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DREF Operations Update

Costa Rica: Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF n° MDRCR017; Operations Update n° 1	GLIDE n° FL-2018-000165-CRI
Date of issue: 13 January 2019	Timeframe covered by this update: 3 months
Operation start date: 14 October 2018	Operation timeframe: 4 months; the operation has been extended by one month, and its new date is 14 February 2019
DREF allocated: 317,526 Swiss francs (CHF)	
N° of people to be assisted: 15,000 people	
Host National Society(ies) presence (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): The Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC) has 120 auxiliary branches, 1,147 permanent staff and nearly 6,000 volunteers across the country in nine regional offices and three National Headquarters: Administrative, Operational and Metropolitan Centre Headquarters.	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)'s Regional Office for the Americas (ARO) and its Country Cluster Office for Central America, the Canadian Red Cross Society	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: National Emergency Commission (CNE), Emergency System 9-1-1, Fire Department, Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Transportation (MOPT), Traffic Police, National Meteorological Institute (IMN), Costa Rican Power Institute (ICE), Costa Rican Aqueduct and Sewerage Institute (AyA), Municipal Emergency Committees (CMEs), Mixed Institute for Social Aid (IMAS), Ministry of Agriculture (MAG)	

Summary of major revisions made to the emergency plan of action (EPoA):

The CRRC did not modify the EPoA's activities; however, due to the delayed entry of the first shipment of water filters and the CRRC's couldn't carry out project activities in the last ten days of 2018 because most of its staff supporting the operation had to fulfill other year-end responsibilities; therefore, the operation has been extended for one month to allow for the completion of the outstanding activities. The new operation end date is **14 February 2019**.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster

On 2 October 2018, the IMN warned of a low-pressure system coming in from the south-western Caribbean Sea, which activated an Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone over the country and over the waters of the Pacific (Meteorological Report # 2). On 4 October 2018, IMN detected two other low-pressure systems (Meteorological Report #8), one in the Caribbean near the Nicaraguan coast and another in the Pacific in western Costa Rica, that led to even more intense rainfall and severe weather conditions along the Pacific coast and slightly milder conditions in other parts of the country. Rains of varying intensity fell in Pacific regions and even in the Central Valley. The greatest amount of rainfall was recorded in the Nicoya Peninsula and the Central Pacific, where between 50 to 150 mm of rain fell over a 24-hour period. Meteorological Report #16, which was issued on 5 October, revealed that more than 300 mm of rain fell over several areas in the North Pacific and Central Pacific on 4 and 5 October 2018. The highest concentration of rain and floods were seen in the districts of Lepanto, Paquera and Puntarenas (Central) and in Tárcoles, Garabito, Parrita and Quepos in the Central Pacific and North Pacific coastal strip. Over a period of 24 hours, IMN reported 400 mm of accumulated rainfall in Paquera, 255 mm in Hojanacha, 206 mm in Cuajiniquil, 145 mm in Sardinal, 71 mm in Liberia and Bagaces, and between 100 and 140 mm in the Central Pacific; this led to increased water levels in the Naranjo, División Saveeegr and Tempisque Rivers and in lower areas of the Abangares River and flooding; the floods affected 125,190 people.

Summary of current response

Overview of Host National Society

Upon the completion of the post-impact assessments, the CRRC carried out the following lines of intervention:

- A cash-based intervention (CBI) with the following methodology:
 - The CRRC dispatched a team to carry out a market analysis of the affected communities.
 - The CRRC held with IMAS and the Ministry of Agriculture, with the objective of obtaining information and coordinating efforts to select beneficiary communities and not duplicate efforts since these two government institutions provide economic assistance to those affected by disasters for specific purposes and under certain criteria that do not always benefit the most affected since IMAS targets people who live in extreme poverty and MAG focuses on small and medium producers that live in poverty or extreme poverty
 - Concurrently, a team of CRRC volunteers from the region of Limón trained in CBI conducted the beneficiary selection process, thus guaranteeing its neutrality.
 - With CRRC volunteers from the region of Puntarenas, including the auxiliary branches present in the intervention areas, the CRRC used the following resources to deliver VISA cards to beneficiary families:
 - Vehicles for transporting personnel and equipment.
 - 1 Ambulance provided by an auxiliary branch in the intervention area.
 - A boat, which was provided by the Regional Structure of Puntarenas, for transport to the Peninsular Islands that are part of the project.

