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Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) Mongolia: Severe Winter

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Revised Emergency Appeal n° MDRMN006	Glide n° CW-2017-000001-MNG
Date of issue: 19 October 2017	
Operation manager: Gwendolyn Pang Head of IFRC Country Cluster Support Team in Beijing	Point of contact: Bolormaa Nordov Secretary General of Mongolian Red Cross Society
Operation start date: 2 January 2017	Expected timeframe: 13 months (to 2 February 2018)
Operation budget: CHF 856,387	DREF allocation: CHF 177,349
Total number of people affected: 157,000 ¹ people	Number of people to be assisted: 11,264 people
Host National Society presence (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) has 33 mid-level and 700 primary level branches working in all provinces of Mongolia, it has 7,000 volunteers and 128,827 members including 75,000 junior and youth members. MRCS has six established regional disaster preparedness centres with 240 emergency response team members.	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation: The National Society works with International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in this operation as well as current Partner National Societies: Australian Red Cross, British Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross Society, Finnish Red Cross, and the Republic of Korea National Red Cross.	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), local governments, USAID, UN and its agencies, World Vision International, Save the Children, Caritas Czech, People in Need (PIN), G-Mobile, World Animal Protection Organization.	

Summary of major revisions made to the Emergency Plan of Action:

This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on 2 January 2017 for CHF 655,512 over a period of ten months. In order to reflect the current needs, address the recommendation from the final evaluation of the previous appeal, and with the support of additional funding from donors, this emergency plan of action (EPoA) and budget is revised and the operational timeframe is extended for three months until 2 February 2018.

The relief activities have been completed, and taking account of close consultation with the affected people and the relevant authorities, this revision will support strengthening Dzud preparedness and national society capacity building including 315 community members as branch disaster response team (BDRT) members.

The dzud preparedness activities supported in this revised emergency appeal, is directly linked to the MRCS dzud preparedness plan which is being developed, and aims to link relief, recovery, mitigation, preparedness and disaster resilience initiatives with combined top-down and bottom-up perspectives. This is important as the summer of 2017 has been unusually dry and the forecast predictions of the National Agency for Meteorology and Environment Monitoring points to a severe dzud in the coming winter months again.

¹UNOCHA's Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (10 - 16 January 2017)

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

*Dzud*² (Mongolian term for a severe winter) is a disaster that affects the herder households in Mongolia which constitutes almost half of the population, by threatening their health, income and livelihood. Nomadic herders in Mongolia rely fully on livestock and livestock related raw material income for their living. Livestock is free-range pastoral and serves as main source of food and transportation. A drought started in 2016 followed by extreme winter has caused many vulnerable families living in the western and northern parts of the country. In December 2016, there were 110 soums³ in 13 provinces, around 32 percent of the total territory was starting to experience hardship. This situation had evolved to affect 157,000 people (approximately 37,000 herder households) across 127 soums in 17 out of 21 provinces in Mongolia as of February 2017. The livestock death toll reached to 133,900 affecting the most vulnerable herders across the 17 provinces. As of February 2017, around 70 percent of the country was covered with snow, in some mountainous regions snow has piled up to as thick as 50 cm. Shortage of pasture and water led to large scale livestock loss and in some areas, the ice crust formed made it difficult for livestock to dig through to reach grass. Approximately 16,000 households (10 percent of total number of HH with livestock) with some seven (7) million livestock, moved to nearby soums and provinces seeking for better pasture. This mobilization of herders is called *otor*⁴. There were several breakouts of livestock infectious diseases and those areas were quarantined, prohibiting animals to move from those locations.



Mongolian Red Cross Society assessment team visited Dzud affected herder's household in Selenge province, January 2017. Photo: MRCS

Having a vast area of land, herders live far apart from each other, some only having a neighbour in 10 km distance. The distance of herders from the soum center and the market range from as near as 5 km to as far as 110 km. Due to blocked roads, transportation is made extremely challenging. The Local Emergency Management continuously worked on clearing the snow from roads to make it possible for herders to pass through. Government was in need of graders, dozers, ambulance cars, police cars and fuel.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) stated that they were 82 per cent prepared in terms of hay and fodder at province level, but they also estimated that the preparedness level in soums was less than 70 per cent due to the budgetary constraints at the local level. Therefore, the State Emergency Commission headed by the Deputy Prime Minister requested humanitarian actors to provide assistance to the dzud affected herders in Mongolia on 15 December 2016. Shortly after this the Government task force together with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) of which MRCS is one of the members, conducted emergency needs assessment.

Many families, in order to prepare for the current winter, had to sell huge numbers of livestock on the market before the livestock died and for cash. This resulted in oversupply of meat in the market, and a steep decline in prices of meat and other animal products. While the price of meat, one of the main sources of income for herders, had declined to lowest levels, herders were in acute need of cash to be able to meet their priority needs including, but not limited to, food, basic household items, agriculture products and health care services. Because of the lack of financial resources to buy hay and fodder, herders were at high risk to lose their livestock at accelerating rates. The prospect of losing their livestock drives them to put even more livestock on the already severely saturated market, putting further downward pressure on prices. This combination of negative forces resulted in a vicious cycle of serious shortage of cash that is critically needed for immediate household basic priority needs.

The Mongolian government welcomed cash support to herders, but had also reported an extreme shortage of ambulance vehicles and medical equipment to meet the needs for emergency transportation, and because of heavy snowfall and road blockages it had become extremely difficult to provide ambulance services in the northern and central parts of the country in a timely manner to save lives. Multipurpose unconditional cash grants to support life-saving basic needs,

² Dzud is a cyclical slow onset disaster unique to Mongolia. It consists of a summer drought, resulting in insufficient production of hay, followed by very heavy winter snow (10 to 350 cm), winds and lower than normal temperatures (-40C to -50 C) during which an excessive number of livestock die causing basic services, and in the longer term, livelihoods to collapse in vulnerable herder communities.

