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DREF Final Report Montenegro: Extreme winter conditions

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRME005
GLIDE n° CW-2012-000006-MNE
6th July 2012

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

CHF 104,884 has been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Montenegro Red Cross Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 1,500 families (7,500 beneficiaries). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: Heavy snowfall and freezing temperatures that started on 31st January 2012 caused an emergency situation in the central and northern part of Montenegro. The most affected municipalities were: Kolasin, Mojkovac, Berane, Andrijevica, Plav, Rozaje, Bijelo Polje, Pljevlja, Zabljak, Savnik, Pluzine, Niksic, Cetinje and Bar. 1,500 families living in the villages surrounding those municipalities were completely cut off from the towns and the rest of the country. Most of them did not have electricity due to severe breakdowns caused by heavy snowfall and blizzards.

The targeted beneficiaries of the operation were mostly families consisting of elderly citizens, also families with children and families that live below the poverty line.

The Montenegro Red Cross was part of the National Coordinating Body for Emergency Situations; local Red Cross branches participated in the work of the Local Crisis Headquarters. The National Society distributed from its own emergency stocks some relief items (hygiene, tea, blankets, jackets, heaters) to the people who were trapped on the roads, as well as to some individuals who urgently needed these items in some of the villages. Following the results of the conducted needs assessment the National Society distributed 1,500 hygiene parcels, and food parcels, 660 pairs of boots, 1,155 blankets and 100 gas heaters to the beneficiaries who were selected based on their vulnerability.

This operation was implemented for two months, and was therefore completed by 7th April 2012.

The major donors and partners of DREF include the Australian, American and Belgian Governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian Government, the Danish Red Cross and the Danish Government, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the



Local RC branch Kolasin – rescue action. Photo: Montenegro Red Cross

Irish and the Italian Governments, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Luxembourg Government, the Monaco Red Cross and the Monaco Government, the Netherlands Red Cross and the Netherlands Government, the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Government, the Spanish Government, the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish Government, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the Montenegro Red Cross, would like to extend their thanks to all donors and partners for their generous contributions. Details of all donors can be found at http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/Active/MAA00010_2012.pdf

[<click here for the DREF financial report; here for contact details>](#)

The situation

Due to continuous snowfall from the beginning of February 2012, the snow cover reached up to 2 meters in the central and northern parts of Montenegro leading to the proclamation of the state of emergency in the whole territory of the country.

The most affected municipalities were: Kolasin, Mojkovac, Berane, Andrijevisa, Plav, Rozaje, Bijelo Polje, Pljevlja, Zabljak, Savnik, Pluzine, Niksic, Cetinje and Bar. Approximately 1,500 families, who live in the villages of those municipalities, were completely cut off from the towns and from the rest of the country. All the villages surrounding the affected municipalities were completely cut off. They didn't have electricity and due to the high snow, which was reaching almost 2 meters, the inhabitants could not reach the firewood or cattle food. Later on this figure had increased significantly, reaching up to almost 20,000 affected people in the country. The northern part of the country was completely cut off from the rest of the country. The snow was falling constantly for two days in the towns of Plav, Gusinje, and Murino in the northern part of the country.



A car trapped in the snow in Montenegro. Photo: Montenegro Red Cross

On 10, 11 and 12 February 2012 there was additional snowfall in the whole country, with more than 60 centimeters of snow in Podgorica, the capital city of Montenegro. The Government of Montenegro declared a state of emergency, and all the available resources were deployed. All primary schools and high school in the affected municipalities were closed. The situation was really dramatic, especially in the northern municipalities, with numerous villages cut off. The Montenegro Red Cross Society responded to the immediate needs of the affected population by releasing its emergency stock.

The main road Podgorica-Kolasin was closed for traffic for days. The road Kolasin – Mojkovac was also closed, as well as the road Mojkovac-Djurjevica Tara. All the roads towards the northern part of the country were blocked and closed. A special unit of the Ministry of Interior, together with the Sector for Emergency Situation rescued 120 passengers from the cars which were blocked on the highway Podgorica-Kolasin. They were accommodated at the police barracks near Podgorica. The Montenegro Red Cross sent them 120 blankets, 120 jackets, 120 heaters, 50 litres of bottled drinking water, some bread and tea.

The only possible way for the delivery of relief items was by helicopter and motor sleds. There were numerous dramatic situations in the country, with passengers trapped on a train, collapsed roofs on the houses, and resident evacuated. The Montenegro Red Cross, as a member of the National Operational Team, received all the updated information from the field and could act accordingly. Following its legal mandate and priorities, the Montenegro Red Cross acted at the local and national level, participating in local Crisis Headquarters (monitoring, assessment, coordination) as well as in the National Operational Team.

