

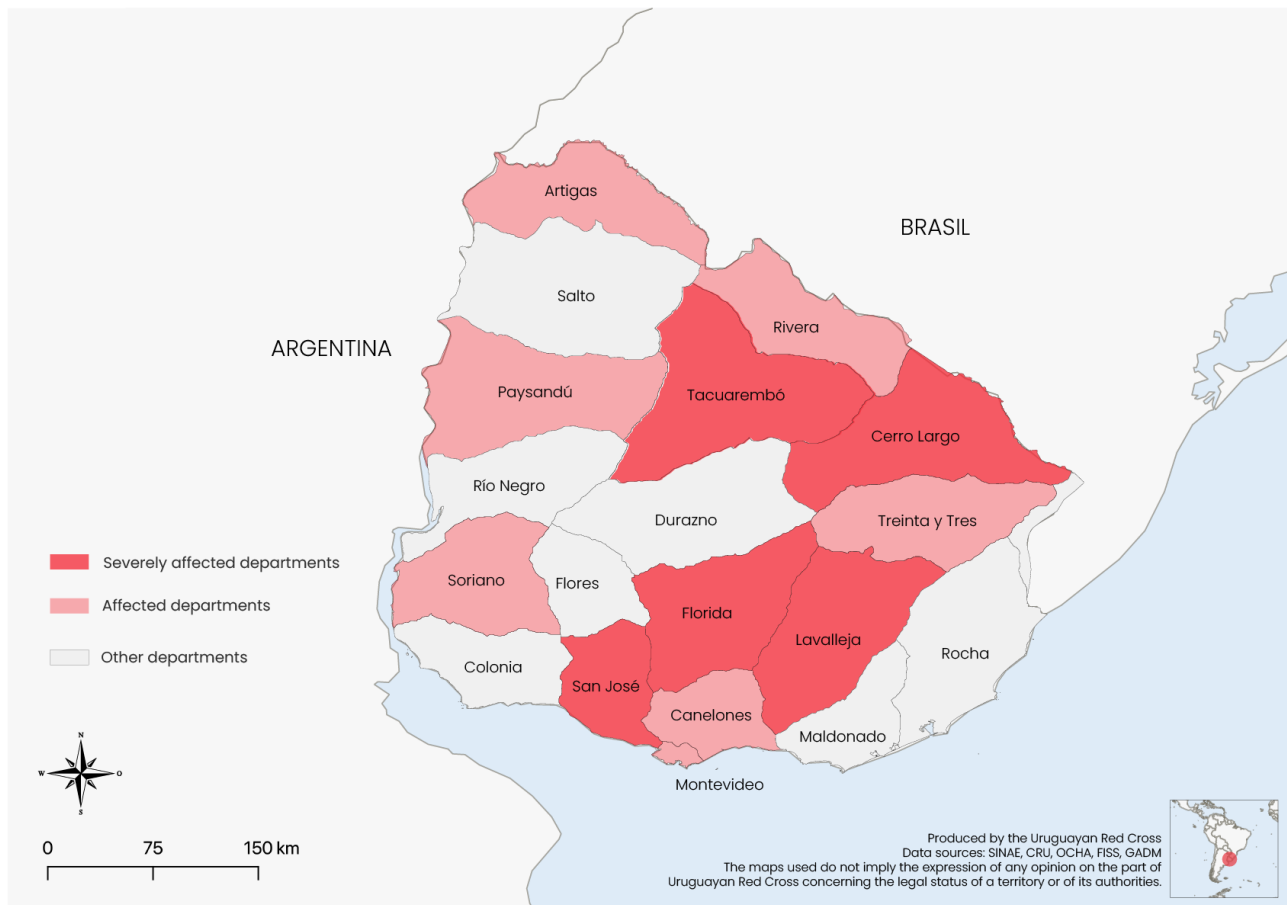


Assesments carried out by URC.

