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Final Report

South Africa: Severe Thunderstorms

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation	Operation n°: MDRZA011
Date of Issue: 14 September 2022	Glide number: OT-2021-000210-ZAF
Operation start date: 24 December 2021	Operation end date: 30 April 2022
Host National Society: South Africa Red Cross Society	Operation budget: CHF 399,000
Number of people affected: 8,810 people (1,762 households)	Number of people assisted: 5,000 people (1,000 households)
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Belgian Red Cross (Belgium Red Cross) and Netherland Red Cross (NLRC).	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: South African Government and other Civil society organisations (Gift of givers and Local Businesses)	

The major donors and partners of the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, as well as DG ECHO and Blizzard Entertainment, Mondelez International Foundation, and Fortive Corporation and other corporate and private donors. DG ECHO and the Government of Canada replenished the DREF on the occasion of this allocation. On behalf of the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS), the IFRC would like to extend gratitude to all for their generous contributions.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster

On 12 December 2021, heavy thunderstorms hit OR Tambo District, particularly Mthatha town in Eastern Cape province, claiming the lives of six people and leaving more than 27 people hospitalized. The thunderstorm destroyed homes in parts of the Amathole, Buffalo city, Alfred Nzo District and Chris Hani district. The level of impact varied from damage to personal and private property such as the destruction of houses, kraals as well roofing and thatching to the loss of livelihoods through the destruction of crops and food gardens as well as the death of livestock.



Figure 1: Partially destroyed house in OR Tambo District

As of the 24 January 2022, a total of 8,810 people were affected, 23 fatalities and several injuries were recorded. This disaster occurred when the province and entire country was still mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. The South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) continued to support the affected households by providing humanitarian assistance and life-saving interventions. Based on the above, this [DREF operation](#) was launched with the overall objective of responding to the immediate humanitarian needs of approximately 5,000 people (1,000 HH) affected by the thunderstorms through the provision of shelter, multipurpose cash grant, WASH and health services for a four months period.

Summary of response

Overview of Operating National Society

In response to these devastating thunderstorms, SARCS mobilized 40 volunteers in the Eastern Cape province who were deployed in 5 affected district municipalities. Ten (10) staff members (5 headquarters, 5 provincial) were coordinated to ensure necessary support was given to the Eastern Cape Province to ensure effective and efficient response to the affected communities.

The Disaster Manager was deployed from SARCS headquarters to support the team as the thunderstorms hit right at the peak of COVID-19 when cases were increasing at an exponential rate, and it was also around the Christmas festive season. The National Society activated psychosocial support (PSS) teams to assist those who were suffering effects of trauma caused by the thunderstorm. In the initial phase of the disaster, the SARCS was able to ensure the below:

- ❖ Activation of 10 staff and 40 volunteers
- ❖ Provision of first aid to 63 people
- ❖ Psychological first aid to 108 people
- ❖ Restoring Family Link (RFL) services to 53 people separated from families
- ❖ Distribution of 250 blankets, which was replenished through this DREF operation
- ❖ Initial rapid assessments and collaborating with Government at local municipalities, districts, and provincial teams.



Figure 2: Map of the Eastern Cape Province showing affected Districts

SARCS has a strong volunteer base of first responders in the affected province and capacity in disaster management (DM); health; WASH; community engagement and accountability (CEA); protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) and psychological first aid (PFA). The resurgence of COVID 19 cases in South Africa following depiction of omicron variant and sharp rising of cases across the country limited SARCS to deploy its teams to full potential. More continuous thunderstorms in Eastern Cape Province affected districts limited teams' ability to conduct full needs assessments in the affected communities and local areas.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Actions in country

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), supports SARCS through its Country Cluster Delegation located in Pretoria. A technical support platform was set up by the IFRC to support SARCS in managing the emergency and any ensuing recovery programmes. IFRC also provided technical support to SARCS for rapid assessment, communication, resource mobilisation design and implementation of the response, in close coordination with other Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners.

In addition, RFL support to affected communities was made possible through support from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The RFL services provided included phone calls and phone charging services. The first aid skills which had been imparted to volunteers in the past through support from Belgian Red Cross (BRC) proved to be useful among first responders who displayed capacity to attend to emergencies and crisis in their communities.

