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Emergency Appeal Mauritania: Food and Nutritional Insecurity

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Appeal n° MDRMR011

To be assisted: **2000 HH (14 800 people)**

Appeal launched: **17 July 2020**

Glide n°: **DR-2020-000167-
MRT**

DREF allocated: **200.000 Swiss francs**

Appeal ends: **24 April 2021**

Funding requirements: **1.1 Million Swiss francs**

This Emergency Appeal seeks a total of some **1.1 Million Swiss francs** to enable the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to support the **Mauritania Red Crescent Society (MRC)** to deliver food security assistance and malnutrition prevention support to **14,800 of people for 9 months in the departments of Barkéol and Ould Yenge**, with a focus on the **Livelihoods and Basic needs; Health (nutrition); Disaster risk reduction (DRR), Protection Gender and Inclusion (PGI), Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)**; complemented by National Society strengthening activities.

The food insecurity situation in the targeted areas has been worsened by the effects of COVID-19 (closure of borders, regional transhumance, closure of markets, rise of food prices, etc.). Hence, this Emergency Appeal is launched to address the **humanitarian needs** and support recovery process. The planned phases of emergency response reflect the current situation and information available at this time of the evolving operation and will be adjusted based on further developments and more detailed assessments.

The disaster and the Red Cross Red Crescent response to date

October 2019: Drought and pastoralist crisis Alert (ACF: Action Contre la Faim/Action Against Hunger).

November 2019: positioning note (FSL WA Cluster); and **Food security IPC results** (Cadre Harmonisé)

December 2019: RC/RC awareness and positioning meeting in Dakar (lead by FIRC); Mauritania RC request for support.

January 2020: RC/RC Positioning note published (See link to the annex on page 17 of the EA).

February: Field Assessment in Mauritania, with the support of the IFRC, Livelihoods Centre; French RC and British RC. [Report published in March 2020](#)

April 2020: ACF "Alert on pastoral and Agropastoral crisis aggravated by **COVID-19**"
Mauritania RC: Short & midterm Drought response Plan of Action

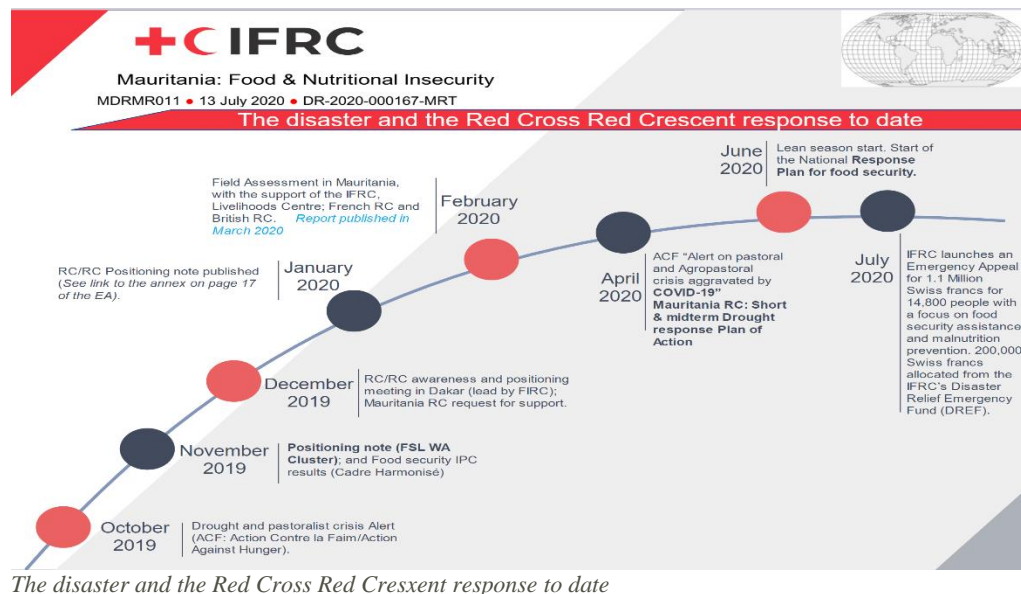
June 2020: lean season start. Start of the **National Response Plan for food security**.

July 2020: IFRC launches an Emergency Appeal for 1.1 Million Swiss francs for 14,800 people with a focus on



RC volunteer facilitating the assessment exercise. Focus group discussion in the community of Lakwar (Barkéol), Source: MRC / IFRC assessment team. February 2020.

food security assistance and malnutrition prevention. 200,000 Swiss francs allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).



Mauritania is currently facing a difficult food and nutritional situation which is like the one of 2018. According to the results of the last harmonized framework of November 2019, **609,184 persons are considered to be in severe food insecurity situation (IPC phases 3, 4) during the lean period between June and October 2020.** This is the most serious situation witnessed in the country since the Harmonized Framework was organized/held in Mauritania (2012). In proportion to its population, Mauritania will be among the most affected countries in the Sahel, with a rate of 14.7% i.e. the highest rate all over the West African Region after Gambia.

According to information provided by Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and the Food and Nutrition Security Working Group (FSNGW), the **biomass production observed in late August 2019 was at its lowest level never recorded since 1998.** The situation slightly improved after the late rains and reached levels which were similar to those recorded in 2011 which were nonetheless very worrying. Most affected regions are located in Gorgol, Guidimaka, Brakna, Trarza, Assaba, Hodh El Gharbi.

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought, resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting reproductive capacity, resilience and food security of the population. In 2019, Mauritania's southern agropastoral regions experienced for the third consecutive year drought-like conditions, putting additional hardship on already impoverished communities.

