

# Real-Time Learning(RTL) COVID-19

**global operation:** How are National Society needs being addressed through the prioritization and allocation of funding to allow it to better rebound from the effects of COVID-19?

18 November 2020

## Acknowledgements

Appreciation first goes out to all the stakeholders interviewed across the five regions and Geneva. We realize that many of the stakeholders interviewed took valuable time from their busy schedules to respond to our questions.

This pilot Real-Time Learning for the COVID-19 global operation has been carried out by a global IFRC and National Society PMER team. Thank you goes to our PMER teams in Africa (Jackson Safari Kilonzo/Vincent Kiplagat/Khary Cisse/Seynabou Diop); Americas (Pradiip Alvarez/Marie Manrique/Wendy Arévalo/Ana Díaz/Andrés Gómez/Priscila González/María Larios/Melina Miele/Jeremy Smith/Araceli Sobenes/Wendy Soto); Asia Pacific (Audrey See Tho/Mursidi Unir/Tamar Gabay); Europe (Dorottya Patko/David Kohlmann/Francisco Fong, Daria Gordina); MENA (Nadine Haddad/Hamzeh Ababneh/Lina Harbieh/Dibakar Behera/Tendai Zauyamakando) and in Geneva (Miki Tsukamoto/Fred Fulton).

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are from our interviewed stakeholders, with analysis and interpretation carried out by the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the IFRC secretariat.

Volunteers and staff of the Philippines Red Cross Society going house-to-house to deliver cash and food assistance to families affected by COVID-19.

*Photo: Philippines Red Cross Society/ IFRC*



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## Context

To help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the IFRC secretariat response to COVID-19, PMER has been piloting an “active learning” approach to carry out real-time learning on targeted areas of the response. This approach is informed by the global scope, scale and rapidly changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the response.

This second pilot aims to reach out to a wider range of stakeholders from Recipient National Societies, Donor National Societies and the IFRC secretariat, with questions identified by management/stakeholders at different points in the operation. This light and flexible approach substitutes the Real-Time Evaluation (RTE), which would be challenging to apply for this operation, but does not replace mid- or end point evaluations when the response is more stable.

Question 2 looked at *“How are National Society needs being addressed through the prioritization and allocation of funding to allow it to better rebound from the effects of COVID-19?”* This learning aims to complement the exercise Mobilize, Execute and Transform with Agility to Respond to COVID-19 which was carried out in April and it is hoped that the feedback will better help the IFRC secretariat adapt its operational response to better meet the needs of member National Societies worldwide.

## Limitations

- Approval to launch the RTL Q2 came only in July which affected the data collection in view of summer holidays/Eid festivity worldwide, as well as competed with other initiatives which had already been planned for the months of July/August.
- Layers of communication needed to reach all relevant stakeholders, as well as the translation time needed for letters etc.
- Unforeseen time it took in certain regions for National Societies to select their representatives for the interview.

- Differences in time zones and internet connectivity in view of COVID-19 context posed a challenge in the RTL data collection and data analysis process.
- A representative sample of stakeholders were selected for this RTL based on recommendations from the Operational Management and a select agreed criteria developed by the global team. It was not possible to reach all stakeholders.

## Methodology

Short interviews (via online platforms) were carried out with 95 key informants (IFRC, Recipient National Society, Donor National Society) from the five regions and Geneva. Interviews followed the same four group of questions and took approximately 20 to 40 minutes.

The methodology of data processing and analysis is a combination of Jess Letch’s ‘RapidCode’ system and the ‘thematic network analysis’ qualitative method. Thoughts and ideas (inputs) with more than 1,403 data provided by respondents were noted. Each input was matched to the relevant question.

As a first step, interviewers reviewed all inputs and based on content, identified the interview to the type of stakeholder (IFRC, secretariat Donor NS, Recipient NS) and assigned a high-level topic to each interview with a short summary of the interview.

## Methodology-continued

As a second step, and in order to facilitate follow up on this RTL by Operations and to align with organizational thinking, many of the topics were then further aligned with the topics in the document Scaling and speeding our response (April 2020) by the analysts of the team. Topics were then collectively honed and placed on a list covering all responses.

Each analyst was assigned a question for which they reviewed inputs at times by topic/stakeholder/region and extracted key analysis points. Key points describing **successes, challenges** or **recommendations** by stakeholder was carried out for Q 3 and 4, with a deeper analysis by frequency and topic/response/stakeholder/region carried out for Q 2, 5 and 6. For Q1, a weighted analysis was used in determining the top 3 NS needs for the COVID-19 operation.

Analysing the dataset by the central topics provided the framework for identifying overarching issues and creating a *thematic network* of key subjects raised by respondents.

## Key question and sub questions



**Key Question: Does the current funding prioritization and level of earmarking for the operation address National Society operational needs?**

### I. National Society Needs

**Q1: What are the top 3 needs for National Societies during COVID-19?**

**Q2: Did the IFRC secretariat respond to these identified needs?**

### II. Prioritization and Earmarking of Funding

**Q3: Do you have any feedback to share on the prioritization of funding for identified needs for COVID-19?**

**Q4: Do you have any feedback to share on the level of earmarking of funding for identified needs for COVID-19?**

### III. Factors to consider for Funding Allocation

**Q5: What factors should be taken into account when considering COVID-19 funding allocation to National Societies?**

### IV. Recommendations

**Q6. What recommendations on funding allocations would you like to give to the IFRC secretariat to better support COVID-19 needs?**



# Key Terms

## DEMANDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Right balance on government, public and donors demands and the NSs absorption capacity to deliver with quality and accountability.

## DO NO HARM

Ensure that all RCRC activities include a strong element on duty of care, operational analysis on the impact of our actions, “building back” better and support on the localization agenda. Ensure RCRC health actions to not cause physical or psychological harm to individuals or to communities served.

## DOMESTIC RESPONSE

Ensure that NSs at Headquarters and Branch levels have the capacity to respond to the needs and address existing community services that can be quickly expanded and supported.

## EVIDENCE-BASED AND RISK-INFORMED

Ensure funding is allocated towards activities likely to have the greatest impact on suppression of virus transmission, treatment of cases, and on mitigating the secondary health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic and efforts to contain it.

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING

Decide with the NS on the activities that are more relevant to their COVID-19 response and ensure swift access to funds without compromising our collective accountability.

## FLEXIBLE REPORTING

Accepting to use NS standard reporting on their domestic response plan and financial reports to reduce reporting requirements, while increasing risk analysis/risk informed decisions.

## NEEDS BASED

Ensure funding serves to address the direct needs of National Societies’ COVID-19 emergency response; provides relevant financial and technical support to address direct and secondary impacts of the pandemic, and the well-being of vulnerable and most vulnerable population (WDR 2019).

## NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT (NSD) SUPPORT

Anticipation to support (weak) NSs currently at risk of being overwhelmed – we need to support their capacity to survive on short, medium and long term. Also enhance NS auxiliary status and use it to obtain exemption from government to accelerate procurement process.

## PROPORTIONALITY ANALYSIS

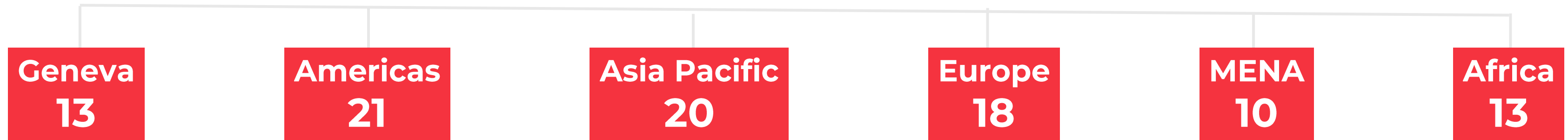
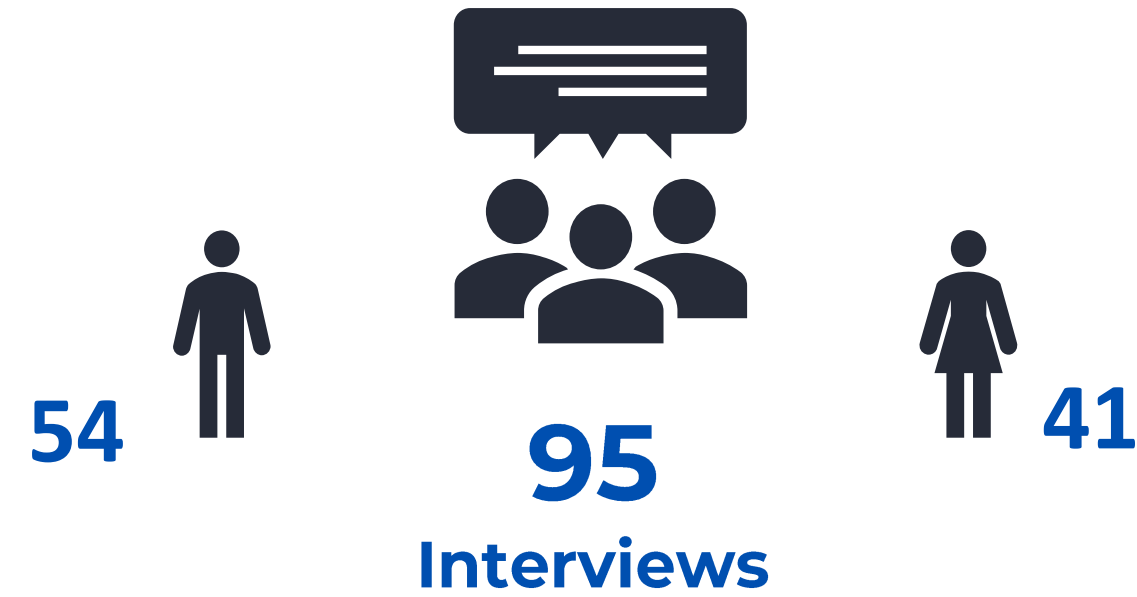
Understanding the needs in fragile settings should serve to define the proportionality of our actions in terms of funding allocation and actions; for example, in high population density informal settlements where highest levels of vulnerability will increase, and contexts with the most limited health system capacity to detect and respond to COVID-19 cases and maintain essential health services during an outbreak.

## STRONG RISK MANAGEMENT

Through close monitoring at local, country, regional and global level and rapid corrective actions as important element for the scale up to succeed

**Note:** These Key Terms come from the guiding principles for allocation from *IFRC Secretariat’s Mobile, Execute and Transform with agility to respond to COVID-19* document.

## Respondent demographics



## Respondents by type of source





# Respondent demographics



## IFRC Respondents by type of position (45)

Disaster Management	7
Management	21
Support Services	9
Health	1
Other technical staff	7

## Donor National Society Respondents (18)

A collection of 18 national society logos, including: American Red Cross, Australian Red Cross, ÖSTERREICHISCHES ROTES KREUZ, British Red Cross, CANADIAN RED CROSS, DANISH RED CROSS, Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Finnish Red Cross, Røde Kors, SINGAPORE, The Netherlands Red Cross, and Swiss Red Cross.

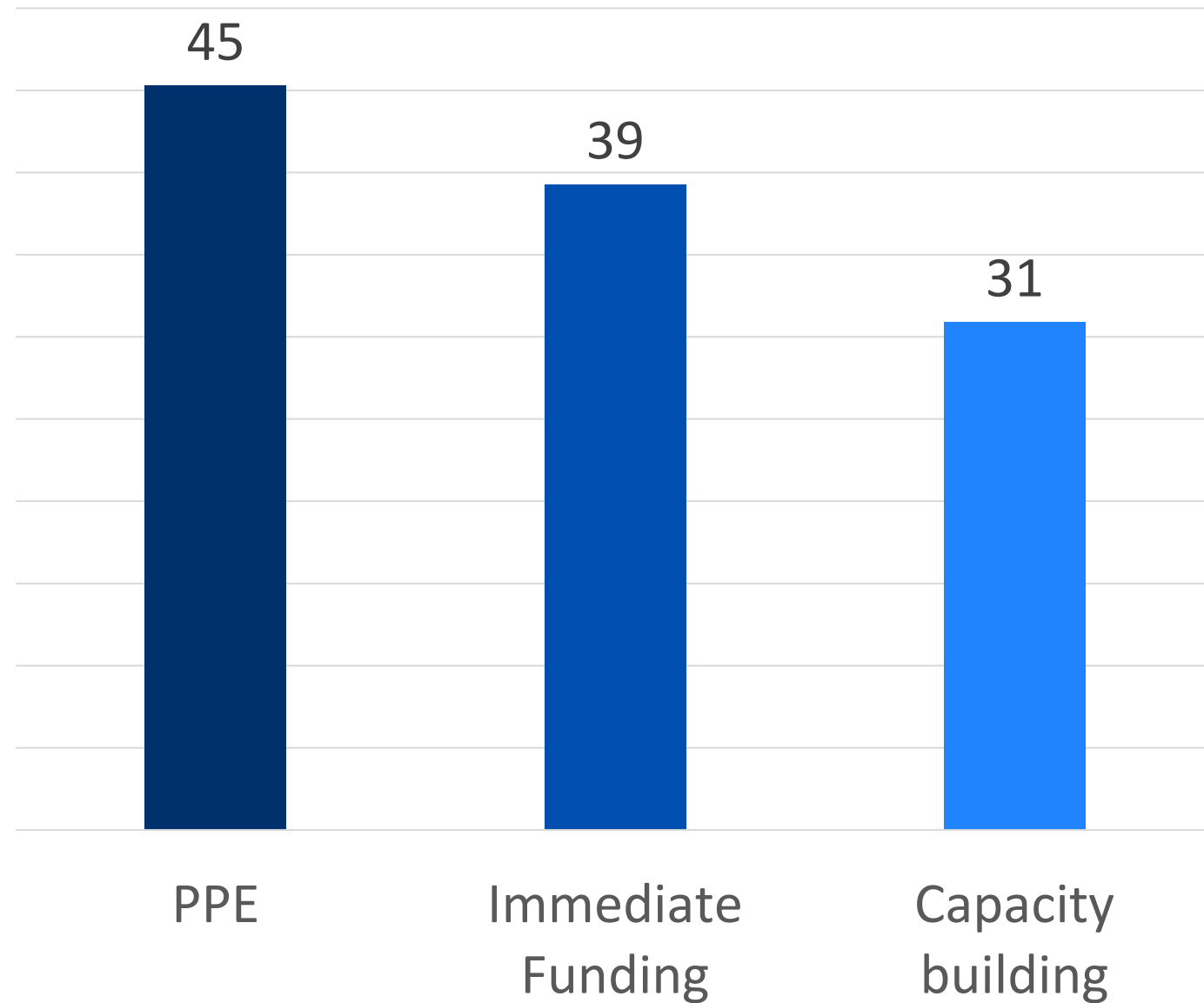
## Recipient National Society Respondents (32)

A collection of 32 national society logos, including: KRYQI KUO SHQIPTAR, BANGLADESH RED CRESCENT SOCIETY (BDRCS), BOTSWANA RED CROSS SOCIETY, CRUZ ROJA CHILENA, CROISSANT-ROUGE COMORIEN, 조선민주주의인민공화국 적십자회, الهلال الأحمر الأردني, Cruz Roja Ecuatoriana, FIJI RED CROSS SOCIETY, always there, Cruz Roja Guatemalteca, Guyana Red Cross, CONVENZIONE DI GINEVRA 22 AGOSTO 1964, NRCS, Kenya Red Cross, PHILIPPINE RED CROSS, M Y 3 II, جمعیت خدای آمر جمهوری اسلامی ایران, TAJIKISTAN RED CRESCENT, CRUZ ROJA NICARAGÜENSE, 中国红十字会 Red Cross Society of China, Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society, TANZANIA RED CROSS SOCIETY, ЦРБЕНИ КРСТ СРБИЈЕ RED CROSS OF SERBIA, GEORGIA RED CROSS, POLSKI CZERWONY KRZYŻ, Bapthalali Swaziland Red Cross Society, ST Kitts - Nevis Red Cross, РОССИЙСКИЙ КРАСНЫЙ КРЕСТ, الهلال الأحمر العربي السوري Syrian Arab Red Crescent, TÜRK KIZILAY, and جمعية الهلال الأحمر اليمني YEMEN RED CRESCENT SOCIETY.



# I. National Society Needs: What are the top 3 needs for National Societies during COVID-19?

### Top 3 NS needs during COVID-19 globally\*



**PPE:** “We need PPEs. As the Government will open up the economy progressively, this will bring a second wave and we will need additional PPEs. Considering the expected needs, our current supply will not be sufficient.”

- NS respondent from Americas.

**Immediate funding:** “Our main need has been financial resources. This pandemic came as a big emergency; hence we were not in a position to respond to the situation adequately”.

- NS respondent from Africa.

**Capacity building:** “We need strong technical capacities in all new areas including Contact Tracing, Risk Communication and PMER. COVID has brought many new areas for National Societies to develop expertise in.”

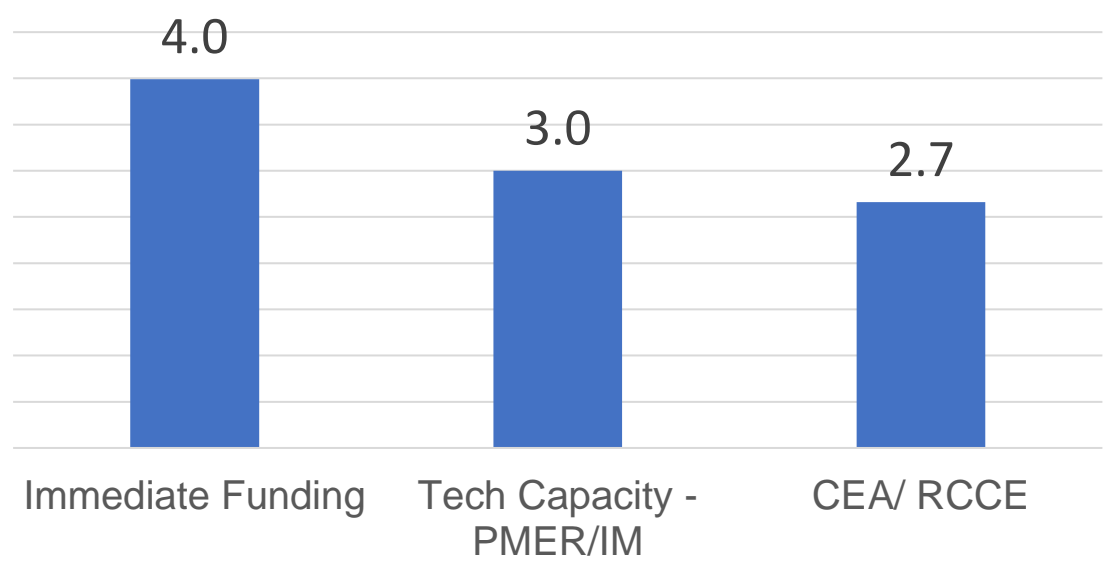
- NS respondent from Europe.

\*All top 3 NS needs were ranked based on weighted scoring prioritization. This method uses numerical scoring to rank needs based on a respondent’s order of preferences, with the first mention scoring the highest score of 1, second mention scoring middle score of 0.66 and third mention the lowest score of 0.33. Final ranking is then based on cumulative sum of scores. Total number of needs (categories) – 22.

