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Operation Update Report Afghanistan: Drought

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency appeal n°: MDRAF007	GLIDE n°: DR-2021-000022-AFG
Operation update n° 1; date of issue: 12 July 2021	Timeframe covered by this update: 19 March 2021 – 30 June 2021
Operation start date: 19 March 2021	Operation timeframe: 12 months; End date: 31 March 2022
Funding requirements: CHF 7.5 million	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF500,000
N° of people being assisted: Target - 224,000 individuals (32,000 households); Reached - 2,300 households	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) is working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), with the latter providing only security-related assistance under the safer-access framework.	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: <u>UN Agencies/IO:</u> United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), and World Bank. <u>Government Ministries:</u> Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), and Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR). <u>(Inter)national Humanitarian NGOs:</u> multiple (inter)national humanitarian NGOs are either planning or have already commenced their drought response operations. To name a few of them: International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), etc.	

The President of Afghanistan officially declared a drought on 22 June 2021 and urged the international community to increase emergency and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Humanitarian organizations, including ARCS, have been urged to adapt their activities to the national plan and to enhance coordination with relevant government departments. Following the declaration and in view of an anticipated expansion of geographical areas to be covered by ARCS, the National Society has requested IFRC to revise the Emergency Appeal (EA) and its Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA). Modification of the EA is underway, and a revision is expected to be issued by end of July 2021.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster

Afghanistan is facing a drought, which was officially declared by the President of the country on 22 June 2021. The country has been experiencing dry conditions since October 2020, which affected the winter season snow accumulation that is critical for water access during the spring and summer agricultural seasons. This is the second drought to impact Afghanistan in four years. The rain-fed and irrigated agriculture/livestock are impacted the most. This year, according to the government, the country's wheat crop will be reduced by nearly 2 million tons, and more than 3 million livestock are in danger of death due to lack of fodder and water¹.

¹ Drought Declaration Message of H.E. President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, Video Message, 22 June 2021

The drought is a devastating blow for a country already grappling with escalating conflict, a devastating new wave of COVID-19 and crippling poverty. COVID-19 cases have steadily risen since mid-May 2021, with compounding socio-economic impacts.

The recently released IPC analysis estimates that nearly 11 million people – almost one-third of the population – are in crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity in 2021². Food prices are already higher than normal due to COVID-19 and may increase further due to armed conflicts and drought. These compounding factors are pushing the financially poor households – especially amongst the small farm holders – to experience extreme food insecurity and rely on destructive coping mechanisms, such as the sale of productive assets, taking children out of school – so they should contribute to household incomes – and reducing the quality and quantity of food.



Summary of current response

Overview of Operating National Society

As an auxiliary to the government, ARCS is a primary national partner to respond to disasters across the country and facilitate disaster preparedness activities with its 34 provincial branches spread across the country. ARCS has a long history of providing life-saving assistance to people in need in Afghanistan. ARCS presence and local networks across the country are exceptionally well established, which enables the National Society to reach vulnerable populations including in highly remote and hard-to-reach areas. ARCS has vast expertise with different types of programming through multilateral projects supported by IFRC, ICRC and Red Cross Red Crescent partners working bilaterally.

ARCS volunteers play a critical role at all stages of programming. This includes assessment, identification, and registration of target communities and internally displaced populations. In addition, volunteers carry out hygiene promotion and community mobilization. Through nationwide coverage of 34 provincial branches and a network of 30,000 volunteers, ARCS can implement large-scale and long-term preparedness and response programmes in coordination with public authorities and across lines of conflict. Applying principled humanitarian action, ARCS enjoys a high level of acceptance and has access to communities across the whole country. The branches in targeted areas have teams of trained volunteers in disaster preparedness and response through established National and Branch Disaster Response Teams, Mobile Health Teams and community mobilizers as part of the CBHFA programme.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement actions in country

The IFRC Afghanistan Country Delegation has set up a technical support platform for ARCS in addressing emergencies and longer-term programmes while IFRC supports ARCS organization development at large. Across the emergency response, IFRC has supported ARCS disaster management teams and volunteers for needs assessment, resource mobilization and for the design and monitoring of the emergency operation, in close coordination with other Red Cross Red Crescent partners in-country, IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO) and IFRC Secretariat in Geneva. With regards to longer-term programmes, IFRC is supporting immunization initiatives for children and implementation of community-health services through the support to Mobile Health Teams (MHTs) and the CBHFA in North, Northeast, Central North, Central South and West of Afghanistan.

The ICRC, in its role of lead agency, is present in Afghanistan since 1986 and engages in dialogue with all parties to the conflict having a direct or indirect influence on the humanitarian situation in the country. The key operating areas in responding to the Afghanistan protracted conflict include the promotion and respect of IHL, health services, in particular for the wounded and sick, ensuring physical rehabilitation and social reintegration, monitoring the treatment of detainees across the country, and maintaining contact with their families, as well as their health and water sanitation conditions. They provide support to the civilian population in improving livelihood and water and sanitation, health, Restoring Family Links (RFL), and tracing activities. The ICRC supports ARCS, as its primary partner in its development and operations with a focus on the “Safer Access” approach that promotes safer access to persons affected by conflict and other situations of violence, whilst minimizing risks for staff and volunteers.