In addition, **only 22.4% of population** (137,000 out of 609,180 people) in food insecurity is being covered by WFP, STC, ACF, OXFAM. This left a **huge gap in humanitarian response to address immediate needs.**



Image: Biomass comparison (2015 vs 2019), Source ACF. 2019)

To an already difficult situation which is characterized by recurrent cycles of **rainfall deficit** are added the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and mitigation measures taken by the Government, in order to prevent its spread, such as closure of borders, movement restrictions between regions or the closure of weekly markets. All these measures are impacting on already food-insecure people in the intervention area¹, either in food access (due to rising basic grain prices²) or in their livelihoods and income sources (for both pastoral and agricultural households due to limited inter-regional transhumance, the rising of prices or the unavailability of agricultural inputs, as well as for households relying on weekly markets and on cross-border trade or on seasonal migration).



Barkéol in Assaba region (February 2020). Source: MRC / IFRC assessment team.

The operational strategy

Summary of Red Cross Red Crescent response to date

In February 2020, the MRC carried out a [needs assessment](#) of the food and nutritional situation at the community level in 4 regions of the South, the East and Centre of the country, notably in the departments of **Modjéria in Tagant, Barkeol in Assaba, in Mbout in Gorgol and Ould Yenge in Guidimagha**. The purpose of the evaluation was to fill information gaps regarding the needs of households affected by droughts. The evaluation was made with the support of MRC's technical and financial partners that belong to the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement (RC/RC Movement), notably: IFRC as well as its Livelihood Resource Centre (LRC), the British Red Cross (BRC) and the French Red Cross (FRC). The evaluation was followed by the drafting of the drought response plan by MRC to which they align and comply with.

Furthermore, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in cooperation with the MRC, is working on the border with Mali, mainly with Malian refugees and host communities. Under this partnership, the ICRC has launched a budget extension appeal (BEA) for increase funding in the Sahel, including Mauritania, to cope with the cumulative effects of conflict, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic. A close coordination will be established with ICRC to identify synergies between the Emergency Appeal and ICRC BEA operations, so far no overlap is expected mainly because the areas of intervention are different.

The MRC was among the first humanitarian organizations in Mauritania and it's in permanent collaboration ties with all the country's humanitarian actors like UNICEF, WFP, FAO and NGOs. During the last few years, with the support of the members of the Movement, MRC carried out several response operations to the food and nutritional crisis while supporting the system of recovery and building of resilience in several regions in Mauritania, notably in Brakna, Tagant, Assaba, Gorgol or Guidimagha. Mostly, MRC is an important actor with respect to main food insecurity crises by participating to them through Emergency Appeals (such as in 2012, 2015 and 2018).

MRC in coordination with its RC/RC partners has developed a **drought response action plan** which foresees short-term actions to respond to the food and nutrition emergency and medium and long-term actions to ensure populations' resilience capacity.

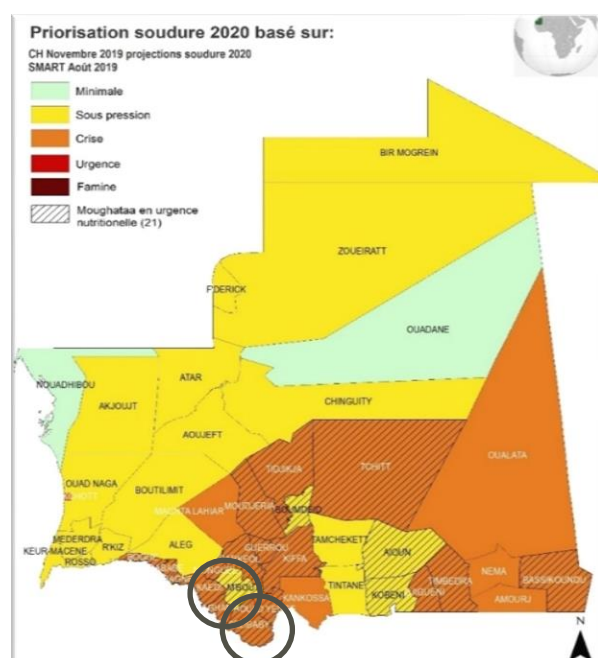
¹ According to WFP Country Brief for Mauritania, published in April 2020, "the emergence of COVID-19 are currently threatening lives and livelihoods of thousands of people in Mauritania along with the trading networks they rely on for survival...The potential impact on already food-insecure people is hugely concerning, projecting up to 1.4 million people expected to be in need of assistance during the lean season".

² Compared to the five-year average, the highest increases in staple cereal prices (over 25%) are observed in Sierra Leone, Senegal, southern Mauritania and the Central African Republic. Source: "Update on the impact of Covid-19 on food and nutrition security in West and Central Africa", WFP.

Short term response	Medium and long term actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food Assistance through CVA (lean season) ▪ Malnutrition prevention and screening ▪ Community-based FSL & nutrition surveillance & preparedness ▪ Support in food production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Livelihoods recovery and strengthening: agricultural inputs distribution (small ruminants, CC adapted seeds, etc.) ▪ Strengthen resilience to the effects of drought and climate change : Climate-smart livelihoods, livelihoods diversification; water system rehabilitation; fodder production; etc. ▪ Strengthen of productive community-based organizations (production, conservation & processing , market links, credit access) ▪ Preparedness; DRR; EW/EA (FbF)

MRC has an ongoing COVID-19 response that creates synergies with the present Emergency Appeal. Main synergies are related to COVID-19 protocols and prevention measures and training of MRC volunteers and staff and the implementation of awareness sessions (based on the materials created in the COVID19 response); but also, in logistical aspects such as the selection of the FSP (financial service provider) for the cash component of both operations. A continuous coordination will be established between both operations to promote such synergies.

Needs assessment and targeting



Prioritization of food assistance needs at department (moughataa) level. Source: Mauritania National Response Plan (NRP)

The needs assessment of the food and nutritional situation made in February by MRC, as well as national analyses of the November 2019 Harmonized Framework (IPC) highlighted a worrying food and nutritional situation for agropastoral populations of targeted departments (Barkeol and Ould Yenge), where it is estimated that **38.663 people** (22% of its population) will be in a food crisis situation during the 2020 lean period (June – September).