³ Sub-province

⁴ Herder households move to nearby soums and provinces seeking better pasture for their livestock, often traveling with scaled down mobile shelter with limited insulation and layer.

emergency agricultural inputs and first aid kits had been identified as priority needs by the Government task force and the HCT.

The summer of 2017 was dry and hot and by 28 August, around 80 percent of the total territory or 94 soums were in drought, 153 soums were in drought-like condition. In the winter of 2017, about 177,480 herder households will be using the pastureland and around 75 percent of them is predicted to go on otor. Due to drought and dry summer, herders were unable to prepare adequate amount of hay and about 60 percent of the livestock was not able to gain enough fat.

Summary of the current response

Overview of Host National Society

Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) has 33 mid-level branches, existent in all provinces and districts and is the sole National Humanitarian Organization in Mongolia. Under the newly approved Law on the Legal Status of the MRCS passed by the Mongolian Parliament in late 2015 and approved by the president of the country in January 2016, the MRCS is an auxiliary to the government in humanitarian matters with a distinct recognized role in disasters and emergencies as stated in the Disaster Protection Law of Mongolia.

The MRCS is a member of the National Emergency Commission and the Humanitarian Country Team and is actively involved in the planning and designing of the national response to the emerging crisis. MRCS's response has been planned in close cooperation with NEMA and other HCT members.

The MRCS has previous experience in implementing Emergency Appeal operations in 2010 and 2016 with the same type of disaster. Multipurpose cash grant was used as an emergency response and was implemented through Khan Bank that has branches in every soum and provinces throughout the country. MRCS has organized psychosocial first aid (PFA) training of trainers (ToTs) present in 17 provinces in 2016 and equipped the mid-level branch staffs/ volunteers with personal protection clothes in cold weather.

The MRCS co-chairs the Cash Working Group with Save the Children. The working group has standardized the amount of cash within the HCT to be distributed to herders.

MRCS' disaster response plan, modalities and mechanisms have been drafted with the support of IFRC. The MRCS National Disaster Response Team members (NDRT) have been activated to provide assistance to targeted communities.

Response up-to-date

The Mongolian Red Cross Society has acted upon the request of the Government call in December 2016. Up to date, MRCS has in total distributed emergency unconditional cash grant to 3,480 households, distributed first aid and veterinary kits to 1,740 households in 11 severely affected provinces. PFA ToT have been conducted, and in total 6,750 children from 120 schools were reached with psychosocial first aid.

No	Support/service provided	People reached	Date	Funded by
1	Kitchen set	150 households	Jan-Feb 2017	MRCS/ECHO
2	Dignity kit	150 households	Jan-Feb 2017	MRCS/ECHO
3	Food Package	40 households	Jan-Feb 2017	MRCS
4	Blanket, Mattress	150 households	Jan-Feb 2017	MRCS/ECHO
5	Warm Clothes	150 households	Jan-Feb 2017	MRCS/ECHO
6	Herder households in Uvs and Khovd provinces were supported by unconditional cash grant	740 households	February, 2017	USAID
7	Herder households in Orkhon, Darkhan, Tuv, Khentii, Selenge Uvurkhangai, Dornod, Zavkhan, Khuvsgul and Uvs provinces were supported by unconditional cash grant (approximately amount CHF100 per HH))	2,740 households	February-March 2017	Emergency Appeal
8	First-Aid orientation by volunteers, FA kit together with manual distribute to herders	1,740 households	March- April 2017	Emergency Appeal

9	PFA ToT training	6,750 students in 120 schools, 1,800 trainers trained	March-June 2017	Emergency Appeal
10	Veterinary kit distributed to herders	1,740 households	March 2017	World Animal Protection Organization
11	Emergency blankets distributed to herders	12,351 blankets (3,087 HH)	April – May 2017	Korean Red Cross
12	Food parcel, NFIs	1200 HH	March 2017	Tama Center of Japan

After the relief distribution, post distribution monitoring was conducted. Mobile data collection method – Magpi was used to collect information from the herders. From the total 3,480 households, 248 households were randomly selected for post-distribution monitoring. The top four priority areas on which the households spent their cash was hay and fodder, food, basic household items for hygiene, agricultural inputs and health care. About 80 percent of the respondents preferred cash assistance to other type of assistance, as it allows more flexibility. Up to 94 percent of the herders who received first-aid kit answered that they found the first-aid kit very useful. They answered that they were able to use it for domestic injuries, accidents and frostbites.

During the time of the cash distribution, the availability of the goods/items were sufficient for the beneficiaries, and as there were no more than 40 beneficiaries assisted in one soum, there were no significant price fluctuation. Only few of the local markets ran out of hay, but these were restocked within five days.

MRCS and IFRC are taking the lessons learnt from the previous year's operation, particularly the recommendation for MRCS's capacity to respond to be strengthened through development and adopting new response mechanisms such as cash-based interventions, building stronger partnerships and establishing strong ties with service providers, such as with Khan Bank of Mongolia.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) is the largest humanitarian organization in the country with a wide network of middle and primary level branches present in all the provinces and districts in Mongolia. The branches play a leading role in providing relief, health and welfare assistance to the most vulnerable groups in the Mongolian population. It aims to serve the most vulnerable through a volunteer-based network, providing key services to targeted populations while promoting the humanitarian values and volunteering. With 33 mid-level branches and 703 primary level branches working all over Mongolia, the MRCS network extends to communities nationwide.

MRCS works in partnership with many government and non-government agencies. It works closely with a number of partner National Societies in various programmes, such as community-based disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction, relief and social care, community-based health and first aid, HIV prevention programmes and youth and organizational development. MRCS is currently implementing several disaster risk management programmes in partnership with the Australian, British and Finnish Red Cross Societies that focus on both household preparedness and risk reduction and institutional disaster response and preparedness in both rural and urban contexts.