Other Participating National Societies

- The Norwegian Red Cross has an in-country presence and strongly supports ARCS network of 45 clinics with health interventions, WASH, and CBHFA activities across the country.
- The Canadian Red Cross has played a critical role over the years to develop ARCS disaster management capabilities, including through Branch Disaster Management Teams.
- The Danish Red Cross extends its support to the ARCS in psychosocial support (PSS) together with ICRC, volunteers management, and youth mobilization activities in Afghanistan.

² [IPC Afghanistan acute food insecurity analysis report \(Mar - Nov 2021\) | Food Security Cluster \(fscluster.org\)](#)

- Qatar Red Crescent and Turkish Red Crescent have been working in Afghanistan on health and livelihoods programming. ARCS through the support of the Qatar Red Crescent distributed one-off Ramadan food packages to poor households in April 2021.
- Red Cross Red Crescent partners have established coordination and cooperation mechanisms including Movement Platform meetings (focusing on strategic matters), informal tripartite meetings (to address urgent matters collectively), operational coordination meetings (focus on operational issues), and technical coordination groups.

Overview of other actors' actions in country

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Clusters are established as sectoral coordination mechanisms at national and regional levels to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each partner, including non-governmental organizations, United Nations (UN) agencies, donor agencies, the Red Cross Red Crescent and other stakeholders. Cluster meetings occur monthly at the national level, coordinated by the respective cluster lead agencies coordinated through UNOCHA and covering shelter, food security and agriculture, health, WASH, protection, and nutrition. Meetings are attended by cluster partners, members, and observers to share information, coordinate humanitarian interventions at cluster or multi-cluster levels, address operational challenges, and feed into funding instruments such as the Afghan Humanitarian Fund. This EA is also in line with the plan and priorities of the Spring Disaster Contingency Plan of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT). During the assessment works and design of this EA, IFRC Country Delegation supported ARCS to share its plan for review of technical clusters such as the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) serves as a strategic, policy level and decision-making forum that guides principled humanitarian action in Afghanistan. The Afghan Humanitarian Forum (AHF) is composed of all heads of International and National humanitarian NGOs and feeds into the HCT.

Regarding the current drought, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is implementing a small short-term emergency food security project. The objective of their project is mainly to mitigate the impact of reduced precipitation due to La Niña resulting drought during the agricultural season.

The following two emergency food security programmes are also being implemented by the Government of Afghanistan. These two programmes are not specifically for drought response, but they are under the government's response plan to mitigate food and nutrition insecurity. 1) "Dastarkhwan-e-Meli" – meaning "National Meal Programme" – is being implemented and benefitting an estimated 4.1 million households with incomes of USD 2 a day or less and covering 90 per cent of households in the country. Under this programme, one-off food distribution (one-month food basket of a household) is provided to target beneficiaries. 2) The COVID-19 Relief Effort for Afghan Communities and Households Project benefits some 2.9 million households across Afghanistan. The COVID-19 Relief Effort for Afghan Communities and Households Project is implemented through the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG), and the Kabul Municipality. It helps provide relief to Afghan households through grants to Community Development Councils (CDCs) to purchase food and sanitation packages for households in their respective communities. Implementation of these two programmes commenced in 2020 and the programmes are still ongoing.

ARCS has been closely coordinating and collaborating its drought response operation with government departments, UN agencies (e.g. UNFAO, UNWFP, UNOCHA, and IOM) and other (inter)national humanitarian organizations that are also having drought response programmes. For instance, during the development of this EA, at the provincial level, ARCS reached out to the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock and the representative of Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, UNFAO, and UNOCHA to consult with and seek their advice for their respective provinces. At the national level, ARCS had its draft plan reviewed by technical clusters such as the Food Security and Agriculture one.

Needs analysis and scenario planning

Needs analysis

As per the recently released updated IPC³ (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification), nearly 11 million people in Afghanistan are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) due to drought, conflict, COVID-19, high food prices and rampant unemployment in 2021. This includes around 7.8 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 3.2 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and require urgent action to save lives, reduce food gaps and save and protect livelihoods. The current drought, which is also officially declared by the government of Afghanistan on 22 June 2021, has further deteriorated the already worse



³ [IPC Afghanistan acute food insecurity analysis report \(Mar - Nov 2021\) | Food Security Cluster \(fscluster.org\)](https://www.fscluster.org/2021/11/15/IPC-Afghanistan-acute-food-insecurity-analysis-report-Mar-Nov-2021/)

food insecurity and livelihood situations in the country. The drought has impacted at least 25 out of 34 provinces of the country.

According to the Pre-Lean Season Assessment (PLSA), conducted across the country in Quarter 1 of 2021, on average, cereal stocks of the prior harvest lasted only five months for the entire households interviewed. Across all areas, only a small proportion (10 per cent) of households reported having cereal stocks from their products that would last till the next harvest. Access to wheat seeds remained a significant challenge. According to PLSA, 81 per cent of farmers did not have access to certified wheat seeds to cultivate their lands during the last season. PLSA findings show that in rural areas, 53 per cent of people generate income from agriculture, while in the urban areas, only 9 per cent of people do.

Economic access to food is seriously compromised because of a significant increase in prices. Overall, an estimated 10-20 per cent price increase has been observed compared with the same period of the last five years. The increase is mainly due to the drought, COVID-19 related impacts, steadily accelerating year-on-year inflation and seasonal changes. To further compound the situation, the PLSA indicated a reduction in income for 75 per cent of people and an increase in debt. Around 73 per cent of households reported having debt, and 74 per cent cited food as the main reason for borrowing. With the increasing dependency on the market due to relatively lower production, increased prices, and debt, financial access to food is constrained for most households, as evidenced by the livelihood coping strategy. One out of five households (20 per cent) adopted Emergency livelihood coping strategies, and 24 per cent resorted to Crisis livelihood coping strategies to mitigate their food consumption gaps.