The 2019 agricultural campaign recorded significant production shortfalls in southern departments where nearly 70% of the households had no stocks at the end of February. This precipitated the early onset of the lean season in those agropastoral areas. Due to that situation, households in targeted areas highly depend on markets for their food consumption. Forty seven percent of them took loans in order to purchase food and this limited their access to food. In agropastoral areas where agriculture and animal husbandry are the main livelihoods, the drying up of the land, the reduction of the biomass and hence of grazing areas, as well as the low filling of dams (*especially in the commune of Boulahrata -Barkéol- where the dams of Vrekiké and Ouedilemide witness zero filling rate*) were the main consequences of the rainfall deficit. This situation had a considerable impact on households' economic security, forcing

them to rely on loans (up to 70% of their income sources).

With respect to nutrition, the household's dependence on the purchase of foodstuffs and their income decrease make it difficult for them to access to food in sufficient quality and quantity. To this should be added the weak knowledge and application of good nutritional practices³. Due to that, the households' nutritional situation, mostly children's nutritional status, is deteriorating. In 2019, according to the last SMART survey, target departments are among the departments with the highest global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates in the country, which are 20% and 17.2% respectively for Barkeol

³ Source : « Rapport de l'enquête nutritionnelle nationale SMART Août 2019 ».

and Ould Yenge, and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rates of 3.7% and 1.9%.

Most vulnerable households are facing a severe food insecurity and a deterioration of their nutritional status which resulted from the decrease or even loss of their livelihoods. In the light of the above-described situation, which is a direct consequence of drought, the households' priority needs consist of:

- **Emergency Food assistance** meant for enabling most affected households to benefit from food in sufficient quantity and quality as well as for alleviating their recourse to borrowing, the sale of productive assets or other strategies of adaptation.
- The **prevention and referring of cases of malnutrition** by specifically targeting children from 6 to 23 months and PLW (pregnant and lactating women) through the distribution of enriched flour and the promotion of good nutrition practices.
- **Distribution of cattle feed** in order to protect their animal capital and limit systematic sales of animals until the beginning of the rainy season.
- **Support to farmers** through the supply of agricultural inputs, the rehabilitation of dikes and technical supervision in order to prepare for the forthcoming agricultural campaign (2020).
- **Support for the upgrade of market gardening perimeters** through technical support and in inputs to women's cooperatives for the production of off-season vegetables so as to reduce their dependence on rain-fed agriculture.
- Creation of an **FSL and Nutrition surveillance system** to anticipate and early respond to drought crisis.



MRC volunteer assessing drought impact, Barkéol. Source: MRC / IFRC assessment team. (February 2020).

The needs analysis reveals that the drought impacts different groups within the community (women, men, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities), their livelihoods and food sources⁴. With respect to food consumption in particular, groups which are most vulnerable to malnutrition are under five-year old children and pregnant or lactating/breast-feeding women.

In addition, the **COVID19 impact** of preventive measures has further aggravated the situation of the most vulnerable households, which rely, among other strategies, on seasonal migration of young to cities or neighbouring countries.

Coordination and partnerships

Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation is one of the key points in the response plan. Since the beginning of the response MRC and IFRC have led the coordination with other RC/RC actors in the country and in the region (such as French RC, British RC, Livelihoods Resource Centre, Belgium RC, ICRC, etc.), for both short term and medium-long term response, and several actions have been conducted accordingly:

- Position paper about the drought alert and the food insecurity and malnutrition situation (January 2020);
- FSL (Food security and livelihoods) assessment, conducted by MRC and technically or financially supported by FRC, LRC, IFRC and BRC;
- Drought PoA definition;
- MRC's FSL surveillance mechanism pilot, supported by LRC, BRC and IFRC, or
- MRC Drought contingency plan supported by FRC and IFRC
- ICRC BEA (Budget Extension Appeal)

⁴ The situation and impact assessment shows that households headed by women have suffered a greater impact on their sources of income and food. In this sense, we highlight three indicators: 1) the food consumption score is more critical (69% of HH and 73% of HH with limit and weak consumption respectively, are headed by women); 2) food stock: food stocks are lower in HH lead by women (80% of households that do not have food stock are headed by women); 3) coping strategy index (CSI): the use of coping strategies is higher in households headed by women (69.7% of households that use crisis strategies are headed by women).

Drought PoA funding plan, as mentioned above MRC has developed a drought response action plan which foresees short-term actions to respond to the food and nutrition emergency (the Emergency Appeal presented in this document is part of the short-term response), and medium and long-term actions to ensure populations' resilience capacity. As part of the Movement coordination, different actions have been carried out to seek funding for the whole plan of action, highlight three of them:

- Project proposal to US/CDC (IFRC) meant for reinforcing malnutrition prevention and food and nutritional surveillance system (through sentinel sites" and "Mothers' Clubs" approaches) in the department of Barkéol.
- Sentinel sites' pilot in Barkeol (10 sites), funded by British RC and IFRC aiming to strengthening the FSL community surveillance/monitoring as part of the national Early Warning System (EWS).
- FbF. CRF intends to carry out a feasibility study on FbF (Forecast based Financing) in the country in order to explore the possibility to develop/adopt a drought early protocol of action as part of the medium-long term response.

Regarding **National Coordination with other actors**, the Mauritanian Government has launched a National Response Plan (NRP) facing the food insecurity and nutritional situation coordinated by the CSA (Food Security Commission) a Government and with the support of its partners, including MRC. The Government represented by the CSA and the partners have confirmed their positioning in 16 over the 23 priority Moughataas (in IPC phases 3 and 4) in the framework of the response to the 2020 lean period, covering so far 22.4% of needs.

MRC is a member of the **Food Security working group (gSA)** which meets on a monthly basis and has as main objectives: to harmonize interventions between partners, including methodology and tools; to share information in term of FSL interventions; and to capitalize partners' experiences. This group also covers nutrition sector and the actions framed into the National Response Plan (NRP).

