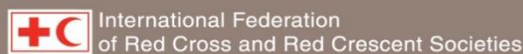


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## Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)

### Costa Rica: Population Movement



|  |                |   |   |
|--|----------------|---|---|
| <b>DREF Operation N° MDRCR020</b>  |                |   |   |
| <b>Preparedness DREF<br/>Date of issue:</b>  | 23 August 2021 | <b>Expected timeframe:</b>              | 3 months  |
|  |                | <b>Expected end date:</b>               | 30 November 2021  |
| <b>IFRC Category allocated to the of the disaster or crisis:</b> Yellow  |                |   |   |
| <b>DREF allocated:</b> 101,814 Swiss francs (CHF)  |                |   |   |
| <b>Total number of people affected:</b>  | 6,000          | <b>Number of people to be assisted:</b> | 3,000   |
| <b>Provinces affected:</b>   | 7              | <b>Provinces/Regions targeted:</b>      | 5 provinces: Puntarenas, Limon, Guanacaste, Alajuela, Heredia |
| <b>Operating National Society presence:</b><br>The Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC) has 120 auxiliary committees (branches), 1,147 permanent staff members and approximately 6,000 volunteers across the country in nine regional offices and three National Headquarters: Administrative, Operational and Metropolitan Centre.  |                |   |   |
| <b>Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation:</b><br>The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Americas Regional Office (ARO) and its Country Cluster Delegation (CCD) for Central America.  |                |   |   |
| <b>Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation:</b><br>National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Care (CNE), 911 Emergency System, Firefighters Brigade, Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Transportation (MOPT), Traffic Police, National Meteorology Institute (INM), Costa Rican Energy Institute (ICE), Costa Rican Aqueduct and Sewerage Institute (AyA), Municipal Emergency Committees (CME), General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME), Migration Police. |                |   |   |

[<Click here for the budget and here for the contact information.>](#)

## A. Situation analysis

### Description of the disaster

In 2021, the number of migrants crossing the Darien Gap has increased, which has alarmed institutions and organizations that provide humanitarian assistance in the field. According to records from Panama's National Migration Service (SNM), 45,150 migrants (33,077 adults and 12,973 children) have arrived in Panama from Colombia between January and July 2021 after crossing the Darien jungle. This is the highest number seen in the last six years (30,065 in 2016), also exceeding the number of migrants recorded in 2019 by almost 42 percent (22,102).

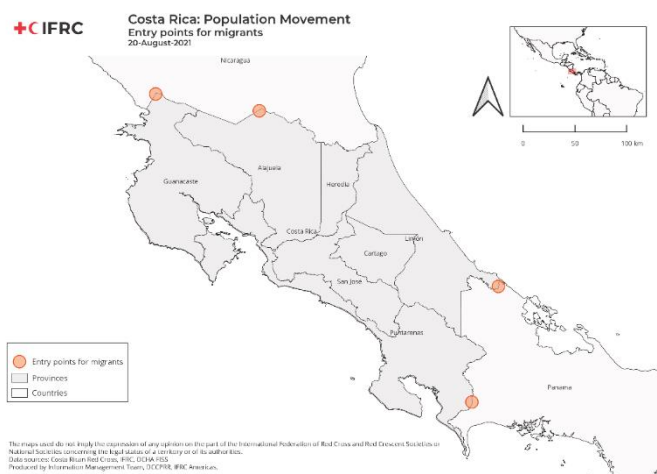
Migrants continue to arrive in Darién, most of them heading to North America, facing all kinds of risks during their journeys across the Darién jungle and along the migration route in Central America and Mexico. Some of the main factors driving increased migration flows include the socio-political and economic conditions in the migrants' countries of origin, violence, unemployment, racism, unequal opportunities, increased poverty, and extreme weather conditions.