Moreover, the above-mentioned issues are compounded with years of conflict and instability that have caused livelihood disruption and displacements. Despite efforts for a peace deal, this has not yet translated into a sustained reduction in violence. In the first half of 2021, an estimated 140,691 people have been displaced. Internal displacement was limited to new IDPs. Still, IDPs from previous years were unable to return to their places of origin mainly because of continued conflict, loss of livelihoods, and a lack of economic opportunities.

ARCS with support from IFRC also conducted rapid food security and livelihood needs assessment in Badghis, Badakhshan, Baghlan, Daikundi, Faryab, Ghor, Kandahar, Nuristan, Samangan and Urozgan provinces in March 2021. The findings of this rapid needs assessment are summarized in bullet points below.

- Food purchase dominates household expenditure, both before and now. However, the drought has reportedly reduced expenditure on all but the essentials – food and household items. It is not uncommon for the poorest to take loans in order to purchase basic household items, such as soap and cooking fuel.
- Lack of access to credit and high levels of debt are key indicators of disproportionately high impacts of drought and food insecurity. According to the assessment, the poorest and poor access credit for food from three to four traders with a debt ceiling at AFN 1,000-4,000 (CHF 11 – 47) per trader. Total debt for the poorest can go as high as AFN 10,000 (CHF 118) or roughly the equivalent of two months of income. Because of the lost incomes and production, traders have reduced access to credit and are in general more cautious about extending credit, particularly to the poorest. In most cases, the poorest are seeking credit from new and/or additional traders and expanding levels of debt.
- Though the assessment did not include a specific nutrition component, it was evident from the questions on consumption that the poorest and poor are not eating adequate diets. A number of 24-hour recall exercises among the poorest found that bread and tea were common meals and that little if any green vegetables, and/or fruits were consumed by this group.
- Female-headed households and disproportionately affected households, such as the elderly or those with a disability or significant medical expense, face a difficult time meeting basic needs, as they rely on assistance from community members, *zakat* (a part of the wealth or property that Muslims must pay annually, to help the poor of their community) or relatives to help cover food needs. During an income stressed year, such as 2021, when the population, in general, is coping with reduced incomes and production, these families face even more difficult times meeting their basic needs.
- Most people indicated that due to drought, the cost for the commodities would increase as there would be a lack of wheat, corn, oats and rice. This situation would be further exacerbated by security getting worse, transitways getting blocked, poverty further aggravating and unemployment rates increasing. Most Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants across all 10 provinces mentioned that many children are not receiving enough food.
- The households mostly from the socioeconomic weaker sections, typically, including female-headed households and of smallholder farmers are the worst hit by the drought due to reduced household wheat stocks and income from on-farm labour where food consumption deficits will continue through the next harvest.

- For livestock communities, the most affected groups are expected to be small livestock keepers (those possessing up to 10 animals including large and small ruminants). They have faced difficulties in accessing fodder for their livestock, and whose pasture area is limited (mobility) and under stress (overgrazed).

Operation Risk Assessment

Community engagement in each aspect of the operation is ARCS's most useful way to mitigate security risks at distributions. Proper communication with communities, including details on distribution procedures has been helping with crowd control. Before any distribution, the teams held a sensitization meeting with community elders and community members. In these sensitization meetings, staff discussed the nature of the assistance, exact targeted locations, the type of assistance, time, date, and venue of distribution as well as the distribution process with beneficiaries and duly incorporated their feedback.

ARCS put in place crowd control mechanisms, including gender-segregated queuing structures outside of the distribution centre, and marked queues using hazard tape inside the distribution centre. Beneficiaries were invited to come to the distribution centre in groups, thereby reducing the amount of time they have to spend queuing outside.

Regarding safety and security, ARCS has been utilizing community engagement and acceptance building. ARCS's security management staff implement a standard, though heightened, mitigation measures including, varying journey timings and routes; carefully controlling information surrounding movements and activities; ongoing stakeholder mapping and engagement to ensure understanding and communication of potential grievances; and regular check.

Moreover, the implementation of the activities under this emergency operation such as distribution of cash assistance has been conducted in consideration of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for distribution in the COVID-19 context. To this end, to mitigate protection risks such as COVID-19 spreads among the target beneficiaries and the staff involved in distributions, the COVID-19 SOP has been acknowledged to keep physical distance. Moreover, masks and handwashing facilities and sanitizer were available in distribution sites.

The table below includes some (potential) risks and the mitigation measures ARCS and IFRC operationalize.

