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## DREF Operation Update

### Lao People's Democratic Republic: Floods

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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#### DREF operation n° MDRLA003

#### Glide n° [FL-2013-000101-LAO](#)

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

**Summary:** CHF 292,168 has been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to 10,000 beneficiaries (2,000 families).

With the onset of this year's monsoon season in June, the river Nam Xan rose rapidly, eventually overflowing its banks in various places, causing widespread flooding and flash floods in the northern and central provinces of Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR).

It was estimated that over 350,000 people have been affected by floods throughout the country and over 20 people lost their lives. Lao Red Cross (LRC) along with in-country partners and government officials worked for the affected people from the onset of the disaster by mobilizing its grass roots volunteers and staff members as well as in-country relief stocks.

After the approval of the DREF, initial steps have been taken to start the implementation focusing on the process of in-country procurement of relief goods.

In order to assist the National Society in the implementation process, a staff on loan from Thai Red Cross is expected to be deployed as of early November. The staff on loan would be embedded into the Lao Red Cross Disaster Management Division to provide support to the implementation of the Plan of Action, of which the draft is to be finalised. This deployment will also contribute to the strengthening of regional response capacity and further build peer learning/exchange opportunities, and further strengthen the partnership between the Thai and Lao Red Cross societies.

The focus of this DREF operation is in the Salavan and Champasak provinces situated in the southern



Damages caused by floods in Okanoi village, Kongsedone district Salavan province.  
Photo credit: French Red Cross

part of the country. This operation is expected to be implemented over six months, and will therefore be completed by March 2014. The Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by June 2014).

## The situation

Unusually heavy monsoon rains, exacerbated by tropical storms, have caused widespread flooding in more than 60 per cent of the Lao PDR from late June through August. The monsoon rains continued since, and the country endured almost continuous heavy rainfall for some ten weeks. The situation was also exacerbated by passing typhoons Jebi and Monghut, which brought further rainfall to the region.

On 16-19 September, a tropical depression crossed over Lao PDR bringing prolonged heavy rainfall to four districts in the south which suffered the worst impact of the floods. It is recorded as the worst flooding in the south of the country in the last 35 years. On 30 September, Typhoon Wutip hit Viet Nam and moved in over central Lao PDR.

It was estimated that over 350,000 people were affected by floods throughout the country. The floods also caused massive damage to transport, infrastructure, education and agriculture. Over 15,000 hectares of rice fields were damaged and thousands of livestock killed. Seven bridges and nearly 1,200km of roads were damaged in addition to irrigation systems, latrines, wells and reservoirs. More than 60 schools have reported to be damaged, with the loss of equipment and books.



Flood water has started to recede in Salavan province. A villager pointing to the level that flood waters reached at the end of September. Photo credit: French Red Cross

Of the four affected southern provinces of Champasak, Salavan, Xekong and Attapeu, the worst impact is recorded in **Salavan** province with the districts of Khongsedon and Vapi being worst hit; and in **Champasak** province where the districts of Soukhouma, Bachieng, Pathoumphone, Pakse, Phonthong, Sansomboun and Mounlapok are worst hit.

More than 100,000 people were affected with two people reported dead and one missing.

The flood waters in affected provinces have receded and the situation is expected to continue improving.

The Government of Lao PDR assisted in the mobilisation of assistance to the most affected population, seeking support of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN released 223 tonnes of rice to support 5,000 families. According to government estimates, about 50,000 people need emergency food and non-food assistance in the coming months.

In response to the approval of DREF operation, the Lao Red Cross (LRC), with support of French Red Cross, mobilized its response trained staff and volunteers to conduct an initial assessment. Findings of the Damage and Needs Assessment (DANA) mission report, conducted in Champasak and Salavan provinces, recommend the following necessary actions to be taken during and after implementation of the relief operation in-depth thematic assessments in the most affected and vulnerable villages (with low coping capacity) for recovery regarding:

- food security: rice for food and rice seeds
- health: epidemics surveillance and hygiene promotion
- infrastructures: irrigation system, water system and school repairs

Currently, LRC is finalising the beneficiary identification. They have collected information about the size of the affected families and information about villages was collected through the DANA report.

LRC, in coordination with the respective authorities and partners, is finalising a detailed plan of action.