Overview of other RCRC actors' actions in country

The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) coordinated all interventions by humanitarian agencies with support from other United Nations Agencies through the Command-and-Control Centre. Civil Society and non-government organisations were working jointly with government to provide immediate assistance at provincial level. To avoid duplication of efforts, the Joint Operating Committee (JOC) emphasized that response should be done in a coordinated manner. Through the JOC meetings, it was agreed that the South African Red Cross Society and the Department of Social Development will conduct assessments and distribute relief items, while other sectors such as Departments of Roads, Water Affairs, Agriculture and Forestry focused on restoring and rehabilitating the damage of infrastructures in the affected Provinces. Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), which was responsible for the relationship between the municipalities, national and provincial governments announced that joint assessments were

on-going to fully record, the impact of damages and number of displaced people. The assessments were finalised, a formal release was made stating the severity of the damage made by the thunderstorms.

Other implementing partners included NGOs like Gift of the Givers, the Departments of Social Development, Infrastructure & Human Settlement and Education – highlights of their support can be found in the [EPoA](#).

Needs analysis and scenario planning

Needs Analysis

SARCS collaborated with Provincial Disaster Management Centres (PMDCs) to conduct joint rapid assessments, which helped highlight the urgent needs in affected communities. Continuous heavy rains in most affected areas prevented assessment teams from reaching some of the affected communities. However, the National Society used data jointly collected from the initial rapid assessment with local government.

This multi-sector needs assessment was conducted using observation, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KII). It helped to highlight the key emergency needs in the areas of food security and livelihoods, shelter, health & care, WASH and protection. Continuous analysis by SARCS volunteers helped to continually update information on immediate and potential needs, disaster impact, access, and protection risks. Details of the assessment can be found in the Needs Analysis section of the [EPoA](#).



Figure 3: A destroyed house in Buffalo City District

Scenario planning

The implementation of this operation followed the best-case scenario, as there was no need to revise the operational plan. Details of scenario planning can be found in the EPoA.

B. Operational strategy

Overall Operational objective

The overall objective of this operation was to respond to the immediate humanitarian needs of approximately 5,000 people (1,000 HH) affected by the thunderstorms through the provision of a multipurpose cash grant, WASH and health services for 4 months.

Proposed strategy

The SARCS targeted 736 households with severe damaged houses, and 264 child-headed and disabled household with proposed services. Continuous needs assessments and analysis was very instrumental in the operation, and it helped to make informed decisions. A follow-up needs assessment was conducted by SARCS from 27th of December 2021 to 4th of January 2022, revealing that there were more households which required immediate humanitarian assistance. The findings of the assessment report enabled SARCS to design a suitable response strategy where, 1,000 households were targeted with an unconditional cash grant of R 2000 distributed for two months. The disbursements period was between February and April 2022. Details on achievements per sector are presented under section C – Detailed Operational Plan, of this report.



Figure 4: SARCS volunteers engaging with the community in OR Tambo District

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

The operation ensured that community engagement and accountability (CEA) were mainstreamed. These were prioritized and integrated in the response to ensure that there was coherence, consistence, and accountability throughout the operation. SARCS staff and Red Cross volunteers provided the affected households with immediate humanitarian assistance and ensured awareness raising on COVID-19 prevention, health care, clean-up campaigns, importance of adhering to good WASH practices and assisted beneficiaries on how to redeem and use their cash.

The implementation of interventions ensured an integrated programming approach in delivering the cash to affected households. For instance, the project ensured that other cross cutting issues are mainstreamed. Community participation and involvement were undertaken to ensure that there were reduced incidences of conflict in the communities. SARCS used Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approach and engaged communities in conflict resolutions and promoted peaceful local level advocacy. There was also an integration of peer education during implementation of interventions to empower youth on human rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, the National Society used existing community structures to implement the operation which ensured involvement of key stakeholders such as community leaders and ensured that people with special needs were prioritised to receive the support.

A feedback mechanism was set up to record and address community concerns on matters related to the operation. The CEA methods were undertaken through household interviews/ engagements, Focus Group discussions and the use of community radio stations to promote awareness and community dialogues.