Regarding the **Early Warning System**, there is a coordination platform including the CSA (lead), ACF, WFP, and OXFAM who are part as well of the FSL and Nutrition coordination mechanism.

Targeting

Emergency Appeal is required to bridge gap between immediate and long-term needs.

It takes a caseload of **2,000 households**: 1200 households for food security and nutrition support through cash-based intervention and 800 households for livelihoods support.

Targeting criteria will be a combination of criteria following CSA and gSA recommendations, including: **socio-economic and FSL impact** criteria (HEA: Household Economy Approach methodology); the use of the **Unified Social Register** for demographic prioritization; and the CODEP (Departmental Committee) for **geographic prioritization**.

Through an analysis of the livelihoods and survival strategies of households targeted by the community (HEA/HES methodology), a ranking into 4 groups will be made (the "Very poor", the "Poor", the "Medium" and the "Better off"). Households ranked as "Very poor" will be target group of this action, by prioritizing, where appropriate, households with children under 23 months old, single-parent households or households with a high dependency ratio (number of active people/between total number of members), and mainly those headed by women, persons with disabilities or older people.

Operation Risk Assessment

With respect to security risks, Mauritania remains stable, notably in target(ed) operation areas which are accessible via road networks.

Yet, the most probable risk of impacting the implementation of operations remains the COVID-19 health crisis which has been prevailing in the country since March 2020. Due to the pandemic, the Mauritanian Government has taken restrictive measures in order to limit/curb its propagation. Since June 2020 movement restrictions between regions have been lifted. As for MRC, it has developed a risk management plan which provides for all potential scenarios and measures to take with respect to all the scenarios.

Related with covid-19 and other health risks, highlight that malaria is present in all areas of Mauritania except in the northern regions of Dakhlet-Nouadhibou and Tiris-Zemour, with higher risk during the rainy season from July through October. Medical facilities are extremely limited, particularly outside Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, where lack of communications makes dealing with an emergency very difficult.

COVID-19 Response

On 31 January 2020, IFRC launched a global [Emergency Appeal](#) (further revised in February, March and May 2020) to support its worldwide membership to deliver assistance and support to communities affected or at risk of being affected by the COVID-19 outbreak with three IFRC wide operational priorities:

- Health, Water, Hygiene and Sanitation;
- Socio-Economic Impact;
- National Society Strengthening.

The global Emergency Appeal has a strong focus on National Society institutional preparedness in line with the changing humanitarian landscape due to the continuous and evolving challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Emergency Appeal focusses on ensuring the development of effective and relevant guidance to ensure that ongoing activities will factor in these new risks. As auxiliaries to public authorities, Red Cross and Red and Crescent National Societies are playing a strong role in supporting national COVID-19 response focused on preparedness, containment, and mitigation against the pandemic. Focus is also given to supporting National Societies to maintain critical service provision to people affected by humanitarian crises through new and ongoing Emergency Appeals, while adapting to COVID-19. This includes ensuring the health and safety of staff and volunteers and developing plans specifically for emergency health service provision. As such, the National Society actions dedicated to COVID-19 and those conducted through new or ongoing operations will be mutually beneficial and built upon programmatic synergies. IFRC continues to assess and adapt its emergency operations in response to disasters and crisis and continues to provide necessary and updated guidance to its membership. The IFRC revised global Emergency Appeal complements both the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan and is linked to the Strategic Preparedness and Response (SRP) Appeal of the World Health Organization (WHO), launched in February and the WHO revised strategy from April 2020 to support countries to improve their prevention and response.

WHO confirmed the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic, on 11 March 2020 and the number of cases continue to increase in Africa although at a relatively slower rate than other regions. Targeted country has already taken international and domestic travel restrictions which, alongside other variables are expected to impact the timeline and implementation of activities of the operation. The strategies envisaged in this Emergency Appeal will need to be reviewed concurrently with COVID-19 prevention strategies to ensure the compatibility and to maximise synergies. Up to date information on the activities of the supported National Society as part of the national COVID-19 response and covered outside of this revised appeal is available on the [IFRC GO Platform](#).

Proposed Areas for intervention

The operation will be carried out in the departments of Barkéol and Ould Yenge. It will comprise food and nutrition assistance activities accompanied by actions meant for preserving the livelihoods of most vulnerable households, raising populations' awareness and monitoring the food and nutritional situation.

The overall purpose of the operation is to help to guarantee the food and nutritional situation of 1,200 households and to preserve the livelihoods of 800 households hit by the bad effects of the drought.

Proposed strategy MRC through its sectorial themes will ensure collective response to **most severe needs** of affected population; linking the **response to durable solutions** (Drought PoA). There should be strong linkage between humanitarian service points and branch development/NSD. Therefore, the mixed range of activities- cash based intervention, women empowerment, mothers club, livelihoods and nutrition should be linked-up with branch development and NSD to **localise the actions**, sustain connection built with government, service providers and partners to support the longer-term programming. This acknowledges risks and mitigation measures to reflect on and improve financial management, procurement, security, National Society operational capacity about the performance and profiling of Movement wide approach.

The operation will focus on the following pillars of intervention:

Food security assistance

An immediate food and basic needs assistance to provide a humanitarian response to the food insecurity and nutritional situation of **1,200 households** (8,800 persons) that belong to the most vulnerable population groups by covering their **food and nutritional needs during four months**, up to the forthcoming harvests. Food assistance will be carried out through CVA (cash and vouchers assistance). The amount (of CVA) will be aligned with the size of the household (in order to cover the 2100 kcal per person per day), in accordance with the conditions recommended by the NRP⁵.

The operation contributes to the **Mauritanian food insecurity National Response Plan**, covering 22.7% of the population in need (IPC phases 3 and 4) of two of the most severely impacted departments (moughataas).