Distribution of Water Filters:

- The entry of the first shipment of water filters was delayed due to a tax exemption issue; however, through meetings with the Ministry of Finance, the CRRC was able to negotiate the delivery of humanitarian relief items directly to the National Society as opposed to via the National Emergency Commission. The new arrangement proved effective, as the second shipment of water filters arrived at the CRRC's facilities in Tibás within 24 hours despite being briefly delayed due to a procedural error.
- The CRRC will continue using the expedited entry procedures for relief items, and the National Coast Guard Service will assist the National Society with the delivery of water filters to Peninsular Islands that were affected during the emergency.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

During the operation, the CRRC has maintained continuous communication with the IFRC's regional office for the Americas (ARO) in Panama, especially with ARO's disaster management coordinator for Central America, its cash delegate and its continental operations coordinator for the Americas region; the CRRC has also regularly communicated with the IFRC's country cluster office for Central America. An information management (IM) Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member from the Salvadorian Red Cross Society supported the operation, and a consultant assisted the CRRC on the following activities:

- The development of a tool to centralize beneficiary information through online forms.
- The updating of an operational Dashboard.
- The collection of field data
- The training of CRRC personnel to ensure installed capacity in information management.

Overview of non-Red Cross Red Crescent actors in country

For the government, AyA, IMAS, the Costa Rican Electrical Institute, the Ministry of Livestock and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport have been working to re-establish basic services and cover affected people's primary needs as follows:

- AyA: It has restored drinking water service to 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the affected areas. AyA is currently focusing on restoring the supply of drinking water to the Peninsular Islands since the aqueduct that provided this service was one of the most damaged; the institute expects the work on the aqueduct to be completed by March 2019.
- IMAS: It has focused on giving financial aid to affected families for the replacement of household goods (kitchen, washing machines or other appliances), subsidizing rental housing for those who require it; however, its aid focuses primarily on the most impoverished segment of the population.
- Costa Rican Electrical Institute: The institute has fully restored the electrical and telecommunications networks affected by the flooding.
- Ministry of Livestock: Its work has focused on the productive sector, where it is supporting mainly small and medium producers to ensure their livelihoods through the delivery of animal feed, seed, fertilizer, agricultural tools and livestock.
- Ministry of Public Works and Transport: Although the road network is 90 per cent functional, it still has sectors where the ministry needs to repair flood-damaged sections.

Needs analysis and scenario planning

Needs analysis

The needs have not changed since the [Disaster Relief Emergency Fund \(DREF\) EPoA](#) was issued on 15 October 2018..

Operation Risk Assessment

The CRRC does not foresee any risks to the implementation of this operation's activities.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

General objective

Ensure humanitarian assistance during the relief phase for at least 3,000 families (15,000 people) affected by floods and landslides in the flood-affected provinces of Guanacaste and Puntarenas through the provision of water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion (WASH) services and actions to restore livelihoods through a CBI. Additionally, the CRRC will consider protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) issues while planning and implementing its activities.

Proposed strategy

The CRRC is maintaining continuous communication and coordination with the Costa Rican government and other humanitarian organizations to carry out better the operation's activities and avoid the duplication of efforts. The National Society is also maintaining communication with the affected communities to ensure that its actions are well received and the organization's accountability to the beneficiary families. The CRRC is incorporating PGI into all its project activities, and it is guaranteeing that its volunteers deliver consistent messages that uphold the National Society's values and principles.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN



Livelihoods and basic needs

People reached: 2,500 people

Livelihoods Outcome 1: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
500 households have enough cash to meet their survival threshold	500	500

Livelihoods Output 1.1: Households are provided with unconditional/multi-purpose cash grants to address their basic needs.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of assisted households able to meet (Survival) Minimum Expenditure Basket needs (including food items, food-related non-food items [NFIs])	500	500

Progress towards outcomes

Activities already carried out:

1.1.1 Development of a CBI feasibility study

The CRRC conducted a CBI feasibility study to determine if a CBI could be implemented in the most affected communities.

1.1.2 Conduct a rapid market analysis

The CRRC conducted a rapid market analysis in the most affected communities.

1.1.3 Refresher workshops on CBI for volunteers and CRRC staff

Since the CRRC divided the communities selected for the CBI into two zones, it held workshops in each of these zones for its volunteers that participated in this activity; the National Society trained 15 volunteers through these workshops.