A total number of 40 volunteers were engaged in the operation to support cash disbursements, provision of psychological first aid (PFA), water and sanitation hygiene (WASH) as well as ensure community engagement and accountability (CEA) and protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI). These were prioritized and integrated in the response to ensure coherence, consistence, and accountability in operation. SARCS staff and Red Cross volunteers helped in distribution of relief items and created awareness raising to the affected population.

From 27 December 2021 to 4 January 2022, SARCS conducted follow up [needs assessments](#) which revealed that, most of the affected households included the elderly, people with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women and some were child headed and in some of these families, the sole breadwinner had no source of income other than social grant. This prompted SARCS to utilize purposive sampling in targeting the elderly and child headed households in its support. The assessment reports also revealed that not only houses were destroyed but 292 livestock also died (sheep, goats, chicken, and pigs), thereby making the affected communities even more vulnerable.

The operation continued to engage the communities using household interviews/ engagements, focus group discussions and the use of community radios to remain in touch with the communities. In addition, staff and volunteers conducted door-to-door visits to the affected households to provide proximity support on cash redemption. The different forms of interactions assisted to clarify any need for information on the operation. Incorporating CEA to activities ensured that communities were involved at different stages of the operation by ensuring that the needs and targeting of affected people were done in a proper manner. This process helped to undertake efficient identification, registration, and verification exercise through use of local knowledge and capacities.



Figure 5: SARCS collaborating with the National DM Centre


Protection Gender and Inclusion (PGI)

PGI was mainstreamed throughout the intervention to ensure safer access and participation. The operation acknowledged that women, girls, men and boys of diverse ages, disabilities and backgrounds had different needs, risk, and coping strategies. There was particular attention to protection and inclusion of vulnerable groups like the disabled. Gender roles were considered on target groups (e.g., if women have safe access to financial service providers and markets) and when setting up distribution time and dates as well as in hygiene promotion activities. All sectors sought to meet the [IFRC Minimum Standards on Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies](#). PGI activities included:

- Sensitization sessions within affected communities, sharing basic social cohesion and protection messages and sharing referral pathways in any SGBV cases.
- RFL services to those who lost contact with their families, in cooperation with the ICRC. The RFL team used the available RFL services and in cases of missing persons, an active and immediate coordination with the ICRC central tracing agency was made.
- A refresher session was conducted for 40 volunteers (at least 25% women) on Minimum Standards for PGI in emergencies to support the women, elderly, and children to access health services and provide the necessary hygiene kits to them, and address issues on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and collect data.

Operational support services were provided in by SARCS with support from IFRC Pretoria Delegation in the areas of Human resources management, Logistics and supply chain, Communications, PMER, Information Management, Finance and Administration as well as Security Management, as detailed under International Disaster Response section below.

C. Detailed Operational Plan

 <p>Livelihoods and basic needs People reached: 5 000 people Male: 3 333 Female: 1 667</p>		
Outcome 1: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of targeted households reached with multipurpose cash transfers (MPCT) funding that is support appropriate to meet their emergency needs	At least 80% ¹	72.5%
Livelihoods and basic needs Output 1.1: Basic needs assistance for food security is provided to the most affected communities		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of people provided with cash grants	1,000 HH	1,000 HH
# of volunteers engaged in Cash and voucher Assistance (CVA) activities	40 volunteers	40 volunteers
Narrative description of achievements		
<p>SARCS in close collaboration with the Government conducted a rapid assessment on the onset of the disaster which helped to inform their initial response, a multisector needs assessment was later conducted from the 27th of December to the 4th of January 2022 to help inform some sustainable response within the community.</p> <p>As the response was mainly centred on cash transfers, a refresher training was conducted on CVA for 40 volunteers and selected staff who were engaged in this operation went through a CVA training. Fortunately, the National Society already has a good working relationship with Nedbank, the financial service provider, so there was no need to procure one. The operation also trained some SARCS staff and volunteers in KOBO tool kit which enhanced their capacity to implement the operation as data was collected electronically which was faster, more accurate and easier to</p>		

¹ Target here is 80% of the targeted 1,000 HH.

consolidate, analyse and report. The skills acquired assisted to provide better service to the affected population. The CVA launch conducted helped the beneficiaries to understand the CVA and their cash entitlements to be redeemed through mobile phone.