Région	Département	Population	Priorité	Population totale en Phase 3	Population totale en Phase 4	Population totale en Phase 3 à 5	Couverture assistance urgence	% couverture	Partenaires
Assaba	Barkéwol	94.807	3	17.065	3.792	20.857	3.556	17,0%	PAM
Guidimakha	Ould yengé	80.796	3	16.159	1.616	17.775	6.451	36,3%	PAM, ACF
Total		175.602				38.633	10.007	25,9%	

The coordination with CSA as well as with local authorities (Mayors, Perfects/Divisional Officers, etc.) and community authorities of departments concerned, will be ensured throughout the operation. Furthermore, coordination activities with stakeholders and the harmonization of the actions nation-wide will be required at all levels, including for the selection of households, the duration of assistance and operation mechanisms.

Nutrition assistance

The Emergency Appeal will contribute to prevent malnutrition for **410 children of 6-23 months and 275 pregnant or lactating women (PWL)**, for most vulnerable households which are affected by the food insecurity situation, through:

- **Screening and referral:** community-based screening sessions will be held during cash transfer distribution activities. Further to screening sessions, suspected SAM and MAM children will be immediately referred to health facilities⁶ for management purposes. Those children will be monitored in the framework of home-visit activities that include awareness raising activities for parents on essential nutritional actions.
- **Nutritional monitoring:** To guarantee the monitoring of the nutritional situation in the framework of the community surveillance mechanism, a mass screening will be made for all children in targeted areas of the community sentinel sites project. That mass screening activity, in collaboration with Health Centers and other actors working in the intervention area, will be carried out at early stage of the activities in order to determine the baseline (situation) and do the mapping for risk areas. The same action will be repeated twice per year: during the lean period and in the post-harvest period.
- **Malnutrition prevention:** beyond the cash transfer schemes, awareness raising and nutritional education sessions will be carried out during the distribution of fortified flours and Nutritional supplements to PLW and children aged 6 to 23 months.

Like with food assistance, nutrition-related activities are harmonized with the approach of the Food Security technical group. Nutrition-related activities will also take place during the **months of July to October** and will include:

Protection and initial recovery of livelihoods

MRC will support vulnerable households through protecting and strengthening their **food and/or income sources**, needs will be addressed through:

The support of **20 women's cooperatives** (composed of between 25 and 30 women on average, that means about

⁵ In accordance with the proposal of the technical team led by the cash alliance, the NRP (National Response Plan) has established that the food assistance modality will be through unconditional cash transfers: with a variable amount depending on the size of the household, as follows:

- Category A from 1 to 3 persons that will receive the amount for 2 persons, i.e. $450 \times 2 = 900$ MRU
- Category B from 4 to 6 persons that will receive the amount for 5 persons, i.e. $450 \times 5 = 2\,250$ MRU
- Category C from 7 to 9 persons that will receive the amount for 8 persons, i.e. $450 \times 8 = 3\,600$ MRU
- Category D from 10 persons and more that will receive the amount for 12 persons, i.e. $450 \times 12 = 5\,400$ MRU.

It should be noted that in average, in target(ed) departments, households who belong to very poor (VP) socioeconomic groups are households that have more than 6 members/HH (about 70% have an average of 8 members/HH) and between 5 and 6 persons (estimate for 30% of the households).

⁶ CRENAM : Nutritional Ambulatory Recovery Centre for Moderate Cases (Centre de Récupération Nutritionnelle Ambulatoire pour cas Modérées); CRENAS : Nutritional Ambulatory Rehabilitation Centre for Severe Cases (Centre de Réhabilitation Nutritionnelle Ambulatoire pour cas Sévères)

600 households) in Barkéol and Ould Yenge. Support will consist on: technical assistance / coaching in agricultural and climate smart good practices; and the distribution of agricultural and protection inputs for their market gardening (during the off season) as a **diversified food and livelihood source**.

In Barkeol department, linked with the implementation of sentinel sites approach, MRC will set up **10 Mothers Clubs** and as a holistic approach that promotes resilience, which will be involved in:

- Awareness-raising on food, nutrition and on good hygiene practices;
- Nutritional monitoring through screening and monitoring of the food security situation.
- Creation of collective income generating activities.

The **Mothers' Clubs (CdM) approach** is a holistic RCRC Movement approach integrated into several National Societies in the region, including the Mauritanian Red Crescent (MRC). They are groups of around 20-25 women, volunteers and supporters of the RC/RC Movement principles. This approach includes three main axes:

- The completion of community-based activities, awareness raising ones mainly.
- The contribution to common funds: solidarity and health fund (CSS) and the savings and credit fund (VSLA).
- The adherence of members to the principles and values of the RC/RC Movement, volunteering in particular.

The above three components can supplement each other with the development of collective economic initiatives.

In the framework of this Emergency Appeal, all Mother's Clubs to be created will integrate all mentioned components: awareness raising and community activities; savings and loans schemes to allow women an access to finance in an easy and affordable way; and the development of income generation activities (IGA) to promote women economic emancipation. All activities will be accompanied by training to ensure ownership and sustainability of the approach.

Food Security and livelihoods surveillance (EWS)

MRC will contribute to the national **Early Warning System in FSL⁷** (food security and livelihoods), as a measure to **anticipate and prevent the effects of drought** (and other crises), through the setting up of **10 sentinel sites** (in 10 villages of Barkeol department) which will conduct the community-based **food security surveillance**.

Barkéol department has a population of around 94,000 persons. The sentinel sites will be set up at representative sites so that all the municipalities in the departments will be covered. The criteria for site selection (as per the CSA's and partners methodology) include: the demographic size of the village, the distance to the market, mobile network, etc.

Drought contingency plan

Within the framework of the Emergency Appeal, and with the support (technical / financial) of French RC and IFRC, MRC will develop a **drought contingency plan** which will enable the National Society to monitor and anticipate the different possible scenarios, more precisely the evolution of the FSL and Nutrition situation, and to define what would be the most appropriate actions that MRC would be able to implement when such scenario shows up.