IFRC has a well-established country office in Mongolia, with a national programme coordinator, finance and administration manager, backed up technically and administratively by the country cluster support team (CCST) in Beijing. A regional disaster management manager based in Beijing is providing technical support to the operation. IFRC supports MRCS in the implementation of various projects such as National Society Development (NSD), Community Based DRR and Climate Change Adaption (CCA), which are funded by the Australian Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross Society and IFRC. In accordance with IFRC standard operation procedures (SOPs), the IFRC disaster and crises, prevention, response and recovery (DCPRR) team in the IFRC Asia Pacific regional office (APRO) coordinates the operation.

Movement coordination

Two information bulletins were published prior to the DREF operation. MRCS with IFRC support produced beneficiary stories and cooperated with both local and international media to raise awareness among partners and the general public about the dzud situation in Mongolia. The Finnish Red Cross Field Communication Unit was deployed to Mongolia in early February to produce a documentary video and stories in support of the operation's communication.

In early February, IFRC CCST in Beijing assisted MRCS to organize an international press conference on dzud, calling on the support of international donors.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

NEMA is the main disaster response coordinator and responder in the country. The agency holds limited stocks of hay from the state reserves to be distributed based on government decision and priorities. NEMA also provides logistics support to government services (such as ambulances) and the police. It also supports the logistics of humanitarian organizations in the affected areas and the evacuation of severely affected herders from remote locations. As part of their response, Local Emergency Management Agencies (LEMA) are responsible for clearing major roads and rescuing people in stranded vehicles.

State reserves provided herders with 2,410 tons of hay at no cost, 1,700 tons of fodder at 50 per cent discounted price. A total of 36 vehicles were provided to 19 provincial health centers to assist prompt delivery of services to citizens. Animal medicines and nutritional products were provided for some provinces at a cost of 41.8 million tugrug (equivalent to CHF19,800). Four vehicles were provided to provincial Emergency Management Departments and Food and Agriculture Departments in key areas for provision of public services.

The World Animal Protection Organization (WAPO) and IFRC have a global partnership and through this partnership WAPO has supported IFRC/MRCS to conduct technical assessments for livestock needs. WAPO, through MRCS' networks has distributed 1,740 livestock kits to complement the multi-purpose cash assistance to affected herders.

The assistance provided by non-RCRC organization is listed below:

No	Organization	Assistance provided	Target Households
1	UN-CERF	Unconditional cash grant (approx. CHF100)	3500 HH
2	UNFPA	Dignity kit	2465 HH
3	UNICEF	Multi-micronutrient supplement	24031 children
4	FAO	Hay and animal feed	2157 HH
5	PIN	Unconditional cash grant, animal feed	615 HH
6	World Vision	Agriculture, food, and cash	1190 HH
7	Save the Children	Cash for education, school based DRR, PFA, WASH, emergency livestock package	33159 children

At provincial level, there have been some duplication among humanitarian actors; however, at the soums they are covering there is no duplication. Beneficiary lists are being shared among the actors with cross checking efforts.

Needs analysis, beneficiary selection, risk assessment and scenario planning

Needs Analysis

Immediate household needs

Findings from several assessments carried out from December 2016 to February 2017 by the MRCS⁵, the Deputy Prime Ministers task force and the Joint HCT assessment team and the analysis of secondary data indicate that due to early snowfall and colder than average temperature during winter has caused many families to face extreme harsh conditions which pushed them to adopt negative coping strategies. Concerns for the affected herders include lack of access to food security and nutrition, basic household items, wash facilities, shelter, health services and psychosocial support.

MRCS assessments have confirmed that vulnerable herder families experience chronic cash shortages to meet their immediate needs. Financial support as a priority method has been supported by findings of the *Dzud and DRR Assessments* conducted by the British Red Cross in Mongolia in June 2016. Eighty (80) percent of interviewees of the beneficiary satisfaction survey developed from the post distribution monitoring reported that they prefer cash over in-kind and other types of assistance as it helps them meet their diverse needs. This has been repeated again in stakeholder interviews that unconditional cash grant is a timely and the most appropriate assistance in times of dzud and economic crisis. Cash allows beneficiaries to prioritize their immediate needs to be addressed. Findings from the cash transfer programming (CTP) feasibility study in December 2016 have shown that the average herder household spent approximately CHF 30 - 40 for their daily basic food needs for two months excluding meat consumption in consideration that meat will be obtained from their livestock. Vulnerable herder families have insufficient cash to be able to meet their immediate needs and mitigate rapidly approaching crisis. The unconditional cash support of MNT 245,000 (approximately CHF 102) per family enables targeted families to utilize it based on their priorities.

⁵ Livelihood and DRR assessment with British Red Cross in June 2016
 - Dzud rapid assessment in Dornod, Khovd provinces in December 2016
 - Cash feasibility study in Dornod, Khovd provinces, December 2016
 - Dzud rapid assessment in Khentii and Sukhbaatar provinces in January 2016
 - Dzud assessment at Selenge province in January 2017

Health

The threat posed to herders by dzud will produce its negative impact on the psychological condition, especially, among children. Most families send their school-aged children to boarding-schools at soum centres to study. Based on the assessment carried out by the Save the Children in mid-December 2016, psychosocial first aid (PFA) is needed for school children from the dzud affected families. Through the 2015-16 emergency appeal MRCS and IFRC have established a partnership with Save the Children to deliver the PFA to school children from affected households and supported school social workers to continue this work throughout the year. Current PFA technical capacity of MRCS, built previously with support from Save the Children (STC), will allow to resume this aspect of the operation without or with minimum technical support from STC.

First Aid kits are required for herder households to meet their basic health care needs in case of any injuries caused by handling their livestock in harsh winter, and it will also prevent any future health issues related to any untreated injuries with proper first aid care, also considering the government is facing shortage of the ambulance and it is extremely difficult for the ambulance to reach every place during winter. Few of the common injuries the herders face are frostbites, cuts, sprains, and domestic injuries including burns. Having the first aid kits and knowledge to apply it will prevent herders from suffering from any untreated injuries. Due to lack of knowledge on first aid kit contents and its utilisation is not commonly used and disseminated widely across the herders. There is a need to disseminate first aid kits to herders and equip them with the knowledge to utilize it to enable them to apply first aid to their families and neighbours.