The operation embarked on provision and distribution of hot meals which reached 8745 people as part of Shoprite and Spar donations. From the local donations to SARCS, 509 people received assorted old clothes to assist with clothing materials as many had lost their clothes and belongings.

A total of 1,000 HH (5,000 people) were to be supported with cash assistance for 2 months with each household receiving R4,000 (R2,000 per distribution). To ensure inclusivity, the operation targeted households with either severely or partially destroyed houses, the child-headed households, elderly living with children or alone, people living with disabilities, lactating mothers, and families in precarious economic conditions. The 40 volunteers involved in this operation were instrumental to the implementation of the project as they supported with the PDM and the feedback mechanisms that were carried out. From the PDM and the feedback mechanisms set up, the National Society was able to realize that people appreciated the cash vouchers more than any other form of support as they were able to meet their exact needs they had.

It was noticed by the end of the operation that although cash was distributed, all the cash grants were not redeemed, as seen in below table:

Round of distribution	# of cash grants transferred	# of cash grants redeemed	# of cash grants not redeemed
1st	1,000	784	216
2nd	1000	667	334

Challenges

A rapid market assessment was not conducted and there were some challenges with redeeming the vouchers, especially for the elderly people who were not able to use their phones regularly to track receipt of message alerts for cash received. To rectify this, volunteers followed up with beneficiaries who failed to redeem their vouchers and assisted them, however, some unfortunate cases which included loss/theft of phone and complete relocation of beneficiaries saw about 27% of the beneficiaries unable to receive and redeem their cash vouchers. The 40 volunteers involved in the operation helped to ensure that the operation ran smoothly, and beneficiaries were supported in every possible way but some issues were beyond their control.

Another unfortunate incident is that as the National Society was concluding the Thunderstorms operation, there were serious floods in Kwa-Zulu Natal, which shifted the priorities of the country and SARCS towards the floods response. The focus on responding to this new disaster delayed some payments hence the conclusion of the operation. This is the main reason why there was no follow up on the beneficiaries who did not redeem their cash grants and why fewer households were reached in the second distribution.

Lessons Learned

Ahead of the disbursement of cash voucher notifications by the FSP, SARCS should deploy volunteers to notify beneficiaries to be on the look out of the notifications. Additionally, SARCS should ensure that the FSP will include 'Red Cross' statement in their notification message to ensure that when the beneficiaries receive the notification, they will not dismiss it as spam; all this in efforts to increase the number of cash vouchers redeemed.

The NS staff at both the province and the branch level will need to have good CVA skills to ensure that should there be other competing priorities, they will be able to confidently carry on with their implementation according to the workplan.



Figure 6: Red Cross distributes clothes and blankets to the affected people in OR Tambo District



Health

People reached: 6,891

Male: 2,297

Female: 4,594

Health Outcome 1: The immediate risks to the health of affected populations are reduced and they are aware and practicing COVID 19 protocols.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of targeted people reached with health activities	100	100%
# of people sensitized on COVID-19	5000 people	5182 people
Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of people reached with first aid services	Need based	19 people
# of community members reached with psychosocial services	5000	1650 people
# of volunteers reached with psychosocial services	40 volunteers	40 volunteers

Narrative description of achievements

A health priority for this operation were provision of PSS and First aid services as needed. Health/ hygiene promotion campaigns and COVID 19 Awareness were conducted, targeting 5 000 people (1 000 HH) but in the end the operation reached 5182 people (1293 Males; 3889 Females) with sensitisation messages on COVID-19 as part of ensuring that the pandemic did not escalate further. This was achieved through different channels and approaches like outreach campaigns and door to door sensitization sessions. COVID-19 precautionary measures like screening were compulsory during every outreach event that was done for COVID-19 sensitization and people with COVID-19 symptoms were not allowed to attend these social events especially when they were held in enclosed space. Other precautionary measures were well addressed and taught to community members because at that point COVID-19 cases had just started to increase. Via local donation, SARCS was able to procure and distribute 15 000 PPEs for the affected community members.

