster/sector
<b>Education in Emergencies</b>  Interventions aiming at restoring and providing safe educational and recreational activities for children and adolescents during an emergency.	Provision of school tents, education and recreation materials to establish safe spaces/learning environments for children from different age groups	No recurrent costs funded
	Emergency repair of education facilities including the provision of adequate sanitation facilities and quantities of safe drinking water and water for personal hygiene at the learning site.	No recurrent costs funded
	Teacher's training in emergencies	Support establishment of initial teaching capacity only. No recurrent costs for training.
	Essential life-saving skills and support such as SGBV information, Mine/UXO risk education, HIV/AIDS, psychosocial, nutrition, health and hygiene.	

HUMANITARIAN SECTOR	LIFE-SAVING ACTIVITIES	WHEN THESE CONDITIONS ARE PRESENT
<b>Emergency Shelter including NFI</b> Immediate provision of temporary/semi-temporary shelter and basic utensils for victims of disaster including complex emergencies	Provision and distribution of shelter materials.	Only for temporary emergency shelter and based on the context.
	Construction/repair of temporary emergency shelter.	Tents or only basic building materials for immediate repair of buildings serving as temporary shelter.
	Basic provision of Non-Food items for affected populations and host families.	According to cultural and climatic context
	Basic infrastructure / shelter repair (including rubble removal, environmental clean-up, emergency rehabilitation of community infrastructure).	Context of specific emergency response
	Construction / reconstruction and repair of temporary or transitional structures that provide immediate shelter and repair of permanent structures when appropriate.	Context of specific emergency response
<b>Food</b> Provision of minimum food requirements to people affected by emergencies	General food distribution and targeted distribution for most vulnerable groups (complement gaps).	Context of specific emergency response
<b>Health in Emergencies</b> Activities that have an immediate impact on the health of populations affected by an emergency	Collection, processing analysis and dissemination of critical health information including access to and availability of life saving health services.	Context of specific emergency response
	Ensuring equitable and timely access to Emergency Primary Health Care.	Context of specific emergency response
	Provision, distribution and replenishment of quick turnover emergency stockpiles which have been used in an emergency context.	Context of specific emergency response
	Addressing life-threatening conditions related to communicable diseases (immunizations, outbreak control). Activities may include establishment of emergency early warning and response systems for the early detection of and response to selected outbreaks of communicable diseases; training of health staff; supply of drugs and material; social mobilisation and targeted health education; Reactive mass vaccination campaign; preparation of specific ad-hoc treatment units (e.g. cholera treatment centre).	Context of specific emergency response
	Priority reproductive health emergency interventions: Activities may include supply of drugs and material.	Context of specific emergency response

HUMANITARIAN SECTOR	LIFE-SAVING ACTIVITIES	WHEN THESE CONDITIONS ARE PRESENT
<b>Health in Emergencies</b>  Activities that have an immediate impact on the health of populations affected by an emergency	Medical (including psychological) support to survivors of sexual violence. Activities may include updating health staff on clinical management of sexual violence protocols; supply of drugs and material (including through inter-agency RH kits).	Context of specific emergency response
	Addressing life-threatening conditions related to chronic diseases which have been interrupted in an emergency context.	Context of specific emergency response
	Priority responses to HIV/AIDS. Activities include HIV/AIDS awareness information dissemination, provision of condoms, PMTCT, PEP, and standard precautions in emergency health care settings; emergency awareness and response interventions for high-risk groups; care and treatment for people with HIC whose treatment has been interrupted.	Context of specific emergency response
	Support the provision of Psychological First Aid – protect and care for people with severe mental disorders in communities and institutions.	Context of specific emergency response
<b>Logistics</b>  Activities that provide immediate logistical support for the delivery of priority sectoral interventions in emergency response	Logistics activities devised to overcome logistics bottlenecks affecting the supply chain of multiple humanitarian organizations in a common humanitarian operation. E.g. emergency bridge or road repairs.	Context of specific emergency response
<b>Nutrition</b>	Nutrition screenings and surveillance providing timely, critical information for identification of areas of urgent needs, or deterioration in the nutritional situation, and for identification of cases of acute malnutrition for referral for lifesaving treatment.	Context of specific emergency response
	Provision of lifesaving emergency food rations (e.g. BPs – or food bars) to the general population, or as blanket distributions to particularly vulnerable groups.	Only when general food ration quality is inadequate for the needs of the population or where distribution is not yet sufficiently addressed during an emergency and as a temporary measure to prevent further deterioration of the nutritional situation and loss of life. DERF funding targets particularly vulnerable groups.
	Management of severe and moderate acute malnutrition. Activities include support treatment for severe acute malnutrition as well as community mobilization /outreach to ensure communities can identify cases and access the services (i.e. community-based management of severe acute malnutrition); targeted and blanket supplementary feeding for children, pregnant and lactating women and other vulnerable groups.	Support for treatment of severe acute malnutrition should be provided wherever cases exist. Supplementary feeding should be considered where levels of acute malnutrition reach emergency thresholds. DERF only funds targeted supplementary feeding approaches to particularly vulnerable groups.