Livelihoods

Because of the continuous economic depression which hit Mongolia since 2014, the country has hundreds of thousands unemployed people who now are unable to support their rural families through regular cash remittances. The economic difficulties faced by Mongolia and the oversupply of meat in the market make it impossible for poor herders to generate enough income to self-sustain. Affected by dzud only drove these families further into the vulnerability and poverty cycle. The only practical and well-known way that herders can use to ensure their livelihood is to keep their livestock. If the herders lose all their livestock, they have no choice but to give up their herder lifestyle and move to the city, increasing the rural to urban mobilization. In total during the 2009/2010 dzud disaster 2.44 % of the total population moved to Ulaanbaatar city, whereas during the 2015/2016 dzud 1.79% of the total population moved to Ulaanbaatar city.

Ex-herders, having only herding skills, are unable to find a job in the city, enroll their children in school and receive adequate health care. Therefore, it is important to save the herders livelihood and support them. The practical way to save their livestock in dzud conditions is to build sufficient hay stock and winter shelter for livestock during the summer. This year, NEMA has calculated the sufficient amount of hay preparation at each level. Herders are to prepare 1.2 million tons of hay and the soum reserve should have 30.8 thousand tons of hay. By the end of September, herders and NEMA will be able to collect 824.5 thousand tons of hay and there will be an unmet gap of 405.7 thousand tons. This means a number of livestock will not be able to survive and herders will be in lack of food and cash for the coming winter.

Based on the previous dzud operation's experience and outcomes from consultations with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Labour, World Vision International and Asian Development Bank, there is a continuous need to address the main risk factors related to impacts of dzud to reduce future implications. This plan of action will address the issue related to support to herders to prepare adequate hay, fodder in sufficient quantities to overcome future extreme winter situation. Droughts during last year's and this year's summer, lack of cash and overgrazing have made it problematic for many poor herders to make adequate preparations.

Grass harvesters were provided to beneficiary herders last year through the Emergency Appeal to enable them to harvest hay for winter preparation as it was reported as three times more efficient as the traditional scythe. Herders were able to collect hay during last summer. However, drought situation that continued for two consequent years, worsened by the dzud disaster in winter, limited the growth of hay in the summer of 2017, making it difficult for individual herders to find hay to collect. This situation was observed and led to a decision of not adopting grass harvester distribution as a livelihood support and winter preparation measure to reduce risk of dzud among the herder households this year.

Community preparedness and disaster risk reduction

Based on the vulnerability and capacity assessment in 2013, and Dzud and DRR assessment by the British Red Cross in 2016, the various methods mitigating the effects of dzud conditions have been recommended. This includes the creation of herders' associations to collect hay and provide the necessary agricultural tools and machinery to strengthen their livelihood. The practicality of such measures largely depends on geographical location and the weather condition of the year as not all areas are suitable and available for hay production. Hay is crucial for the survival of livestock during the harsh months of winter and spring as an immediate relief, and supports herders to save their livelihood from bankruptcy.

Reducing the number of livestock by destocking was highly recommended by the livelihood experts from the Red Cross Movement but considering current operational capacity of the MRCS, and winter situation of dzud affected areas and condition of other herder households, this option will be implemented with high cost and will require much more human

resources from the operation and local government. Considering current local market price of livestock and raw materials, the de-stocking would have similar input with CTP but with higher operation cost, higher amount of time and human resources. Therefore, this is not considered in this appeal.

Longer-term DRR in terms of mitigating future dzuds include: Crop production (vegetable); Sustainable pasture management; Supporting the development of herder groups and cooperatives; Re-stocking. Re-stocking was done by the MRCS, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Save the Children as recovery following the dzud responses. But the outcomes were uncertain. There were no significant outcomes from the re-stocking programmes done by MRCS and Save the Children. Ministry of Food and Agriculture had negative recommendation on their re-stocking programme due to its contribution towards the inactiveness of herders in preparation for future dzuds. Instead, recommendation was to give full ownership to herders through their own active involvement in preparation for extreme winters. This includes business support such as training, financial and business literacy, small scale production units start up grants, market integration and links. These, to a greater extent, would require a much longer duration operation, flexible funding and specialized technical capacity, which MRCS currently lacks.

Nevertheless, the findings from the interviews with herders and relevant stakeholders during monitoring and evaluation visits stressed the gap of community members taking ownership over dzud preparedness. It was suggested by many herders to form cooperatives and herders' groups that works together to better prepare for dzud and self-support themselves and their group members in times of disaster as they are the first responders. There is a need to coordinate and form community groups equipped with first-aid, PFA knowledge, disaster management and train them as disaster response teams. Increasing community engagement and accountability (CEA) through engaging the community members in the process of preparedness, response and recovery will play a significant role in increasing the community ownership and programme sustainability.

Shelter

The targeted population comprise semi migrant people carrying smaller compact traditional gers with themselves and they are able to cope with hard winters. Therefore, no shelter activities were proposed in this operation previously. However, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has recently announced that 75 percent which is about 133,110 herder households are forced to go on otor, or migrate to nearby soums and provinces in search of better pasture. Up to date, 80 percent of the total territory is in drought and drought-like condition. The head of household will go on otor and the wife and children will stay behind as the child needs to go to school. Some of the families have smaller compact traditional gers, but some lack such gers, or have no option but to take some of the insulation from the gers left behind. Ger is insulated with felt covers. More than one layer of ger insulation becomes necessary during the winter months as winter temperature often drops below -40C. Having no adequate insulation in the ger, the ger is not able to sustain the heat generated from the fuel leading to inefficient use. The severe winter threatens nomadic herder households, especially vulnerable families who lack the resources to stockpile fuel for heating. Inefficient use of fuel that can cause households to run out of fuel for heating can be life-threatening if not addressed properly. The ger insulation helps herder households to stay warm during winter, ensure efficient use of fuel for heating and increase the level of comfort.