Coordination and partnerships

Local Crisis headquarters were established in all of the affected municipalities. Local Red Cross branches were part of those, and local disaster response teams were constantly present in the field. An operational team was established including the Montenegro Red Cross at the national level, in Podgorica, consisting of all relevant ministers and directors of institutions who were part of the disaster response system in

Montenegro. The team met on a daily basis in order to discuss the current situation and prepare a plan of action for the actual day. The armed forces of Montenegro and the police forces also assisted in the evacuation of the affected population.

Local donors recognized Local Red Cross branches as adequate and reliable partners, so Red Cross warehouses were used for storing the donated relief items. All the local branches (especially the ones from the municipalities which were not affected by the winter conditions) organized solidarity fundraising actions, where they called on the citizens to show solidarity and donate relief items, such as food and clothes.

In the meantime, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has decided to award a USD 100,000 grant to the Montenegro Red Cross as immediate assistance for the population affected by extreme winter conditions. The Montenegro Red Cross suggested that the funds should be used for the procurement of additional hygiene parcels and snowmobiles.

Different private companies donated soft drinks, food, bottled drinking water, which were distributed to the affected population. A cargo plane from the United Arab Emirates landed in Podgorica. The United Arab Emirates Red Crescent Society (UAE RC) donated blankets, tents and packed dates.



U.S. Black Hawks



UAE Red Crescent

The United States European Command (EUCOM) also provided USD 10,000 in terms of humanitarian assistance funding to Montenegro to purchase winter gear and supplies for those affected by the heavy snowfalls. They procured the items themselves and donated them to the Montenegro Red Cross, which conducted the distribution.

Partners from UAE Red Crescent, as well as the USA Ambassador in Podgorica participated in packaging and distributing hygiene and food parcels. Colleagues from UAE Red Crescent visited the city of Niksic, where they assisted in the distribution of food parcels. U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters conducted several missions, where they also distributed hygiene parcels procured with USAID funds.

The Austrian Red Cross provided EUR 15,000 that was used for the procurement of additional food items for the affected population while the German Red Cross provided EUR 15,000 which was used for the procurement of shovels, coats, boots and baby clothes.

In cooperation with the Montenegro Red Cross, two mobile phone operators, Telekom and M-tel, opened SMS lines so that the citizens of Montenegro could donate for the affected population. All the collected funds were transferred to the bank account of the Montenegro Red Cross.

Other organizations in Montenegro (Montenegro Phototracking, Twitter groups and other NGOs) also organized food collection in different supermarkets, and they donated everything they collected to the Montenegro Red Cross. The food was packed and together with other collected donations, distributed to the affected population. Due to the generous donor contributions, the National Society succeeded to cover an additional 5,000 families. 4,000 families received food and hygiene parcels (Procured with the support of UAE RC, Austrian Red Cross and USAID), and the remaining 1,000 families received everything that was collected in solidarity actions or provided with the support of the additional donors.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Montenegro Red Cross immediately reacted to this disaster, according to its mandate and internal capacities. From the outset, the National Society was part of the protection system for the affected areas and was responding at both the local and national levels. The Montenegro Red Cross Society distributed some relief items (hygiene, tea, blankets, jackets, heaters) among the people who were trapped on the roads, as well as to some individuals who urgently needed these items in some of the villages.



Items prepared for distribution to the affected families. Photo: Montenegro Red Cross

From its own emergency relief stock, Montenegro Red Cross gave away relief items, such as rubber boots, blankets, hygiene parcels, and jackets to the affected population. The table below provides detailed information about the items distributed.

Municipality	Relief items from the stock			
	Rubber boots	Blankets	Hygiene parcels	Jackets
Pljevlja	100	100	100	
Bijelo Polje	100	100	100	
Niksic	50	100	100	
Podgorica		120		120
Kolasin	100	100	100	
Bar	50	50	20	
Berane	100	100	100	
TOTAL	500	670	520	120

The Montenegro Red Cross put at disposal its logistic support for the national disaster response activities, so it was involved in receiving and distributing relief items. The Ministry of Agriculture in the Government of Montenegro decided that all of the collected food items should be received and stored in the central warehouse of the Montenegro Red Cross in Podgorica.

All the local branches were active in the disaster response activities in their respective municipalities. They participated in rescue actions and the distribution of relief items and were actively involved in the work of the local Crisis Headquarters. Red Cross volunteers were engaged in cleaning streets and roofs in their municipalities. In Podgorica, Red Cross volunteers were distributing hot drinks to the police and other services that were on duty in the streets of Podgorica.

Operation

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Outcome: Population from the municipalities most affected by the heavy snowfall, in 14 municipalities, is provided with emergency relief items according to the needs assessment from the field: 830 persons will receive blankets, 1,500 families will receive food parcels, 980 families will receive hygiene parcels, and 100 families will receive gas heaters.