Protection, Gender and Inclusion

The duration of the crisis, and the time of exposure to the lack of means to provide families with essential needs, has put extra pressure on the heads of households, especially in the case of single-parent households or households with a high dependency ratio, and mainly those headed by women, persons with disabilities and older people, with a greater workload or fewer resources to respond to household needs. Face to this situation MRC will assess these cases to prioritize them as target group and include protection support actions, when necessary. MRC will rely on partners experience, training and support to ensure inclusion measures within the whole operation.

Operation's livelihoods activities are mainly addressed to women. Mother's Club is an approach that promotes, among others, women economic empowerment, inclusion and increase of women participation in community activities, and a way to give sustainability to community-based actions (nutrition screening, awareness, etc.). All the sectors including livelihood and basic needs, health, DRR will mainstream PGI and seek to meet the minimum standards of protection, gender and inclusion in emergencies.

COVID-19 prevention measures and awareness

⁷ Within the framework of this EA, the scope includes primarily strengthening the existing National Early Warning System (SAP), including the department of Barkeol within the coverage area of that system. MRC's Drought PoA develops this component by integrating the Early Action part (EW/EA) through the FbF project that French RC plans to develop with funds from British RC.

Furthermore, and in the framework of the **COVID-19**, risk management measures and awareness-raising campaigns (meant to project stakeholders on preventive measures against the spread of COVID 19) will be organized alongside all project activities, particularly during training and nutrition awareness-raising sessions. Consequently, and to facilitate access to hygiene services, hand washing devices will be set up at each distribution site.

Security

Related to security risk, Mauritania remains stable, notably in target(ed) operation areas which are accessible via road networks.

At country level, crime levels are moderate but steadily increasing. Infrastructure is poor, including in the capital Nouakchott. The conditions of paved roads in Mauritania are generally poor, and overland travel is difficult. The porous nature of borders in the Sahel region - of which Mauritania is a part - means extremist groups can, and do, operate across borders and carry out attacks anywhere in the region. Landmines pose a risk along the border with the disputed territory of Western Sahara (Morocco). To reduce the risk of RCRC personnel falling victim to crime, violence or road hazards active risk mitigation measures must be adopted. This includes situation monitoring and implementation of minimum-security standards. All RCRC personnel actively involved in the operations must have completed the respective IFRC security e-learning courses (i.e. Stay Safe Personal Security, Security Management, or Volunteer Security).

Alarming signs of situational degradation noted in SAHEL in general to IO/INGO and Inter-Governmental Agencies active in Sahel / Lake Chad Basin. Special security advisory has been issued along the protocol and circulated in Sahel sub cluster. The Regional Security Unit has been monitoring the situation in the Sahel with particular focus on risk reduction and risk mitigation in support of operations, staff, personnel and assets.

Areas of Focus



Livelihoods and basic needs

People targeted: 2,000 households (14,800 persons)

Male: 7,296

Female: 7,503

Requirements (CHF): 581,000

Proposed intervention

Needs analysis

It is estimated that 38,633 persons living in target departments are estimated to be in severely food insecure during the lean season (June - October) and need food assistance and support in order to protect their livelihoods.

Immediate Food assistance

Based on identified needs, the operation aims to provide food assistance to **1200 households** (8,800 persons) **through multipurpose - unconditional cash transfers (CVA)**, during 4 months (from July to October), in the departments of Barkéol and Ould Yenge⁸.

A feasibility study of cash transfers will be made by MRC in order to determine if required conditions for CVA are met⁹. To assess the distribution process (and adapt it if necessary), and assess the use of CVA and their impact, a Post Monitoring Distribution (PDM) will be conducted after each distribution. MRC volunteers will also monitor prices (for 4 months) on local markets in view of covering essential needs and make corrections if necessary.

Targeting, market analysis and monitoring surveys will be administered by volunteers through the use of ODK-Kobo.

Proposed activities:

⁸ Due to the delay in launching this appeal, and following the actions made by other actors involved in the response, we could propose that the first disbursement includes two months of the transfer value.

⁹ At this stage of the response, the feasibility analysis is limited to the acceptance of target community and prices monitoring. The MRC is in contact with the other actors in the intervention areas (WFP, OXFAM, etc.), who ensure the viability of CVA's basic aspects such as the availability of a valid mechanism / FSP, availability of commodities on the market, acceptance by the authorities, etc.

It is worth noting that MRC is implementing a two-year capacity building programme in cash and vouchers assistance (CVA), financed by the British RC and in technical and administrative partnership with the French RC.

- Training of the volunteers on targeting techniques and cash distribution
- Households targeting (tools and processes), and baseline survey
- Feasibility analysis and market monitoring
- FSP's procurement process
- Cash distribution (during 4 months)
- PDM surveys

Protection and initial recovery of livelihoods

Needs analysis

The main livelihood activities in the departments of Barkeol and Ould Yenge are strongly affected by drought, including the depletion of the natural capital (water, biomass, grass) necessary to ensure the protection of livelihoods and food sources, and the coping strategies adopted by vulnerable HH after a long time of exposure to the lack of means to access essential needs. In this sense, to address these needs, the operation includes two main actions:

- **Support to 20 women's cooperatives** (about 600 households) of the departments of Barkeol and Ould Yenge through technical guidance and the distribution of agricultural inputs and protection of collective farms.
- Creation and support of **10 Mothers' Clubs** (200 women), in the department of Barkeol, who will receive, among others, assistance for the creation of savings and credit groups and training programmes for the launch and reinforcement of their income generating activities.