Since 2016, Costa Rica has become a frequent route of passage for Haitians, Cubans, Venezuelans, and migrants from other countries. Their numbers have been increasing in recent months as borders in the southern cone have begun to open after being closed due to the pandemic.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Costa Rican government has temporarily restricted the entry of foreign nationals classified as non-residents. This has also affected the humanitarian bridge that had allowed them to cross the country in "transit". These actions are based on Executive Decree 42238-MGP-S of 17 March 2020 and 30 October 2020, which forbids the entry of foreign nationals planning to cross the country from north to south and vice versa except for humanitarian reasons, as authorized by the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME) and after coordinating with the relevant authorities in Panama and Nicaragua.



Migrants entering through the Paso Canoas border in southern Costa Rica. August 2021. Source: [Nacion](#)



Despite the restrictions in force and the DGME's routine border controls, a significant number of people manage to slip past and enter irregularly to continue their way.

In the last five years, the country has experienced a significant increase in the number of people applying for refugee status, mainly from Nicaragua and Venezuela. In 2020, Costa Rica took in 121,983 persons of concern, of whom 9,613 are refugees and 89,770 are persons applying for and waiting to be granted refugee status.

In addition, there is a major social crisis in neighbouring Nicaragua that has been ongoing since May 2018. The political situation is expected to deteriorate further given the upcoming presidential elections in Nicaragua in November 2021.

It should be noted that Costa Rica has been experiencing various migration flows from Nicaragua and other Central American countries since the 1980s due to the armed conflicts in the region, and migration from Nicaragua increased in the 1990s because of the economic crisis in that country. According to the census conducted by the National Institute of Census and Statistics, 385,899 immigrants were living in the country by 2011, accounting for 9 per cent of the total population. Most immigrants continue to be from Nicaragua (more than 287,000), accounting for 74.6 per cent of the total number of resident immigrants. These numbers include all migrants irrespective of their migratory status, which are counted by the census. Another segment (some 100,000 individuals) is made up of the floating migrants who come to Costa Rica to work along border areas. Their stay is based on agricultural cycles and do not remain in the country permanently and are therefore not counted in censuses; however, they do need to be considered when analysing migration flows from Nicaragua.

## Summary of the current response

### Overview of National Society Response Actions

- The CRRC is currently monitoring the issue both nationally and internationally to identify the required actions and provide the most appropriate response.
- National Directorates and Headquarters have been informed of the situation that may potentially arise to have them commence a requirement analysis.

### Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Actions in country

The National Society has been coordinating its actions with the IFRC Regional Office's Disaster and Crisis Prevention Department.

The National Society, through the Disaster Management Unit, maintains constant communication with the Movement supporting the situation. The IFRC has a regional office for volunteering and youth in Costa Rica, so there is an internal coordination mechanism.

The IFRC has held and led at least four coordination meetings with the different National Societies involved in this response in the last month (Colombian Red Cross, Red Cross Society of Panama, Costa Rican Red Cross, Honduran Red Cross, Guatemalan Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross). The same meetings are held on a weekly basis, as well open communication and coordination channels are maintained with operations to share information relevant to the regional context of extracontinental and other flows in the region from Chile to Guatemala. Also, following the earthquake in Haiti, Restoring Family Links (RFL) and information services have been increased along the route.

The ICRC, since the onset of the emergency, has supported the Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC) through:

- The provision of RFL services through call points.