In addition, the operation embarked on provision of Psychological First Aid (PFA) to address the mental and psychological impacts following the trauma caused by the thunderstorms. This led to SARCS reaching out to 1,650 people (791 males and 859 females) being supported. As part of duty of care and volunteer wellness, a total of 40 volunteers (15 males; 25 females) against targeted of 40 were involved in provision of psychosocial services across the province.

Overall, the health services reached 6,891 persons, when combining people reached with COVID-19 sensitization, first aid, PSS and volunteers reached with PSS support.

Challenges

As a result of the disaster, some people were injured in trying to get themselves to safety and to save some of their personal belongings but only 19 people (11 females; 8 males) were supported with first aid services as others were badly injured and needed hospital services, while others fled the affected areas altogether.

With the disaster came the trauma of losing belongings and uncertainty of the next available meal and how to rebuild livelihoods.

The NS had targeted to offer PSS to all the 5000 people (1000 HH) but despite intensified dissemination of messages to provide information on availability of the services through SARCS staff and volunteers, only 1,650 people (791 males and 859 females) were reached with psychosocial services. Reduced numbers of people coming for PSS were recorded mainly because this service was not made compulsory it was merely based on need; but adequate support was given to those who reached out for the support.

Lessons Learnt

The integration of COVID-19, first aid services and psychosocial services in the CVA operation was a good development as this addressed other needs that directly affect people's lives. The training of volunteers on psychosocial support was timely as it reminded them on capacity to undertake the implementation with ease. This should be maintained and continued in the future programs. People were reached with information as a package hence this helped uptake of the program.



Water, sanitation and hygiene

People reached: 8,810

Male: 2937

Female: 5873

Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of targeted people reached with hygiene promotion activities	100%	100%
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 engaged in hygiene promotion activities	40 volunteers	40 volunteers
# of hygiene promotion sessions conducted	6 sessions	8 sessions
# of dignity kits distributed to women and girls of child bearing age	500	500
# of hygiene kits distributed to affected families	1000	1500
Narrative description of achievements		
<p>Ahead of the hygiene promotion sessions, 40 volunteers had a refresher training on Health and Hygiene which was meant to equip them with the necessary skills to better support the community at large. Health and Hygiene promotion campaigns were part of the government's support, given that they funded the activities targeting the entire affected population of 1762 HH (8810 people). As such, the National Society only provided them with volunteer support. The National Society conducted 8 hygiene promotion sessions across the province against the target of 6. More sessions were achieved due to more support from corporate organization and having an integrated approach which embraced COVID-19 sessions as well as targeting families that were displaced and accommodated in the shelters.</p> <p>In addition, there was also promotion of good hygiene practices through the distribution of 1500 hygiene kits which were provided by the South African Red Cross society and International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to assist in restoring dignity especially to those families that had lost everything and were being accommodated in shelters. Furthermore, there was dissemination of information on the importance of adhering to WASH good practices which also mitigated COVID-19.</p> <p><i>All the activities implemented were meant to ensure that affected families are equipped with ways to prevent the potential negative health effects. WASH orientations were always sensitive to the cultural practices of the community and endeavoured to meet the specific needs of the elderly, women, children, and persons with disabilities.</i></p>		
Challenges		
No key challenges highlighted in this sector.		
Lessons Learned		
<p><i>Hygiene promotion campaigns which were supported by the government assisted to restore dignity and raise awareness on hygiene issues, especially given the fact that the communities were still battling with the effects of COVID-19.</i></p>		



Shelter


People reached: 3650

Male: 1217

Female: 2433

Shelter Outcome 1: Communities in disaster and crisis affected areas restore and strengthen their safety, well-being and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlement solutions

Output 1: Shelter and settlements and basic household items assistance is provided to the affected families.