Another shelter need to be addressed is the winter shelter for livestock. Each year, families mend and repair their winter shelter. However, due to lack of cash, many families are unable to mend and insulate their winter shelters. The livestock death toll increases if not kept in warm shelter. Therefore, there is a need for ger insulation and repairing of winter shelter in the dzud affected communities to reduce the risk.

Beneficiary Selection

MRCS, in coordination with Ministry of Social Welfare and its local branches have identified around 2,740 vulnerable herder households across ten targeted provinces as the most in need of assistance. Ministry of Social Welfare maintains good, reliable and accurate information concerning the poorest and most vulnerable herder within their responsibilities area. The identified beneficiaries were discussed with community committees for validation.

MRCS targeted herder households with 200 or less livestock who fulfills one of the following criteria:

- Herder families with disabled family member
- Elderly herder families (over age 65)
- Multi-children herder families (3 or more children under age 16)
- Single-headed herder household

Beneficiary registration was done by MRCS and was facilitated by the staff and volunteers of the mid-level branches in close coordination with the local government and authorities. The selected beneficiaries were crosschecked for possible duplication with other humanitarian actors within the HCT members. MRCS established both local and national hotlines to collect feedback from communities.

Risk Assessment

Mongolia is a relatively calm and peaceful country and there are no significant security risks related to dzud operation. The road blockage caused by heavy snowfall hinders the timely mobility to target areas. This is handled by the national emergency management agency in a timely manner.

The early snowfall in autumn will limit the time to spend for disaster risk reduction and livelihood activities. The training and livelihood activities shall be planned to take place before November 2017.

MRCS/IFRC will be regularly monitoring the operation both remotely and through field visits, as well as conduct internal audits.

Cross Cutting Issues

When planning the emergency operation, gender issues have been taken into particular consideration to meet minimum standards. Mongolian culture and social structure have few special implications with regards to gender issues and any related concerns will be addressed during implementation of the appeal.

MRCS staff and volunteers have been instructed to give their special attention to cross cutting issues such as the needs of the women, elderly, marginalized groups, people with disabilities and children that have been taken into account for the selection of the most vulnerable beneficiaries.

MRCS/IFRC will be constantly monitoring the operation to ensure that these issues are properly addressed as these were not included in past emergency appeal operation.

MRCS volunteers and staff have been instructed to properly document any cases of domestic violence and refer these to the local authorities.

B. Operational strategy and plan

MRCS has established an operational coordination center at its headquarters. The MRCS coordination center is led by head of DM and supported by other departments.

This emergency plan of action has been developed by MRCS supported by IFRC in consultation with government and international responders.

MRCS/IFRC will strengthen the longer-term recovery component of the operation. This will be done through approaches aimed at assisting MRCS to reduce herders' vulnerability to future dzuds through optimized hay and fodder collection and preservation.

Through this operation, MRCS will further strengthen its capacity in disaster management, especially at the local and branch levels. MRCS staff and volunteers will receive refresher trainings in PFA. This operation will allow MRCS to learn and adopt long term economic development approaches in support of vulnerable herders.

MRCS/IFRC will further sensitize and train Red Cross staff and volunteers who are participating in the operation on the principles and rules of RCRC for Humanitarian Assistance, Code of Conduct, SHPERE standards and other relevant policies and guidelines.

Overall objective

The overall objective of the operation is to deliver humanitarian assistance to 2,740 vulnerable households (approx. 11,264 people) affected by Dzud, with a focus on health, shelter and non-food relief items and livelihood support. The operation will also include dzud preparedness and national society capacity building activities, in which 315 herders will be trained as branch disaster response team (BDRT) members, equipped with DM, PSS and first aid knowledge.

Proposed strategy

The operation consists of closely integrated sectors aiming to provide:

1. **Cash-transfer component** will include unconditional cash grant to 2,740 households (11,264 people) to meet their immediate needs, and cash for work to 165 vulnerable herders to mend and repair winter shelters, which will be elaborated under shelter.

2. **Health:** Psychosocial support, in cooperation with Save the Children, will be provided to 6,750 children at 120 boarding schools and living in school dormitories away from their herder parents. 1,000 basic First Aid kits along with its manuals and training will be provided to dzud affected households.
3. **Community preparedness and disaster risk reduction:** Due to drought condition this year, MRCS will preposition 25,000 bundles of hay from private company or from Russia in advance of winter, to cover 125 vulnerable households in order to reduce the risk of livestock loss. The hay procured will be stored in the Local Emergency Management Agency warehouses. In addition, 1,000 first aid kits will be prepositioned and stored in MRCS warehouse.
4. **Livelihood:** Given that most of the herders rely on only one source of income, facing the challenges of having sufficient cash from pasture, many of the herders are not able to repair its winter shelter and many families are sharing the winter shelters during winter times. By recruiting some skilful herder to repair the winter shelter for community members, in adopting cash for work, it is not only addressing the shelter needs, but also gives them an alternative income source. In total, 55 winter shelters will be repaired and 165 herders will have received some money in exchange for the work. The daily wage for the herders will be calculated in accordance to the government minimum salary.
5. **Shelter:** 100 ger winterization kits will be provided to 100 herder households, to repair and strengthen their gers prior to the winter, to ensure that herders will stay warm during winter.
6. **MRCS institutional preparedness and disaster response capacity.** 15 selected community members consisting of herders, local doctors, bagh leader and relevant stakeholders from 21 each province (jointly chosen and registered by NEMA and MRCS) will be selected and trained as branch disaster response team (BDRT), and coordinated by Red Cross mid-level branches. They will be trained in first aid, PSS and disaster response and familiarized by necessary knowledge in disaster risk reduction. These community team will serve their areas with facilitation and guidance from the MRCS. These teams will also be utilized as information dissemination channels to the herder communities. Moreover, lessons learnt workshop among the staff and volunteers will enable the institutional learning process.