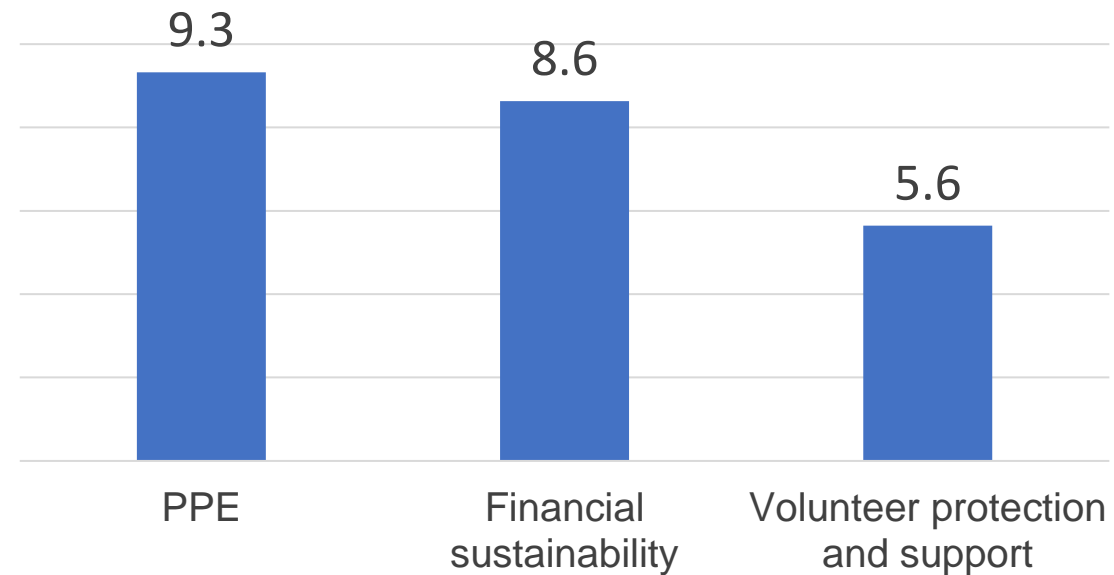
# Top 3 NS needs by region



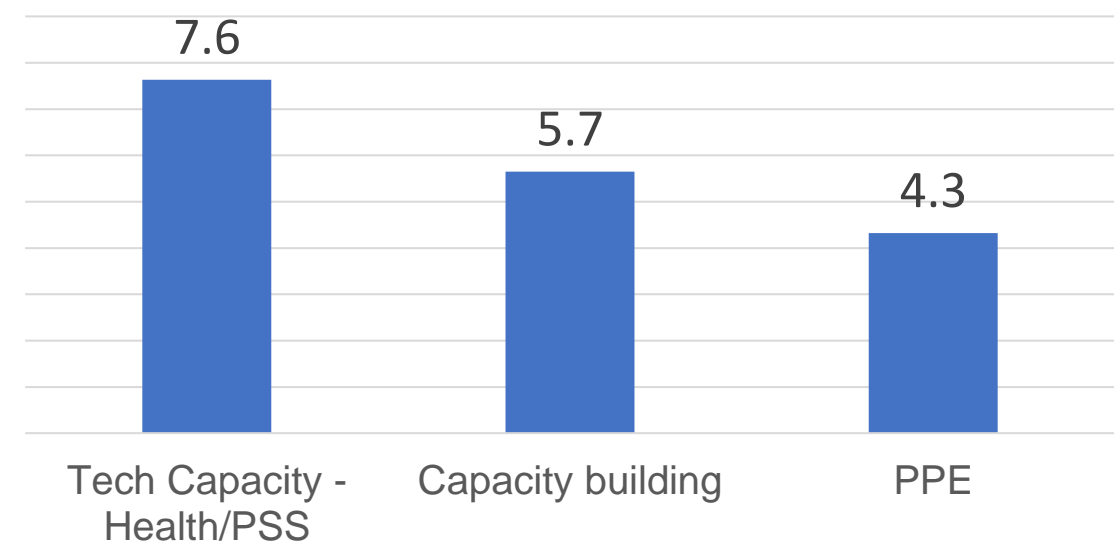
## Africa



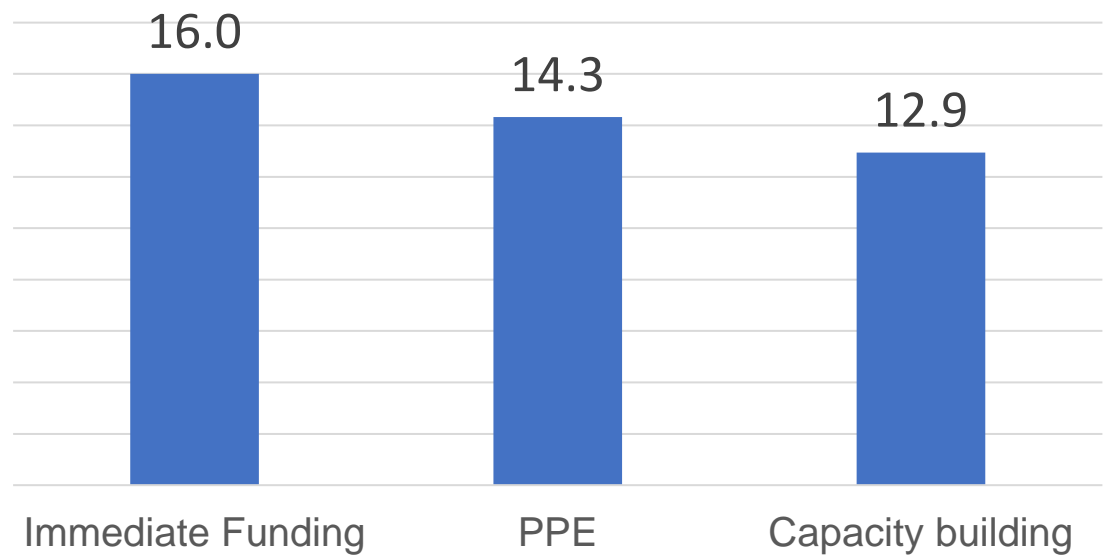
## Americas



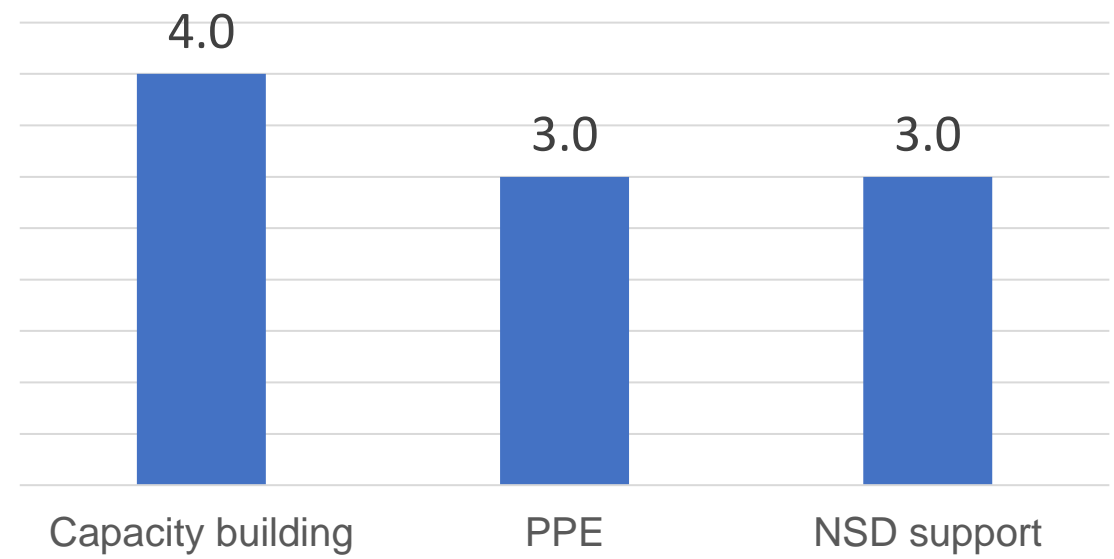
## Asia-Pacific



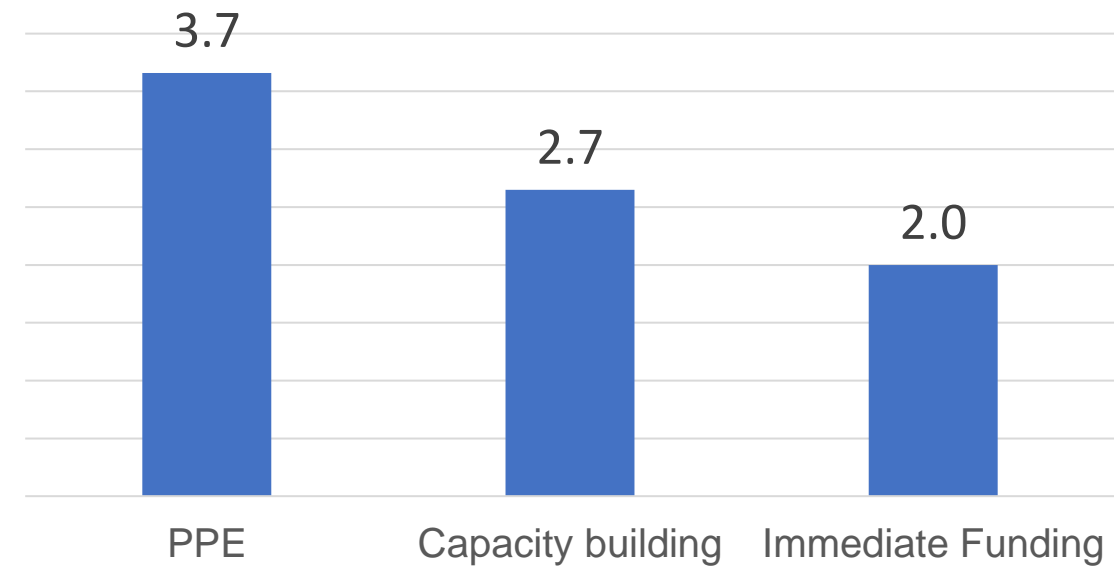
## Europe



## Geneva

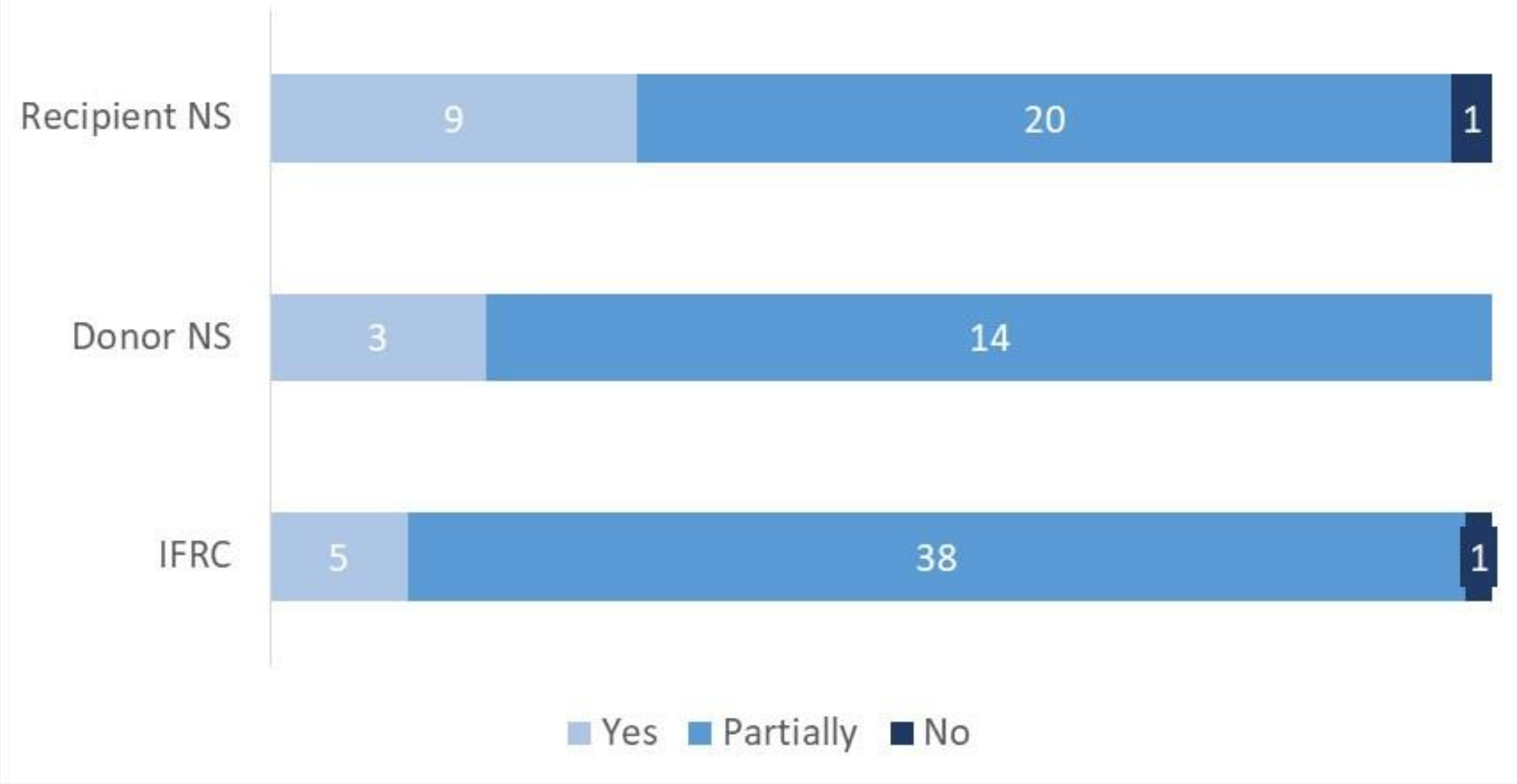


## MENA



\*All top 3 NS needs were ranked based on weighted scoring prioritization. This method uses numerical scoring to rank needs based on a respondent's order of preferences, with the first mention scoring the highest score of 1, second mention scoring middle score of 0.66 and third mention the lowest score of 0.33. Final ranking is then based on cumulative sum of scores. Total number of needs (categories) – 22.

### I. National Society Needs: Did the IFRC secretariat respond to these identified needs?



**17 said Yes**  
**72 said Partially**  
**2 said No**

Note: 4 respondents chose not to respond to this question.



## YES

“

*The IFRC secretariat responded based on its capacity in country and the capacity of regional offices to respond to the requests of more than 100 NS responding domestically.*

“

*Yes. The resources of appeal have been properly allocated to the NS response plan, and the technical support provided has been relevant.*

“

*Immediately the IFRC secretariat responded to the needs. Although there is a high-level plan, they respected the localized plan to align to the 4 pillars: surveillance, support to authorities, community action and business continuity.*

“

*Yes. The logistics delegate has been supporting the RM table where each Movement partner contributes. The IFRC secretariat did a lot of procurement support e.g. hygiene kits for the health facilities..*

“

*Absolutely. The appeal/EPoA approved all of these items which were included and we received the support.*

## PARTIALLY

*For sending money quickly and establishing local partnerships/flexible processes, we have not been able to adapt the current system yet through our normal ways of working.*

*We are collecting a lot of information and the NSs are tired and confused with so many requests. The priority of NSs are to have funds to respond and survive.*

*Massive efforts done by the Regional Office to ensure Cluster Offices were in contact with the NS. There was strong technical guidance in allocating the resources and in coordination with clusters to develop response plans. A bit challenging for some countries but focal persons for COVID response were quite helpful in consolidating the plans.*

*The IFRC secretariat is doing its best, but in case there is no funding, then it is unable to support.*

*A Donor NS contributed 28 millions of unearmarked money to the Geneva secretariat. The impact of the pandemic is so big, for example, a lot of the funds go to Geneva, but how much funds go to MENA - we don't know.*

## NO

”

*Our response has been siloed even more than in other emergencies. This is because every team is working at 200% for 6 months. There have not been systems that have forced us to work together and we have worked in parallel. From a structural perspective it has been a piecemeal global strategy for COVID-19, although many of the pieces needed to be connected. This has also been reflected at the NS level.*

”

*No, the IFRC secretariat has not responded to these needs. It is the NS that has the lead for disinfection activities and burials at the Ministry level. All our visibility will be ruined if we cannot follow up on these activities and maintain the system. For example, at the beginning of the school year the disinfectant and hand washing system needed to be put in place by the NS. The delay in the IFRC secretariat transfers meant that we could not move forward.*

## II. Prioritization of Funding (Recipient NS) - Challenges & successes

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One component that needs to be strengthened, is the communication line between the delegations and the IFRC secretariat.

### Communication and Coordination

Transparent and clear. Good coordination with Country Office and certain IFRC Regional Offices.

Efficient communication with Government, public and donors, and logistics crucial.

Some NS funding needs are still not covered

### Needs based

Prioritization of funding does not meet all local needs

Important to also take into account National Society local context and include migrants in funding allocation.

### Demand and expectations

Political context of a country can affect IFRC secretariat's support to National Societies in view of their auxiliary role.

### Decision making

Misunderstanding to decide the priorities at the beginning of the pandemic.

There are many examples of successful efforts in resource mobilization from Recipient National Societies.

National Societies prioritized hospital and medical care from the very beginning.

### Domestic Response

Good Communications: Important to disseminate correct information during COVID-19.

National Societies got funding through production of masks which also helped in distribution of masks to local communities.

**Do you have any feedback to share on the prioritization of funding for identified needs for COVID-19?**

### Evidence-based and risk-informed

The funds provided versus the budget was not enough. There is a need for IFRC secretariat to provide more support.

Procurement of face masks to target population and RCRC staff and volunteers should be given high priority as it is the most effective way of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The National Society's budget initially focused on Information, Education and Communication. Therefore, there was no funding left for livelihoods.

Some National Societies keep reserve funds for emergencies

IFRC secretariat in country has supported in-country needs well.

Certain National Societies have engaged corporate donors and have received flexible funding.

Funding prioritization process not clearly communicated with National Societies.

IFRC secretariat funding did cover the needs of some National Societies.

Allocations were done according to IFRC secretariat's Emergency Plan of Action.

There is a need for more flexibility in the use of resources by the National Society. The operation is evolving and new needs are being identified, and flexibility in the use of resources is needed.

A more consultative and participatory process on funding is needed between the National Society and the IFRC Country Office.