Outputs (expected results) and activities planned:

- All the affected population is provided with the necessary emergency relief items.
- Continuous cooperation with local crisis headquarters and other partners at the field.
- Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.
- Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.
- Develop an exit strategy.

As the emergency stock of the Montenegro Red Cross was not sufficient to cover all the needs, the National Society applied for DREF assistance and received funds for immediate assistance for some 7,500 beneficiaries.

On February 8th, the Montenegro Red Cross sent immediately relief items to nine families in the village Brezna (Municipality Pluzine) whose building was caught in fire in connection with emergency heating, and completely burned down. All of the nine families had to be evacuated. From its own emergency stock, the Montenegro Red Cross provided blankets, clothes, rubber boots, hygiene parcels, and canned food, while the UNHCR provided 20 beds, 20 mattresses, and 9 wood stoves for the evacuated families.

One of the assets that made a significant difference during the emergency situation and disaster response, were the snowmobiles and other winter equipment in possession of the Montenegro Red Cross, and prepositioned in the local Red Cross branch of Kolasin.

Several years ago, the Norwegian Red Cross had donated to the Montenegro Red Cross (Red Cross Kolasin) a snowmobile and some additional winter equipment. With this equipment, volunteers from the Red Cross Kolasin participated in 15 rescue actions, saving lives. The snowmobile was used for distributing relief items, fuel and other supplies to the affected population. It was also used for the evacuation of the sick and the transport of medical doctors to see the people who needed medical support.



Relief items being distributed by Red Cross staff and volunteers to the affected families. Photo: Red Cross Montenegro

The snowmobile was used for distributing relief items, fuel and other supplies to the affected population. It was also used for the evacuation of the sick and the transport of medical doctors to see the people who needed medical support.

The local Red Cross team continued relief distribution to the affected population. Motor sleds were used to transport fuel necessary for the engines that were engaged in cleaning the roads to the cut-off villages. The motor sleds were also used to transport medical staff.

The Red Cross Branch of Kolasin has also one cross-country vehicle which is rented from the logistic base of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Dubai, and it proved to be very useful during the recent operations.

Two snowmobiles were rented through DREF and were also used for relief distribution in the northern municipalities of Montenegro.

Overview of distributed relief items (from DREF support)

MUNICIPALITY	ITEMS				
	Food parcel (pcs)	Hygiene parcel (pcs)	Boots (pairs)	Gas heaters (pcs)	Blankets (pcs)
Andrijevica	100.00	100.00	25.00	5.00	60.00
Bar	50.00	50.00	20.00		
Berane	150.00	150.00	80.00	10.00	140.00
Bijelo Polje	150.00	150.00	80.00	10.00	120.00
Cetinje	50.00	50.00	10.00	5.00	50.00
Danilovgrad	50.00	50.00	15.00	5.00	50.00
Kolašin	100.00	100.00	50.00	10.00	80.00
Mojkovac	100.00	100.00	50.00	5.00	90.00

Nikšić	150.00	150.00	100.00	10.00	150.00
Plav	100.00	100.00	15.00	5.00	60.00
Pluzine	50.00	50.00	20.00	5.00	55.00
Pljevlja	150.00	150.00	35.00	10.00	100.00
Rožaje	100.00	100.00	100.00	5.00	80.00
Savnik	50.00	50.00	10.00	5.00	60.00
Žabljak	150.00	150.00	50.00	10.00	60.00
TOTAL	1,500.00	1,500.00	660.00	100.00	1,155.00

As seen from the table 1,155 blankets were distributed and 1,500 food parcels, and also the same amount of hygiene parcels. According to the previous assessment, 980 hygiene parcels were supposed to be distributed to the affected population and 520 for stock replenishment. However, these additional 520 were also distributed to the beneficiaries, since there was a need for that.

Challenges:

The main challenges that Red Cross staff and volunteers encountered during the DREF operation were related to the extreme weather conditions. Most of the roads were closed, and relief items could only be delivered with snowmobiles and helicopters. Elderly and sick people were cut off in remote villages and volunteers were struggling to reach them and provide them with necessary relief items.

Beneficiary Satisfaction Survey

A survey among beneficiaries reached during the DREF operation was conducted to find out about the people's level of satisfaction with the services provided.

During the survey, data collection was conducted through a structured interviewing process, which at the same time allowed the targeted people to provide additional comments and voice their opinions. The preparation for the survey included capacity building for the National Society, as team members were guided about how to interview people and do data analysis. The survey was conducted in the affected municipalities Bar, Cetinje, Nikšić, Danilovgrad, Berane, Andrijevića, Plav, Rožaje, Bijelo Polje, Mojkovac, Kolašin, Žabljak, Šavnik, Plužine and covered affected people (150 families) from several local communities. An equal number of women and men were interviewed. Moreover, in selecting people for interviews, explicit focus was put on reaching different parts of the affected population as to examine people's satisfaction from different angles.