The leadership of LRC has formed a committee to implement the DREF operation with the support of in-country Red Cross Red Crescent partners. This committee is entirely responsible in overseeing the implementation of the DREF operation.

## Coordination and partnerships

A regular meeting of National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC) has been scheduled next week where LRC will brief a government official about the DREF operation.

The local government in **Champasak province** mobilized staff and volunteers to evacuate the people to safe areas. They also organized donations (instant food, noodles, canned fish and medical kits) from the private sector and drinking water for the affected people (four districts of Soukhuma, Outhomphone, Munlapamok, Sanasomboun). In addition, the provincial governor issued a decree for compulsory contribution from Civil Servant staff (20,000 kips per person).

In Soukhuma district, World Vision in collaboration with LRC and local authorities, responded to immediate needs. World Vision is distributing three packs of noodles per person, three x 1 litre bottles of water, two cans of tuna per day per person and three packs of candles per family. Three women with pregnancy complications were escorted to district and provincial health facilities

The Provincial Disaster Management Committee (PDMC) confirms that in addition to physical crop damage, flooding interrupted the seed formation in rice crops, so yields are likely to be badly affected. This will affect harvests and household food stocks, undermining food security in the coming months

In **Salavan province**, district authorities set up a special committee to follow up on the situation and to support the affected villages. The committee collects and shares information and updates on the flood situation, impact, needs and gaps with PDMC and humanitarian and donor community. The district authorities are mobilizing both governmental and private sectors to get additional funds. LRC district branch continues to coordinate closely with district authorities.

According to the vice district governor, the Government of Salavan province has limited resources to address the needs, and thus has requested the international communities and NGOs to help the local authorities in recovery stage and provide additional assistance.

The LRC formed a committee to support the relief operation, of which the health, disaster management and communication departments are part of the implementation. In addition, with support from the French Red Cross, which is based in Lao PDR, the LRC is regularly communicating and coordinating with other partners in-country as well as IFRC Southeast Asia regional delegation (SEARD).

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

From 26 September to 1 October 2013 a joint Lao and French Red Cross damage and need assessment mission was carried in Champasak and Salavan provinces. The main objective was to assess impact of the floods in the target areas; collect primary and secondary data; and assess which action has been taken and determine next steps. The assessment verified the coping mechanisms of the affected population and made recommendations for Red Cross' immediate response and longer term recovery response.

The joint assessment team collected information through direct field observations, semi-structured interviews (DANA questionnaire), focus group discussions and secondary data collection. A full report on the assessment will be produced by the LRC, but preliminary findings indicate that in-depth thematic assessments are necessary in the most affected and vulnerable villages (with low coping capacity) for recovery purpose on:

- food security: distribution of rice for food and rice seeds
- health: an epidemics surveillance and hygiene promotion
- infrastructures: improving of the irrigation system, water system and school repairs.

LRC is in a process of finalising the plan of action integrating the findings from the DANA mission findings. Between 150-200 volunteers are currently mobilized mainly in Salavan and Champasak provinces to conduct

detailed assessments. Mobilised volunteers are being covered by the Red Cross Red Crescent standard global insurance policy.

The procurement of food and non-food items is underway. IEC materials on hygiene promotion, flood preparedness and prevention have been identified for reproduction/reprint. One staff member will be travelling from SEARD in early November, along with selected staff on loan from the Thai Red Cross to support and speed up in-country coordination and implementation process.

## Progress towards outcomes

### Relief distributions (food)

**Outcome:** The immediate needs of 2,000 families (10,000 beneficiaries) are met through distribution of essential food items.

**Outputs and activities planned: Output (expected results):** 10,000 beneficiaries are provided with essential food items (rice).

**Activities planned:**

- Conduct beneficiary identification.
- Develop a strategy to reach the beneficiaries and a registration system to deliver intended assistance.
- Procure 150 tonnes of rice.
- Transport relief goods to affected villages.
- Identify and prepare distribution points and plan.
- Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.
- Monitor and collect beneficiary feedback.

**Progress and impacts:** The DANA has been completed in early October. The consultation process with PDMC and other partners is progressing well regarding finalization of beneficiary lists. Procurement process for rice is underway.