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of people reached with sensitisation on building of safe shelter	N/A	N/A
# of stakeholders engaged to address shelter needs of affected communities	N/A	N/A
# of people assisted with vouchers to meet shelter needs	5000	3650
Narrative description of achievements		
	<p>SARCS is a well-established member of the JOC where there is constant collaboration with the Government and other various partners and stakeholders. Throughout the course of the disaster even till the recovery, there has been very sound coordination of the disaster support initiatives by all members.</p> <p>The needs assessments conducted also considered shelter needs, capacities and gaps and the volunteers and staff conducted community awareness on safe and strong housing structures in all the 5 affected districts in Easter Cape. The community feedback entailed that most of the beneficiaries used their multi-purpose cash voucher to pay for labour to fix their houses and to buy building materials to rebuild their houses.</p>	
<p>As part of replenishment of previous stock used, 250 blankets were procured to replace the blankets distributed during the initial response to the disaster.</p> <p>Overall, the 3,650 people reached under this section are those who redeemed their cash voucher and acknowledged to have utilized the funds for rehabilitation of their homes.</p>		
Challenges		
<p>Despite the National Society strongly advocating for government Department of Infrastructure and Human Settlement to assist affected households to re-build their homes in a safe area and with quality materials in the JOC meetings, by the end of the operation there was no indication for any support on reconstruction of homes for the affected population.</p>		
Lessons Learned		
<p>Cash voucher is a good response modality to support disaster relief during emergencies as it gives people the liberty to buy what they need the most.</p>		

International Disaster Response**Outcome S2.1: Effective and coordinated international disaster response is ensured.****Output S2.1.1: Effective response preparedness and NS surge capacity mechanism is maintained**

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of detailed assessment reports produced	1	2
# of affected regions assessed	5 districts	5 districts
# of volunteers participating in the response	40	40
# of supervision missions conducted by the SARCS	3 missions	3 missions
# of community feedback received and processed	At least 80%	80%
# of IFRC monitoring missions	2 missions	1 mission
# of Lessons learned workshop conducted	1	1
Narrative description of achievements		
<p>SARCS was present and had a strong footprint in both affected districts with functional Provincial and Branch offices. This operation enabled 40 staff and selected volunteers to undergo a CEA and PGI refresher training to equip them with the understanding of minimum standards of PGI in emergencies, which guided them throughout the</p>		

implementation of activities. This also guided their conduct on the field, in upholding Red Cross Fundamental Principles. IFRC deployed a surge personnel from Malawi Red Cross to enhance the capacity of the SARCS in operations interventions.

Despite continuously assessing the situation in the 5 districts, the National Society conducted 2 needs assessments (a rapid and a detailed needs assessment) in collaboration with government and other stakeholders to inform the response operation targeting Eastern Cape province. The assessments complemented each other and assisted to meeting the most urgent needs at household level.

Three DM field visits were conducted by SARCS HQ staff for coordination of the overall response, monitoring of activities, as well as to support resource mobilization efforts by reaching out to potential local partners who could support recovery of the affected communities. The IFRC Cluster office conducted

1 monitoring visit and deployed a surge personnel who was based on site for 1 month and virtually supported for another 1 month. The IFRC support really helped the NS to build its capacity in CVA especially in the Eastern Cape Province, considering this was their first DREF operation and their first time to use CVA as a response modality.

A post distribution monitoring (PDM) survey was also undertaken to understand how overall operation was perceived by the targeted communities in terms of addressing the needs of the affected population. The PDM revealed that more females were affected than males. It also showed that most of the money was used for food and reconstructing their homes in all 5 districts.

Operational updates where necessary and they were issued and shared with the Cluster Delegation. PMER also supported regular assessment to inform the response targeting and ensuring that needs of the most vulnerable were catered for.

There was very good collaboration between the National Society and the government. Indeed, the government supported SARCS with cars and transport for monitoring visits and relief distributions.

SARCS branch and HQ where constantly monitoring and supporting the districts to ensure smooth implementation of activities. IFRC DM team attended the CVA launch to appreciate the roll out of CVA operation within the province. The CVA launch was graced by local community members, stakeholders and government representatives.

Provincial office provided weekly updates that were feeding into the operational update report. SARCS provided both narrative and financial reports at the end of the operation with support from IFRC Cluster Delegation. All reports were conducted in accordance with IFRC PMER standards.

At the end of the operation, SARCS conducted a lessons learned workshop with all stakeholders, including recipient households, to collect feedback on efficiency and effectiveness of the response. The operation conducted two lessons learnt workshop against target of one due to distance between affected districts hence, it was imperative that two workshops be undertaken within the province which was later consolidated into [a report](#). The feedback was used to inform future such operations.

