

DREF final report

Romania: Extreme winter conditions

DREF operation n° MDRRO003 GLIDE n° CW-2012-000006-ROM 21st August 2012

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of unearmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross Red Crescent response to emergencies. 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.

Summary: CHF 165,927 was allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Romanian Red Cross in delivering immediate assistance to 800 families (3,200 beneficiaries).

In February 2012, unusually cold winter weather conditions affected many parts of Romania in the form of heavy snowfalls and extremely low temperatures reaching minus 25 degrees Celsius in some places, which hampered or even blocked road transport and led to the disruption of food supplies and problems in rendering medical assistance, and caused hunger and frostbites among the most vulnerable segments of the population, especially the homeless.



Distribution of food items to beneficiaries by Red Cross volunteers in isolated villages.
Photo: Romanian Red Cross

The Romanian Red Cross reacted promptly by alerting its staff and volunteers, starting the distribution of its available stocks from its warehouses and contacting the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) for immediate financial assistance through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund.

A direct and accurate assessment of the needs was not possible in the very first days due to the fact that most of the affected communities were unaccessible. The actions had initially been planned according to the data provided by local authorities. Later on, assessments were continuously conducted by local Red Cross branches, the situation was updated daily in the meetings of the local Commands for Emergency Situations in which the Romanian Red Cross was represented, and the plans of action were permanently revised according to the new data. Based on the needs assessment, the weather forecast and the information provided by the Crisis Management Centre, the National Society decided to target the most vulnerable 800 families (3,200 beneficiaries) in those villages which were isolated due to snow blockades.

The beneficiaries were mainly elderly individuals living alone in remote areas with little or no family support, low income families with small children and limited social security coverage. The Romanian Red Cross was also providing support to the homeless people in the affected counties.

The operation achieved its targets having provided the planned 800 families (3,200 beneficiaries) with

relief items, enhanced the visibility of the Romanian Red Cross, and further improved the existing good cooperation with the central and local authorities and the mass media. Due to the time-consuming procurement procedures for the replenishment of the stocks, the timeframe of the operation was extended until May 25th.

Due to the positive donor response to the national appeal launched by the Romanian Red Cross, savings were realized on the DREF allocations. The National Society returned un-used balances and according to the final financial report a final balance of CHF 31,980 remained, which needs to be reimbursed to the DREF funds.

The major donors and partners of the DREF operation in Romania include the Australian, the American and the 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's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the 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's Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors. On behalf of the Romanian Red Cross Society, the IFRC would like to extend their thanks to all of them for their generous contributions. Details of all donors can be found at http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/Active/MAA00010_2012.pdf

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The situation

In February 2012, unusually cold winter weather conditions affected Romania in the form of heavy snowfalls and extremely low temperatures, reaching minus 25 degrees Celsius in some places, which resulted in numerous traffic problems especially in rural areas, and led to the lack of food supplies and medical assistance, creating hunger and frostbites especially among the homeless.

The cold wave that reached Romania starting 23rd January 2012, along with heavy snowfalls, first hit the south-eastern part of the country, later extending to the whole territory. Roads were blocked by the snow, and people were getting stranded in their homes, cars or trains. Government and municipal authorities were mobilized to provide support to those in need. According to the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, an overall number of 504 localities in 27 counties were affected by the extreme winter conditions. The counties worst affected were: Buzau, Vrancea, Ialomita, Calarasi, Giurgiu, Mehedinti, and Tulcea. The total number of deaths caused by severe hypothermia during that period was 86.

Starting from 25th February 2012, temperatures returned to normal values. However, the snow banks created by massive snowfalls and strong winds continued to hinder access to affected communities. In a few weeks, the situation returned to normal throughout the whole country.

Meetings of the Commands for Emergency Situations were held regularly to coordinate response operations in each county or municipality, to ensure the efficiency and timeliness of the response, minimize the overlapping of activities and maximize the number of people reached. In their capacity as members of the Commands for Emergency Situations, the Romanian Red Cross branches and headquarters staff members were attending these meetings and actively participated, along with the representatives of the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, in the planning, coordination and decision-making so as to combat the effects of the harsh weather. During the coordination meetings, the situation was evaluated and specific measures were taken to reduce the consequences of the cold wave.

Coordination and partnerships

At the national level, the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations and other public institutions were closely monitoring the developments, and intervened wherever necessary. At the local level, all activities were implemented by the local administrative units, and were focused on cleaning the access routes from

snow, ensuring medical assistance, and the distribution of drinking water. All the activities were implemented in cooperation with the Red Cross offices at local and national level.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In response to the cold wave, the Romanian Red Cross Society was able to act immediately and to provide assistance to the most vulnerable. Through the DREF operation, relief items were distributed to the targeted 800 families (3,200 beneficiaries).