Summary of activities and number of people to be reached:

Sectors	Intervention	Number of people to be reached
Shelter and NFIs	Provision of UCG for immediate needs	2,740 households, 11,264 people ⁶
Livelihood	Cash for work – for shelter repair	165 herders
Shelter	Receive winter shelter repair assistance through the livelihood cash for work activity mentioned above	55 herder households, 275 people
	Provision of Ger winterization kit	100 herder households
Health	Conduct PFA training	6,750 children in 120 schools
	Conduct PFA ToT	1,800 people in schools
	Distribution of first aid kits and first aid training	1,000 people
Preparedness	Preposition of hay	125 households
	Preposition of first aid kit	1,000 people
NS capacity building	Training on DM, first aid, PSS	315 herders trained

Four key aspects have been factored into the strategy for this operation:

- **Movement-wide approach:** MRCS is responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the disaster response operation. IFRC is the primary operational partner of MRCS.
- **Cash transfers:** It has been determined that one of the best response approaches is through unconditional cash grants to empower the affected herders, preserve their dignity and allow them to prioritize their diverse needs on their own. The Government of Mongolia approved this intervention and set up a cash grant value harmonised across all the humanitarian actors in country (UN agencies, NGOS, MRCS, etc.). Cash for work modality will also be used to meet two diverse needs – lack of cash on hand and mending the winter shelters.
- **Integrated programming and resilience-building:** Cash grants will fulfil the needs of the affected people and thereby contribute to their resilience.
- **Lessons learned from the previous operation:** MRCS has gained valuable experience from the 2015-16 dzud operation, which was taken into consideration when planning this operation. In this operation, the local working groups comprising local authorities, LEMA, MRCS and members of the community will be set-up to ensure that only those who meet the selection criteria are assisted in an accountable and transparent manner.

⁶ People reached with unconditional cash grants also targeted for assistance under shelter, livelihoods and health

Cash transfer component

MRCS gained strong experience in cash transfer programme during the past dzud operation of 2015-16 and a risk assessment based on previous dzud operations in 2010 has been carried out. Additionally, the operation will be closely monitored and supported by the IFRC. The recent cash transfer programme feasibility study conducted by the NDRT in late 2016 had the same findings as it was done in late 2015 by IFRC CCST Beijing assessment team. In addition, from the findings of MRCS and British Red Cross joint assessment on Livelihoods and DRR Dzud it has been prioritized that financial support for vulnerable households to be able to:

- a. Cover basic household needs such as food, clothing and boots, ger “winterization”
- b. Prepare adequately for next winter: fuel and transport costs for going on otor so livestock gains enough fat and strength to sustain the next winter, repair winter shelter, buy winter animal feed stocks (hay, fodder, desert plants and natran)
- c. Enable the repayment of formal and informal loan repayments including food bought on credit
- d. Cover educational fees, stationary and travel costs to school. Educational costs are particularly high for university students
- e. Health expenditure, as elderly people and people with chronic diseases, have reported not being able to seek medical attention or stopped buying medicines

Leaving CTP in unconditional terms gives the flexibility and opportunity for affected herders to spend the cash grant in their most needed priorities.

Community engagement and accountability: Community engagement, compliance and feedback hotline was set up to receive feedback from the communities. The hotline operated 24 hours a day to ensure that everyone has access to information and space for feedback. During the cash transfer, complaint boxes and volunteers worked in the respective bank branches to collect feedback from the beneficiaries. A number of monitoring visits as well as lessons learnt workshop was organized in order to capture stakeholder feedback on the operations. Needs assessment was conducted with direct observation as well as household interview methods to ensure the reflection of community engagement. Post distribution monitoring was conducted in randomly selected households using Magpi – mobile data collection tool. To further ensure the community engagement and accountability MRCS needs to develop permanent hotline to receive beneficiary feedback and complaints as well as prepare TV programmes on nationally broadcasted TV to deliver timely and necessary information to the beneficiaries.

Operational support services

Human resources

MRCS has mobilized 220 local volunteers, 13 NDRTs and 30 staffs of mid-level branches in support of the operation. There is one designated Emergency Appeal officer in charge of the operation at the headquarter facilitating the operation in the mid-level branches. Staffs responsible for PMER, IT, communication, finance, logistics and human resource supported the operation from the MRCS headquarters.

The operation mobilized a surge capacity delegate for one month to oversee and provide technical support to the operation, including aspects of planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER). A regional disaster response team (RDRT) was deployed to support the cash transfer component of the operation in February 2017.

The IFRC country-cluster support team (CCST) in Beijing and AP regional office in Kuala Lumpur has provided a wide range of technical, administrative and logistical support to the operation.

Logistics and supply chain

Logistics activities aim to effectively manage the supply chain, including, procurement, fleet and transport to distribution sites in accordance with the operation’s requirements and aligned to IFRC’s logistics standards, processes and procedures.

Procurement of first aid kits (FA) for immediate distribution has been concluded locally by the IFRC Country Office (CO) team whereas the procurement of FA kits for preposition stocks will be done in later stage of the operation by the IFRC CO. For the preparation of coming winter season, the hay and ger winterization kit will be sourced locally by MRCS with support from IFRC CO and CCST in Beijing. The NEMA has been supporting MRCS with trucks and man power to transport FA kits to distribution points. The transportation of hay and ger winterization kits to distribution points upon concluding the procurements will be done by the MRCS with their existing resources.

IFRC Operational Logistics, Procurement and Supply Chain Management (OLPSCM) department in Kuala Lumpur will extend its technical support to NS, and IFRC CO and CCST respectively.

Information technologies (IT)

The cost of communication is low and consist of mobile phone and mobile internet usage. Mobile cellular networks operate normally in the targeted areas. The MRCS's 13 NDRT have portable radios and Iridium satellite phones as a backup emergency communication means. VHP radio will be used by the deployed staffs and volunteers in the areas where the mobile cellular network is limited.

Beneficiary communication

A hotline number was set up to ensure 24/7 communication with beneficiaries in receiving complaints and providing necessary information.

MRCS has also used traditional beneficiary communication methods such as face-to-face communication, leaflets, complaint boxes and bill boards. Post distribution monitoring was conducted by household interviews. A regular TV programme on nationally broadcasted TV and permanent hotline to receive feedback needs to be set up to ensure CEA.