The main conclusions and recommendations regarding the extreme winter condition DREF operation were as follows.

- Overall the survey confirmed that the involvement of affected people in preparing and implementing operations is crucial. Asking the affected people about their needs and the required support will clearly increase the likelihood that people's real needs are reached. The National Society will still look into additional mechanisms for involving stakeholders and affected people at different stages of relief operations, enabling them to contribute with their own capacities and local knowledge.
- Conducting distributions in two rounds appeared as a good practice since people reached were provided with some sort of continuity in the support.
- The cooperation with other stakeholders (donors) providing support to the affected population proved to be beneficial, and ensured that all needs were covered and duplication was avoided.
- People reached stated that representatives of local communities provided important information about the relief operation which made the distribution easier. However, the survey also showed that this cooperation could be further improved to ensure that people receive *all* the necessary information.
- In terms of the speed of the operation the National Society recognizes that it needs to speed up decision-making processes and improve the overall performance of the organization in order to react promptly to the needs of disaster affected populations.
- Promotion of the Montenegro National Society through transparent work processes and advocacy on behalf of the affected people resulted in citizens and companies contributing to cover some of the needs of the affected people.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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 Disaster 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.

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

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.



Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2012/2-5
Budget Timeframe	2012/2-4
Appeal	MDRME005
Budget	APPROVED

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Funding

	Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL	Deferred Income
A. Budget	104,884					104,884	
B. Opening Balance	0					0	
Income							
<u>Other Income</u>							
<i>DREF Allocations</i>	104,885					104,885	
C4. Other Income	104,885					104,885	
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C4)	104,885					104,885	
D. Total Funding = B +C	104,885					104,885	
Coverage = D/A	100%					100%	

II. Movement of Funds

	Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL	Deferred Income
B. Opening Balance	0					0	
C. Income	104,885					104,885	
E. Expenditure	-104,885					-104,885	
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)	0					0	

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2012/2-5
Budget Timeframe	2012/2-4
Appeal	MDRME005
Budget	APPROVED

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure						Variance	
		Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL		
A								B	A - B
BUDGET (C)		104,884						104,884	
Relief items, Construction, Supplies									
Clothing & Textiles	22,635							22,635	
Food	14,488							14,488	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	14,488							14,488	
Utensils & Tools	18,110							18,110	
Total Relief items, Construction, Supplies	69,721							69,721	
Logistics, Transport & Storage									
Storage	6,036							6,036	
Distribution & Monitoring	1,207							1,207	
Transport & Vehicles Costs	16,178							16,178	
Total Logistics, Transport & Storage	23,421							23,421	
Personnel									
National Society Staff	966							966	
Volunteers	3,772							3,772	
Total Personnel	4,738							4,738	
General Expenditure									
Communications	603							603	
Total General Expenditure	603							603	
Contributions & Transfers									
Cash Transfers National Societies		98,484					98,484	-98,484	
Total Contributions & Transfers		98,484					98,484	-98,484	
Indirect Costs									
Programme & Services Support Recov	6,401	6,401					6,401	-0	
Total Indirect Costs	6,401	6,401					6,401	-0	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	104,884	104,885					104,885	-1	
VARIANCE (C - D)		-1						-1	

DREF OPERATION

07/02/2012

06/07/2012

MDRME005 Montenegro Red cross

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF	Actual expenses CHF	Variance
Shelter - Relief			
Shelter - Transitional			
Construction - Housing			
Construction - Facilities			
Construction - Materials			
Clothing & Textiles	22,635	22,628	7
Food	14,488	14,487	1
Seeds & Plants	0		
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	14,488	14,487	1
Medical & First Aid			
Teaching Materials			
Ustensils & Tools	18,110	18,110	0
Other Supplies & Services	0		
Emergency Response Units			
Cash Disbursements			
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	69,721	69,713	8
Land & Buildings			
Vehicles Purchase	0		
Computer & Telecom Equipment			
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment			
Medical Equipment			
Other Machinery & Equipment	0		
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0	0	0
Storage, Warehousing	6,036	6,036	
Distribution & Monitoring	1,207	1,207	0
Transport & Vehicle Costs	16,178	16,178	0
Logistics Services			
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	23,421	23,421	0
International Staff			
National Staff	0		
National Society Staff	966	966	0
Volunteers	3,772	3,772	0
Total PERSONNEL	4,738	4,738	0
Consultants			
Professional Fees			
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0	0	0
Workshops & Training	0	0	0
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	0	0	0
Travel	0		
Information & Public Relations	0		
Office Costs			
Communications	603	603	0
Financial Charges	0	0	0
Other General Expenses			
Shared Support Services			
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	603	603	0
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	6,401	6,401	1
Total INDIRECT COSTS	6,401	6,401	1
TOTAL BUDGET	104,884	104,876	8