### Flexible Funding

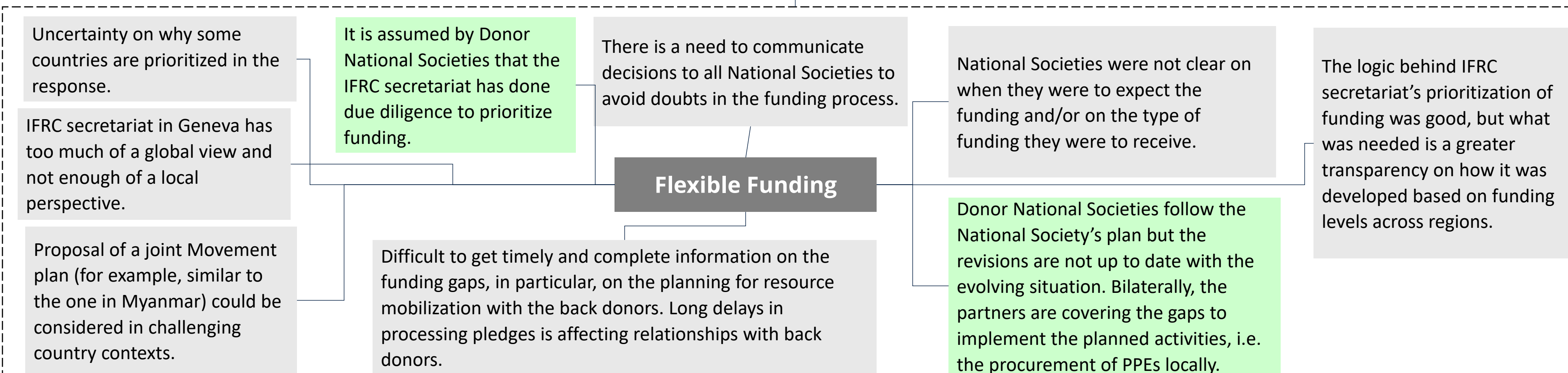
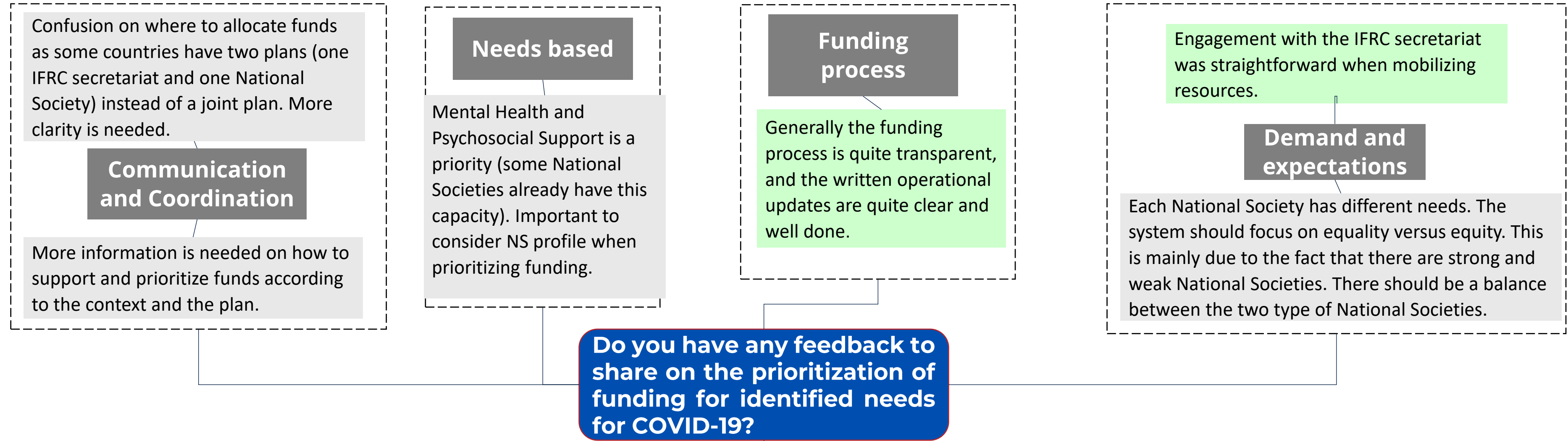
By the time the funds arrived to some National Societies, they had to find other resources to cover the needs due to the time sensitivity of needs.

National Societies are not clear on how funding is being prioritized and allocated from the IFRC secretariat amongst the National Societies in a region.

National Societies expect additional funding.

National Societies need more resources for support units such as HR and Finance to have long-term solutions, to support communities in addressing the secondary effects of the pandemic.

## II. Prioritization of Funding (Donor NS) - Challenges & successes





## II. Prioritization of Funding (IFRC secretariat) - Challenges & successes

### Demand and expectations

Funds were delivered quickly, but implementation depends on the capacity of National Societies.

IFRC secretariat processes should be adapted to match the urgency to spend, and if funds were delivered quickly, the implementation will depend on the capacity of National Societies.

### NS absorption capacity

National Societies need sufficient time to implement the funds.

### Proportionality analysis

Reflection on whether a wrong formula/approach was taken in distributing unearmarked funds to the regions. The IFRC secretariat should identify the needs, analyze, understand the story/context behind the numbers, rather than focusing on just the count.

### Flexible Reporting

An algorithm was developed employing 36 variables to facilitate the financial reporting process. Trusted tool by management.

Coordination between the National Society and the IFRC secretariat needs improvement. Longer deadline for feedback on the plans is needed to ensure that the IFRC secretariat's response is aligned with urgent National Society needs.

### Needs based

Limited response on COVID-19 planning from National Societies. Funding allocations do not always match the needs. Politics also influence decisions on needs-based funding.

The index designed to support decisions was helpful, but only used for the 3rd allocation. This index is still subjective; it needs to be more needs-based.

**Do you have any feedback to share on the prioritization of funding for identified needs for COVID-19?**

Allocation tools in certain regions have been transparent and fair. For example, based on the number of cases and requests.

Some National Societies are not requesting additional funds.

The main contribution of big donors also came with a tight level of earmarking and the name of countries.

Low level of engagement between the IFRC secretariat and some regional offices in the allocation of funding.

Scale up systems so they work faster. Finance processes should be updated to make them more agile and checks and balances should be reduced to speed up the response and get money to the National Society at the beginning of the operation.

Generally agree with IFRC secretariat's response framework.

IFRC secretariat is mobilizing the funds and support while maintaining the accountability for prioritization of National Society needs.

The funding allocation has not always been aligned with the number of cases- it has been difficult. There is no clear method. It is a "first come first serve," based on finalized National Society response plans.

### Flexible Funding

Resources have been given to cover basic needs prioritized by the National Society and based on IFRC secretariat's experience with them. Prioritization needs to be done with the National Societies.

Certain regions did not benefit from the allocations of unearmarked funding, and therefore there have been no discussions at the country level on how to allocate such funding by sector/activity.

The IFRC secretariat has managed to raise substantial amount of unearmarked funding to date There is a concern around the capacity to spend received funds

It is not clear how the allocations of funding were split between regions and then between the subregions.

### NSD Support

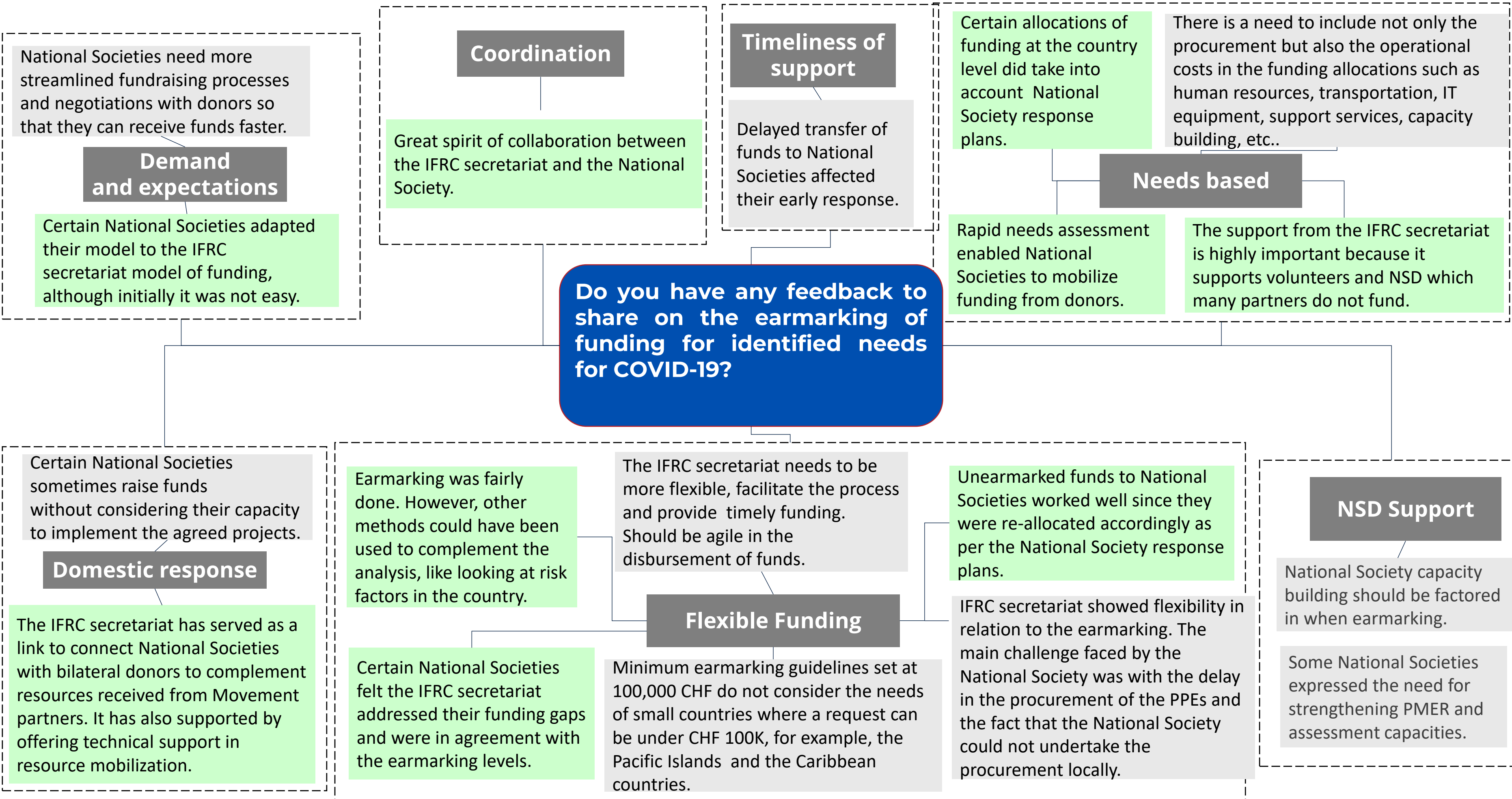
National Society health capacity mapping is needed.

Some National Societies will have trouble implementing funds due to structure and capacity limitations.

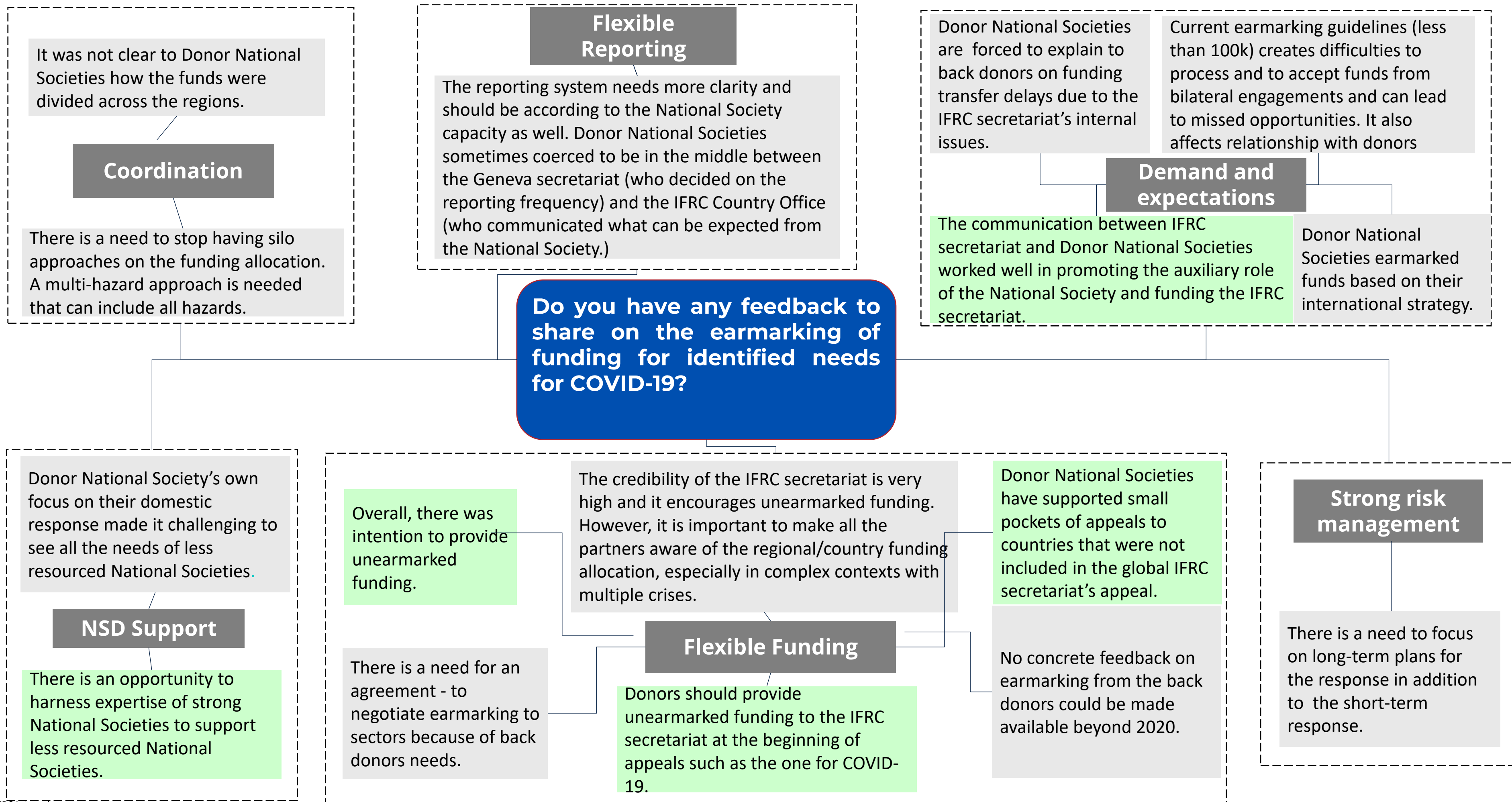
Strengthen National Society infrastructure at branch level and insure all volunteers at the forefront.



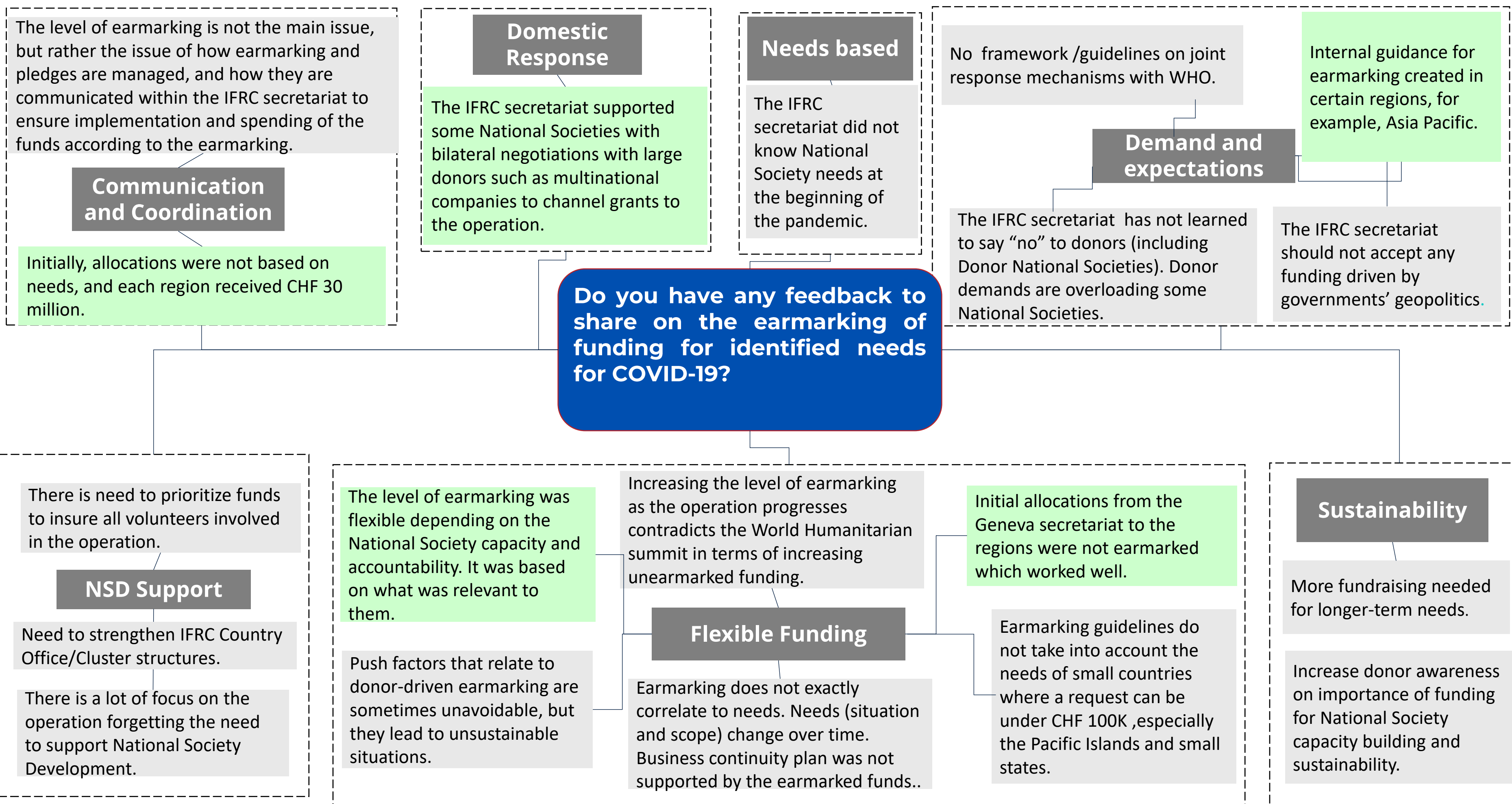
## II. Earmarking of Funding (Recipient NS) – Challenges & successes



## II. Earmarking of Funding (Donor NS) - Challenges & successes



## II. Earmarking of Funding (IFRC secretariat) - Challenges & successes





## II. Prioritization and Earmarking of Funding – Recommendations

	RECIPIENT NS (RNS)	DONOR NS (DNS)	IFRC secretariat
Flexible Funding	<p>Speed up the funding allocation process (between the request and the disbursement of funds) and make it more flexible.</p> <p>Funds allocation should focus on the 3 priority needs for National Societies.</p>	<p>Need to reduce bureaucratic processes in funding allocation.</p> <p>Focus to allocate funds based on needs and the capacity of National Societies.</p>	<p>Improve the process of disbursing funds to National Societies to meet the urgency.</p> <p>Funding allocation should be based on local needs.</p>
NSD Support	<p>Strengthen National Society technical areas like HR, Finance and PMER to ensure sustained response to the pandemic.</p> <p>Strengthen National Society capacity in the sustainability of RCRC services and of the National Society itself.</p>	<p>Harness the expertise of stronger National Societies to build the capacity of less resourced National Societies.</p> <p>Strengthen National Society capacity in assessing needs and PMER.</p>	<p>Strengthen the National Society infrastructure at the branch level.</p> <p>Ensure all volunteers are insured especially the ones on the forefront</p>
Communication and Coordination	<p>Strengthen the communication line between IFRC secretariat's Regional Delegations and Geneva secretariat.</p>	<p>Need to include a feedback mechanism in the development of IFRC secretariat's Emergency Appeal.</p>	<p>Ensure clarity in decision making and communication to partners.</p>
Demand and Expectations	<p>National Societies need more assistance to cover staffing expenses for COVID-19 because operations are 100% volunteer-based</p>		
Domestic Response	<p>A lot of National Societies are facing multiple disasters at the same time and should be taken into account, hence there should be a coordinated response.</p>		



## II. Prioritization of Funding – Quotes



“

### Flexible funding

*“Flexibility is very important at the donors and back-donors level.”*

*“Prioritization of funding is linked to the country-level prioritization rather than thematic. Country-level prioritization seems to work OK as long as needs are met. However, thematic prioritization can disrupt National Societies’ priorities. Speed of transferring funds is important to consider when prioritizing, as if we transfer funds to locations where it does not get there in time the earmarking may no longer be relevant by the time the funds arrive.”*