1.1.4 Selection and registration of beneficiaries

The CRRC's selection of beneficiaries began with the identification of the intervention region based on the information it obtained from the government's national emergency operations centre (EOC). The CRRC then held meetings with IMAS, MAG, AyA and the National Society's operations coordinator for the affected region to identify the specific communities in which it would stage its intervention. Subsequently, the CRRC held a meeting with community leaders to identify the most affected families in the impacted communities. The National Society then used preliminary lists to pre-select potential beneficiaries through house-to-house visits. Finally, the CRRC administered a phone survey to determine the beneficiaries; the CRRC notified those who it selected of the date and time of the VISA card delivery via telephone.

1.1.5 Distribution of non-restricted cash transfers

The CRRC had difficulty activating the cards during the implementation of the CBI, as beneficiaries were not able to withdraw the money in the time indicated to them (24 hours), and it took the National Society eight days to resolve the issue. Additionally, the CRRC has five cases in which the beneficiaries had issues with their cards. The National Society determined that the cards were damaged in four of the five cases, and it had to give cash to the beneficiaries with defective cards. The beneficiary in the fifth case claimed that the automated teller machine (ATM) withheld some of the cash; the bank where the incident occurred is currently investigating the case, and the CRRC is awaiting the result. The delivery of the 500 cards took place over 6 days and through 33 meetings. Families from 27 different communities benefited from the CBI. Please see the tables below for more information on the distributions.

DISTRICT OF LEPANTO			
Community	Quantity	Women	Men
La Fresca	37	28	9
San Blas	12	8	4
Montaña Grande	5	1	4
Bajillo Oscuro	4	1	3
Lepanto	36	22	14
Cabo Blanco	46	32	14
La Esperanza	6	4	2
Puerto Viejo	44	26	18
Barrio El Coto	10	8	2
Jicaral	3	3	0
Isla Caballo	79	15	64
Total	282	148	134

DISTRICT OF PAQUERA			
Community	Quantity	Women	Men
Gigante	7	5	2
Punta del Río	28	15	13
Río Grande	27	18	9
Santa Cecilia	17	13	4
San Rafael	24	14	10
Las Salinas	10	6	4
Punta Cuchillo	22	12	10
Gran Paquera	15	9	6
Paquera Centro	24	19	5
Barrio Órganos	14	12	2
Barrio San Josecito	3	1	2
Playa Camarón	3	1	2
Playa Órganos	5	2	3
Playa Congojas	1	0	1
Isla Cedros	17	4	13
Rio frio de Cóbano	1	0	1
Total	218	131	87

1.1.6 Monitoring and reporting on distributions

The CRRC activated two phone numbers for beneficiaries to call if they had questions or concerns. As part of the monitoring, the National Society planned to administer a survey via phone calls and home visits to 20 per cent of the beneficiary population in the districts of Lepanto and Paquera. Furthermore, the CRRC has ensured the

monitoring of beneficiary families through the implementation of its community engagement and accountability (CEA) strategy.

The CRRC has been following up on the cases in which beneficiaries had issues withdrawing money. Moreover, for monitoring purpose, National Society personnel called all 500 of the beneficiary families; nonetheless, 350 of the 500 families did not answer the phone, requiring the CRRC to call them again. The CRRC also conducted 30 home visits, and it administered 150 satisfaction surveys to the beneficiary families, a sample size of 30 per cent.

1.1.7 Setting up of a monitoring system and beneficiary communication and accountability system

The CRRC developed a strategy and divided it into the phases of Analysis, Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Social Networking; the National Society's objective was to establish appropriate communication with people in affected communities to improve community participation and accountability using the CEA Guide and tools. The CRRC has implemented the strategy using forms, lists of questions to project implementers, regular meetings with project implementers, monitoring visits and telephone interviews, and lessons learned workshops with community members and volunteers from the branches involved in the operation have worked on the project.

1.1.8 Beneficiary satisfaction survey

The CRRC interviewed 467 beneficiaries following the delivery of their card and an informative talk and an accompanying CBI brochure. The survey contained the following questions:

P1. Do you know which number you need to call if you have a problem with your card?

Ninety-seven per cent of respondents said that they knew which number they had to call; the remaining three per cent of the respondents did not recall if this information was provided in the brochure.

P2. Do you know how long the cards will be active? Ninety-four per cent of the respondents said that knew the length of time that it would be active, while said they did not know.

P3. Do you know which ATMs the card can be used at? One-hundred per cent of the respondents correctly mentioned at least one ATM with which they could use their card.

P4. Do you think the aid was delivered in a timely manner? Of the 467 people that the CRRC interviewed, 466 said that the aid was timely.

P5. How have you been treated by the Red Cross staff since the pre-selection process until today? A total of 466 people said they had been treated well, while one person did not respond to the question.