Communications

With support from the regional communications unit in Kuala Lumpur, the MRCS's communications officers supported the development of stories, articles and documentary films. Partner National Societies are provided with information on the response through Newswire operation updates. MRCS has developed beneficiary stories, documentaries and articles to be published locally. MRCS will prepare TV program about the Emergency appeal, interview beneficiaries and broadcast it through National broadcasting channels in Mongolia. The Finnish Red Cross Field Communication Unit has been deployed to Mongolia in early February to produce a documentary video and stories in support of the operation's communication. With support from IFRC, MRCS organized international press conference to engage international media and draw attention of possible donors.

Security

Security management is a vital element of the operation to ensure security of personnel, assets and programmes. The MRCS's operational coordination ensures that volunteers and staff follow security rules when working in affected areas. MRCS continuously monitor the security environment and respond to changes in the threat and risk situation, if any, by implementing adequate security risk reduction measures. This includes measures related to safety-related threats and risks, e.g. road traffic accidents, fire safety, and health and weather-related concerns. All MRCS personnel are encouraged to complete the respective IFRC Stay Safe courses; Stay Safe Personal Security, Stay Safe Security Management and Volunteer Stay Safe.

IFRC is a member of various inter-agency groups including the HCT and Mongolia International NGO forum, which allows monitoring any changes in the security situation. MRCS, with its wide network of branches and volunteers will be aware of any possible security threats and/or volatile situation.

Planning, monitoring, evaluation, & reporting (PMER)

NDRT members continuously monitor the implementation of the emergency operation. MRCS with IFRC support had provided team members with refresher training on PMER in December 2016. MRCS headquarters receive weekly updates from operating branches. Weekly/monthly update formats are developed and introduced to responding branches.

Regular monthly updates on the operation have been developed and shared during the emergency phase. A special telephone line has been established at MRCS headquarters, with the telephone number communicated to beneficiaries through TERA. All bagh⁷ leaders are notified through TERA. The bagh leaders then reaches the beneficiary households without cellular network or cell phones through word of mouth. Similarly, messages to provide information on the distribution and cash disbursements, post distribution monitoring and a beneficiary satisfaction review will be conducted through household visits. A beneficiary satisfaction survey will be carried out during the operation and a final evaluation will be carried shortly before the end of the operation. Reporting on the operation is carried out in accordance with the IFRC minimum reporting standards. A final report will be available 90 days after the end of the operation.

Administration and Finance

MRCS has a well-established finance and administration team consisting of six specialists.

IFRC has a finance and administration manager based in Mongolia. IFRC teams at Asia Pacific regional office and CCST in Beijing have the capacity to provide a range of support services to the operations, including finance, administration and logistics. Technical support related to cash transfer programming is provided by IFRC through RDRT and IFRC technical staff.

⁷ Smallest administrative primary level unit in Mongolia

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

Health

Needs analysis: Based on the assessment carried out by the Save the Children in mid-January 2017, the psychosocial first aid (PFA) is needed for school children who are from the dzud affected families. Moreover, first-aid kits with manual and training needs to be disseminated to affected herder households as these herders possess risk of frostbites, domestic injuries, burns and suffer from health complications caused from untreated injuries.

Population to be assisted: Approximately 6,750 school-going children will be supported with PFA through partnership with Save the Children. In addition, 1,000 herder households will receive first aid kits, manual and FA training.

Outcome 1: The immediate and medium-term risks to the health of affected populations are reduced.															
Output 1.1: Provision of First Aid kits to affected herder households.															
Activities planned	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Remark
Identification of soums in 4 provinces across the country		■													In cooperation with local governments
Beneficiary selection and registration		■	■												
Local procurement of first aid kits			■	■						■	■	■			
Distribution of first aid kits			■	■	■					■	■	■			NEMA (LEMA) MRCS
Onsite monitoring during the distribution			■	■	■					■	■	■	■		
Output 1.2: School-going children affected by the dzud are provided with psychosocial first aid support (PFA).															
Activities planned	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Remark
PFA TOT training at the province level			■	■											
PFA service for school children at soum school levels				■	■	■	■								Continuous PFA will be delivered through PFA trained peer educators, school teachers for schoolchildren who live in school dormitories away from their parents and to those who need support along with other children.

Food security, nutrition and livelihoods

Needs analysis: Based on the NDRT assessments, herder families are in desperate need of cash. Because of the current market situation and also because of frequent snowstorms, vulnerable herders are in food insecurity, lack of heating fuel to cope with freezing temperatures and a high risk of significant livestock losses. Vulnerable herders have very limited cash and with horses as their only means of transportation they are not able to reach nearest market to buy food, warm clothes, hay for their livestock or coal and firewood to heat their gers. The livelihood of the affected herders can be supported by cash for work modality in repairing the winter shelters.

Population to be assisted: 2,740 families in 10 provinces will be assisted through provision unconditional cash grants as *immediate relief*. 165 skilful herders will be selected and recruited to assist the community members to repair their shelter.

Outcome 2: Immediate food and other priority needs of the targeted families are met.															
Output 2.1: Target population of 2,740 households in 10 provinces are provided with unconditional cash transfers for meeting priority needs															
Activities planned	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Remark
Identification of soums in 10 provinces across the country		■													Completed
Beneficiary registration and cash form preparation		■	■	■											Completed
Distribution of unconditional cash grants (MNT 245,000/ CHF 100) through bank transfer			■	■											Completed
Post distribution monitoring and reporting				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Ongoing
Output 2.2: Livelihoods of affected herders supported by cash for work modality in repairing winter shelters															
Herders registered and recruited for cash for work										■	■				

Community preparedness and disaster risk reduction

Needs analysis: Financial and technical support is needed for disaster preparation and disaster risk reduction among herders. It was clear during previous assessments. Financially and socially capable herders prepare for winter enough or close to enough and the most vulnerable groups have no capacity to prepare and putting them at risk.