Romanian Red Cross logistics unit in action during the winter DREF operation. Photo: Romanian Red Cross

In coordination with the local authorities, Romanian Red Cross teams took part in the evacuation process of people trapped by the snow, in the distribution of drinking water, food, non-food items, clothing and equipment as well as providing support to the local authorities in setting up temporary shelter for the homeless. Romanian Red Cross volunteers were also handing out hot meals, tea and drinking water.

14 Romanian Red Cross branches (Vrancea, Arad, Giurgiu, Ilfov, Botosani, Braila, Dambovita, Calarasi, Satu Mare, Iasi, Neamt, Bacau, Ialomita, Teleorman) carried out activities to assist the people most affected by the cold. Over 300 volunteers were mobilized for the implementation of the actions.

A national fundraising campaign launched on February 11th allowed the National Society to collect and distribute 94 tons of food and drinking water. Other donations comprised wood stoves, blankets and clothing. Altogether, through DREF and the additional donations received, the National Society was able to reach an overall number of 7,300 beneficiaries in 11 counties.

From existing stocks in the central and regional warehouses, and donations received, Romanian Red Cross has distributed: 70 beds (to homeless shelters), 1600 blankets, 800 sleeping bags, 120 clothing sets, 800 hygiene parcels, 200 heaters and 278 wood stoves. The wood stoves (not captured in DREF) were received as donation and have covered the needs of 1.100 beneficiaries. As a result of this and of a second assessment carried out, only 800 of the 1.600 sleeping bags funded by DREF have been distributed. The remaining 800 will be distributed between RRC's regional warehouses.

The IFRC Europe Zone Planning and Reporting Manager was deployed from 20 May until 24 May on a DREF supported operation monitoring visit to Romania, during which the delegate had the chance to discuss with the Director General of the Romanian Red Cross Society and the Department for Emergency Situations of the Romanian Red Cross Society about the progress achieved during the recent DREF operation in response to the extreme winter conditions. The mission confirmed that the assessment of the situation, the procurement and the distribution had been done in an appropriate manner, in accordance with IFRC procurement procedures and regulations.

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: Providing emergency assistance (food, non-food and clothing items) to approximately 800 families

Output: The food and hygiene needs of the most vulnerable 3,200 people will be met through distribution of food and non-food items and clothes.

Activities planned:

- Coordination with local emergency departments and social welfare authorities.
- Preparation of final beneficiary lists.

- Preparation of distribution plan.
- Procurement of emergency items in Romania.
- Distribution of emergency items by RC branches, staff and volunteers, according to the prepared beneficiary lists (as per table above).
- Beneficiaries will be notified regarding the time of distribution.
- Monitoring and reporting.

Table 1: List of items procured by the Romanian Red Cross

Blankets	1600
Sleeping bags	1600
Hygiene parcels	800
Food parcels	800
Heaters	200
Hot air generator	1

Table 2: Relief items distributed by the Romanian Red Cross

Counties, localities and no. of beneficiaries				Quantities and types of items distributed				
County	Localities	Families	No. of beneficiaries	Blankets	Sleeping bags	Hygiene parcels	Heaters	Food parcels
Buzau	Ciorasti, Cilibia, Scutelnici, Rubla	151	604	360	110	220	100	148
Vrancea	Focsani, Vartescoi, Tisita	155	620	340	260	160	100	169
Ialomita	Slobozia	70	280	80	50	44		67
Giurgiu	Toporu, Rasuceni, Satu Nou	94	376	120	120	62		90
Calarasi	Calarasi	40	160	80		60		90
Teleorman	Alexandria, Botoroga	80	320	220	80	80		80
Mehedinti	Ponoarele, Bala	120	480	220	100	120		112
Ilfov	Buftea, Ganeasa	90	360	180	80	54		44
Total		800	3200	1600	800	800	200	800

Part of the DREF allocation was used for replenishment of the emergency stocks of the National Society for the already distributed items.

800 of the 1,600 sleeping bags were distributed. The remaining 800 pieces have been deployed among Romanian Red Cross regional warehouses, for stocks replenishment.

The Romanian Red Cross Headquarters, in close cooperation with IFRC Europe Zone Office, monitored the progress of the operation and provided the necessary technical expertise. Field monitoring and observation

of the distributions were carried out locally by staff members of each of the branches that had received assistance.

Visibility of the work of the Red Cross volunteers was ensured during the operation through the national and local media. Red Cross emblems and signs were well presented on the uniforms and the distributed items.

At the end of the operation, a workshop was held to exchange opinions, share good practices and lessons learned, to update the National Society contingency plan and further improve its disaster management capacity. The workshop gathered 16 of the RC volunteers most actively involved in the operations, branch directors and national headquarters staff.