The National Society has a functional Logistics department which oversees all the procurement process. The financial service provider (FSP) which was chosen during implementation of DREF on thunderstorms was engaged to support the cash and voucher assistance which was conducted by SARCS with support from IFRC Cluster Delegation and Regional office Logistics departments. SARCS incorporated IFRC procurement procedures into their internal procurement process, strictly adhering to the same.

The affected districts have functional and adequate Information, Communication and Technology. The status quo changed as thunderstorms in all districts led to network disruptions due to destruction of existing infrastructure and almost affected the operation, however SARCS and IFRC monitored the situation and persevered.



Figure 8: Field teams conducting needs assessment in Mthatha

Through collaboration with the Information Management Working Group (IMWG) in Southern Africa, IM activities included data analysis of the assessment, production of maps/Infographic and support creation of data visualization dashboard which later maintained by IFRC Cluster Office with capacity building of SARCS. Content upload of the activities on the GO platform was done at the IFRC Cluster Delegation with technical assistance from IFRC Regional Office

Communications: The National Society has a communications unit, which worked closely with different media houses including [SABC News](#), the leading media outlet in the country, by ensuring that SARCS interventions were well published, and communities and stakeholders were aware of SARCS's response interventions. Updates on the operation were shared on all the National Society official social media platforms (websites, Facebook, Twitter). The National Society also worked closely with IFRC communication focal person for technical support to ensure sufficient media coverage of the response. Response teams utilized available visibility clothing and equipment during the operations to ensure easy identification. Both the SARCS and IFRC communications officers were deployed to ensure proximity support to the operation.

Challenges

- There were delays in the submission of returns by Branch Managers which affected timely consolidation of financial reports. As mitigation measure, there was regular reminders to the responsible officers but also adopted the approach of disbursing funds after receiving returns for the previous disbursed funds. In addition, there is need to support the Managers and all other staff involved in the operation with a training on Finance.
- *The response targeted elderly people who were not able to use their phones regularly to track receipt of message alerts which advised them to go and redeem their cash. As mitigation measure, there was use of proxies as well as volunteers in liaison with the Branch managers who helped them in redeeming their cash.*

Lessons Learned

- There was good coordination among SARCS staff, volunteers and stakeholders which played an important role in ensuring shared responsibilities in delivering the operation. This should be promoted further in the future and similar programmes
- Involvement of IFRC team at different stages of the operation assisted to provide strategic direction of cash programming, visibility, and successful delivery of the interventions. The regular engagement further helped to align programming needs to IFRC strategies and policies.
- Engagement of volunteers was fundamental in supporting the operation. Specifically, the volunteers helped at different stages of the programme as well as assisting the affected people who were unable to access their cash entitlements because they were not able to use the phones appropriately some due to age.
- Community engagement Accountability (CEA) played a catalytic role in ensuring that beneficiaries are engaged at different stages but also share their opinion regarding the operation by using the communication channels that were set up.

Strengthen National Society

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of SARCS staff trained in CVA	10	10 staff
# of SARCS volunteers trained in CVA	40	40
# of SARCS staff and volunteers trained in KOBO tool kit for this operation	N/A	55

Narrative description of achievements

The operation trained 10 staff members in cash and voucher assistance. This was essential to prepare the team in the cash distributions exercise. In addition, 15 staff were also trained in KOBO tool kit to assist in data collection and management. The trained staff further trained 40 volunteers who were tasked with data collection in the different districts.

The Finance Department monitored all the expenditure according to the National Society financial procedures, taking into considerations the IFRC financial procedures. Financial reports were issued and shared with IFRC Cluster Delegation for review.

The security environment in the affected districts was marred with incidents of robbery and theft. Health Hazards were also a major risk as the country currently grappling with the resurgence after detection of omicron variant in-country

characterized by skyrocketing figures of COVID-19 positive cases spurred on by lack of adherence to preventive measures that was prevalent during evacuation efforts. Despite this, the National Society worked closely with communities from these areas and there was no threat posed to the response team.

Government law enforcement always present in these areas to provide secure environment to the communities and other organizations working within these areas.