*“It has been a bit of a “first come first serve” because it has been based on the National Societies that have finished their response plans”*

*“We are ready now to respond to other pandemics. It was a good learning for us. ”*

*“It is about the internal dynamics of the NS in a good integrity status”*

*“I feel uncomfortable that we have such a big chunk of money going to a country that is very sustainable and has raised so much funds”*

*“Wide consultation with National Societies should at least provide a clue to the IFRC secretariat on what should be considered as a priority for the National Society.”*

“

### Demand and expectations

*“The urgency to spend has not been matched by the urgency to change the IFRC secretariat’s processes.”*

*“It is important to know the National Society absorption capacity to implement the activities.”*

“

### Domestic Response

*“Our National Society keeps reserve funds for emergencies. In this case, we successfully responded in the beginning from these reserves. It was good to be able to respond from our own resources, we felt very proud. The National Society had to mobilize its own funds to respond quickly.”*

*“Frankly, I am proud of our National Society, because I think no other organization responded so quickly with PPE...”*

“

### Needs Based

## II. Earmarking of Funding - Quotes



*As far as I know there was a level of flexibility depending on the National Society capacity and accountability to agree on where they want to focus for each of the components. It was not tightly earmarked, there was flexibility to see what was relevant to the National Society.*

*Earmarking: It is close, but not a clear match. We did not do the correlation exercise carefully.*

*Donor-driven earmarking of pledges is sometimes unavoidable. Although we try our best to avoid them. One of the earmarking eligibility is by geographic, one area that we've tried to combat, while the other earmarking is timeframe. We had a problem with one Donor National Society's money which was timeframe earmarked – a big push for us to spend (as much possible) in the first six months, in a way that probably led to the unsustainable situation we're in now.*

*Earmarking has pros and cons. The good part is it triggers the receiving country – to spend and implement these activities by a certain time. But at the same time, it may lead to a situation where quality is compromised in order to complete things earlier.*

### Flexible funding



*We need to strengthen our cooperation with WHO at a practical level, and make sure WHO understands how it can engage with the IFRC secretariat and National Societies. For them to look at us as a first to contact about some sectoral areas (PSS, risk comms ...) Now we are initiating contact, and we are trying to make sure they do not forget us. We need to think on all levels, how we can formulate our relationship better with them - we need to do better.*

*The IFRC secretariat would need to increase the flexibility and have better balance between fundraising and building the partnerships.*

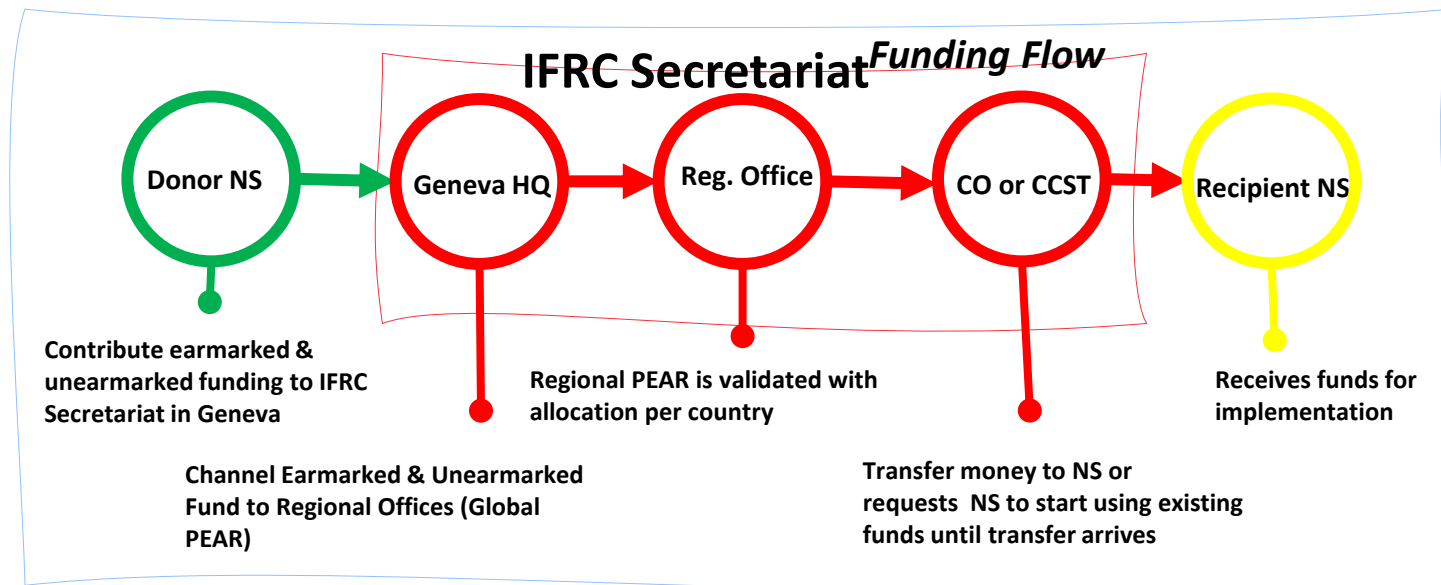
*At the moment we don't treat all the countries equally because we can't allocate the money, because of different reasons.*

### Demand and expectations

# III. Factors to consider for Funding Allocation

What factors should be taken into account when considering COVID-19 funding allocation to National Societies?

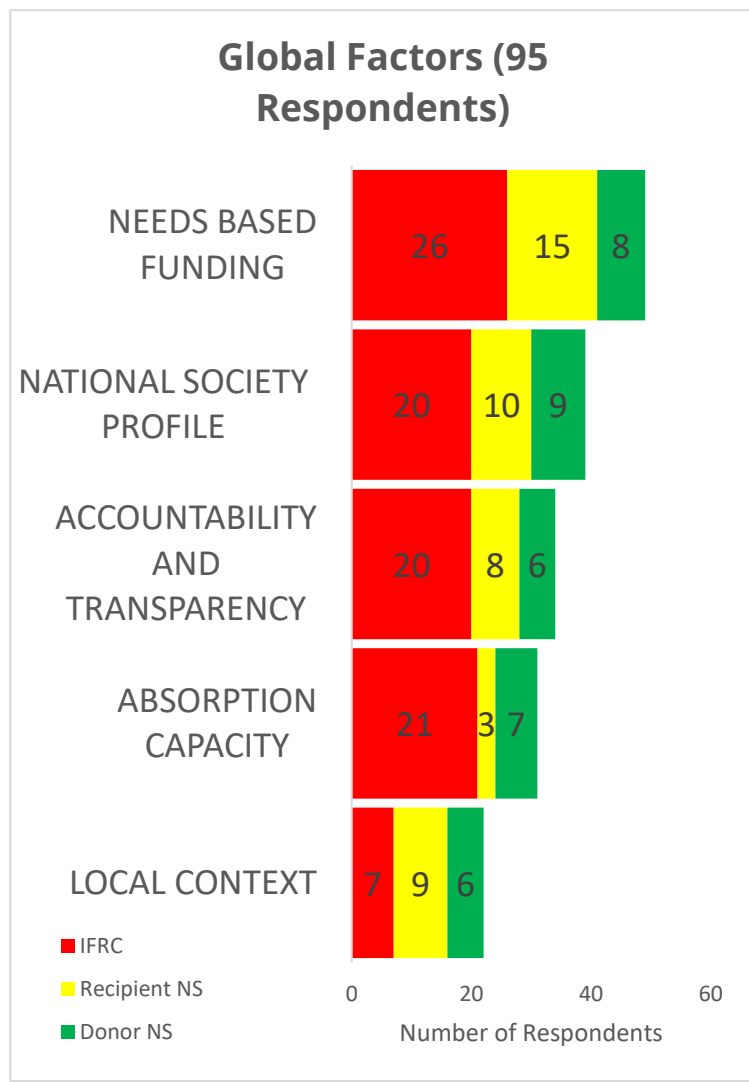
Return to Contents



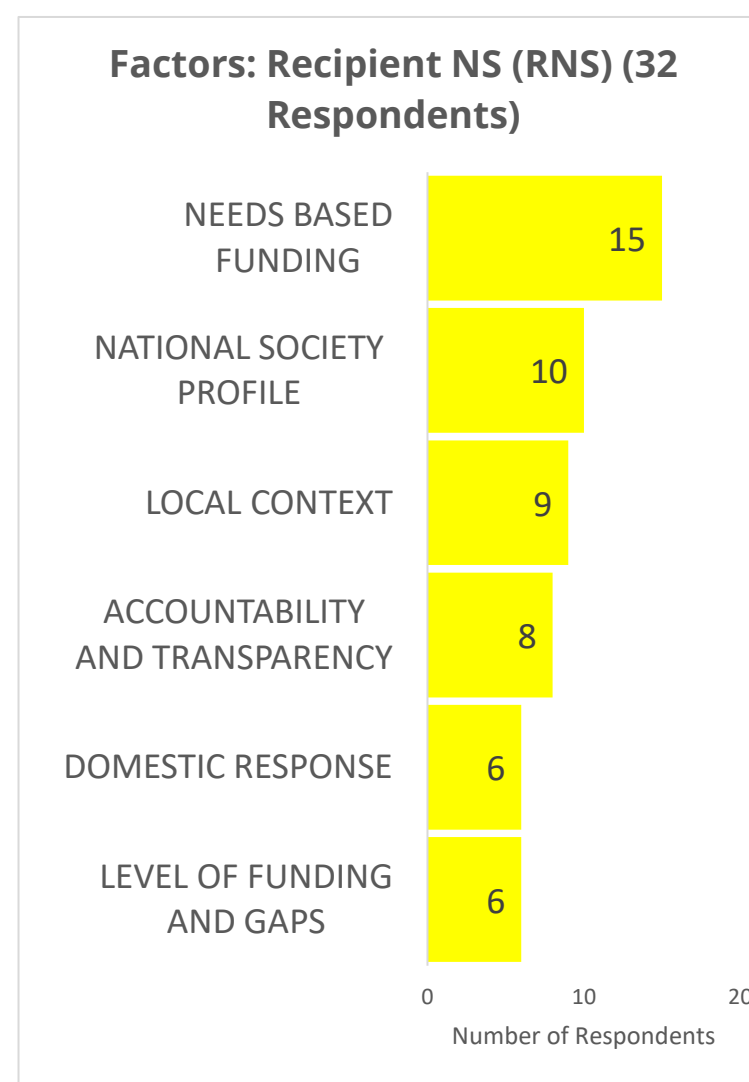
Based on collected data, 19 **Factors** under different Topics have been captured as below

- Coordination**
  1. Coordination and communication
- Demands and expectations**
  2. Absorption Capacity
  3. Donor influence
- Domestic Response**
  4. Domestic Response
  5. Programming
- Evidence-based and risk-informed**
  6. Assessments
  7. Demographics
  8. Pandemic trends
  9. Socio economic
- Flexible Funding**
  10. Earmarking levels
- Needs based**
  11. Funding Prioritization
  12. Needs Based Funding
  13. Duty of care
- NSD support**
  14. Financial Sustainability
  15. Level of Funding and Gaps
  16. National Society profile\*\*
- Proportionality analysis**
  17. Vulnerability
- Strong risk management**
  18. Local Context
- Transparency and Accountability**
  19. Accountability and Transparency