Amongst the findings resulted from the workshop:

- Most branches reported a very good collaboration with the local authorities.
- Domestic fundraising was very efficient and successful. The appeal made by the RC on national level as well as the intense media coverage on both national and regional levels prompted a very positive donors response (both from the private sector and the general population). Hence, above the DREF contribution, 94 tons of food and bottled water was collected and distributed to the affected counties with the help of the government authorities. Other donations comprised stoves, blankets and clothing, which enabled the National Society to reach an overall number of 7,300 beneficiaries in 11 counties.
- One missing aspect in this area is the fact that there are no framework contracts in place with any suppliers of goods that would come into force during the emergency period. This aspect is to be considered by both the HQ and the branch directors.
- The involvement of the beneficiaries was well taken into consideration by most branches, both for conducting the needs assessment and organizing the distributions.
- The volunteers reported the provided uniforms and gear to be inappropriate for the extreme cold. This was the first time that the Romanian Red Cross was confronted with such conditions. Nonetheless, this aspect will be taken into account for future procurements.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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- **IFRC Zone:** Alberto Monguzzi, Acting Disaster Management Coordinator; phone: +36 1 8884 500; email: alberto.monguzzi@ifrc.org
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DREF history:

- This DREF was initially allocated on 13th February 2012 to the amount of **CHF 165,927** for two months to assist 800 families (3,200 beneficiaries).
- An Operation Update was issued on 2nd May 2012 so as to present the progress of the DREF operation and the process of the replenishment of the distributed items.
- In view of the procurement needs, the timeframe of the operation was extended until 25th May 2012, based on Operation Update No.1 dated on 2nd May 2012.



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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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Saving lives, changing minds.



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.
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Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2012/2-9
Budget Timeframe	2012/2-5
Appeal	MDRRO003
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	165,927					165,927	
B. Opening Balance	0					0	
Income							
<u>Other Income</u>							
<i>DREF Allocations</i>	165,927					165,927	
C4. Other Income	165,927					165,927	
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C4)	165,927					165,927	
D. Total Funding = B +C	165,927					165,927	
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	165,927					165,927	
E. Expenditure	-133,947					-133,947	
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)	31,980					31,980	

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2012/2-9
Budget Timeframe	2012/2-5
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III. Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination		
A							B	A - B
BUDGET (C)		165,927					165,927	
Relief items, Construction, Supplies								
Clothing & Textiles	73,200						73,200	
Food	17,600						17,600	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	28,000						28,000	
Utensils & Tools	12,600						12,600	
Total Relief items, Construction, Supplies	131,400						131,400	
Logistics, Transport & Storage								
Distribution & Monitoring	10,000						10,000	
Transport & Vehicles Costs	2,000						2,000	
Total Logistics, Transport & Storage	12,000						12,000	
Personnel								
International Staff	1,500						1,500	
National Society Staff	3,000						3,000	
Volunteers	100						100	
Total Personnel	4,600						4,600	
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training	1,500						1,500	
Total Workshops & Training	1,500						1,500	
General Expenditure								
Travel	2,000	991				991	1,009	
Information & Public Relations	500						500	
Office Costs	1,000						1,000	
Communications	1,000						1,000	
Financial Charges	800	0				0	800	
Other General Expenses	1,000						1,000	
Total General Expenditure	6,300	991				991	5,309	
Contributions & Transfers								
Cash Transfers National Societies		124,781				124,781	-124,781	
Total Contributions & Transfers		124,781				124,781	-124,781	
Indirect Costs								
Programme & Services Support Recov	10,127	8,175				8,175	1,952	
Total Indirect Costs	10,127	8,175				8,175	1,952	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	165,927	133,947				133,947	31,980	
VARIANCE (C - D)		31,980				31,980		

DREF OPERATION

11/02/2011

17/07/2012

MDRRO003 Romania Red cross

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF	Actual expenses Romania RC CHF	Variance
Shelter - Relief			
Shelter - Transitional			
Construction - Housing			
Construction - Facilities			
Construction - Materials			
Clothing & Textiles	73,200	66,602	6,598
Food	17,600	11,233	6,367
Seeds & Plants			
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	28,000	26,276	1,724
Medical & First Aid			
Teaching Materials			
Ustensils & Tools	12,600	11,261	1,339
Other Supplies & Services			
Emergency Response Units			
Cash Disbursements			
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	131,400	115,372	16,028
Land & Buildings			
Vehicles Purchase			
Computer & Telecom Equipment			
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment			
Medical Equipment			
Other Machiney & Equipment			
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0	0	0
Storage, Warehousing	0		
Dstribution & Monitoring	10,000	0	10,000
Transport & Vehicle Costs	2,000	2,010	-10
Logistics Services			
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	12,000	2,010	9,990
International Staff			
National Staff			
National Society Staff	3,000	2,840	160
Volunteers	100		100
Total PERSONNEL	3,100	2,840	260
Consultants			
Professional Fees			
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0	0	0
Workshops & Training	1,500	1,341	159
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	1,500	1,341	159
Travel	2,000	0	2,000
Information & Public Relations	500	500	0
Office Costs	1,000	1,008	-8
Communications	1,000	1,008	-8
Financial Charges	800	52	748
Other General Expenses	1,000	650	350
Shared Support Services			
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	6,300	3,218	3,082
TOTAL BUDGET	154,300	124,781	29,519