Population to be assisted: Due to limited hay growth this year, herders are unable to collect hay on their own. MRCS will proposition 25,000 bundles of hay which will be able to support 125 households with 200 livestock fully for one month. 1,000 first aid kits will be prepositioned and kept in MRCS warehouse.

Outcome 3: Communities' resilience to disasters is protected and restored															
Output 3.1: Risk reduction measures are incorporated in disaster risk reduction programme															
Activities planned	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Remark
Selection of beneficiaries for hay distribution										■	■	■			
Hay procurement										■	■	■			
Preposition of hay to be stored in NEMA warehouse										■	■	■			
Monitoring and reporting										■	■	■	■		
Procurement of 1,000 first aid kits										■	■	■			
Preposition 1,000 first aid kits in MRCS warehouse										■	■	■			
Support in the CBHFA workshop										■	■				

Shelter and settlements

Needs analysis: 75 percent of the total herder population will go on otor and for vulnerable herder households, ger insulation will be a big problem, as they need to divide their existing one for insulation. This puts the herder households at risk during harsh temperatures of winter. The ger, having inadequate insulation are not able to sustain the heat generated from burning fuel. Excessive use of fuel used to heat the ger causes families to run out of heating fuel. Winter shelter is to be supported to help vulnerable herder households to save their livestock from extreme cold and this is to be assisted by CFW modality.

Budget

REVISED EMERGENCY APPEAL

11/10/2017

MDRMN006

MONGOLIA:
SEVERE WINTER

Budget Group	Appeal budget CHF
Construction - Housing	45,917
Seeds & Plants	48,958
Medical & First Aid	74,633
Teaching Materials	12,500
Cash Disbursements	285,195
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	467,203
Computer & Telecom	2,000
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	2,000
Other Machinery & Equipment	
Total LAND VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	
Distribution & Monitoring	44,020
Transport & Vehicle Costs	13,800
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	57,820
International Staff	5,765
National Staff	32,153
National Society Staff	36,650
Volunteers	5,686
Total PERSONNEL	80,254
Workshops & Training	118,613
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	118,613
Travel	13,181
Information & Public Relations	25,000
Office Costs	18,042
Communications	6,267
Financial Charges	1,303
Shared Office and Services Costs	14,438
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	78,230
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	52,268
TOTAL BUDGET	856,387
Available Resources	
Multilateral Contributions	678,950
TOTAL AVAILABLE RESOURCES	678,950
NET EMERGENCY APPEAL NEEDS	177,437

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

Mongolian Red Cross Society:

- Nordov Bolormaa, secretary general; mobile: +976 99119395; email: bolormaa.n@redcross.mn
- Munguntuya Sharavnyambuu, disaster management team leader; mobile: +976 80091909
email: munguntuya.sh@redcross.mn

IFRC country cluster support team (CCST) in Beijing:

- Gwendolyn Pang, head of CCST; mobile: +86 135 110 6515; email: gwendolyn.pang@ifrc.org
- Bahram Amintorabi, disaster risk management manager; mobile: +86 135 1106 5152;
email: bahram.amintorabi@ifrc.org

IFRC Asia Pacific regional office in Kuala Lumpur; phone: +603 9207 5700; fax: +603 2161 0670:

- Martin Faller, deputy regional director; email: martin.faller@ifrc.org
- Nelson Castano, head of disaster and crises unit: nelson.castano@ifrc.org
- Alice Ho, operations coordinator; mobile: +60 13 360 0366; email: alice.ho@ifrc.org
- Riku Assamaki, regional logistic coordinator; mobile +60 12 298 9752; email: riku.assamaki@ifrc.org
- Rosemarie North, communications manager; email: rosemarie.north@ifrc.org

IFRC Geneva:

- Susil Perera, senior officer, response recovery and preparedness; email: susil.perera@ifrc.org
- Cristina Estrada, operations quality assurance senior officer; email: cristina.estrada@ifrc.org

For Resource Mobilization and Pledges:

- Sophia Keri, resource mobilization in emergencies coordinator; email: sophia.keri@ifrc.org

For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)

- Clarence Sim, PMER manager; email: clarence.sim@ifrc.org



Click here

1. Revised Emergency Appeal budget **above**
2. Click **here** to return to the title page

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote social inclusion
and a culture of
non-violence and peace.

ANNEX 1: ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS TABLE

ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS	LIST IF SPECIFIC AFFECTED SECTORS OR STATE 'ALL'	Likelihood	Impact	CAN CONTROL; MITIGATE / INFLUENCE; or only FACTOR-IN
<p>1. Misunderstanding on beneficiary selection among herders in affected areas: Internal migrants may have impact on the beneficiary selection process at soum level and influence local social care workers and local emergency management agency staff with their requests for humanitarian assistance.</p>		L	L	<p>MRCS's beneficiary selection criteria for affected people will create mutual understanding of who are the Red Cross beneficiaries in the affected areas.</p>
<p>2. Red Cross visibility and cooperation with local authorities: Low visibility and lack of understanding about red cross and its operation can be misunderstood by local authorities as majority of them are newly elected and may take actions might hamper the operation.</p>		M	M	<p>Increased visibility and awareness raising on Mongolian Red Cross Society and its relief efforts to assist affected herder people will reduce any miscommunication within local authorities and communities. Therefore, well planned public engagement activities will prevent any misunderstanding to rise.</p>
<p>Access to herder families is significantly complicated.</p>		M	L	<p>Heavy snowfall and snowstorms block roads in the affected areas and limit access to vulnerable herders. Logistics support from LEMA and utilization of local trucks and drivers will increase access to herder families. Local drivers know the roads better than drivers from the city and LEMA will clear roads if snow is preventing the transportation of relief goods.</p>
<p>Insufficient growth of hay throughout the country caused by drought</p>		H	H	<p>Due to drought and insufficient growth of hay, herders will not be able to harvest hay on their own as a preparation for the winter. This will then lead the livestock starvation and increased number of death. This risk can be mitigated by prepositioning hay and distributing to herders in preparation to winter.</p>