### Overview of other actors' actions in country

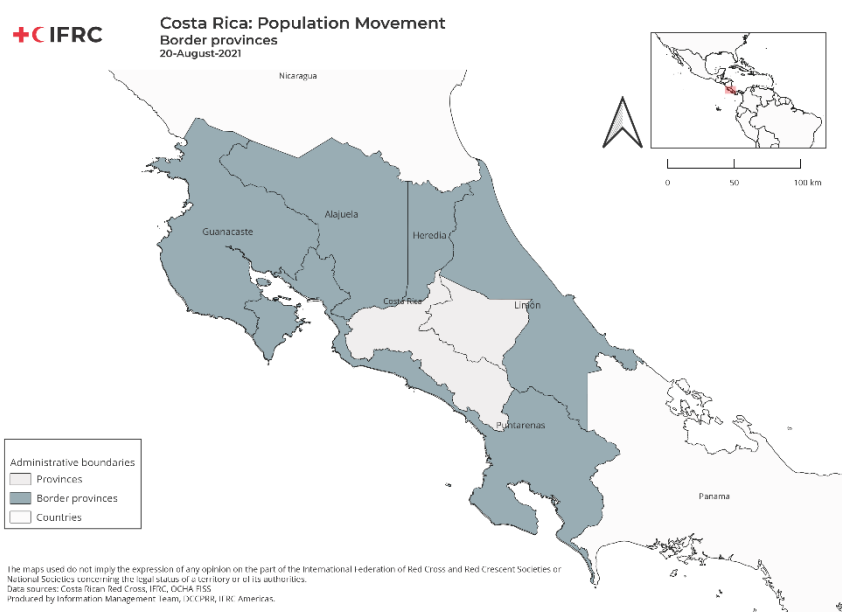
- There is no information yet on actions by government institutions.
- IOM Costa Rica is currently implementing human security projects for migrants, labour migration, linkages with the diaspora, migration and development, and protection and assistance to vulnerable migrants.
- UNHCR's operations in Costa Rica focus on the displacement caused by conditions in northern Central America, Nicaragua and Venezuela. UNHCR also helps to strengthen the government's capacity to determine refugee status through technical cooperation and dedicated staff for the Refugee Unit, in addition to supporting government child protection and sexual and gender violence prevention and response initiatives.

## Needs analysis, targeting, scenario planning and risk assessment.

### Needs analysis

It is important to consider that the Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC) is dealing with two migration modalities:

1. Transit migration: the migrants who use Costa Rica as a transit country come from several countries, which has caused several challenges over time:
  - Language barrier: this was mitigated through the translators hired by the DGME.



- Cultural barrier: it is necessary to train Migrant Care Centre staff to deal with the different cultures they are encountering. This will help to reduce situations that may be considered offensive, or even enable them to detect situations that they would not have been able to recognize otherwise.
  - Religious barrier: it is important for migrants to have places in which to worship; therefore, staff must be made aware of the different religious practices so they can provide these spaces and avoid incurring in any type of disrespect or other issues.
  - The short time spent in the country: this means that activities or projects cannot be implemented effectively, which is a significant challenge.
  - Human trafficking: all migration flows are vulnerable to human trafficking in all its manifestations, so it is important to recognize the signs in order to properly protect all migrants.
2. Migration with Costa Rica as a destination country: several countries<sup>1</sup> (e.g., Colombia, Venezuela, El Salvador and Nicaragua, which according to the DGME are the most representative in terms of number of migrants) currently see Costa Rica as a destination. In this case, the challenge lies in the country's capacity to absorb this migrant population into its labour, education and social spheres. Specifically, the challenge is to find ways to minimize the impact to the country as much as possible, so the approach used by state structures and different service providers in the country needs to be comprehensive.

### **Health**

Some of the problems caused by migration flows along the different borders are public health issues - currently, mainly due to COVID-19. While everyone is at risk of contracting the virus, migrants are among the most vulnerable, often travelling in conditions with limited or no access to hygiene and sanitation facilities, soap or other means to protect themselves. Under these conditions, the risk of poor outcomes is high.

To mitigate and prevent these situations, the CRRC proposes providing migrant groups with relevant information and a PPE kit that offers the knowledge and tools to minimize risks.

### **Water, sanitation and hygiene**

Women and men experience migration differently; furthermore, in emergency contexts, such as the one caused by COVID-19, men and women face different challenges that can put migrant women and girls in situations of greater vulnerability.

The CRRC therefore wants to focus on menstruating women, an important group of the migrant population, and provide them with a hygiene kit that offers the appropriate supplies.

### **Migration**

Migrants travelling through Costa Rica during their migration journey come from different countries and face barriers such as the ones mentioned before. This makes it easy for families to become separated during the trip or lose contact with relatives back home.