Risk	Mitigation measure
Injuries or loss of life of staff or volunteer due to collateral damage from the detonation of an IED (improvised explosive device), or crossfire.	Ensure availability of first aid kit in vehicles, first aid-trained staff, keep distance from potential targets, do not drive on roads where there is IED threat, real-time monitoring of the situation and advising staff and volunteers, communication of activities and movement with all stakeholders, use of protective emblem, Critical Incident Management and Emergency plans in place, movement monitoring.
Perception issues related to the conduct of the operation or activities which may impact the access and acceptance of ARCS	Ensuring the dissemination of ARCS operation, the activities, its approach, including the methodology of selecting people to receive assistance to all stakeholders. For community-based distribution activities, proper communication with the communities will be maintained. Sensitisation meetings with community elders and members will be used to manage crowd control. Sensitisation meetings will discuss the nature of the assistance, exact targeted locations, the type of assistance, time, date, and venue of distribution as well as the distribution process with beneficiaries and was duly incorporated their feedback.
Staff or volunteers abducted/ kidnapped due to disputes between the stakeholders.	a) Awareness sessions of staff and volunteers, clear communication of neutral, independent, and impartial humanitarian action (NIHA) nature of the organization to all stakeholders, monitoring of the situation, daily communication with all stakeholders, training of the staff and volunteers on actions in critical situations, avoiding of disputed areas, movement monitoring. b) Coordination of Movement and activities with Movement partners, including ICRC who is operating in the same areas or location.
Extortion or robbery of staff or volunteers due to the existence of criminal groups or illegal checkpoints.	Advise staff and volunteers not to carry valuables and to comply with requests, use of the protective emblem, real-time communication with all stakeholders, monitoring of the situation, and releasing advisories to staff and volunteers accordingly.
Risks associated with community-based cash and/or in-kind distribution activities.	ARCS will put in place crowd control mechanisms, including gender-segregated queuing structures outside of the distribution centres, and will mark queues using hazard tape inside the distribution centres. ARCS will invite people to receive assistance to come to the distribution centres in groups, thereby reducing the amount of time they must spend queuing outside.
COVID-19 Context.	To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the safety of the people receiving assistance and the staff who will be involved in distributions, the COVID-19 SOP will be followed, and physical distance maintained. Moreover, masks, handwashing facilities, and sanitizers will be available in distribution sites.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Proposed strategy

The initial strategy and plan of this emergency operation was to provide life-saving and early recovery assistance to address the immediate food, livelihood, health, and WASH needs of 32,000 drought-affected households in 10 provinces Badghis, Badakhshan, Baghlan, Daikundi, Faryab, Ghor, Kandahar, Nuristan, Samangan and Urozgan.

After the launch of this EA, some new developments related to drought issues took place in Afghanistan. The President of Afghanistan officially declared the current drought on 22 June 2021. The President of Afghanistan asked donor agencies and humanitarian organizations supporting Afghanistan to extend their assistance and support. Because of new changes and development in the drought context, ARCS and IFRC will revise this EA to further align the response plan with Afghanistan national drought response plan and to increase the number of target locations, beneficiaries, and the overall funding requirements. Further details on modification of the EA will be provided in the revised EA which is expected to be launched by end of July 2021.

As of this reporting period, IFRC/ARCS mobilized a total of CHF 522,000 under this EA. Using this amount, ARCS with technical assistance from IFRC commenced providing cash for food assistance to 3,500 households in three (Badghis, Baghlan, and Faryab) out of 10 target provinces. The below paragraphs provide details of progress and achievements achieved for distributing cash for food assistance to selected households in the three provinces.

Stakeholder orientation and consultation: After having introductory/coordination meetings with the government authorities in three provinces (Badghis, Baghlan, and Faryab) and other relevant stakeholders such as the representatives of UNOCHA and Food Security and Agriculture (FSAC), ARCS carried out community engagement and mobilization meetings in drought-affected villages to inform the community members about the commencement of project implementation in their communities. As a result of those meetings and with support from community elders, ARCS staff and volunteers communicated the type of assistance and the beneficiary selection criteria to broader members (male and female) of the communities.

Beneficiary assessment: ARCS followed three stages for implementation of beneficiary assessment. 1) Community filtering and identification; ARCS met the local authorities (District Governor Office, Department of Agriculture, and the provincial representatives of ANDMA (Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority) to receive their advice in mapping the implementation locations. 2) Once the communities were selected, ARCS staff and volunteers met with the respective community members and provided them with beneficiary selection criteria, ensuring that the wider community understood the programme and the criteria was made in coordination with community leaders. The community leaders provided ARCS with a list of all households meeting the criteria. ARCS then assessed all proposed households using its beneficiary assessment tool. 3) All data were then entered, and household information was verified. The final lists were then produced to eligible participants and shared with respective community members.

Beneficiary verification and registration: ARCS in collaboration with community representatives completed beneficiary selection for 3,500 households in three provinces (Badghis, Baghlan, and Faryab). Details of the selected beneficiary households are as follows: 1,100 households in Badghis province; 1,200 households in Baghlan province; and 1,200 households in Faryab province. For cross-referencing, community discussions were conducted with Community Development Council (CDC) leaders, and with a number of community members (men and women) who were not part of the CDCs. The criteria that had been defined at the emergency plan of action stage were accepted and implemented. The criteria included the following:

Mandatory / eligibility criteria: 1) Households that have been highly affected by drought; and 2) Households that are having unstable and/or no income generation opportunities.

Within this, the following vulnerability criteria were used to prioritize selection: 1) Elderly with responsibility for children in the household. 2) Households without productive assets. 3) Households headed by widows or single mothers with young children. 4) Households with chronically ill members. 5) Households with members with a disability who are unable to work. 6) Pregnant and lactating women.