The table below will give a brief description of DREF coverage for 10,000 beneficiaries from Salavan and Champasak provinces:

Target province	Relief item per beneficiary	Relief item per family	Total beneficiaries
Champasak	15 kg of rice	6 soaps 2 kg of detergent 2 mosquito nets	4,000 beneficiaries (800 families)
Salavan			6,000 beneficiaries (1,200 families)
<b>TOTAL</b>	150 tons of rice	12,000 soaps 4 MT of detergent 4,000 mosquito nets	10,000 beneficiaries (2,000 families)

**Challenges:** Lack of access to the affected areas delayed the damage and needs assessment. The limited capacity of the LRC has further hampered relief activities of the national societies. Also, LRC has limited trained human resources which are stretched to the limit in times such as this.

### Health and hygiene promotion

**Outcome:** The immediate threat to the health status and the risk of waterborne and water-related disease for 2,000 families (10,000 beneficiaries) in the affected areas are reduced through the provision of basic sanitation, hygiene promotion and non-food items.

**Outputs (expected results):**

- 2,000 families are provided with basic hygienic items (soap and detergent) and mosquito nets, and have increased awareness of the prevention of water and mosquito-borne diseases.
- Waterborne and water-related diseases are prevented through awareness campaigns,

sensitization sessions and provision of basic hygiene items.

**Activities planned:**

- Work closely with the relief team and most affected beneficiaries identified for assistance
- Procure 4,000 mosquito nets, 12,000 soaps and four tonnes of detergent.
- Re-print existing awareness raising materials (Ministry of Health and ECV materials) for mosquito-borne diseases, waterborne diseases and hygiene promotion
- Mobilize four health teams to conduct 40 visits/awareness raising/sensitization sessions (two per village, for an estimated target 20 villages)
- Conduct awareness-raising sessions for Red Cross volunteers and beneficiaries on the prevention of mosquito-borne diseases (combined with sessions on waterborne diseases - two times: once during distribution, and once after distribution to evaluate the impact)
- Conduct training/information programmes for Red Cross volunteers and beneficiaries, particularly in regional hygiene promotion and waterborne diseases (combined with mosquito-borne diseases)

**Progress and impacts:** The consultation with NDMC and other partners continues to avoid potential overlaps. Procurement process for soap and detergents is underway. Process of identification of beneficiaries has been initiated.

**Challenges:** Access in the field is one of the challenges due to damaged roads and bridges – plus the distance from Vientiane to two provinces is approximately 760 km limiting support from headquarters to the branches.

### Capacity Building-Disaster Risks Reduction

**Outcome:** LRC capacities in preparedness for response and response are further strengthened and the communities' awareness on flood preparedness and prevention is raised.

**Outputs and activities planned: Outputs (expected results):** Lao Red Cross capacities are further strengthened through identification of key lessons learnt from this intervention

**Activities planned:**

- Re-print existing awareness rising materials for flood preparedness and prevention.<sup>1</sup>
- Organize a *lessons learnt* workshop with participation of key LRC staff and volunteers from the branches to identify what has worked and what needs to be improved and how.

**Progress and impacts:** The IEC materials on hygiene promotion and flood preparedness and prevention have already been identified for reproduction. The process to identify suppliers and tendering process is underway. Reprinted materials will enhance the affected areas capacity to mitigate the potentials threats and cope with the impact of future disasters. A lesson learnt workshop will be organized at the end of operation with involvement of selected beneficiaries as well as staff and volunteers members.

**Challenges:** The emergency operation room in LRC has to be strengthened. LRC has very limited number of trained human resources to support implementation of such operations.

### Logistics

All relief items are available in-country and will be procured locally following IFRC procurement standards and quality control. Following IFRC procurement procedures, conduct competitive procurement process to procure all items, ensuring necessary standards and prices are met. IFRC Southeast Asia regional office and French Red Cross support LRC in-country during the procurement process, ensuring efficiency, transparency and best value for money is obtained.

LRC is in the last stage of finalization of documents for tendering procedure for food and non-food items. The learning from 2011 DREF operation helped LRC to produce and finalize the tender documents. Once the beneficiary/village selections are completed the distribution counters will be identified and that information will further be communicated to targeted beneficiaries through good and clear beneficiary communication before the distribution. LRC will follow the direct distribution strategy.

<sup>1</sup> This activity will be done during the relief phase, in conjunction with distributions and health and hygiene promotion

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