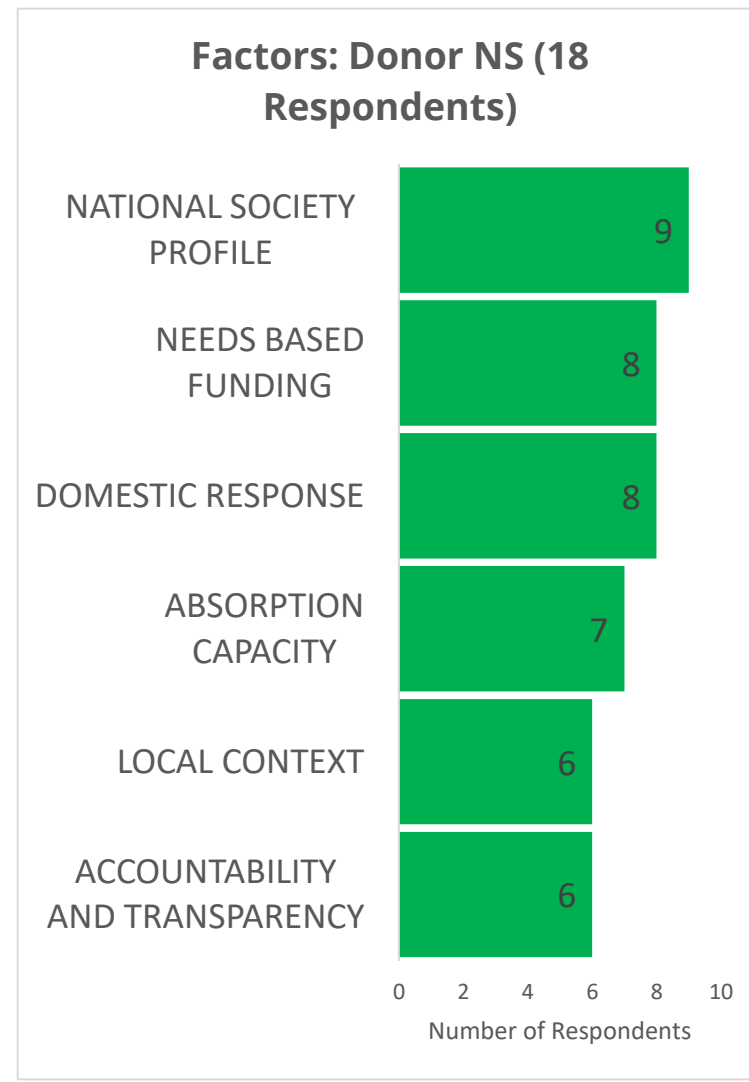
## Top 5 Factors Global



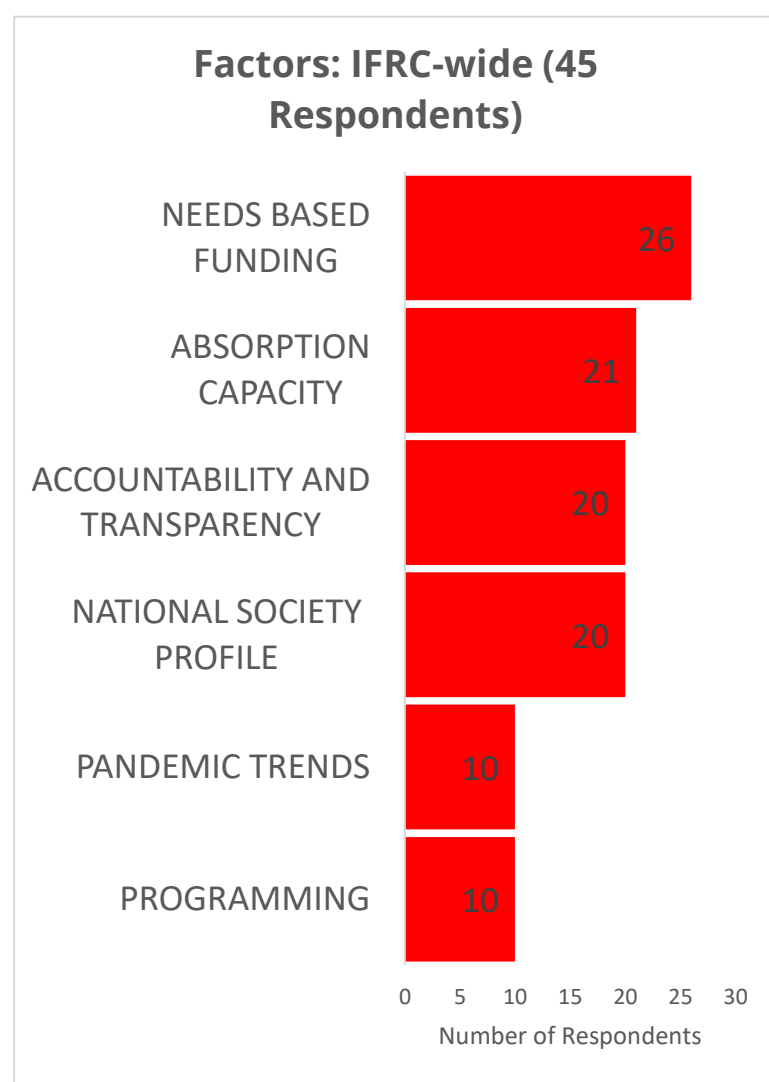
## Top 5 Factors Recipient NS\*



## Top 5 Factors Donor NS\*



## Top 5 Factors IFRC Secretariat\*

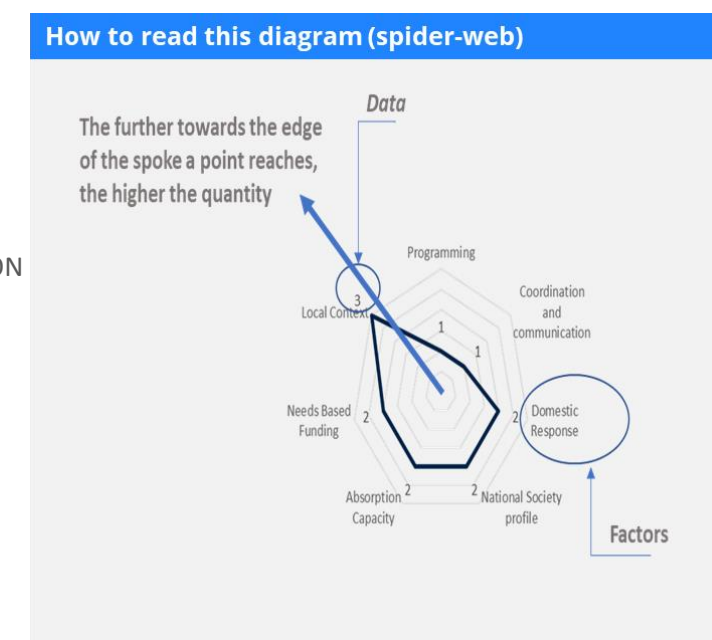
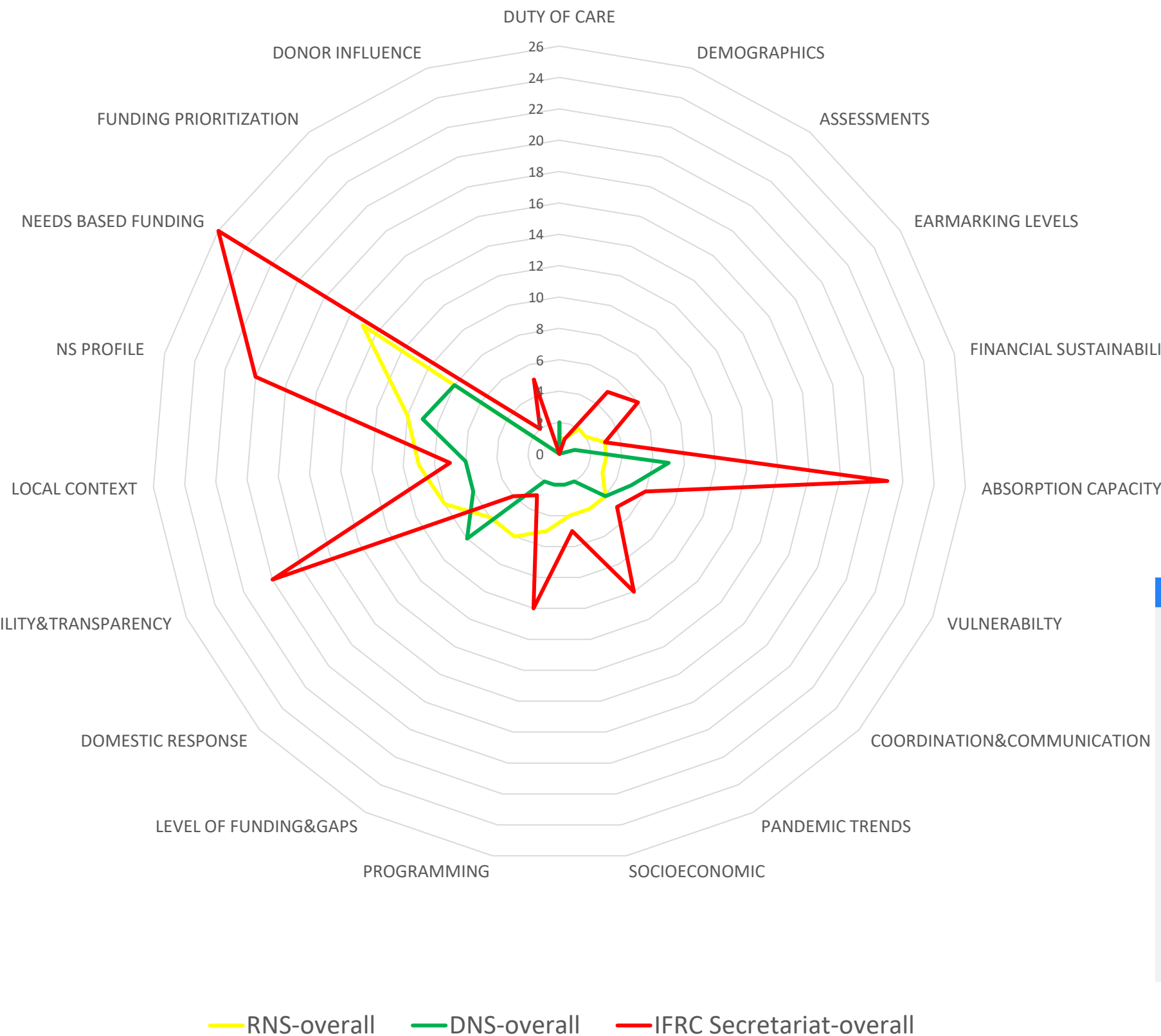
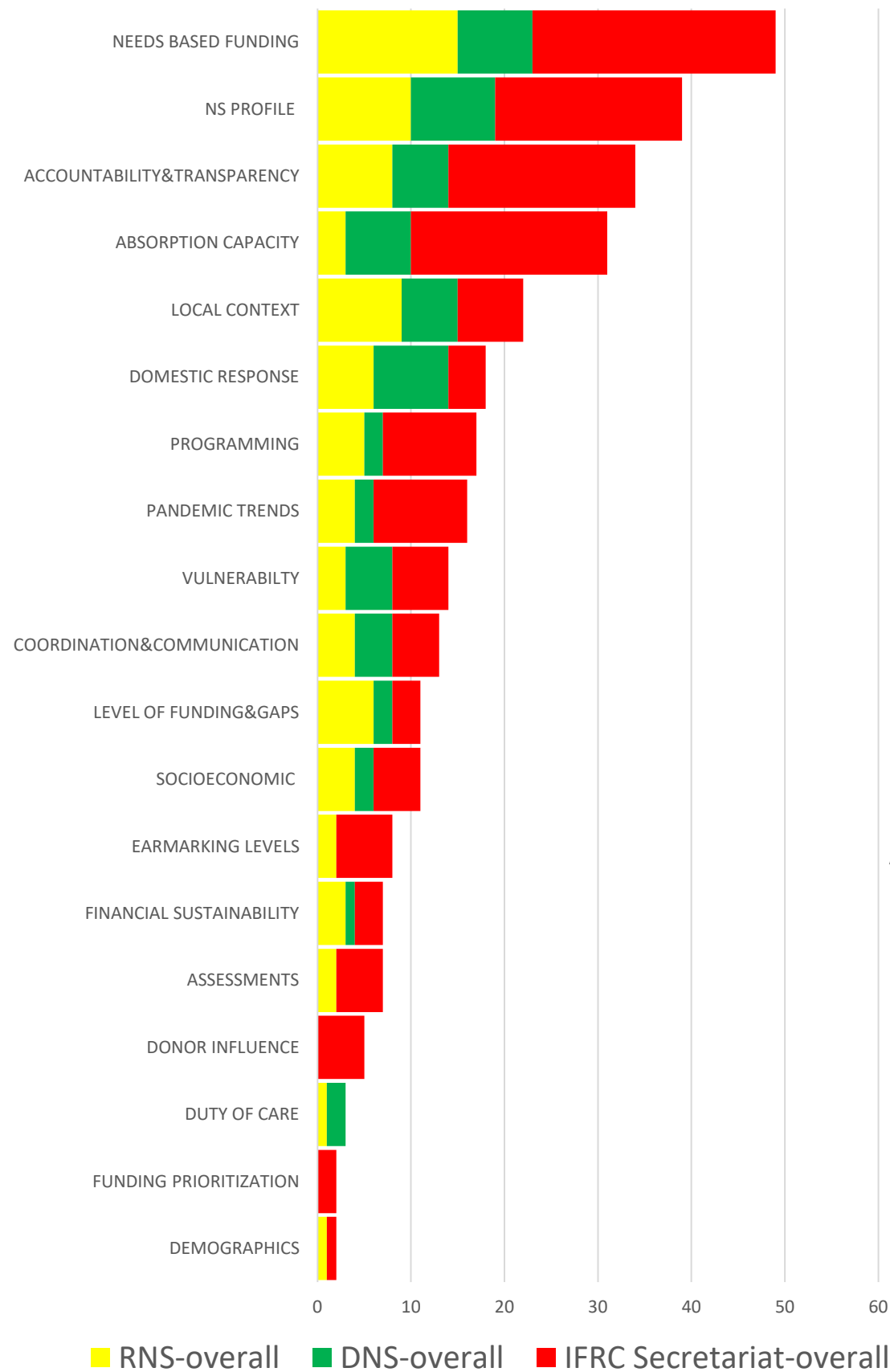


\*For Recipient NS, Donor NS and IFRC Secretariat factors, there are six factors displayed (instead of five) as they are having the same number of mention by respondents.

\*\*Responses under this include Mandate given by the Government of the country on what the role allocated to the RC in the response, NS capacity to recover and implement, capacities/expertise of NS, Fundraising capacity as well as proven track record with the NS

# III. Factors to consider for Funding Allocation

## Combined Overview



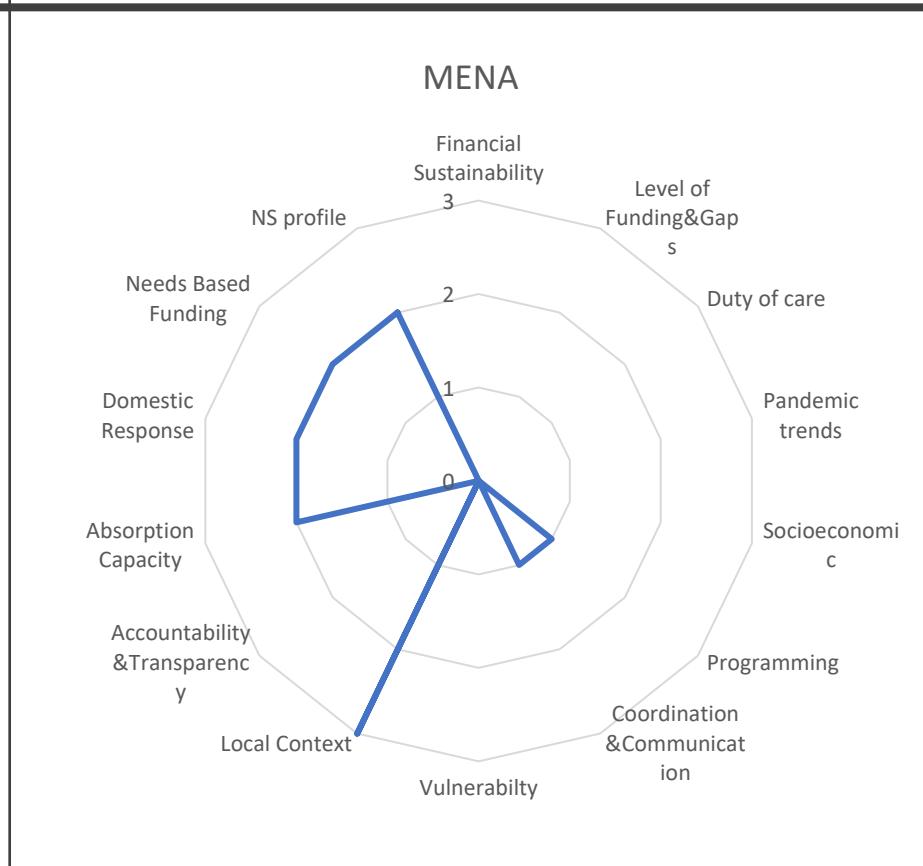
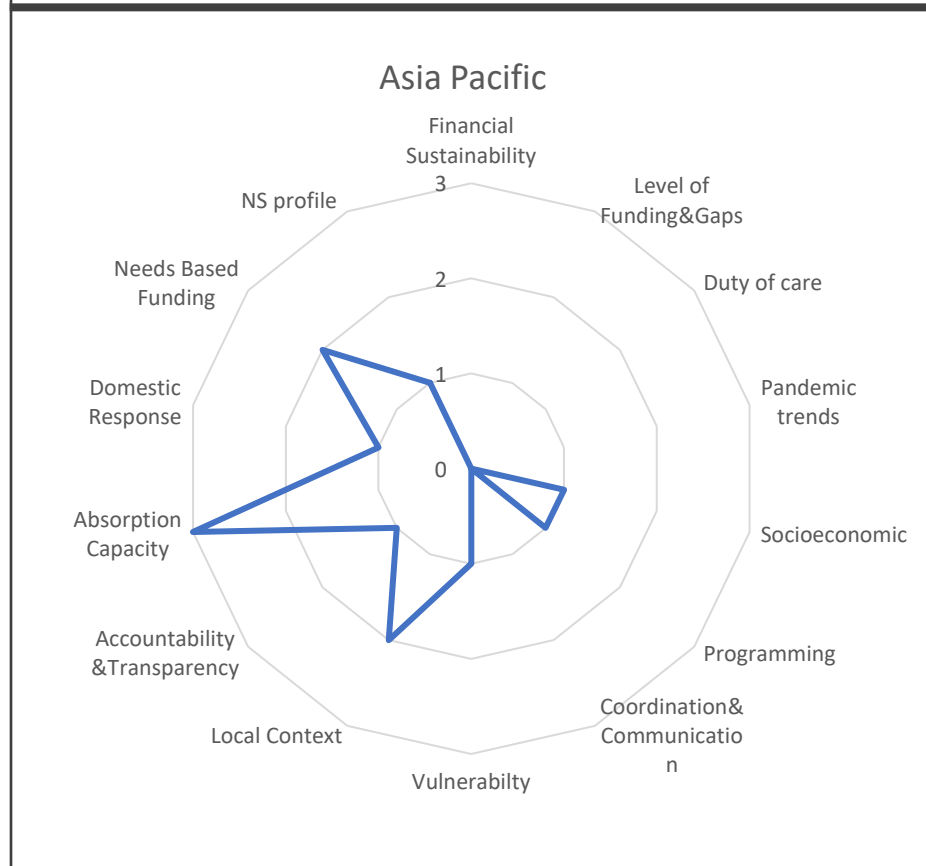
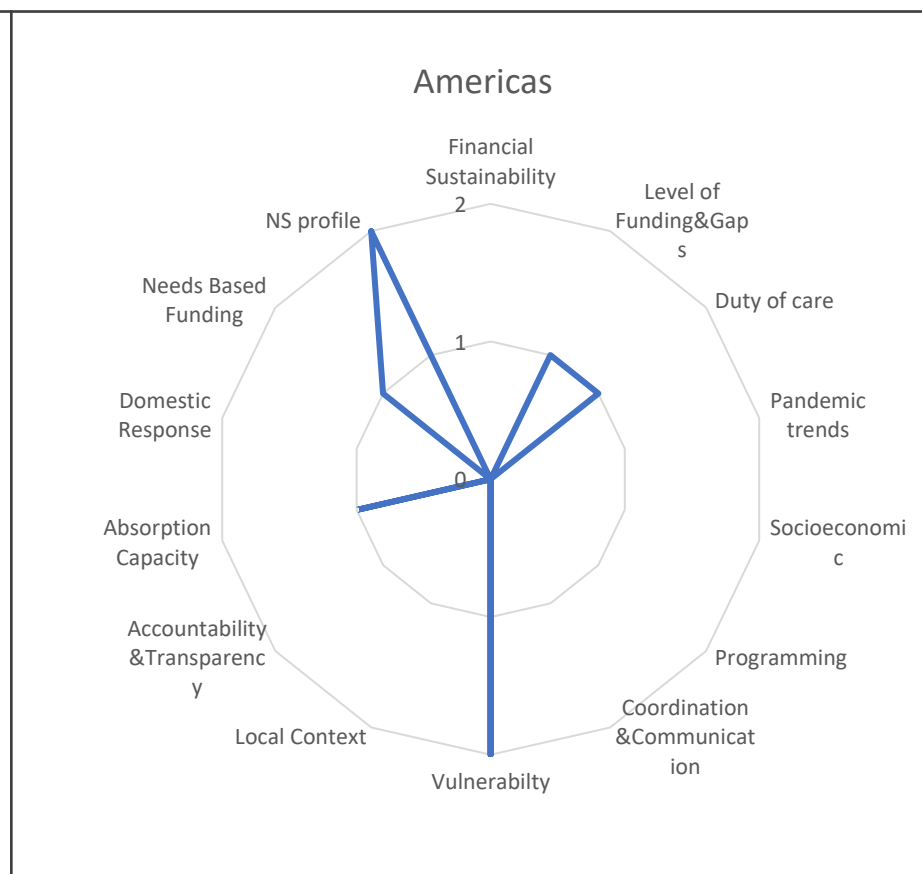
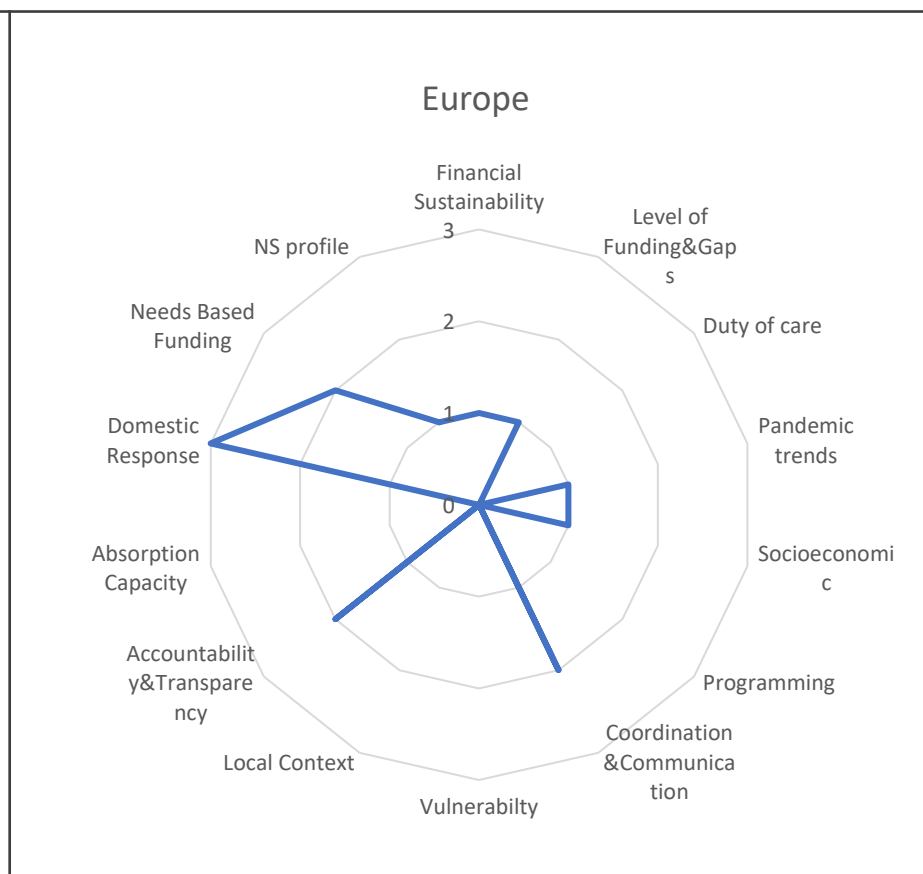
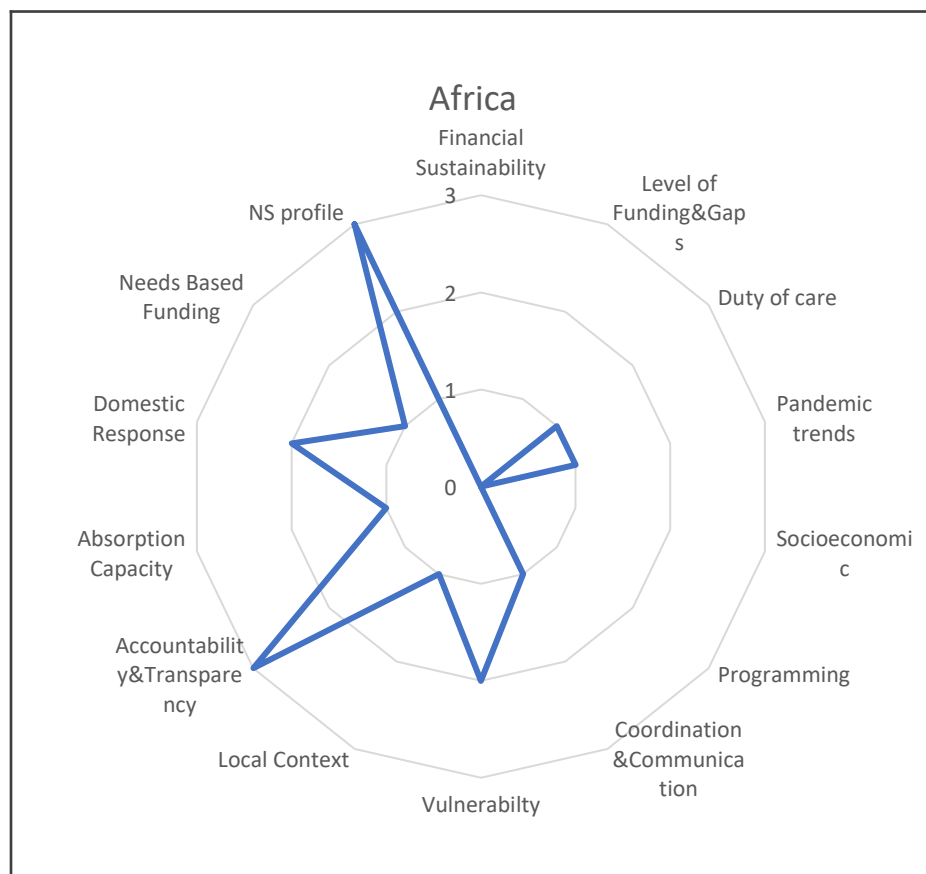
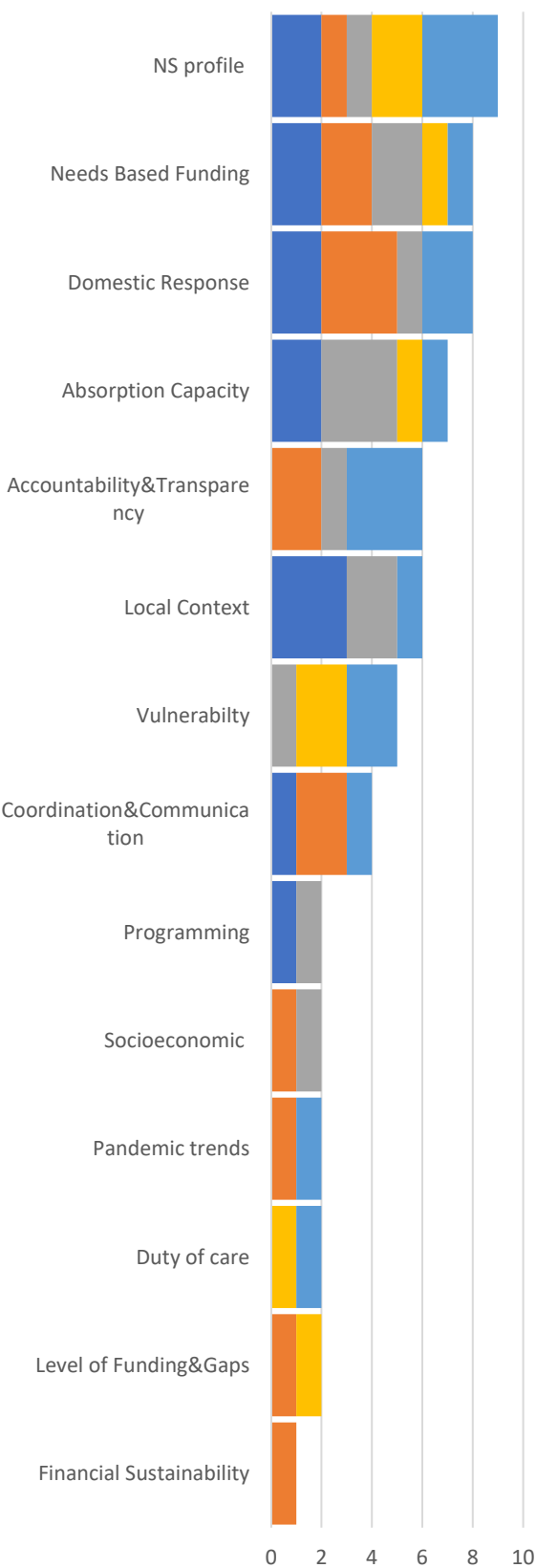