Establishment of long-term framework contract with Financial Service Provider: ARCS with technical support from IFRC logistics team the procurement process and procedures to identify and select Financial Service Provider (FSP) for its cash and voucher assistance programming. As per the IFRC and ARCS procurement policy, the tender was announced under the national competitive bidding process to allow all the eligible FSPs to take part in the process and submit their offers. The tender was announced on 29 March 2021. As a result of implementing the whole IFRC/ARCS procurement procedures and evaluating the offers, ARCS decided to sign framework contracts with the two winning FSPs including ROSHAN and ABMMC (Afghan Besim Mobile Money Company). ROSHAN, one of the largest telecommunication companies in the country – will provide e-voucher and/or mobile money services to ARCS. ABMMC will support ARCS's CVA operation by providing direct cash assistance to ARCS.

Cash distribution to beneficiaries: as of the date of this operation update report, ARCS, thanks to funds mobilised under this EA, commenced field implementation in Badghis, Baghlan, and Faryab provinces to provide cash for food assistance to 3,500 households. 1,100 households in Badghis and 1,200 households in Faryab received the first instalment of cash assistance in the third week of June. Each beneficiary household was provided with AFN 5,000 (CHF 57). ARCS will distribute the second instalment of cash assistance to beneficiary households in Badghis and Faryab and both first and second rounds of cash distributions to selected households in Baghlan province in July. Further details about the cash distributions in these three provinces are provided under the section of Detailed Operational Plan below.

Access and acceptance: through its principled mandate and presence in communities, ARCS enjoys continued acceptance over the past months. The National Society has been able to operate in targeted communities affected by drought, including hard-to-reach areas. High vigilance and monitoring were maintained to ensure access was gained through localised negotiation and acceptance by all parties. The local communities were involved through several channels for community engagement and communication which was adopted to promote participation and to ensure the satisfaction level of beneficiaries. In a few locations such as in Basghis and Faryab, ARCS had cases where operations of cash distribution to beneficiaries had to be paused – due to ongoing armed clashes – but then concerns were addressed through dialogue and activities resumed within 72 hours.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA): IFRC/ARCS CEA approach emphasizes a more regular or permanent presence in the communities and strong community engagement from the outset. It promotes resilience among the affected communities by ensuring they are able to access humanitarian assistance as necessary, have the required information on the services available to them, and are involved in the planning and delivery of assistance, including beneficiary selection, distribution of cash assistance, and implementation of post distribution monitoring (PDM) activities.

Activities implemented for distributing the cash assistance were regularly accompanied by community-based information and sensitization sessions in the communities. Community members are heavily involved in the implementation of the activities. The community engagement was facilitated and supported by the pre-established community volunteers. Community elders/representatives took an active role in beneficiary assessment and selection.

Progressive monitoring of the intervention: ARCS PMER (planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting) staff are making continuous monitoring visits to implementation communities in the provinces noted above. Baseline data collection, cash distribution to beneficiaries, and meetings with community-based committees/community elders were monitored through those visits.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

	<p>Livelihoods and Basic Needs</p> <p>People reached: 16,100 Male: 7,889 Female: 8,211</p>	
<p>Outcome 1: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods</p>		
<p>Indicators:</p>	<p>Target</p>	<p>Actual</p>
<p><i># of drought affected people assisted through emergency food security and livelihood restoration activities.</i></p>	<p>224,000</p>	<p>16,100</p>
<p>Output 1.1: Skills development and/or productive assets and/or financial inclusion to improve income sources are provided to target population (off-farm livelihoods).</p>		
<p>Indicators:</p>	<p>Target</p>	<p>Actual</p>
<p><i>% of beneficiaries reporting their livelihoods restored within three to six months after receiving support.</i></p>	<p>80</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>Output 1.2: Basic needs assistance for livelihoods security including food is provided to the most affected communities.</p>		
<p>Indicators:</p>	<p>Target</p>	<p>Actual</p>
<p><i># of drought affected people of all ages and sex who receive adequate food/cash responses, in a timely manner.</i></p>	<p>84,000</p>	<p>16,100</p>

Output 1.3: Household livelihoods security is enhanced through food production, increased productivity and post-harvest management (agriculture-based livelihoods).

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of drought affected people of all ages and sex who receive adequate livelihood protection/restoration assistance, in a timely manner.	140,000	0

Progress towards outcomes

As of this reporting period, ARCS commenced providing assistance to drought-affected households only under this outcome. Details of the achievements realised under this outcome are outlined below.

ARCS staff targeted the communities with drought-affected households. The criteria (noted under section B – Operational Strategy) for targeting the drought-affected households were drawn from the initial assessment and discussed with other organizations working in the area — including UNOCHA, Department of Agriculture, and the representatives of ANDMA (Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority) — as well as with the provincial- and district-level authorities, and local communities.

For purpose of cross-referencing, community-based discussions were held with the members and leaders of the CDCs and with a number of community members who were not part of the CDCs. Assessment forms were prepared including assessment criteria for each beneficiary household. At each site, CDC leaders and members submitted the beneficiary lists, following the criteria for receiving cash for food assistance. ARCS staff and volunteers visited all potential beneficiaries of cash assistance in order to assess their level of vulnerability. After this was completed, the assessment sheet was signed. The session also served to avoid double-counting. A total of 3,500 households (1,100 households in Badghis province; 1,200 households in Baghlan province; and 1,200 households in Faryab province) have been selected to receive cash for food assistance. As per the operation plan, each household is eligible to receive AFN 10,000 via two monthly instalments (each instalment AFN 5,000).