Appeal: <b>MDRUY004</b>	Total DREF Allocation <b>CHF 381,390</b>	Crisis Category: <b>Yellow</b>	Hazard: <b>Drought</b>
Glide Number: <b>DR-2023-000010-URY</b>	People Affected: <b>409,115 people</b>	People Targeted: <b>12,000 people</b>	
Event Onset: <b>Slow</b>	Operation Start Date: <b>2023-01-29</b>	New Operational end date: <b>2023-07-31</b>	Total operating timeframe: <b>6 months</b>
Additional Allocation Re- quested <b>338,439</b>	Targeted Areas:	<b>Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja, San Jose, Tacuarembó</b>	

# Description of the Event

## Affected departments Droughts | Uruguay 20-01-2023



Areas affected by droughts in Uruguay. Source: URC

## What happened, where and when?

The lack of rainfall recorded since September 2022 has caused a significant reduction in the availability and access to water in the country, which in turn has been affected by the presence of the La Niña phenomenon in the region and the increase in temperatures within the summer seasons. In October 2022, the national government, through the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture, and Fisheries (MGAP by its initials in Spanish) declared a state of agricultural emergency for a period of 90 days for the entire country. In January 2023, the state of emergency was extended until the end of April and extended to livestock, dairy, fruit and/or horticulture, agriculture, poultry, beekeeping and forestry.

On 20 January, the Uruguayan State, through the National Emergency System (SINAIE by its initials in Spanish), extended a formal request to the Uruguayan Red Cross to provide support with damage and needs assessments of the current drought situation that is affecting the country and possible response to the consequences of this event.

The drought emergency continue affecting the entire country, with the most affected departments being Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja and San José. As per information provided by the SINAIE, and corroborated with the results of the assessments conducted by the URC, the most complex situation is related to the lack of access to safe water which limits the consumption and use of water, as well as maintenance of crops and livestock of approximately





20,000 people throughout the country.

According to information released by the National Meteorological Institute (INUMET by its initials in Spanish), during the summer season (December, January and February) the average rainfall was 126.4 mm, 225.4 mm below the average value for the reference period. The current summer has been the driest in the last 42 years on record, which explains why the entire country is currently affected by droughts, with 20.51% of the territory, equivalent to 3,623,300 hectares, being under extreme drought (1).

Similarly, for the months of March to June, INUMET forecasted the accumulated precipitation in the northern region of the country to be below normal, while for the rest of the territory, climatological terciles are expected. Specifically, for the northern region, there is a 40% probability in the lower tercile and 30% in the middle and upper terciles, while for the rest of the country, 33% is assigned to all three terciles (2)

Different key actors have made statements and continue disseminating information about the impact of the drought. At the end of February, the Rural Association of Uruguay (ARU) assured that the losses in soybean and corn crops are irrecoverable and will affect the production even until 2026. From the association, they affirm that the affectations with more impacts are related to livestock services, which translates into fewer births that will generate a great impact on the availability of animal food (slaughter) at least until 2025 and 2026.

The President of the Republic stated that the situation is complex and although in some specific areas it rained, the consequences and losses in production, in the economy, in work and in the income of the country will not be recovered. In fact, as a result of the lack of rain, the prices of tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, cucumbers and watermelon have increased by 40%, while the price of other fruits and vegetables suffered an average increase of 10%. During 2022, the prices of the basket of fruits and vegetables remained between 30 and 45 pesos per kilo, currently reaching almost 55 uruguayan pesos per kilo.

Sources:

(1) Climate Trends INUMET: <https://www.inumet.gub.uy/clima/tendencias-climaticas/tendencias-climaticas-febrero-marzo-abril-2023>

(2) Climate Trends INUMET: <https://www.inumet.gub.uy/clima/tendencias-climaticas/tendencias-climaticas-marzo-abril-mayo-2023>



Assessment, Lavalleja, March 2023



Assessment, Tacuarembó, March 2023

## Scope and Scale

During the assessment stage, the Uruguayan Red Cross (URC) inquired about the impacts of the drought on livelihoods, health and access to water and identified the unmet needs of the affected population.

As part of the assessment conducted, both through interviews and collection and analysis of secondary data provided by the State and the official press, it is worth highlighting the fact that there are currently 2.3 million people affected with limitations on the access to safe water since its use for non-essential purposes has been prohibited due to the drought. Additionally, the results of the assessment indicate that there are 409,115 people directly affected whom live in the departments most affected by drought and water shortages, out of which 20,000 are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance, especially under WaSH and Livelihoods (1).

On 8 March, the State Sanitary Works (OSE by its initials in Spanish) published a new status report on the water deficit, where it was reported that the drought affecting the entire national territory is causing a continuous decrease in reservoirs and watercourses used as a source of supply to the population. In this context, the board of directors of the agency resolved to prohibit the use of drinking water for non-essential purposes.

In the case of the metropolitan area (Montevideo and surrounding areas), if it does not rain, the water supply will only last until the end of April 2023. Particularly, the city of Minas (Lavalleja Department) has been one of the most affected areas, and water pressure in the supply system had to be lowered due to the lack of rainfall. However, some rainfall from recent weeks managed to recover part of the Carlos Maggiolo dam reservoir, thus guaranteeing water availability, but only for the month of April so far (2).