# III. Factors to consider for Funding Allocation

## Donor NS – Regional Perspective\*



Factors: Donor NS

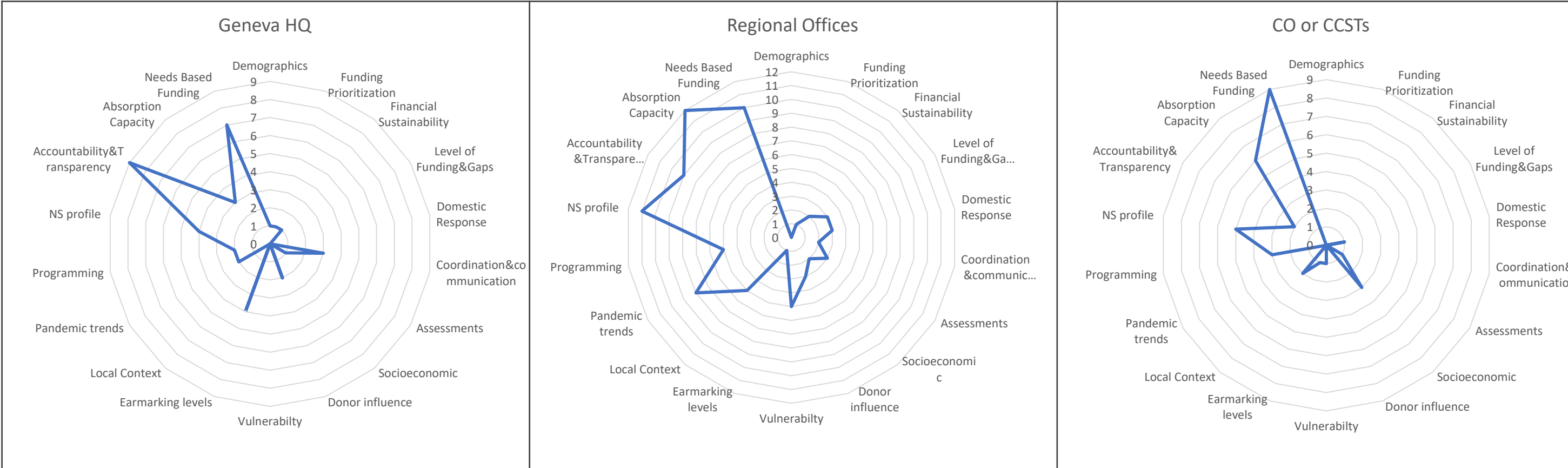
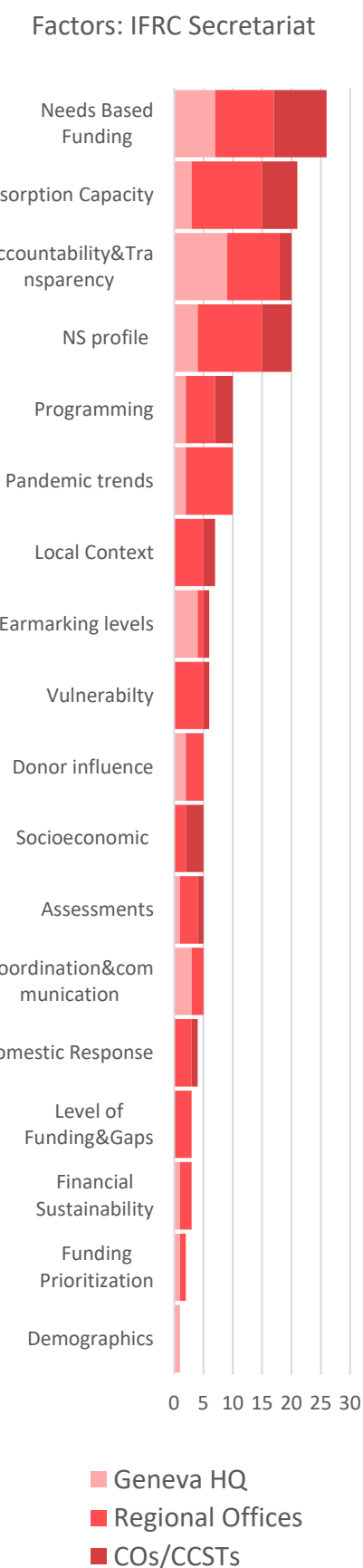


**ANALYSIS**  
 In all five regions, **NEEDS-BASED FUNDING** and **NS PROFILE** have been cited by Donor NS as being among the important factors to consider in their decision making.  
  
 Donor requires information about **the needs and preference** of affected people/NSs. Allocations need to be driven by actual needs and items that can be accounted among others. As for **NS profile**, such information provides insight to **Mandate** given by the Government of the country on what the **role allocated to the RC** in the response, **NS capacity to recover and implement, capacities/expertise** of National Societies as well as **proven track record with the NS** - to know that they have a close contact with the people, and that they know the needs.

\*Note: Based on Donor NS view for a particular region. The Donor NS may/may not be coming from the same region.

# III. Factors to consider for Funding Allocation

## IFRC Secretariat- Level Perspective\*



**ANALYSIS**

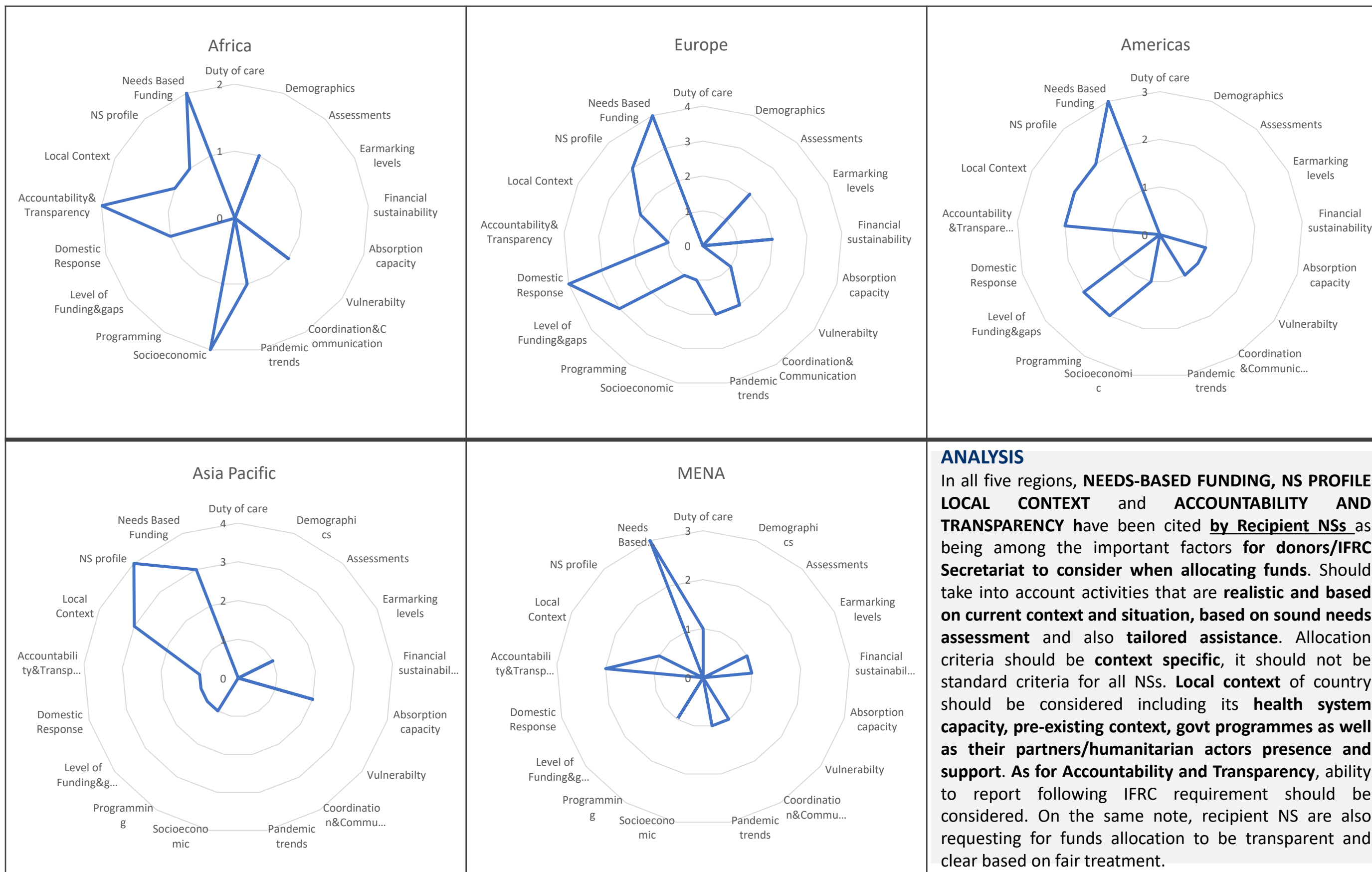
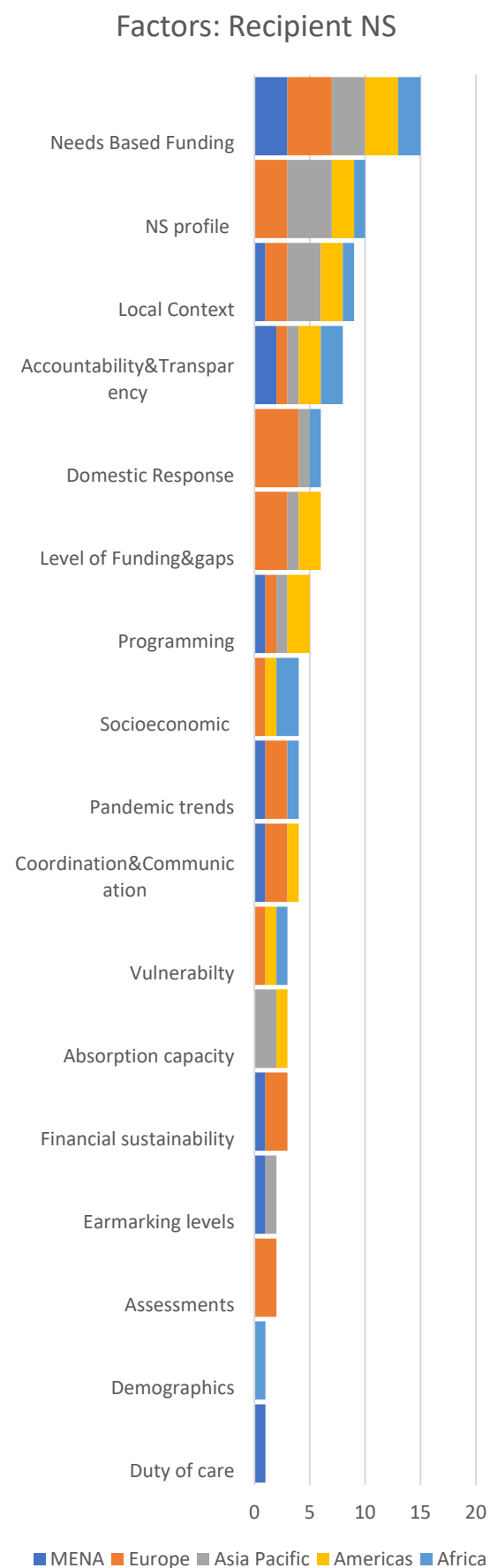
In all three different levels of IFRC Secretariat, **NEEDS-BASED FUNDING, ABSORPTION CAPACITY, ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY, NS PROFILE** and **PROGRAMMING** have been cited as being among the important factors to consider in their decision making: **IFRC Geneva HQ** allocates earmarked & un-earmarked funds to **IFRC Regional Offices**, which in turns channel those funds **to COs or CCSTs** (who then transfer the money to **NS**)

Collectively, IFRC secretariat respondents are saying that allocations need to be driven by actual **needs** (as opposed to politically driven, etc.), aligned with local priorities, demand driven, based on intensity of needs, based on sound decision/criteria as well as prioritizing small countries with less capacities and at higher risk. In the process, some **level of flexibility is warranted** i.e. flexibility in money transfer especially in multi-disaster context to address needs, flexibility of funding use - extent to which the allocation can consider the capacity building needs, etc. The **absorption capacity** - National Societies' ability to absorb the funds, willingness and ability to scale up - is also of paramount consideration. When it comes to **Accountability and Transparency**, funds allocation should be considered for NS that has the ability to conform with rules and procedures of IFRC - audit system, financial management, etc. - staying true to their mandate in country, have capacity to report and also taking into account issues of corruption or frauds. As for **NS profile**, such information provides insight to **Mandate** given by the Government of the country on what the **role allocated to the RC** in the response, **NS capacity to recover and implement, capacities/expertise** of National Societies as well as **proven track record with the NS** - to know that they have a close contact with the people, and that they know the needs. On top of these factors, good and quality **programming** should also be in place: good plans, alignment with global decisions, take into account strengthening NS capacities, feasible/appropriate type of programmes – a high cost programme (running a hospital) vs a lesser cost programme (volunteer-based work).

\*Note: The views are based on IFRC levels. It is not possible to do a regional perspective for IFRC i.e IFRC MENA, IFRC Americas, IFRC Europe, IFRC Africa & IFRC Asia Pacific, due to limited respondents from COs & CCSTs.

# III. Factors to consider for Funding Allocation

## Recipient NS - Regional Perspective\*



**ANALYSIS**

In all five regions, **NEEDS-BASED FUNDING**, **NS PROFILE**, **LOCAL CONTEXT** and **ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY** have been cited by Recipient NSs as being among the important factors for donors/IFRC Secretariat to consider when allocating funds. Should take into account activities that are **realistic and based on current context and situation, based on sound needs assessment** and also **tailored assistance**. Allocation criteria should be **context specific**, it should not be standard criteria for all NSs. **Local context** of country should be considered including its **health system capacity, pre-existing context, govt programmes as well as their partners/humanitarian actors presence and support**. As for **Accountability and Transparency**, ability to report following IFRC requirement should be considered. On the same note, recipient NS are also requesting for funds allocation to be transparent and clear based on fair treatment.

\*Note: Based on Recipient NS view coming from a particular region.



### III. Factors to consider for Funding Allocation - Quotes (top 5 Global Factors)

#### 1. NEEDS BASED FUNDING

"Is there a calculus with which we are aiming to reach where we say X amount of money is going towards beneficiary-centred activities versus how much money is being used to stand up these operations. **You can never have enough resources** and it's trying to find that balance."

"We tend to give more funds to countries with high needs and high capacities. But these countries also have a high fundraising capacity. It is not logical to invest so much in those countries."

"Impartiality in this COVID operation would mean allowing the Geneva secretariat and regions to **distribute resources according to needs. In several cases, regions made decisions based on politics and not on needs.**"

"Some of the National Societies ask for huge amount of funds **based on weak and exaggerated needs** assessment and not real needs, that affect the other National Societies in that same region."

#### 2. NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

"Allocation criteria should be context specific - it will not be a standard criteria for all National Societies. We need to see what is the **National Society's mandate/common role**, then act accordingly."

"Does the National Society have **the requisite structure in their place to implement what is in their plan?** How can we as the IFRC secretariat support the National Societies to evolve and respond to needs and to support national authorities?"

"Considering funding will always be limited and we need to respond globally. Will look more on needs/vulnerability and **historical ability.**"

"Secondly, **the resources the National Society has**, donors need to consider the funding opportunities of the National Societies in their domestic context. E.g. our National Society has no local funding opportunities from the Government or other sources."

#### 3. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

"...even though with exceptions for COVID response - what level of monitoring and capacity mapping for the National Society? .... really hard to know what is actually on the ground. How do we verify? **Do we have enough transparency?**"

"How funds have already been spent, **accountability or corruption issues, reporting capabilities...**"

"**Accountability and transparency**, audit system, financial management. How the National Society is seen within the society of the country in terms of **trust.**"

"There is not a proper/fair allocation of funding, and the **IFRC secretariat should be transparent and clear on the way of allocation**, some of the National Societies get big amounts and other didn't get sufficient funds."

#### 4. ABSORPTION CAPACITY

"Need a bit of **analysis on how National Societies absorb and implement quality programming.** In some countries that we've been following, feel this would be problematic".

"On the other hand, there're pull factors, that relate to humanitarian needs, **National Societies' ability to absorb the funds, willingness and ability to scale up and to do so in an accountable way.** ""

"National Society capacity to implement. Different regions are applying different approaches in this because we don't have a method **to measure or score the implementation capacities of National Societies.** The regions have developed their own method of measuring the implementation capacities of the National Society. in this regard there is a little bit of blurriness."