During this reporting period, ARCS distributed the first instalment of cash assistance to 2,300 households in two provinces (1,100 households in Badghis province and 1,200 households in Faryab province). Each household received AFN 5,000 (CHF 57) which covered 75 per cent of the cost of a monthly food basket for a family of seven. Cash distribution to selected households in Baghlan province will happen in July. The distribution in Baghlan province did not take place in June because of ongoing armed clashes between the government forces and the Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs). The stakeholders requested ARCS to pause its cash distribution activities for some time.

In distributing the first instalment of cash assistance to 2,300 households in three provinces, ARCS experienced mainly two major operational challenges:

1. Establishment of a long-term framework contract with FSPs took a longer time than expected. Delays in the establishment of framework contracts and selection of FSP further delayed the actual distribution of cash assistance to target households. In the end, the ARCS operation team only commenced the cash distribution to beneficiary households from the third week of June even though the beneficiaries were already assessed and identified back in April 2021.
2. All three provinces (Badghis, Baghlan, and Faryeb) – where ARCS commenced the cash distribution under this emergency operation – have been experiencing major negative developments in the security situation and an increase in armed clashes between the AOGs and the government forces. For example, two target districts in Faryab and one target district in Badghis collapsed and fell to AOGs in the first half of June. Because of the ongoing airstrikes and clashes, both the local authorities and the AOGs requested ARCS to stop its emergency response operation in these districts for some days. After a short pause, the ARCS response team resumed the field implementation in those districts from the third week of June and distributed the planned cash assistance to target beneficiaries.

ARCS will distribute the second instalment of cash assistance to these selected beneficiaries in July 2021. Following the distribution of the second instalment of cash assistance, ARCS with support from IFRC will also implement the post distribution monitoring activities in communities where cash distributions happened. The findings of this post distribution monitoring will be shared in the next operation update.



ARCS response team (ARCS staff and volunteers) during coordination meetings with local authorities, community socialization meetings, beneficiary assessment and rapid market assessment. (Photo: ARCS)



Health

People reached: N/A
 Male: N/A
 Female: N/A

Health Outcome 2: The immediate risks to the health of the affected populations are reduced through improved access to medical treatment

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of referrals to medical centres by volunteers	720	-
# of beneficiaries treated/assessed for first aid by volunteers	720	-
Health Output 2.1: Improved access to health care and emergency health care for the targeted population and communities.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of volunteers trained in basic first aid and injury prevention in targeted areas.	720	-
# of active volunteers providing first aid and injury prevention in the targeted areas	720	-

Progress towards outcomes

The progress against the targets will be reported in the next operation update when the implementation of activities planned under this outcome is commenced. During this reporting period, ARCS prioritized addressing immediate food needs using the loan from DREF and contributions received to date. Partners and donors are encouraged to provide support to the EA to enable holistically meeting the needs.

Health Outcome 4: Transmission of diseases of epidemic potential is reduced

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Target community's knowledge increased, and they are able to prevent communicable disease by recognition the mode of transmission.	Yes	-
Health Output 4.1: Community-based disease control and health promotion is provided to the target population.		

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of volunteers trained and mobilized on hygiene promotion, ECV, HHWT, behavioural change communication and COVID-19 prevention.	720	-
Health Output 4.2: Transmission is limited through early identification and referral of suspected cases using community-based surveillance, active case finding, and/or contact tracing.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Intervention is monitored and supervised	Yes	-
Health Output 4.3: Improved knowledge about public health issues among [target population] in [area].		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of volunteers trained and mobilized to conduct awareness-raising campaigns	720	-
# of households reached with key messages to promote personal and community hygiene	6,000	-
Progress towards outcomes		
The progress against the targets will be reported in the next operation update when the implementation of activities planned under this outcome is commenced. As noted above, during this reporting period, ARCS prioritized addressing immediate food needs using the loan from DREF and contributions received to date. Partners and donors are encouraged to provide support to the EA to enable holistically meeting the needs.		
Health Outcome 7: National Society has increased capacity to manage and respond to health risks.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Coordination with relevant humanitarian actors ensured	Yes	-
Health Output 7.1: The National Society and its volunteers are able to provide better, more appropriate, and higher quality emergency health services.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
Coordination with relevant humanitarian actors ensured	Yes	-
Progress towards outcomes		
The progress against the targets will be reported in the next operation update when the implementation of activities planned under this outcome is commenced. As noted above, during this reporting period, ARCS prioritized addressing immediate food needs using the loan from DREF and contributions received to date. Partners and donors are encouraged to provide support to the EA to enable holistically meeting the needs.		

	<h2 style="color: red;">Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</h2> <p>People reached: N/A Male: N/A Female: N/A</p>	
WASH Outcome 1: Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water related diseases in targeted communities.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of targeted population have access to clean water, sanitation and with increased knowledge of personal hygiene according to Sphere standards	80	-
WASH Output 1.1: Continuous assessment of water, sanitation, and hygiene situation is carried out in targeted communities.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of assessments/monitoring visits undertaken and shared	1	-
WASH Output 1.2: Daily access to safe water which meets Sphere and WHO standards in terms of quantity and quality is provided to target population.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual

# of households provided with jerry cans (2 per HH), water filters (1 per HH) and Aqua tabs	6,000	-
WASH Output 1.4: Hygiene promotion activities which meet Sphere standards in terms of the identification and use of hygiene items provided to target population.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of volunteers trained on household water treatment (HHWT)	720	-
# of people reached by hygiene promotion activities	42,000	-
WASH Output 1.5: Hygiene-related goods (NFIs) which meet Sphere standards and training on how to use those goods is provided to the target population.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of households provided with hygiene kits	6,000	-
# of households provided with soaps	12,593	-
Progress towards outcomes		
<p>The progress against the targets will be reported in the next operation update when the implementation of activities planned under this outcome is commenced. Procurement and distribution of WASH items will be initiated when additional contributions are received. During this reporting period, ARCS prioritized addressing immediate food needs using the loan from DREF and contributions received to date. Partners and donors are encouraged to provide support to the EA to enable holistically meeting the needs.</p>		

	<h2 style="color: red;">Protection, Gender and Inclusion</h2> <p>People reached: 24,500 Male: 12,005 Female: 12,495</p>	
PGI Outcome 1: Communities become more peaceful, safe and inclusive through meeting the needs and rights of the most vulnerable.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of affected people disaggregated by sex, age and disability including those with vulnerability who report that they are informed in planning and distribution/services	80% of 224,000 people	24,500 people
PGI Output 1.1: Programmes and operations ensure safe and equitable provision of basic services, considering different needs based on gender and other diversity factors.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of people (reached through the operation) reporting satisfaction from received services disaggregated by sex, age and disability.	80% of 224,000 people	24,500 people
PGI Output 1.2: Programmes and operations prevent and respond to sexual- and gender-based violence and other forms of violence especially against children.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of staff and volunteers are trained to respond on SGBV/PSEA using SOPs and in child protection activities.	70	30% of 120 staff and volunteers
PGI Output 1.3: NS educational and advocacy programmes raise awareness on humanitarian challenges, cultivate humanitarian values and develop relevant interpersonal skills		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of educational and advocacy events conducted in national society addressing issues of exclusion and discrimination.	3	0
Progress towards outcomes		
<p>The IFRC Minimum Standards for protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) in emergencies is being well integrated into this operation. The ARCS PGI focal point is involved in supporting PGI approaches in the operation aiming to ensure equitable access to essential services, safeguarding the dignity, access, participation and safety of all people affected by the drought. The IFRC PGI manual was adopted and translated in Dari and Pashto for use by ARCS. The PGI focal point provides practical guidance on how to mainstream these principles in all sectors, taking into consideration gender, age, disability and other diversity factors. This includes limiting people's exposure to the risks of violence and abuse and ensuring that emergency operations "do no harm". The minimum standards also include</p>		

guidance on SGBV prevention and response and child protection, women, men, girls and boys in the target areas of drought response in Afghanistan. Integration of protection and community engagement approaches is progressing through all activities planned under this emergency operation.

PGI focal person in ARCS provides guidance to the operations team and supported the analysis of gender and protection needs of the affected population. The PGI team developed some indicators to observe the protection risk and gender analysis during the field visit while implementing the operations activities. When collecting data, the field teams also organized FGDs with males and females of different ages. Similarly, interviews and FGDs were also conducted with persons with disabilities.

	<h3 style="color: red;">Disaster Risk Reduction</h3> <p>People reached: N/A Male: N/A Female: N/A</p>	
DRR Outcome 1: Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of the targeted population increased the resilience level and prepared to respond disaster.	80	-
DRR Output 1.1: Communities take active steps to strengthen their preparedness for timely and effective response to disasters.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of ARCS staff/volunteers trained on DRR/CCA & EWS	200	-
% of people have communities risk knowledge.	80	-
# of sessions conducted in drought-affected communities.	50	-
Progress towards outcomes		
<p>The progress against the target under this outcome will be reported in the next operation update when the implementation of activities planned under this outcome is commenced. As noted above, during this reporting period, ARCS prioritized addressing immediate food needs using the loan from DREF and contributions received to date. Partners and donors are encouraged to provide support to the EA to enable holistically meeting the needs.</p>		

<h3 style="color: red;">Strategies for Implementation</h3>		
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		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
ARCS capacity building and organisational development initiatives organized	Yes	Planned
Output S1.1.4: National Societies have effective and motivated volunteers who are protected.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
National Societies have effective and motivated volunteers who are protected	Yes	Ongoing
Output S1.1.7: NS capacity to support community-based disaster risk reduction, response and preparedness is strengthened		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of national/provincial level trainings conducted for staff and volunteers of ARCS	10	3
Outcome S2.1: Effective and coordinated international disaster response is ensured		
Indicators:	Target	Actual

<i>Effective and coordinated international disaster response ensured</i>	Yes	Ongoing
Output S2.1.3: NS compliance with Principles and Rules for Humanitarian Assistance is improved		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>ARCS compliance with principles and rules for humanitarian assistance is improved</i>	Yes	Ongoing
Output S2.1.6: Coordinating role of the IFRC within the international humanitarian system is enhanced		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>ARCS engage with other humanitarian actors for coordinated humanitarian intervention</i>	Yes	Ongoing
Outcome S3.1: The IFRC secretariat, together with National Societies uses their unique position to influence decisions at local, national and international levels that affect the most vulnerable.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>IFRC and NS are visible, trusted, and effective advocates on humanitarian issues</i>	Yes	Ongoing
Output S3.1.1: IFRC and NS are visible, trusted and effective advocates on humanitarian issues		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i># of involvement within the humanitarian system on advocacy for the crisis</i>	TBC	0
Output S3.1.2: IFRC produces high-quality research and evaluation that informs advocacy, resource mobilization and programming.		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i># of evaluations conducted</i>	1	0
<i># of detailed assessment conducted</i>	1	0
<i># of paper/report published (for RCRC)</i>	4	0
Output S4.1.3: Financial resources are safeguarded; quality financial and administrative support is provided contributing to efficient operations and ensuring effective use of assets; timely quality financial reporting to stakeholders		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>ARCS compliance with financial procedures and reporting requirements improved</i>	Yes	Ongoing
Output S4.1.4: Staff security is prioritized in all IFRC activities		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
<i>Regular monitoring of safety and security of staff members</i>	Yes	Ongoing
Progress towards outcomes		
<p>As of reporting date, ARCS and IFRC have commenced implementation of some of the activities such as – a) regular monitoring of safety and security of response team members, b) engaging with other in-country humanitarian organizations for coordination and collaboration purposes, c) compliance with principles and rules for humanitarian assistance, and d) providing branch/provincial level training and orientation to response team members (ARCS staff and volunteers) in three branch offices – planned under this result. Implementation under this result will remain continuous during the entire period of this emergency operation and further progress updates will be reported through the next operation updates.</p>		