The CRRC is in constant coordination with the ICRC and IFRC to provide Restoring Family Links (RFL) services to migrants. This will help them re-establish contact with loved ones, which in turn will improve their psychosocial situation. They will also be assisted with relevant information that will guide them across the country, such as security measures, etc. These information products have been developed as a Movement with the approval of the different components and National Societies in the region.

This is a relatively new area for the National Society, so it will be necessary to strengthen the staff and volunteers' knowledge regarding migration and the challenges it entails.

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<sup>1</sup> At least 35, according to [Panama's National Migration Service](#).

## Targeting

The conditions to temporarily receive people entering as part of mixed migration flows are improved, and adequate referral of the most vulnerable cases in need of international protection is ensured.

- Provide pre-hospital care and humanitarian assistance in line with the minimum standards of humanitarian assistance, in addition to creating a permanent structure for handling migration issues within CRRC.
- Improve effective access to international protection and referral processes to provide services for migrants and refugees entering as part of mixed migration flows through Costa Rican borders

### Estimated disaggregated data for population targeted.

The aim is to assist 3,000 migrants on their journey across the country, prioritizing:

- Children and adolescents, including unaccompanied and separated minors who require interventions to ensure their rights and family reunification.
- Elderly adults who are vulnerable because of their age or other external factors.
- People with disabilities.
- Women who are menstruating, pregnant, and women at risk of sexual exploitation, human trafficking and migrant smuggling.
- Families with children under two years of age.
- Single-parent families.

| Category                       | Estimated % of target group | % Female | % Male |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|--------|
| Young Children (under 5 years) | 23%                         | 8.28%    | 14.7%  |
| Children (5-17 yrs.)           | 3%                          | 1%       | 2%     |
| Adults (18-49 yrs.)            | 73.7%                       | 36%      | 37.7%  |
| Elderly (>50 yrs.)             | 0.3%                        | 0.1%     | 0.2%   |

\*Data from Red Cross Society of Panama

## Scenario planning

Because of conditions worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic, the measures taken at the border level (which have become more flexible) and the constant flow of migrants, the following scenarios are proposed to enable assisting populations such as: migrants, refugees, people in need of protection, minors (accompanied or separated) and pregnant women:

### Scenario 1

According to DGME, the flow of migrants is as usual; however, monitoring of the situation in Nicaragua and Panama and complementary information from IFRC indicate an increase in migration flows in those countries.

### Trigger

Panama (Red Cross Society of Panama) takes action because of the presence of migration flows at its borders through the current DREF operation [MDRPA015](#) (Information sources: Red Cross Society of Panama and IFRC) and/or a social crisis ensues in Nicaragua.

### Actions to be conducted:

1. Field assessments.
2. Meetings with institutions and other NGOs:
  - a. National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Care (CNE).
  - b. General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs.
  - c. Law enforcement.
  - d. Ministries of Health.

- e. IOM.
  - f. UNHCR.
  - g. Others.
3. Establish an Alert Level for auxiliary committees on the country's northern and southern borders.
  4. Increase the Alert Level for auxiliary committees at the country's northern and southern borders.
  5. Activate the Restoring Family Links (RFL) programme
  6. Deliver talks and trainings for staff working with migrants.
  7. Purchase supplies to assemble migrant assistance kits.
  8. Preposition PPE kits for migrants (3,000).
  9. Preposition hygiene kits for female migrants (600).
  10. Purchase and distribute PPE to staff and volunteers.
  11. Design and print informational materials for migrants.

### **Scenario 2:**

#### **Trigger**

This trigger could be activated by any of the following situations:

- The flow of migrants increases to more than 400 per day.
- Migrant Care Centre capacity is above 75 per cent.
- An express request for help from the government or its institutions.
- Trigger 2 conditions are maintained for more than one month.

#### **Actions to be conducted:**

1. Request funds for response (DREF/Appeal)
2. Increase the Alert Level for auxiliary committees at the country's northern and southern borders.
3. Implement Restoring Family Links (RFL) actions.
4. Distribute PPE kits for migrants.
5. Distribute hygiene kits for female migrants.
6. Distribute informational materials for migrants.