"Earmarked funding should be properly handled. **Prior to the confirmation of receiving an earmarked donation, the IFRC secretariat should confirm with the earmarked National Society about their capability and intention to receive the donation.**"

#### 5. LOCAL CONTEXT

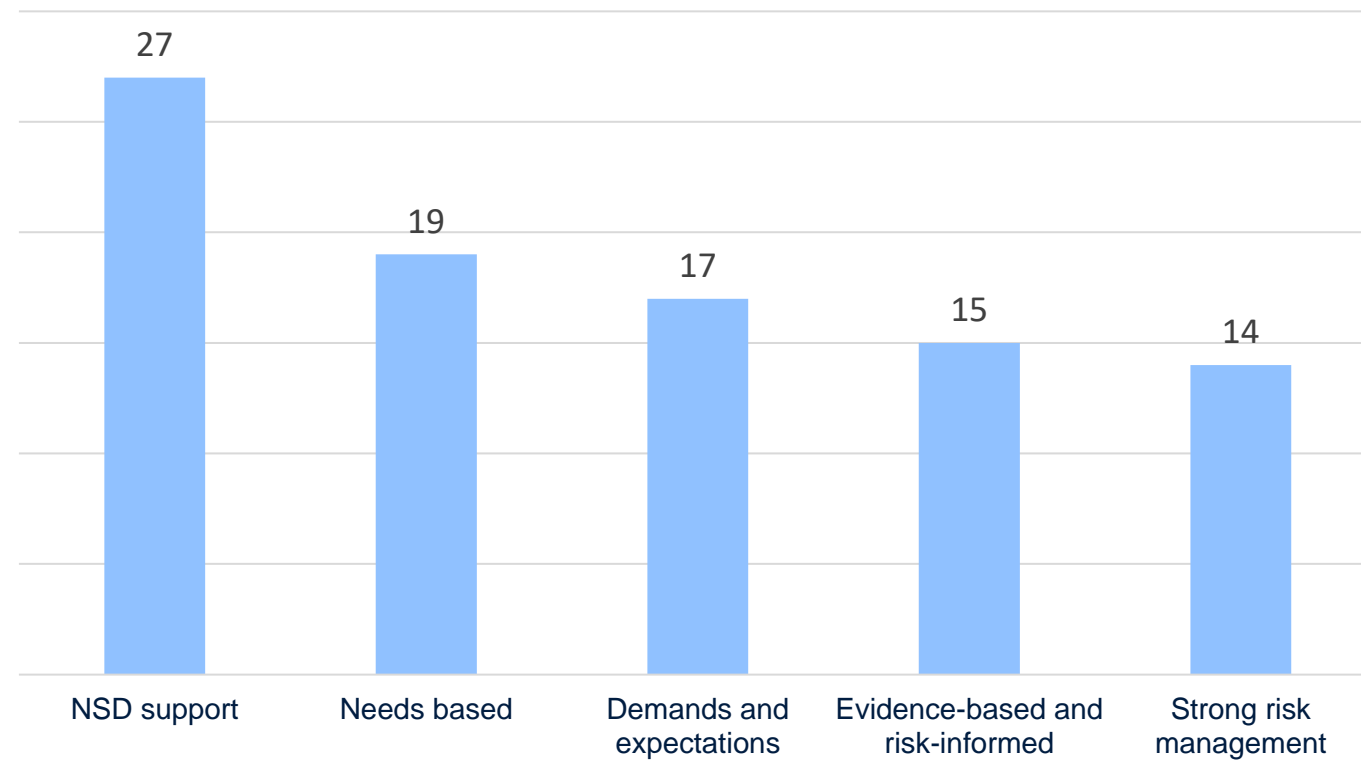
"... **the situation on the ground.** If National Societies are stretched and the IFRC secretariat is stretched, in some ways we need to ask whether they are able to implement? E.g.(in one country in Asia Pacific)...At this moment, IFRC delegates cannot go to the field. National Society staff cannot have face to face meetings with the IFRC secretariat. "

"**Pre-existing context** needs to be considered to avoid reputational risks during implementation period or beyond".

"Consider local context in a country. If the **health system** is not managing, we need to reach out even if the National Society is not reaching out to us. "

"Covid has different implications in (country). The IFRC secretariat needs to **focus more on what the (National Society) is doing and not on what the global trend is in dealing with Covid.**"





## 1. NSD Support

- Support for financial sustainability, business continuity and income-generating activities
- Improving the wellbeing of volunteers
- Strengthening National Societies' capacities in technical areas (including livelihoods, PMER, Comms)
- Adaptation to remote work and online trainings
- National Societies learn from each other (peer support between National Societies)

## 2. Needs based

- Allocations need to be driven by needs, not by the National Society's capacity to spend
- Strengthening National Society consultation process
- Flexibility and agility to changing needs
- Focus on what National Societies need to be sustainable
- Earmarking must be aligned with needs

## 3. Demands and expectations

- Managing expectations based on available/expected funding
- Better engagement with donors to increase buy-in in overall plan and reduce earmarking
- National Societies need clear and timely guidelines/technical advice
- Perception that all major decisions have been made in the Geneva secretariat – blur between strategic and operational leadership
- Additional HR support needed for units/teams that are overwhelmed

## 4. Evidence-based and risk-informed

- Reducing bureaucracy so funds can get to the country-level faster
- Closely monitoring local context, National Society needs and gaps, absorption capacity, socioeconomic impact, etc.
- Clear criteria and decision-making process for funding allocation
- Stronger consultation process with National Societies

## 5. Strong risk management

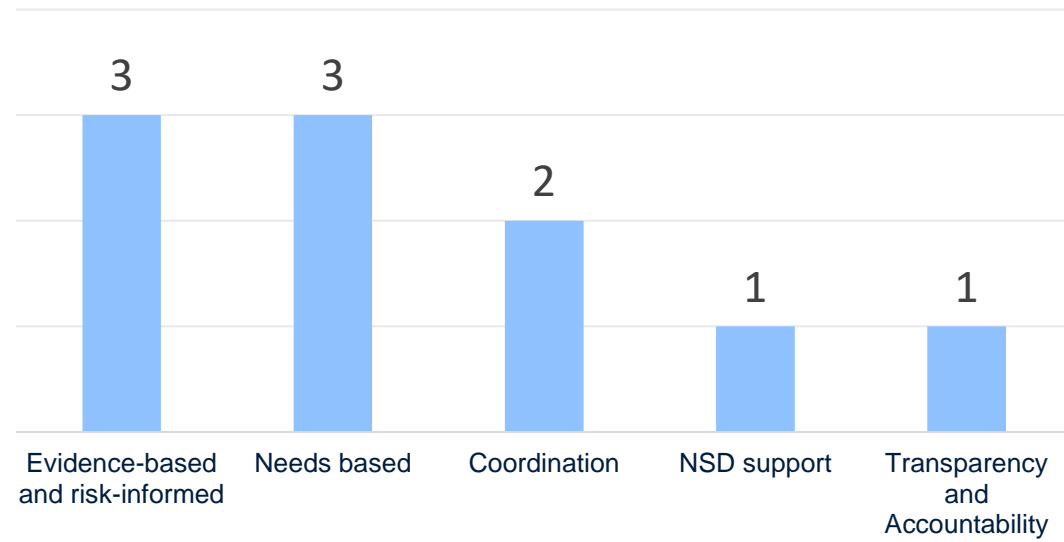
- Acknowledging the complexity and dynamic context of the situation and establishing a flexible approach that increases agility
- Closely monitoring National Society implementation capacity
- Planning ahead, including for the incorporation of COVID-19 activities into programmes when funding runs out
- Putting aside funds for unexpected large-scale events

# IV. Overall Recommendations from Interviewed Stakeholders – Top 5 topics by region

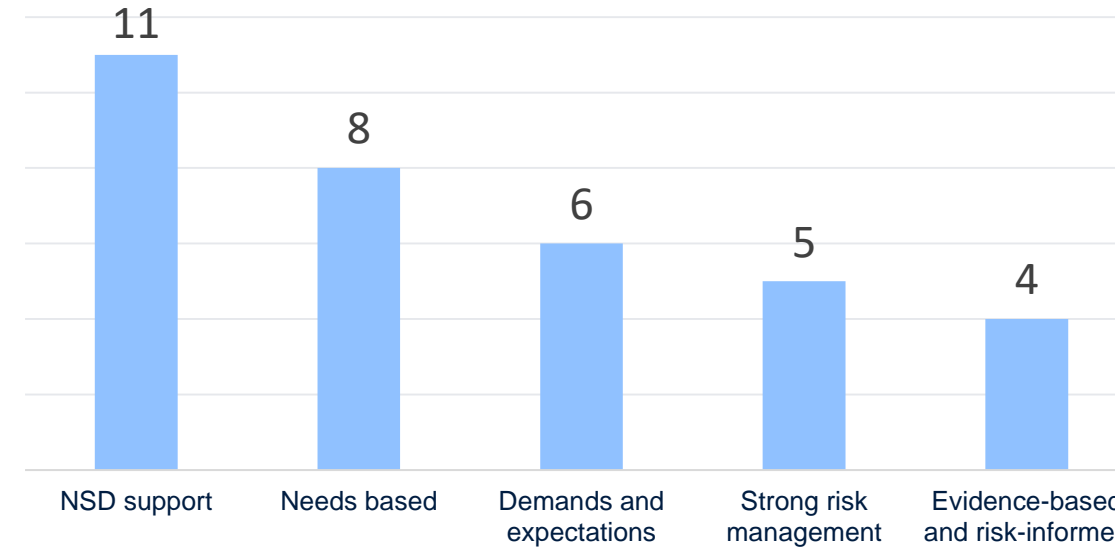


## Top 5 topics by region - # of respondents

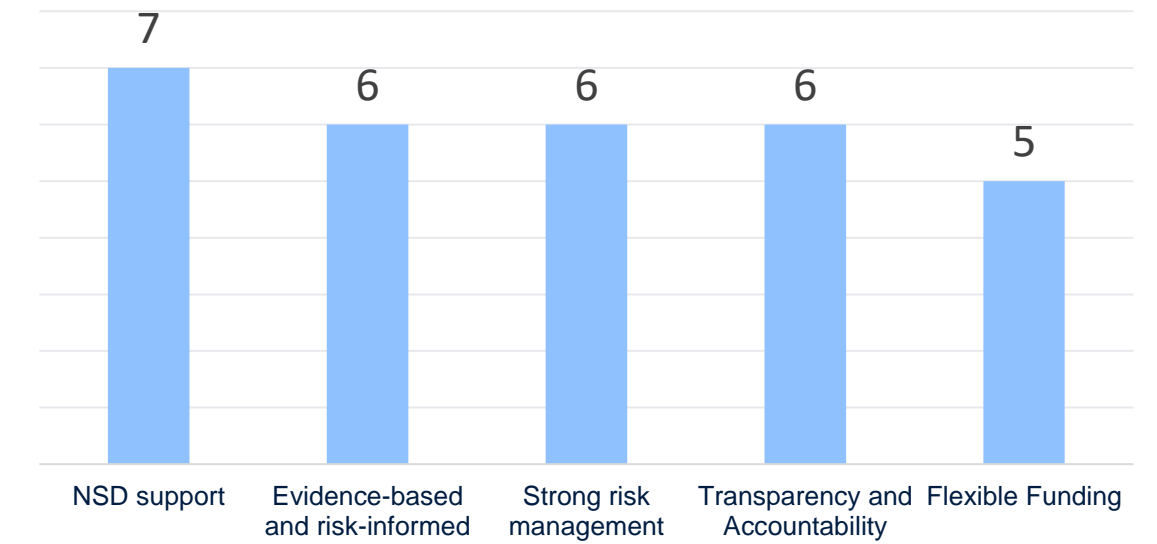
### Africa



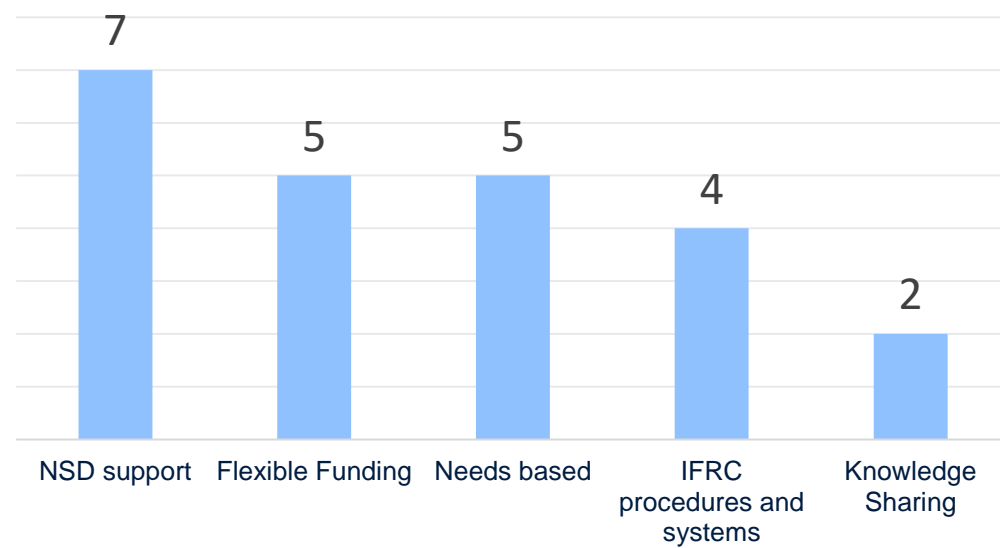
### Americas



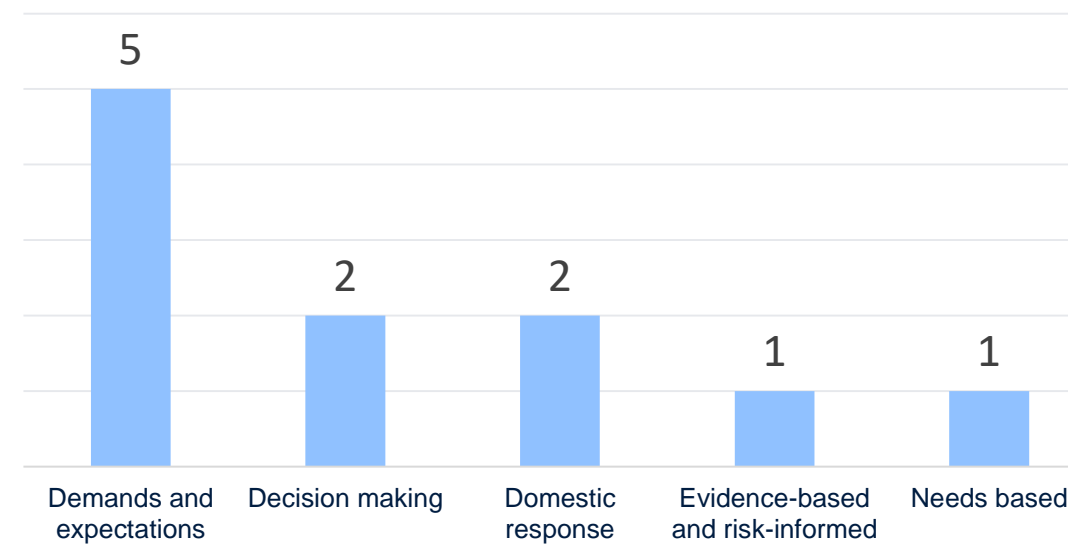
### Asia Pacific



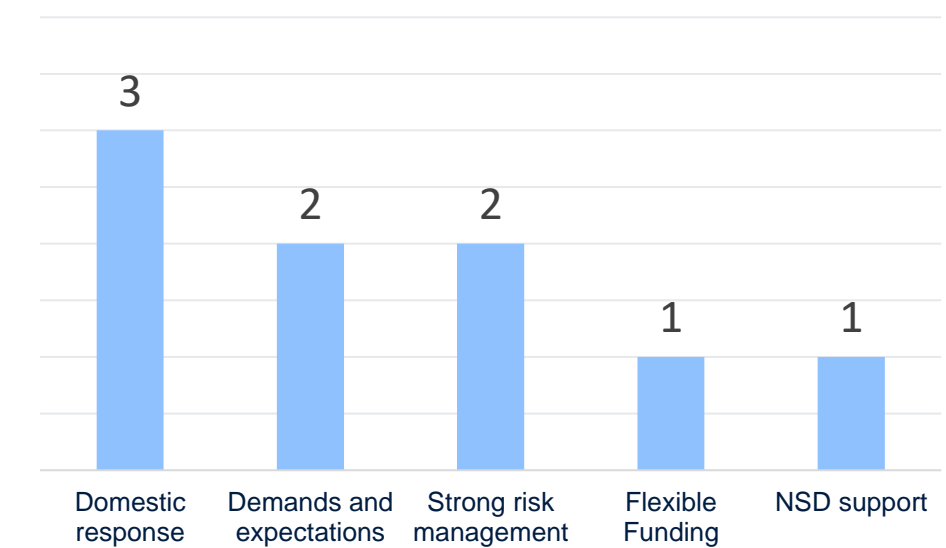
### Europe



### Geneva



### MENA



## IV. Overall Recommendations from Interviewed Stakeholders – Quotes

### 1. NSD SUPPORT

*If we are going to remain relevant, we need to shift how we operate, from face-to-face to remote working. Any training, guidance and support from the IFRC secretariat would be greatly appreciated.*

*We have lots of needs. The Government is requesting many volunteers to complement their response efforts. **We need different approach (distance/online trainings) to train our volunteers.** We are trying to contextualize IFRC secretariat's tools and trainings but unable to find the original ones - asking around with other National Societies. Need tech support from the IFRC secretariat for this.*

*Need **BCP funding support** to continue functions during compounding disasters.*

### 2. NEEDS BASED

*A **consultative process is needed:** Listening and considering the needs and aspirations of National Societies instead of imposing on them. Important to keep National Society things in front.*

*Try to understand the different allocations which are coming from the humanitarian sector. Analyze and avoid duplication of investments and **put money where there are more needs** (also related to National Society HR so to reduce potential risks).*

*Sometimes, funds have been allocated to whoever screams the loudest. **It should be based on needs and capacities**, but it has not been this way.*

### 3. DEMANDS AND EXPECTATIONS

*This is a new emergency operation for all of us. **We need to be ambitious but grounded in some degree of reality.***

***Better negotiations with donors.** So when donors speak to their back donors, they understand that this is not our usual annual funding with the usual terms and conditions. Remind them of the good donorship.*

### 4. EVIDENCE-BASED AND RISK-INFORMED

*Better analysis of historical data and look at how we allocate funds to resources in the future and for it **not to based on assumptions.** Many decisions had been made before consultations took place.*

*COVID-19 is different from other disasters. The rapidly increasing demand for treatment has caused unprecedented pressure on the healthcare system in many countries. Therefore, it is recommended to focus on the most severely-hit areas. The medical services capabilities of National Societies in countries and in regions with severe humanitarian challenges like natural disasters, armed conflicts and immigration have been under great pressure, while COVID-19 has made it more difficult to aid such areas. It is suggested that the **funding allocation should be inclined to National Societies of these countries that are in urgent needs.***

### 5. STRONG RISK MANAGEMENT

*I anticipate funding drying out for COVID-19, so **how do we integrate COVID-19 in existing operations?** This transitioning process is needed - recommend to start thinking about this. Factoring COVID-19 in our activities, duty of care, programmes...*

***Lack of clear technical guidance has been an issue** (from global and regional level). Pandemic preparedness technical adviser at the (regional) level is lacking (position doesn't exist), we don't have it at global level either and this has been an issue. We were not prepared ourselves...*



# Overall trends 1/2

More explanation on region-specific trends is on the "Trends by region" slides below. Click on the region's name for the corresponding slide. These are global trends based on stakeholder feedback from all six questions.