P6. Did you know that the CRRC does this type of work?

Only 16 per cent of respondents said that they knew that the CRRC does this type of work.

P7. Don't show me your pin, but do know where to find it? In total, 463 people said that they knew where to find the pin and that CRRC personnel pointed out its location during the card delivery to those who were unsure of it.

P8. Have you used an ATM previously?

P8.1 With the explanation provided, would you be able to use one? When asked this question, 108 people said that they had not used an ATM before; CRRC personnel provided additional information to these individuals, and 92 of the 108 people said that the further explanation would enable them to use it.

P9. Do you think the information provided on the card was sufficient and understandable? In total, 465 said that the information the CRRC provided was sufficient and understandable.

P10. How did you perceive today's process for receiving your card?

This question was open-ended, and most people expressed that the process had been excellent and that they were happy with the help.



Water, sanitation and hygiene

People reached: 2,045 people

Male: 1,022

Female: 1,023

WASH Outcome 2: Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water-related diseases in targeted communities

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of families with access to safe water and hygiene promotion messages.	3,000	409

WASH Output 2.1: Daily access to safe water, which meets Sphere and World Health Organization (WHO) standards in terms of quantity and quality, is provided to target population.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of families that receive water filters and know how to use them properly.	3,000	409

WASH Output 2.2: Hygiene promotion activities are provided to the entire affected population.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of families that receive hygiene promotion messages.	3,000	409

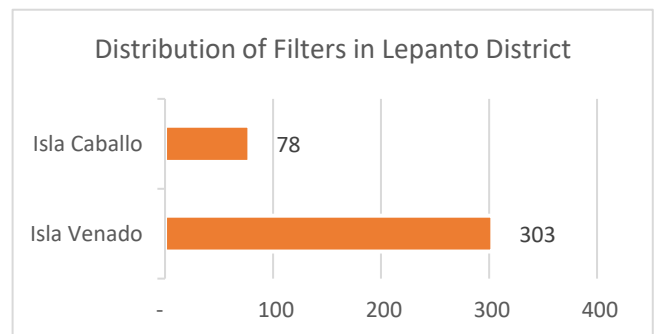
Progress towards outcomes

Activities already carried out

1.1.1 Distribute a year's supply of water filters to 3,000 households

Since there was no national emergency declaration for this emergency, government mechanisms for importing humanitarian aid could not be used; therefore, the National Society had to carry out the processes directly, which delayed the entry of the first shipment of the water filters and due to the unavailability of the product in Panama and the holiday season, the second shipment of water filters did not arrive in Costa Rica until 4 January 2019.

The distribution process began on the islands of the Nicoya Peninsula (Isla Venado and Isla Caballo). For these distributions, there were volunteers and permanent staff from the CRRC's auxiliary branch in Jicaral and its regional structure.



Source: CRRC

In keeping with its Environmental Protection Policy, the CRRC carried out the registration of beneficiaries with Open Data Kit (ODK) to avoid using paper.



The distribution in Isla Venado, where CRRC volunteers registered beneficiaries with ODK. Source: KTC Publicitaria.

For the transfer of the filters and the personnel to the islands, the CRRC had the support of a Costa Rican Coast Guard boat



Photos of the transfer of the water filters, which were loaded in Guardacostas and delivered to the islands of Venado and Caballo with the communities' help.
Source: KTC Publicitaria.

1.1.2 Training of beneficiaries in the use of the water filters

During the distributions, the CRRC delivered a talk on the hygiene promotion and the water filter's assembly and use; the National Society also discussed the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles and the topics of social inclusion and the prevention of violence.

1.2.1 Hygiene promotion campaign for affected communities

Since the beginning of the operation, the CRRC has disseminated hygiene promotion messages and distributed printed materials during community meetings. The CRRC has paired this activity with the distribution of the water filters. The culmination of this activity goes hand in hand with the distribution of water filters.

1.2.2 Audiovisual documentation (professional photos, videos)

The CRRC hired a photographer, who has already photographed the CBI activities and the distributions of the water filters (the photographer took some of this report's photos). At the end of his assignment, the photographer will deliver ten print-quality photos that can be enlarged and disseminated to promote the CRRC's work.

1.2.3 Printing graphic material (posters, infographics, brochure)

This process was delayed because the CRRC had to wait to receive the technical area's contributions and revisions and for the delivery of the materials until after the holiday season. Based on a lessons learned from a previous operation, the CRRC decided to create a calendar with key messages promoting good hygiene, which it will deliver to beneficiaries during future distributions.