Challenges

N/A

Lessons Learned

It was imperative to train the staff and volunteers to increase their capacity in data collection which will eventually improve the quality of our reporting.

Financial Report

The overall amount allocated for this operation was CHF 399,000 of which CHF 327,923 (82%) was expensed. A balance of CHF 71,077 will be returned to the DREF pot.

Explanation of variances:

- The Clothing and Textiles budget line was spent though appears as an unbudgeted expense as the activity was coded incorrectly on the budget.
- The Water, Sanitation & Hygiene budget line was spent though appears as an unbudgeted expense as the activity was coded incorrectly on the budget
- Cash Disbursement budget line was not fully spent and remained with a balance of CHF 30,599 because following the final cash disbursement, the Financial Service Provider could only provide information of the beneficiaries that had not redeemed their money after 30 days. This was unfortunately too late for the NS to action as the operation had concluded.
- Distribution and monitoring budget line was underspent as travel costs were wrongly coded on the budget. Additionally, the government provided support for the distribution of relief materials and monitoring of cash disbursements.
- Transport & Vehicle Costs were underspent by CHF 4,590 as the government provided support with the use of their vehicles for the distribution of relief materials and joint monitoring visits.
- International staff budget line was underspent CHF 19,391 (97%) because the operation had sufficient support from the CVA surge deployed and did not require further international staff support.
- The National Staff budget line was exceeded by CHF 1,487 (128%) as being their first DREF and CVA operation for the Eastern Cape Province, more staff members were required in the field for longer lengths than anticipated.
- Volunteers' budget line was underspent as most volunteer costs were booked as part of the activities falling under Workshop and Training.
- Workshops and Training were expensed as the staff and volunteers required additional training on CVA. Additionally, volunteer expenses were wrongly coded to this budget line.
- Travel budget line was overspent by CHF 3,170 (139%) because the travel costs for staff and volunteers were immense, acknowledging that they had to travel vast distances to reach the target populations.
- Information and public relations appear to be not expensed as expenses were wrongly coded to the workshop and training budget line.
- Communications budget was expensed but not budgeted for as the government had provided some communications support from the beginning of the budget design. Though during implementation, it was identified that there were communication gaps, hence the unplanned expenses.

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021/12-2022/06	Operation	MDRZA011
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 27/Jul/2022

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRZA011 - South Africa - Severe Thunderstorms

Operating Timeframe: 24 Dec 2021 to 30 Apr 2022

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	399,000
DREF Allocations	399,000
Expenditure	-327,923
Closing Balance	71,077

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items	7,708	9,054	-1,346
PO02 - Livelihoods	4,144	3,909	235
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash	271,282	244,317	26,965
PO04 - Health	1,776	1,566	210
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	37,331	18,835	18,496
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	1,233		1,233
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery			0
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	2,146	1,178	968
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	325,620	278,860	46,761
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships	5,858	5,210	648
EA02 - Secretariat Services	21,336	6,110	15,226
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	46,186	37,744	8,442
Enabling Approaches Total	73,380	49,064	24,316
Grand Total	399,000	327,923	71,077

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021/12-2022/06	Operation	MDRZA011
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

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III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	239,127	233,764	5,363
Clothing & Textiles		8,502	-8,502
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene		16,735	-16,735
Cash Disbursement	239,127	208,528	30,599
Logistics, Transport & Storage	54,322	3,008	51,314
Distribution & Monitoring	47,084	360	46,724
Transport & Vehicles Costs	7,238	2,648	4,590
Personnel	29,957	6,899	23,058
International Staff	19,976	584	19,391
National Society Staff	1,158	2,645	-1,487
Volunteers	8,824	3,670	5,153
Workshops & Training	10,769	20,796	-10,027
Workshops & Training	10,769	20,796	-10,027
General Expenditure	40,472	43,442	-2,970
Travel	8,106	11,276	-3,170
Information & Public Relations	2,027		2,027
Communications		860	-860
Financial Charges	5,211	5,921	-710
Other General Expenses	25,129	25,385	-256
Indirect Costs	24,352	20,014	4,338
Programme & Services Support Recover	24,352	20,014	4,338
Grand Total	399,000	327,923	71,077

Contact information

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

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world