	GENEVA	AFRICA	AMERICAS	ASIA PACIFIC	EUROPE	MENA
Demand and Expectations	National Society capacity to absorb and implement funding.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Unclear decision making for the operation</li> <li>-Better coordination needed at global level.</li> <li>-Translation of key documents/webinars</li> <li>-More NSD support needed</li> <li>-Overwhelming requests to NS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-NS capacity to implement and scale up.</li> <li>-Donor NS's expectation for timely information and processing of pledges.</li> <li>-Demand for timely technical support/guidance.</li> <li>-Meeting NS funding expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of clarity in the funding process.</li> <li>-Clear guidelines and/or trainings needed for NS</li> <li>-Concerted Movement effort needed during this global pandemic to reduce the level of earmarked funds.</li> </ul>	
Evidence-based and risk-informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-More reliance on historical data when making decisions for funding prioritization/allocation.</li> <li>-Look at domestic fund-raising efforts as a factor for funding allocation.</li> </ul>	Allocations to be driven by level of the burden, risk level, travel, tourism and capacity of the countries to respond to the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Clear criteria for allocations at global level needed.</li> <li>-Useful impact/allocation index in the Americas.</li> <li>-Pre-existing context needs to be considered to avoid reputational risks for the IFRC secretariat and NSs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Useful IFRC secretariat tool to decide on NS funding support, but more factors need to be included in analysis.</li> <li>-More transparency and information sharing needed.</li> <li>-Look at domestic fund-raising efforts as a factor for funding allocation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strengthen NS ability to respond to secondary impacts of the pandemic.</li> <li>-Good country-level analysis for a long-term response.</li> </ul>	Risk index useful to define risk rating of countries, unless there is earmarked funding.
Flexible Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-More donor advocacy and unearmarked/flexible funding needed in a changing C-19 context.</li> <li>-Clear communication needed on funding implementation.</li> <li>--Flexible IFRC secretariat procedures/systems needed for the transfer of funds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-With multiple disasters, coordinated funding response needed.</li> <li>-More factors to be considered for funding allocation.</li> <li>-IFRC secretariat satisfied with flexibility of funding which considered NS absorption capacity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Flexible funding needed as the operation evolves and new needs identified.</li> <li>-A set of criteria needed for earmarking.</li> <li>-Reduce checks and balances to speed up response.</li> <li>-Additional funding needed for 2nd wave.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Managing donor expectations on the global earmarking guidelines.</li> <li>-Missed opportunities and delays in pledge processing because of earmarking guidelines.</li> <li>-Earmarking levels affecting funding prioritization/allocation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Flexible IFRC secretariat procedures needed for the transfer of funds.</li> <li>-Flexible donor earmarking in a changing C-19 context.</li> <li>-Additional resources provided by private donors to meet existing NS gaps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Clarity on funding prioritization/allocation procedures needed.</li> <li>-Flexible funding needed to cover gaps and multi-crisis contexts (ex. Palestine, Lebanon).</li> <li>-Challenges to transfer funds due to country sanctions.</li> </ul>



# Overall trends 2/2



More explanation on region-specific trends is on the "Trends by region" slides below. Click on the region's name for the corresponding slide.

	GENEVA	AFRICA	AMERICAS	ASIA PACIFIC	EUROPE	MENA
Funding Prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Global criteria for funding prioritization needed.</li> <li>-More transparency and information sharing within RCRC Movement.</li> <li>-Consider addressing more COVID-19 when low transmission risks.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Prioritization should be done with NS.</li> <li>-Useful index developed in the region but it was only used in the 3<sup>rd</sup> allocation. It should be more needs-based.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Not benefiting from unearmarked funding due to assumptions that AP has a lot of resources.</li> <li>-More transparency needed on allocation of unearmarked funding.</li> <li>-Clear funding prioritization criteria needed at global level.</li> </ul>		<p>On the one hand, the IFRC secretariat is mobilizing the funds and support while maintaining the accountability for the prioritization of the NSs needs. On the other hand, accountability and transparently needed in the prioritization process of funding..</p>
Needs-based	<p>Funding should be based on NS needs and not be influenced by donor earmarking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding allocation require wide consultations with NS to get the immediate needs as priority.</li> <li>-Need to continuously negotiate with the donors to make the resource allocation needs driven.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Absorption capacity should be taken into account, but allocations should be done based on needs first.</li> <li>-Increase agility and flexibility of the operation to meet NS needs.</li> <li>-Funding should be prioritized for NSs with less resources and capacity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Funding allocations need to be driven by actual needs not politics.</li> <li>-Allocation should be context-specific and not a standard criteria for all NS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Allocate funding towards NS needs in NSD and capacity building.</li> <li>-Allocations should be longer term with less earmarking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Varying needs depending upon country context.</li> <li>-The needs assessment do not always reflect the reality on the ground and the figures are sometimes inflated.</li> <li>-IFRC secretariat needs to show transparency on regional funding allocations.</li> </ul>
NSD Support	<p>Continue to provide technical advice and support to affected National Societies, with a strong focus on those who have limited capacity to absorb and implement the funding.</p>	<p>NS needs more resources channeled to technical support, well-being of volunteers, PMER, HR and financial sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Support financial sustainability, business continuity and income-generating activities</li> <li>-Improve the wellbeing of volunteers.</li> <li>-Increase support to ongoing NS activities.</li> <li>-Help NS adapt to remote work and online trainings.</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to provide technical advice and support to affected National Societies, with a strong focus on building capacities (strength &amp; expertise), which is among the top 3 needs in Asia Pacific.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build technical capacities, ex. pandemic preparedness, assessments, PMER and hygiene promotion.</li> <li>-Support NS financial sustainability.</li> <li>-Long-term OD impact not evident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Find alternative ways to support NS in view of sanctions in certain country contexts.</li> <li>-Support financial sustainability of NS services and its operation.</li> </ul>

## Trends by Region - Geneva

**Demand and expectations:** Important to take into consideration the National Society capacity to absorb and implement funding. This should be a factor when considering funding prioritization.

**Evidence-based and risk informed:** More reliance on historical data (global data sets and IFRC Secretariat's non-public data sets) when making decisions for funding prioritization/allocations. Useful to also look at National Societies' domestic fundraising efforts as this could influence funding allocations in a region.

**Flexible funding:** More efforts need to be placed on obtaining unearmarked or flexible funding to allow the IFRC secretariat to better address NS needs in a changing COVID-19 context. At present, the trend is going opposite towards tighter earmarking. Earmarking levels are playing a heavy factor on how funds are being prioritized for this operation. Increase flexibility in the IFRC Secretariat's procedures and systems so that in emergency operations like COVID-19, funding can be allocated on time to National Societies to allow them to respond to COVID-19. For all funding, important to ensure there is clear communication within the IFRC secretariat on how these funds should be spent and implemented in the field according to earmarking to ensure organizational and donor accountability. Clear messaging should also be considered to donors to ensure that there is understanding that this is not a "typical" emergency operation, and it may not be possible to apply usual terms and conditions (ex. Reporting).

**Funding prioritization:** . A criteria for funding prioritization is needed at the global level which explains how funding is allocated and which aligns with the criteria of other regions. More transparency and information sharing with members within the Movement and donors on how funds have been prioritized in order to increase trust, meet urgent NS needs, avoid duplication of resources and align not only the IFRC secretariat but also Movement objectives for the operation. Also consider levels of transmission in a country and increase efforts to address COVID-19 when levels and risk of transmission are low.

**Needs based:** For an operation like COVID-19, funding should be based on needs of the National Societies, and not be so influenced by donor earmarking.

**NSD Support:** Continue to provide technical advice and support to affected National Societies, with a strong focus on those who have limited capacity to absorb and implement the funding.

## Trends by Region - Africa

**Accountability and Transparency:** Need to consider the capacity of the National Society to spend and report the allocated funds.

**Coordination and Communication:** Ensure clear communication on decisions taken and set reporting requirements early enough at the start of the operation. Reduce bureaucracy so that funds can get to the countries faster.

**Evidence-based and risk-informed:** Need to ensure some level of consistency when allocating funds to the regions. Allocations to be driven by level of the burden, risk level, travel, tourism and capacity of the countries to respond to the pandemic.

**Flexible Funding:** A lot of National Societies are facing multiple disasters at the same time and there is a need to have a coordinated funding response. While National Societies appreciate the IFRC secretariat's support, initial delays in the release of funds affected the start of the operation. National Societies acknowledge that the funding allocation was fairly done, but indicate that other methods could have been used in determining the allocations, for example, a country's risks and capacity to respond to the pandemic. IFRC secretariat expresses satisfaction with the level of earmarking flexibility which took into account NS capacity and accountability.

**Needs based:** Funding allocation decisions require a wide consultation with National Societies so that their immediate needs are prioritized. There is a need to continuously negotiate with the donors to make the resource allocation needs driven.

**NSD Support:** National Societies need more resources channeled to technical support, well-being of volunteers, PMER, HR and financial sustainability.

## Trends by Region - Americas



**Demands and expectations:** Perception that all major decisions for the operation have been made by the global leadership team, blurring strategic vs operational leadership. Better coordination needed at global level, as mixed messages from the Geneva secretariat have created confusion. Webinars and important information from the Geneva secretariat at times have been shared only in English, which has created language barriers. National Societies need stronger support from technical areas to develop their response/recovery plans. Too many requests sent to them, which have not always been coordinated.

**Evidence-based and risk-informed:** Clear criteria for allocations at the global level is needed. Better efforts to capture the voice of recipient National Societies and to incorporate local context, needs and gaps of the most vulnerable areas in decision making. The impact/allocation index developed in the Americas has been useful and is still a valid tool for future allocations, however, it could be improved. Pre-existing context needs to be considered to avoid reputational risks.

**Flexible funding:** National Societies have expressed that there is a need for more flexibility in the use of resources as the operation is evolving and new needs identified. Perception that we are going backwards when it comes to earmarking, as some funds are tightly earmarked. There should be a set kind of criteria that helps us analyze whether earmarking makes sense. Check and balances should be reduced to speed up response. National Societies expect additional funding needs due to "second wave" as movement restrictions are reduced in the region.

**Funding prioritization:** Prioritization must be done in conjunction with National Societies. The index developed in the region to support this decision has been useful, however, it was only used for the 3rd allocation. It needs to be more needs-based, as it is still subjective.

**Needs based:** Absorption capacity should be taken into account, but allocations should be done based on needs first. Increase agility and flexibility to changing needs. Funding should be prioritized for smaller and weaker National Societies. Perception that we are spending too much on vehicles, equipment, and HeOps. Stronger focus needed on building capacities that can make National Societies more sustainable.

**NSD Support:** Support financial sustainability, business continuity and income-generating activities. Improving the wellbeing of volunteers. Strengthen National Societies' capacities in technical areas. Help them adapt to remote work and online trainings. Increase support from the IFRC secretariat to National Societies' ongoing activities, as it has been very limited.

**Transfer of funding:** Reduce bureaucracy and increase flexibility in procedures in order for funds to reach National Societies more quickly.



## Trends by Region - Asia Pacific 1/2

**Demand and expectations:** Important to consider National Societies' capacity to absorb and implement funding, and its willingness and ability to scale up. Apart from the need for more transparency on the funding allocation and gaps, Donor National Societies expressed difficulty in getting timely and sufficient information, in particular, on funding gaps to plan for resource mobilization with their back donors. Long delays in processing pledges are affecting donor/back donor relations. The IFRC secretariat acknowledges there is demand for effective and timely technical support and guidance from National Societies. The IFRC secretariat is also aware on the mismatch of expectations on funding levels between the Regional Office and Country/Cluster Offices that affect National Societies' expectations as well.

**Evidence-based and risk informed:** Caution against reliance on formula approach i.e. number of cases, science-based indexes, size and specialties of a National Society, mandate, geographic, level of impact etc, as the reality is more complex and delicate. This has been useful and valid from a Donor National Society view, but more transparency and information sharing is needed to better understand funding needs and gaps. Nevertheless, the IFRC secretariat realizes that a more practical approach is needed, and more factors should be considered, including political and push factors. Useful to also have an in-depth assessment which will help better decide on funding decisions. It is also useful to look at a National Society's health system in country, capacity or investment of a country in its health sector, including in countries with severe humanitarian challenges. Also useful to look at domestic fundraising efforts.

**Flexible funding:** While Donor National Societies acknowledge the (global) earmarking guidelines is a good approach, it's challenging to convince back donors and manage their expectations. Earmarking guidelines should be more flexible as it has resulted in difficulties to accept and manage funds as well as they do not take into account the needs of small states, where a request can be under CHF 100K. This has led/can lead to missed opportunities as well as delays in pledge processing, affecting relationships with donors/back-donors. Earmarking levels influence how funds are being allocated/prioritized in Asia Pacific with varying needs. Flexibility of funding is also sought.

## Trends by Region - Asia Pacific 2/2



**Funding prioritization:** There is a sense that Asia Pacific is missing out on *unearmarked* fund allocation, due to the assumption that Asia Pacific has a lot of resources. Some countries, not having the privilege of receiving earmarked funds continue to have massive needs, vulnerabilities and its fragile context suffers due to minimal funding. More transparency is needed on how (unearmarked) funds have been prioritized in order to increase trust, meet urgent National Society needs, etc. A clear criteria or formula for funding prioritization is needed at the global level which explains how funding is allocated and which aligns with the criteria of other regions.

**Needs based:** Allocations need to be driven by actual needs (as opposed to politically driven, etc.), aligned with local priorities, demands, intensity of needs, sound decisions, current context and situation, sound needs assessments as well as with a tailored assistance. Allocation criteria should be context specific and not a standard criteria for all National Societies.

**NSD Support:** Continue to provide technical advice and support to affected National Societies, with a strong focus on building capacities (strength & expertise), which is among the top 3 needs in Asia Pacific.

**Transfer of funding:** Flexibility in IFRC secretariat's procedures and systems, in particular, flexibility in money transfer especially in multi-disaster contexts to address needs.

## Trends by Region - Europe

**Demand and expectations:** Although some National Societies found their engagement and transfer of funds straightforward, other National Societies reported a lack of clarity regarding the process of accessing funds, and commented on the rigidity of the process. National Societies have requested that clear guidelines and/or training in mobilizing emergency funds is made available, including in the Russian language. They would also like to have clear guidelines when it comes to engaging with WHO and other non-Movement partners, should similar crises happen in the future. At the same time, IFRC Secretariat respondents have acknowledged rigidity in some of their processes and would like to find ways to guarantee that these do not jeopardize the integrity of its humanitarian mandate. For some Donor National Societies, their financial support has been largely determined by specific countries that their respective governments chose to prioritize, and they have highlighted a need for a concerted effort within the Movement to change donor attitudes in the face of a global pandemic.

**Evidence-based and risk informed:** National Societies have highlighted a need to strengthen their ability to respond to the secondary impacts of the pandemic by building key capacities so that they can properly assess and articulate their needs. For the IFRC secretariat, good country-level analysis is needed in order to move forward with the long-term response.

**Flexible funding:** A need for more flexible IFRC secretariat procedures regarding the transfer of funds, as well as donor flexibility in their earmarking is needed, especially in an operational context whereby needs can change and additional financial resources be provided by private donors to address a National Society's existing gaps.

**Needs based:** National Societies would like some of the COVID-19 allocations to address some of their specific NSD and capacity building needs. IFRC secretariat respondents think allocations should be negotiated over a longer implementation period, and be less detailed in their descriptions /earmarking.

**NSD Support:** A strong need has been highlighted by National Societies to build technical capacities, especially regarding pandemic preparedness, designing public health interventions, how to carry out assessments, PMER and hygiene promotion. Additionally, the need for financial sustainability has been highlighted by respondents. Some National Societies feel that the IFRC secretariat is not aware of its own challenges in its NSD efforts, as some respondents mentioned that long-term OD impact is not evident, as there is a need for sustained, long-term NSD support.

## Trends by Region – MENA 1/2

**Accountability and Transparency:** The needs assessment do not always reflect the reality on the ground and the figures are sometimes inflated. The IFRC secretariat has to show transparency when it comes to funding allocations amongst the regions.

**Coordination and Communication:** Communication amongst the Movement partners is essential to avoid any duplication of efforts. One component that we need to strengthen is the communication line between the delegations and the IFRC secretariat.

**Demand and expectation:** There is a challenge with certain National Societies implementing activities and spending money. This depends on the National Society's capacity to implement.

**Domestic Response:** Local procurement allow the National Societies to be agile to respond to the crisis.

**Evidence-based and risk-informed:** From the DCPRR point of view, the risk index defines the overall capacity level in the country, its coverage of the plan and funding projections, unless there is earmarked funding.

### Flexible Funding

Funding allocation: National Societies were not aware of the funding allocation in the MENA Region - some National Societies received more than others. In general, the IFRC secretariat showed flexibility in funding for COVID-19. The ownership and connectiveness needs to be improved among the Movement components. A clarity on the allocation, selection and prioritization procedures is needed. Three areas should be defined: 1) Interconnectivity amongst the departments; 2) Working together; and 3) Learning and sustainability of the National Society to maintain and deliver their mandate.

More resources required: The funds received by some National Societies were not fully covered by the response plan since some of the response plans were not updated. Also, some activities, for example, RCCE will be included in the future needs to be covered.

Transparency: The IFRC secretariat should focus on maintaining the accountability of the prioritization process for National Society needs.

Earmarking: Earmarking does not always consider countries with multi-crisis like Lebanon and Palestine.

Earmarking: In addition, during COVID-19, unearmarked funds were preferred because the National Society could procure locally due to travel restrictions. Also, geographical and activity-based earmarking was not accepted as it was too tight of a level of earmarking.

Earmarking: Look into multi-year funding, and ensure that IFRC is not competing with the annual plan funding.



## Trends by Region - MENA 2/2



**Priority needs:** The flexibility to change the earmarking with the evolving situation and changing needs of the targeted communities. It could differ from country to country.

**Transfer of funds:** Challenges to transfer funds because of the sanctions of certain countries.

**Implementation challenge:** The main challenge is how to spend the funds and how to fully implement the activities. With the current situation and the movement restrictions, as well as the limited access to the field, implementation rates remains a big challenge.

**Lessons Learnt:** The response to COVID-19 was a learning experience which allowed the National Society to respond more efficiently to future events and pandemics.

**Movement Footprint:** There is no picture on the RCRC Movement footprint. There is an ICRC footprint, IFRC secretariat footprint and specific National Society footprints, but the Movement footprint is missing in the MENA region. The footprint will come when tools are aligned as one Movement, there is one direction, and all the Movement components work together.

**Needs Based:** The needs are different from one country to another. The current evolving situation and changing needs requires a flexible funding approach. Also, funding allocations should include a wider approach to assess needs and not be based solely on a needs assessment. The IFRC secretariat has to show transparency when it comes to the funding allocation amongst the regions.

**NSD support:** The list of National Society needs and priorities were shared with the IFRC secretariat. It is important to explore alternative ways of supporting the National Society in view of the challenges it faces with sanctions. Also, important to ensure the sustainability of its services and operation; safety of staff and volunteers; and the coverage of costs of responders/distribution.

**Proportionality Analysis:** Needs should be prioritized. It is unrealistic to implement all planned activities . An area-based approach should be considered, accountable to the stakeholders and the community.



**For further information on Real-Time Learning (RTL) for the COVID-19 global operation, please contact:**

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