Considering the above, the following phases are proposed for Costa Rican Red Cross actions:

| Scenario 1  | Humanitarian Consequence  | Potential Response   |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant flow of migrants entering Panama from the south and heading to the northern border is detected.</li> <li>• A social crisis is underway in Nicaragua stemming from the current political situation, which may cause migration to Costa Rica.</li> <li>• Pressure builds up at the border, either in Nicaragua or Panama, and more than 200 migrants are entering per day.</li> <li>• There is much uncertainty among the Nicaraguan population due to the impact that could be caused by political conditions, which in turn could trigger significant migration to Costa Rica.</li> <li>• There is a flow of migrants from outside the region and the continent entering through the southern border (Panama), who, given the usual</li> </ul> | <p>Alert humanitarian services to prevent them from collapsing and enable them to provide an adequate response.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Field assessments.</li> <li>2. Meetings with institutions and other NGOs</li> <li>3. Establish Alert Level for auxiliary committees at the country's northern and southern borders.</li> </ol> |

| <p>mechanics, are expected to request entry to Costa Rica at any time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some 2,000 migrants are expected to enter legally - and many illegally - via the northern and southern borders, who will halt their normal transit across the country, i.e., they will remain in a one overcrowded location.</li> </ul>  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Scenario 2   | Humanitarian Consequence   | Potential Response  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pressure builds up at the border, either in Nicaragua or Panama, and more than 200 migrants are entering per day.</li> <li>There is much uncertainty among the Nicaraguan population due to the impact that could be caused by political conditions, which in turn could trigger significant migration to Costa Rica.</li> <li>There is a flow of migrants from outside the region and the continent entering through the southern border (Panama), who, given the usual mechanics, are expected to request entry to Costa Rican soil at any time.</li> <li>Some 2,000 migrants are expected to enter legally - and many illegally - via the northern and southern borders, who will halt their normal transit across the country, i.e., they will remain in a one overcrowded location.</li> </ul> | <p>Have the necessary supplies to provide an adequate response to the most vulnerable migrants</p>                                       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the Alert Level for auxiliary committees at the country's northern and southern borders.</li> <li>Activate the Restoring Family Links (RFL) programme</li> <li>Deliver talks and trainings for staff working with migrants.</li> <li>Purchase supplies to assemble migrant assistance kits.</li> <li>Preposition PPE kits for migrants (3,000)</li> <li>Preposition hygiene kits for female migrants (600)</li> <li>Purchase and distribute PPE to staff and volunteers</li> <li>Design and print informational materials for migrants</li> </ol> |
| Scenario 3   | Humanitarian Consequence   | Potential Response  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panama grants transit to migrants stranded in the country, who begin to apply pressure along Costa Rican borders. They enter the country through formal border points, but also through informal points given the porous nature of the borders. Detection becomes difficult under these circumstances.</li> <li>Significant migration of Nicaraguan nationals is triggered by the uncertainty stemming from the political situation.</li> <li>More than 3,500 people from Nicaragua and from outside the region and the continent apply for entry to Costa Rica.</li> <li>People enter illegally through both the northern and southern borders of the country.</li> </ul>  | <p>Take the necessary steps to increase National Society responsiveness and improve care to migrants, as auxiliaries to authorities.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request DREF funds for response</li> <li>Increase the Alert Level for auxiliary committees at the country's northern and southern borders.</li> <li>Implement Restoring Family Links (RFL) actions</li> <li>Distribute PPE kits for migrants</li> <li>Distribute hygiene kits for female migrants</li> <li>Distribute informational materials for migrants</li> </ol>  |