Proposed activities:

- Women's cooperatives targeting, based on vulnerability criteria, official registrations and local authorities' and community coordination
- Inputs (seeds, tools, acacia trees, wire rolls, etc.) procurement process and distribution
- Training and coaching in agricultural and climate smart good practices (2 days x cooperative)
- Coaching, technical coaching and monitoring.
- Training of MRC members (staff, animators and volunteers) on the Mothers' Club (MC) approach
- Setting up of and assistance to 10 Mothers' Clubs in the department of Barkéol
- Trainings and assistance/guidance for 200 members of the mothers' clubs, basic trainings (community life, savings and credit funds), and thematic training (awareness-raising, protection and inclusion, nutrition, screening, etc.)
- Distribute functioning, awareness and screaming equipment to Mothers' Club
- Launching and support to mothers' clubs for initiating community-based activities
- Training mothers' clubs' members on income generation activities (IGA) management
- Implementation of Collective IGAs (inputs procurement, distribution and support for the implementation).
- Permanent assistance for the adoption of the Mothers' Clubs approach (management tools, selection of Collective IGAs, etc.)



Health

People targeted: 665

Male: 202

Female: 463

Requirements (CHF): 94,000

Proposed intervention

Needs analysis

Target(ed) departments (Barkéol and Ould Yenge) are among the 21 moughataas classified in emergency phase in terms of malnutrition, high rate of malnutrition which are mainly due to food insecurity (low availability of food products, lack of access to products and low household income) and non-compliance with good nutrition and hygiene practices.

Population to assist/support:

- In view of preventing malnutrition, **410 children aged 6 to 23 months** and **275 pregnant or breast-feeding women** shared in the departments of Barkéol and Ould Yenge.

- Households that have children aged 6-23 months and/or pregnant and lactating women (PLW), and SAM and MAM children who will be immediately **referred to health facilities** for management purposes.

Proposed Activities:

- Training of MRC's volunteers and staff on malnutrition awareness-raising and screening
- Beneficiaries targeting (tools and processes) at the same time as CVA targeting
- Holding of malnutrition screening sessions and referral to health facilities
- Fortified flour purchase processes
- Distribution of fortified flour to 410 children from 6 to 23 months and to 275 PLW
- Organization of awareness-raising campaigns on nutritional good practices and of cooking demonstrations
- Active mass screening (in Barkeol)
- Permanent nutritional monitoring through the Mothers' Clubs surveillance/monitoring activities, under the guidance/supervision of MRC's volunteers and in coordination with health centers.

Covid-19 protection measures and awareness

The current pandemic situation forces the inclusion of covid19 social distancing and other prevention measures (such as hand washing and PPE).

MRC will follow both National and RCRC recommendations, as well as will conduct awareness campaigns (meant to project stakeholders and communities alongside all project activities, particularly during training and nutrition awareness-raising sessions).

Proposed activities:

- Organize awareness-raising sessions on the protection against COVID 19
- Provide project teams with protection equipment in accordance with IFRC PPE Rational use guidelines and/or MoH requirements
- Include/distribute hand-washing kits during community-based activities (targeting, distributions, etc.).



Disaster Risk Reduction

People targeted: 94 807 people, Barkeol population (through EWS)

Male: 46 455

Female: 48 352

Requirements (CHF): 35,000

Proposed intervention

Needs analysis

Mauritania is among the countries which are most affected by natural disasters essentially linked to recurring cycles of rainfall deficit which impact on the livelihoods and therefore on the food and nutrition situation. Faced with this recurrent situation, humanitarian actors in Mauritania have noted the **need to monitor certain indicators linked to food security and livelihoods**. In this context, the Mauritanian Government, as part of a global disaster risk reduction goal, is in the process of developing a **national Early Warning System (SAP)** for anticipate, preparing, early action and responding to food crises. Partners like ACF, OXFAM, WFP assist the food security commissioner (CSA) in view of setting up a community surveillance mechanism which must cover all municipalities in Mauritania. To date, that mechanism is operational only in 3 regions over 15. It is in this context that the MRC has noted the need for geographic coverage and community mobilization in order to supplement the Government's and the partners' efforts in not covered regions.

In consequence, MRC will contribute to the national **Early Warning System in FSL** (food security and livelihoods) through the setting up of **10 sentinel sites** in 10 villages of Barkeol department (with at least one sentinel site per commune). MRC has been working since May 2020 on a pilot phase for setting up sentinel sites approach (financed by British RC and IFRC), starting with the targeting sites and community relays. The selection and training of the management teams for the sentinel sites is planned for the month of July with the support of ACF.

Proposed activities:

- Training of the technical staff and volunteers on community-based surveillance/monitoring
- Identification of villages where to set up sentinel sites
- Setting up of sentinel sites in the department of Barkéol
- Training of the members of sentinel sites on monitoring data collection
- Collection and analysis of the food and nutritional situation monitoring data
- Production and sharing of 3 months-report to partners and the national EWS mechanism.
- Monitoring
- Sentinel exchanges for learning and sharing of best practices.

Strategies for Implementation

Requirements (CHF): 390,000

Based on the demand for the technical and coordination support required to deliver in this operation, the following programme support functions will be put in place to ensure an effective and efficient technical coordination:

Strengthen National Society

Requirements (CHF): 173 000

National Society Development is a key priority for the IFRC and the Mauritanian Red Crescent; this capacity strengthening priority is concretised in different areas, which are included in the **MRC Drought PoA**¹⁰: preparedness; improving emergency response; and learning/reinforcing the National Society into resilient approaches to the ongoing situation of drought and climate change effects in the country.

Human resources: National Society has proposed adequate structures at both national and branch levels to ensure effective delivery of planned activities, that includes a Programme Coordinator based in Nouakchott, two field teams (one for each department) composed by: one field coordinator, two technical assistants (CVA and FSL and nutrition), one financial/log assistant and one driver; and a HQ-based support team which includes: FSL, WASH & volunteers focal points, and financial and logistic assistants and a IT-Kobo analyst.

To complement available skills technical support will be delivered by IFRC (finances, logistic, PMER, FSL, etc.), also IFRC will recruit an Ops. Manager, for 5 months, to be based in Nouakchott, and will deploy two RDRTs one specialized in CVA and the second specialized in FSL & nutrition (RDRT will support for 4 and 3 months respectively).