HUMANITARIAN SECTOR	LIFE-SAVING ACTIVITIES	WHEN THESE CONDITIONS ARE PRESENT
<b>Protection and Human Rights</b>	Profiling, registration and documentation of affected populations.	Context of specific emergency response
	Identification and strengthening / set up of community-based protection mechanisms.	Context of specific emergency response
	Provision of life saving psychosocial support to persons with special needs in particular for older persons.	In close coordination with the health cluster / sector
	Provision of life saving information to the affected population.	Context of specific emergency response
	Support measures to ensure access to justice with a special focus on IDPs, women and children (e.g. assessments of justice and security needs; support to legal advice and paralegal services in conflict affected areas).	Context of specific emergency response
<b>Gender-Based Violence</b>	Strengthen and/or deploy GBV personnel to guide implementation of an inter-agency multi-sectoral GBV programme response including ensuring provision of accessible confidential, survivor-centred services to address GBV and to ensuring it is appropriately addressed across all sectors.	In an emergency context and as a first priority, support health service providers with relevant supplies and ensure a range of appropriate psychosocial interventions are in place and accessible.
	Identify high-risk areas and factors driving GBV in the emergency and (working with others) strengthen / set up prevention strategies including safe access to fuel resources (per IASC Task force SAFE guidelines).	Context of specific emergency response
	Improve access of survivors of gender-based violence to secure and appropriate reporting, follow up and protection, including to police (particularly women police) or other security personnel when available.	Context of specific emergency response
<b>Water and Sanitation</b> Provision of minimum requirements of water, sanitation and hygiene standards in emergency situations.	Provision of water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene (bathing/washing). Activities include extraction, transport, treatment, storage, distribution and monitoring; repair, construction and maintenance; bulk and HH levels.	Context of specific emergency response
	Sanitation systems in emergency situations or situations with a foreseen emergency. Excreta disposal – shared, segregated household facilities. Solid Waste, Drainage.	Where there are public health risks or risks to other resources and facilities.
	Hygiene and sanitation supplies (including for women and girls) and awareness raising. Active participation of and accountability to affected populations in the prevention and mitigation of WASH related diseases: information / communication; optimize effective use of facilities; mobilization and participation; essential WASH related non-food items.	

HUMANITARIAN SECTOR	LIFE-SAVING ACTIVITIES	WHEN THESE CONDITIONS ARE PRESENT
<b>Child Protection</b>	Identification, registration, family tracing and reunification or interim care arrangements for separated children, orphans and children leaving armed groups / forces.	Context of specific emergency response
	Ensure proper referrals to other services such as health, food, education and shelter	Context of specific emergency response
	Identification, registration, referral and follow-up for other extremely vulnerable children, including survivors of GBV and other forms of violence, children with no access to basic service and those requiring special protection measures.	Context of specific emergency response
	Activities (including advocacy, awareness-raising, life-skills training, and livelihoods).	Context of specific emergency response
	Provision of psychosocial support to children affected by the emergency, e.g. through provision of child friendly spaces or other community-based interventions, return to school or emergency education, mental health referrals where expertise exists.	Context of specific emergency response
	Identification and strengthening, or establishment of community-based child protection mechanisms to assess, monitor and address child protection issues.	Context of specific emergency response
<b>Support Services</b>	Provision of common emergency telecommunications in support of the humanitarian community in an emergency.	Context of specific emergency response
<b>Coordination</b>	Provision of assistance to coordination efforts in humanitarian response.	The DERF can fund participation of DERF implementing CSO in relevant cluster/sector coordination groups to enable contribution towards ensuring that crisis-affected people receive coordinated and complementary assistance. It must be part of and relevant to a DERF humanitarian intervention.
<b>Multi-Agency Assessments</b>	Multi-agency needs assessments in new emergencies.	The DERF can fund participation of DERF implementing CSOs in multi-actor needs assessments where documented needs exist for new or updated data on humanitarian needs.



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