## Operation Risk Assessment

Based on the [COVID-19 Contingency Plan](#) prepared by the RCCS, the following risks are considered:

| THREAT                                       | RISKS  |
|--|--|
| Pandemics                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortage of water and sanitation and disinfection products in border areas.</li> <li>• Increase in morbidity and mortality due to lack of care capacity in hospital centres.</li> <li>• Shortage of PPE to deal with and serve migrants in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Staff exposure to illnesses.</li> <li>• Social tension and discrimination.</li> <li>• Dead body management.</li> <li>• Non-compliance with health measures.</li> </ul>   |
| Increased migration flows                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown number of migrants entering the country.</li> <li>• Massive and uncontrolled migration flow.</li> <li>• Lack of health controls because of unawareness regarding migrants' health.</li> <li>• Lack of PCR tests to perform COVID-19 swabs.</li> <li>• Mass deaths on site.</li> <li>• Social panic due to xenophobia.</li> <li>• Non-admittance of migrants to hospitals due to saturation of installed capacity.</li> <li>• No support from medical personnel in migrant care centres to perform COVID-19 swab tests.</li> </ul> |
| Hurricane season                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased rainfall in border areas and host communities.</li> <li>• Floods that require opening collective centres to house communities.</li> <li>• Reduction or suspension of public services due to flooding.</li> <li>• Significant impact in the country that causes a major emergency.</li> </ul>  |
| Regional/Global social and political context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-political instability in Nicaragua.</li> <li>• Socio-political instability in Afghanistan.</li> <li>• Earthquake in Haiti.</li> </ul>   |

## B. Operational strategy

### Overall Operational objective

To ensure humanitarian assistance for at least 3,000 migrants in need and housed in Temporary Migrant Care Centres, or elsewhere, through dissemination of information on humanitarian assistance for migrants and distribution of different kits (food, hygiene, among others) as required. Through its auxiliary committees at the northern and southern borders, enhance the National Society's capacity to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in the country and promote the restoring of family links.

Costa Rican Red Cross will implement preparedness and response actions for emergencies or disasters that may affect the country, to assist the most vulnerable populations in the country.

Likewise, it will act as an auxiliary to government ministries and institutions in responding to incidents related to infections involving influenza-type illnesses (AH1N1, SARS COVID-19, others).

Per its humanitarian mandate, it will consider measures to include the migrant population in preparedness and response to COVID-19 regardless of their legal status, although also considering the resources available to do so and without exceeding the installed capacity within the National Society.

### Human Resources

Costa Rican Red Cross has a technical multidisciplinary team that will ensure the implementation of the activities:

- Project staff
- Technical staff
- Administrative - accounting personnel in Administrative Headquarters.
- Personnel from the Risk Management and Disaster Response Directorate (DINAGER) and respective departments.

- Procurement department personnel (purchasing, warehousing, fleet).
- Press department staff.
- IT department staff.
- Volunteer staff from affected regions.

Process oversight falls to the Risk Management Directorate (with support from General Management) and the institutional administrative structure in all its departments. Headquarters also has a monitoring team tasked with tracking financial reports and ensuring the quality of the intermediate outputs and final reports submitted.

### **Logistics and supply chain**

The operation expects to procure materials both nationally and internationally, as local markets do not carry the products required for the operation.

- CRRC has a procurement department through which all supplies and equipment required by committees at the national level are purchased, as well as a central warehouse. Purchasing procedures are endorsed by the government as many processes use funds allocated by the State, requiring management to adopt these procedures for all purchases.
- The Global Logistics Unit will provide support to the National Society and assist with quality control of the purchases made according to the authorization levels required in purchasing procedures.

### **Communications**

CRRC has an institutional Communications Department that maintains lines and strategies, both inside and outside the organization, to ensure visibility as well as appropriate support to institutional activities during emergency response and recovery phases.

Communications objectives based on target audience:

1. External Communications. A number of informational outputs will be implemented to maintain a line of transparent and objective information on what Red Cross is doing to assist those affected by emergencies, aimed at the general population and especially beneficiaries, for example, via social networks, interviews, bulletins.
2. Documentation. Providing evidence of support processes in emergency situations fosters credibility with donors and the general population, e.g., archives of published news stories, photo bank, beneficiary stories.

### **Information technology (IT)**

CRRC has an IT department that supports the National Society's administrative and operational functions. It will also provide support for all data management tools, such as ODK or Microsoft Forms, or any other service as required.