1.2.4 Social Media campaign (radio)

The CRRC has already developed the messages and determined the radio stations that are best positioned to deliver them to the affected areas; however, the National Society still needs to finalize the contract with the radio stations to air the messages.



Protection, Gender and Inclusion

People reached: 4,545 people

Male: 2,272

Female: 2,273

PGI Outcome 3: Communities identify the needs of the most vulnerable and particularly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, as a result of inequality, discrimination and other non-respect of their human rights and address their distinct needs.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Safe and equitable access to operation activities is ensured, considering different needs based on gender and other diversity factors.	3	3

PGI Output 3.1: CRRC programmes improve equitable access to basic services, considering different needs based on gender and other diversity factors.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of activities that consider Gender, Social Inclusion and Disability issues within their planning and implementation.	3	3

PGI Output 3.2: Emergency response operations prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and all forms of violence against children.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of activities that consider Gender, Social Inclusion and Disability issues within their planning and implementation.	3	3

Progress towards outcomes

Activities already carried out

The CRRC has incorporated PGI into all project activities, such as Livelihoods and basic needs, Water, sanitation and hygiene, and CEA

1.1.1 Support sectorial teams to include measures to address vulnerabilities specific to gender and diversity factors in their planning

The CRRC coordinated with its Equity and Diversity Committee on the review of all project materials to ensure they used inclusive language, and committee members have accompanied all the distributions to impart information on the topic to the operation's beneficiaries.

1.2.1 Use Minimum Standard Commitments as a guide to support sectorial teams to include measures to mitigate the risk of SGBV

The CRRC's Social Inclusion, Culture of Peace and Non-violence Commission approved the following three documents, which the National Society shared with the volunteers who are supporting the operation:

- a. Social Inclusion Policy
- b. Social Inclusion Strategy
- c. Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality and Equity in the CRRC



A CRRC volunteers assists a beneficiary during a CBI activity in Paquera. Source: CRRC

Strategies for Implementation

Outcome SFI 1.01: National Society capacity building and organizational development objectives are facilitated to ensure that National Societies have the necessary legal, ethical and financial foundations, systems and structures, competences and capacities to plan and perform.

Output S1.1.6: National Societies have the necessary corporate infrastructure and systems in place.

1.1.1 Hiring of National Society Operation Coordinator

The CRRC hired a project coordinator.

1.1.2 Hiring of National Society field officer

The CRRC hired a field officer.

1.1.3 CRRC Headquarters logistics support and monitoring visits

The CRRC has conducted field visits, and it plans on carrying out one more before the end of the operation.

1.1.4 Provision of Protective Equipment for 50 volunteers

The CRRC has distributed protective equipment to its personnel, including solar protection equipment for use in the tropical intervention areas.



Solar protection equipment delivered to personnel during project activities. Source: CRRC

1.1.5 Provision of logistics support for volunteer's assessments (250 volunteers)

This activity has taken place during each of the project's activities. Currently, the CRRC is implementing it for the distribution of the water filters.

1.1.6 Development and implementation of a CEA strategy for the operation

The CRRC has implemented its CEA strategy during various community-based activities such as the distribution of the water filters.

1.1.7 Rumor and feedback tracking systems established to tackle misinformation originating from target population

The CRRC activated two phone lines to field calls from beneficiaries. Furthermore, the CRRC held two meetings with beneficiaries to receive feedback from them on its project activities.



Meeting with CBI beneficiaries and CRRC personnel in Paquera. Source: CRRC



Meeting with CBI beneficiaries and CRRC personnel from its Jicaral branch. Source: CRRC

Outcome SFI 2.01: An effective and coordinated disaster response is guaranteed.

Output S2.1.1: An effective response preparation as well as an extended capacity mechanism (surge) is provided by the National Society.

1.1.1 Lessons Learned Workshop

This activity is planned for the first week in February 2019.

1.1.2 Monitoring visits of IFRC (including logistics support)

The IFRC has conducted two visits: the IFRC's disaster management coordinator for Central America conducted a monitoring visit and accompanied a visit by the Canadian Red Cross Society while he was deployed, and the IFRC's cash delegate carried out the other monitoring visit.



IFRC and Canadian Red Cross Society visit to the CBI activity. Source: CRRC

1.1.3 An information management (IM) surge member is deployed to support the CRRC on the establishment of an IM system for the operation

An IM RIT helped the CRRC develop technological tools during the project.

Click here for:

- [Emergency Plan of Action \(EPoA\)](#)

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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**.