PNS and the Livelihoods Resource Centre will support also technically in some areas such as CVA, Mothers' Club, nutrition or DRR. Surge deployments for technical support would be considered if needed.

Security: The security situation in Mauritania is relatively stable. The areas of the operation are not risk areas, but the MRC will put in place security rules and will take measures to allow implementation of the operation without difficulties. The accessibility of the targeted areas is linked to the road conditions.

Finance and Logistics: Financial resources will be safeguarded by high quality financial and administrative practices supported and monitored by the National Societies and IFRC Cluster finance staff. Compliance with IFRC logistics and financial procedures will be observed. Continuous monitoring and technical support will be provided by IFRC to ensure that agreed standards are met including the FSP procurement process.

MRC will rent two vehicles available in the areas of operation and the IFRC will provide additional support (2 during the firsts 5 months and 1 till the end of the operation). Two office bases will be rented in both target departments and the appropriate IT equipment purchased (computers, printers, smartphones for carrying out surveys with ODK/Kobo).

Outcome S1.1: 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

Activities planned

- Organize 4 training sessions for NDRT and CDRT teams on the project's topics: cash and vouchers assistance; nutrition; PGI ; sentinel sites (EWS) and Mothers' Clubs
- Support to MRC volunteer management and capacity building

¹⁰ This Emergency Appeal, is part of the short-term response of the Mauritanian RC Drought Plan of Action, a 3.5 years PoA drafted in May 2020 (with the support of MRC's partners) for defining the short-mid and long-term response of MRC against drought effects.

- Drought Contingency plan drafting workshop
- Improve / support permanent coordination of the Movement's members, notably IFRC and partners present in the country (the French Red Cross, ICRC), and other actors such as the Livelihood Centre or the British RC.
- Improve / support permanent coordination with the response actors
- Make sure that volunteers are insured, know their rights and duties/liabilities and understand and sign the code of conduct.

Ensure effective international disaster management

Requirements (CHF): 195 000

Community engagement and accountability (CEA): MRC will ensure that the already developed CEA tools (during 2018 Food Security EA) are adopted and used during the whole response (needs assessment, targeting, inclusion/exclusion mechanism, gather community information, community feedback, etc.). The community will be actively participating in the various stages of the operation, particularly in targeting through the village committees that will be set up, but also in conducting nutrition awareness-raising activities and monitoring of the food and nutritional situation through the establishment of mothers' clubs and sentinel sites. The objective is to place the communities at the centre of the operation, to consider them as experts and partners and not as helpless victims.

Communication strategy: MRC and IFRC will collaborate to implement a communication strategy emphasizing on (i) international advocacy on the prevailing food insecurity situation in Mauritania, (ii) communication on the activities of the operation at local, national and international level, (iii) communication and advocacy in the medium-long term Drought PoA. Communication, advocacy and community awareness materials will be developed, as part of this strategy, to make the actions of the MRC and the IFRC visible through the writing and production of articles, press releases, testimonials, flyers, photos and videos to be disseminated across broadcast and print media, as well as IFRC and broader Red Cross Red Crescent social media channels.

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and reporting (PMER): MRC with the support of IFRC cluster office will ensure compliance with expected deliverables and reporting requirements. In addition to the project teams in the field, an IT-Kobo analyst will conduct regular missions in the field and will support project teams on gathering and analysing of project information. The IFRC PMER team will work closely with MRC to facilitate internal reviews, ops updates, lessons learnt sessions, etc.

Movement coordination and cooperation

Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation is one of the key points in the response plan and in the Mauritanian RC Droughts PoA. Since the beginning of the response MRC and IFRC have led the coordination with other RC/RC actors in the country and in the region (such as French RC, British RC, Livelihoods Centre, Belgium RC, ICRC, etc.), for both short term and medium-long term response.

For this Emergency appeal, coordination and cooperation will be guaranteed through the participation and support from IFRC CCST and other MRCs partners, Distance support and field missions have been included in the budget to guarantee the quality of the support.

Outcome SFI 2.01: Effective and coordinated international disaster response is ensured

Planned activities

- Training of volunteers and staff on Code of conduct, rules and principles for humanitarian assistance
- Ensure community participation in the operational planning and implementation through mothers club and village committee
- Establish a hotline to receive complaint/suggestion and dispose, change necessary changes on operational modalities
- Develop and roll out communication strategy to profile RC food insecurity activity implementation and advocate for long term sustainable food security plan
- Conduct Kobo data collection analysis system
- Conduct PDM of distribution
- Conduct reviews and evaluation of activities

Outcome S2.2: The complementarity and strengths of the Movement are enhanced

- Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation to create synergies in community-based risk reduction programming
- Ensure the participation of the IFRC and National Societies to the Movement Coordination meetings at all level

Ensure a strong IFRC**Requirements (CHF): 22 000 CHF**

Financial resources will be safeguarded, through the financial and administrative support provided by IFRC CCST office in order to ensure timely quality financial reporting, and effective use of assets.

An external audit will be carried out at the end of the operation to evaluate the efficiency and quality of resource management.

Funding Requirements

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

EMERGENCY APPEAL

MDRMR011 - Mauritania Food Insecurity

Funding requirements - summary

Area of Intervention	Needs in CHF
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION	35,000
LIVELIHOODS AND BASIC NEEDS	581,000
HEALTH	94,000
STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SOCIETIES	173,000
EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT	195,000
ENSURE A STRONG IFRC	22,000
TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS	1,100,000

Jagan Chapagain
Secretary General

Reference documents

□ **For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:**

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.**

Annex

Annex 1. Positioning Note regarding Drought in Mauritania and Senegal

Title: Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Positioning Note regarding Drought in Mauritania and Senegal in 2019, January 2020.

Document reference : “Positioning Note RCRCM vDef”



Positioning Note
RCRCM vDef.docx