### **Security**

The National Society has a Security Office responsible for analysing risks and generating guidelines. These guidelines are always followed during operations, and potential scenarios are analysed to minimize risks.

### **Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER)**

CRRC will have a monitoring team made up of personnel from the Risk Management Department. This operation will issue one intermediate progress report and one final report at the end of the operation.

### **Administration and Finance**

The Financial-Accounting Department has trained personnel available to provide the necessary support to the work areas included in the Plan of Action.

The Financial-Accounting Department's strategy focuses on:

- Having department personnel available to work on specific aspects of the operation.

- Complying with the issuance of reports and constant monitoring of compliance with and correct use of budget items.
- Informing the various work area coordinators about optimization and proper use of resources allocated to the Plan of Action.











## Budget

See Annex attached.

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

**In the Costa Rica Red Cross:**

- Jorge Mario Herrera Venegas, National Society President, [jorge.herrera@cuzroja.or.cr](mailto:jorge.herrera@cuzroja.or.cr);
- Jim Batres Rodríguez, Risk Management Director, [jim.batres@cuzroja.or.cr](mailto:jim.batres@cuzroja.or.cr); +506 88433000

**In the IFRC Americas Region**

- Head of Central America Country Cluster Delegation: Nelson Aly, [nelson.alyrodriguez@ifrc.org](mailto:nelson.alyrodriguez@ifrc.org)
- Head of Disaster and Crisis Department: Roger Alonso, [roger.morgui@ifrc.org](mailto:roger.morgui@ifrc.org)
- Continental Operations Manager: Felipe del Cid, [felipe.delcid@ifrc.org](mailto:felipe.delcid@ifrc.org)
- Head of Partnerships and Resource Development: Sandra Romero, [sandra.romero@ifrc.org](mailto:sandra.romero@ifrc.org)
- Communications Manager: Susana Arroyo, [susana.arroyo@ifrc.org](mailto:susana.arroyo@ifrc.org)
- Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting Manager: María Larios, [maria.larios@ifrc.org](mailto:maria.larios@ifrc.org)
- Regional Logistics Coordinator: Mauricio Bustamante, [mauricio.bustamante@ifrc.org](mailto:mauricio.bustamante@ifrc.org)

**In IFRC Geneva**

- DREF Senior Officer: Eszter Matyeka, [eszter.matyeka@ifrc.org](mailto:eszter.matyeka@ifrc.org)
- Operations Coordination Senior Officer: Antoine Belair, [antoine.belair@ifrc.org](mailto:antoine.belair@ifrc.org)

## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. 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

# DREF OPERATION

MDRCR020 - Costa Rica - Population Movement

23/08/2021

## Budget by Resource

| Budget Group                       | Budget         |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Travel                             | 3,000          |
| Information & Public Relations     | 2,000          |
| Communications                     | 600            |
| Financial Charges                  | 300            |
| <b>General Expenditure</b>         | <b>5,900</b>   |
| Cash Transfers National Societies  | 89,700         |
| <b>Contributions and Transfers</b> | <b>89,700</b>  |
| DIRECT COSTS                       | 95,600         |
| INDIRECT COSTS                     | 6,214          |
| <b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>                | <b>101,814</b> |

## Budget by Area of Intervention

|              |  |                |
|--------------|--|----------------|
| AOF1         | Disaster Risk Reduction                        |                |
| AOF2         | Shelter  |                |
| AOF3         | Livelihoods and Basic Needs                    |                |
| AOF4         | Health   | 31,418         |
| AOF5         | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene                  | 19,703         |
| AOF6         | Protection, Gender and Inclusion               |                |
| AOF7         | Migration                                      | 11,609         |
| SFI1         | Strengthen National Societies                  | 32,802         |
| SFI2         | Effective International Disaster Management    | 6,284          |
| SFI3         | Influence others as leading strategic partners |                |
| SFI4         | Ensure a strong IFRC                           |                |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |  | <b>101,814</b> |