D. Financial Report

The total budget for this operation is CHF 7.5 million and is expected to change following the upcoming EA revision. Detailed income and expenditure as of 31 May 2021 are outlined in the attached financial report at the end of this update. [Click [here](#)]



Click here for:

- [Previous Appeals and updates](#)
- [Emergency Plan of Action \(EPoA\)](#)

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

In the Afghan Red Crescent Society

- Dr. Nilab Mobarez, acting President; phone: +93 781 57 00 85; email: drnilab.mobarez@gmail.com
- Abdulrahman Kalantary, director disaster management; phone: +93 792 22 21 82; email: abr99@gmail.com

In the IFRC Afghanistan Country Delegation, Kabul

- Necephor Mghendi, head of country delegation; phone: +60 12 224 67 96; email: necephor.mghendi@ifrc.org
- Ahmad Ali Rezaie, disaster risk management coordinator; phone +93 70 36 33 502; email: ahmadali.rezaie@ifrc.org

In the IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office, Kuala Lumpur

- Alexander Matheou, regional director; email: alexander.matheou@ifrc.org
- Gwendolyn Pang, acting deputy regional director; email: gwendolyn.pang@ifrc.org
- Jessica Letch, acting head of disaster, climate and crisis unit; email: jessica.letch@ifrc.org
- Nur Hayati Ahmad, operations coordinator; email: opscoord.southasia@ifrc.org
- Siokkun Jang, logistics manager; email: siokkun.jang@ifrc.org
- Antony Balmain, communications manager; email: antony.balmain@ifrc.org

In IFRC Geneva

- Christina Duschl, senior officer, operations coordination; email: christina.duschl@ifrc.org
- Eszter Matyeka, senior officer, DREF; email: eszter.matyeka@ifrc.org
- Karla Morizzo, senior officer, DREF; email: karla.morizzo@ifrc.org

For IFRC Resource Mobilization and Pledges support

- Alice Ho, partnership in emergencies coordinator; email: partnershipsEA.AP@ifrc.org

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

- Mursidi Unir, acting PMER manager; email: mursidi.unir@ifrc.org

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.

Emergency Appeal

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021/3-5	Operation	MDRAF007
Budget Timeframe	2021	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 17 Jun 2021

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRAF007 - Afghanistan - La Nina Drought

Operating Timeframe: 19 Mar 2021 to 31 Mar 2022; appeal launch date: 10 Apr 2021

I. Emergency Appeal Funding Requirements

Thematic Area Code	Requirements CHF
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction	87,000
AOF2 - Shelter	0
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	5,042,000
AOF4 - Health	128,000
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene	743,000
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion	77,000
AOF7 - Migration	0
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	533,000
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management	0
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners	136,000
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC	758,000
Total Funding Requirements	7,504,000
Donor Response* as per 17 Jun 2021	522,359
Appeal Coverage	6.96%

II. IFRC Operating Budget Implementation

Thematic Area Code	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction	500,000	479,080	20,920
AOF2 - Shelter	0	0	0
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	0	0	0
AOF4 - Health	0	0	0
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene	0	0	0
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion	0	0	0
AOF7 - Migration	0	0	0
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	0	0	0
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management	0	0	0
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners	0	0	0
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC	0	0	0
Grand Total	500,000	479,080	20,920

III. Operating Movement & Closing Balance per 2021/05

Opening Balance	0
Income (includes outstanding DREF Loan per IV.)	872,151
Expenditure	-479,080
Closing Balance	393,071
Deferred Income	0
Funds Available	393,071

IV. DREF Loan

* not included in Donor Response	Loan :	500,000	Reimbursed :	0	Outstanding :	500,000
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Emergency Appeal

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021/3-5	Operation	MDRAF007
Budget Timeframe	2021	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 17 Jun 2021

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRAF007 - Afghanistan - La Nina Drought

Operating Timeframe: 19 Mar 2021 to 31 Mar 2022; appeal launch date: 10 Apr 2021

V. Contributions by Donor and Other Income

Opening Balance							0
Income Type	Cash	InKind Goods	InKind Personnel	Other Income	TOTAL	Deferred Income	
DREF Allocations				500,000	500,000		
European Commission - DG ECHO	221,194				221,194		
Finnish Red Cross	109,963				109,963		
Japanese Red Cross Society	40,994				40,994		
Total Contributions and Other Income	372,151	0	0	500,000	872,151	0	
Total Income and Deferred Income					872,151	0	