It is also important to highlight, from the monitoring carried out by National Society through the platform (D-NGDI) of Deltares (a leading independent research institute in the field of water and subsoil based in Delft and Utrecht (The Netherlands)), a critical state of vegetation has been evidenced. Indeed, the vegetation health index (VHI) is currently at 0.088, representing an extreme drought, and with a historical extreme of 0.037 recorded in February of this year, the highest in the country's history and with the greatest impact on the continent (3).

Furthermore, as a result of the droughts, the price of national foodstuffs such as fruit and vegetables has increased by an average of 20%, which has increased the cost of living throughout the country, with some prices reaching the highest level in recent years (4).

As part of the assessments conducted by the URC, and as captured in the assessment report, the main needs identified are access to safe water (32%), animal feed (12%), debt financing (10%), and financing for well construction or to acquire items for water storage (10%). In terms of unmet needs, water for irrigation and animal feed (27%); water for drinking and cooking (25%); and water for personal hygiene (16%) stand out as the most pressing issues.

Consequently, the assessment report indicate that families have had to take unusual or desperate measures to cope with the consequences of this emergency, including: asking for help from institutions, relatives or friends (34%), the sale of smaller animals than usual (21%), and other actions (27%) such as using money previously destined for other needs for the purchase of ration and fodder for animals, buying drinking troughs and tubs, total cut of crop irrigation, decrease of water consumption, decrease of feed and water for animals, requesting unplanned loans and anticipated use of resources planned for the winter.

(1) Water Use Prohibition Statement: <http://www.ose.com.uy/noticia/comunicado-a-la-poblacion-2946>  
(2) Last update of the OSE Status Report: <http://www.ose.com.uy/noticia/-deficit-hidrico-al-29032023>  
(3) Vegetation health index: <https://jurianbeunk.users.earthengine.app/view/ngdi-test>  
(4) Average increase in food costs: <https://www.subrayado.com.uy/precio-frutas-y-verduras-aumento-20-promedio-la-sequia-n912062>

## Summary of changes

Are you changing the timeframe of the operation	Yes
Are you changing the operational strategy	Yes



Are you changing the target population of the operation	<b>Yes</b>
Are you changing the geographical location	<b>No</b>
Are you making changes to the budget	<b>Yes</b>
Is this a request for a second allocation	<b>Yes</b>
Has the forecasted event materialize?	<b>No</b>

### Please explain the summary of changes and justification

The Uruguayan Red Cross (URC) launched this DREF Operation on 29 January 2023 to conduct damage and needs assessments on the current drought situation that is affecting the country.

As a result of the evaluation stage, the National Society has revised its DREF Plan of Action with the objective of transitioning to a DREF for Response.

Through this Operations Update No. 1, the Uruguayan Red Cross, with the support of the IFRC, aims to:

- Request a timeframe extension of four additional months, for a total of six months (new end date: 31 July 2023).
- A budget increase that includes a second allocation of CHF 338,439 for a total DREF budget of CHF 381,390.
- Implement this Plan of Action through the intervention of activities under WASH, Livelihoods and Multipurpose Cash Assistance with a Community, Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approach to reach 12,000 people (2,400 families) in the departments of Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja and San José.

## Current National Society Actions



Assessment, Tacuarembó, February, 2023

Assessment, Cerro Largo, March 2023

The Uruguayan Red Cross has activated the feedback and complaint management forms, these forms are implemented in all activities that are carried out directly with the communities. There is a case management and suggestions reception team that provides support and responds to any type of inconvenience.



<b>Community Engagement And Accountability</b>	<p>nience, query or complaint.</p> <p>On the other hand, as a result of the information collected during the field assessments, a dissemination list was generated for dissemination of relevant information for the community and a telephone number was made available for consultation by the community. The topics to be disseminated are derived from the information that the community selected as most relevant or that it would be most interested in receiving</p>
<b>Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery</b>	<p>A total of 4 branches (San José, Dolores, Soriano and Río Negro) have given awareness talks and dissemination of key messages on drought and heat wave prevention in crowded and tourist areas of their departments.</p>
<b>Resource Mobilization</b>	<p>The Resource Mobilization area has reached two agreements with companies to provide some supplies for the work of volunteers in the field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salus: Donation of water drums (500L).</li> <li>- Farmashop: Donation of 250 sunscreens.</li> </ul> <p>Further negotiations are expected once the DREF for response is launched following the assessment report validation. A line has been included in this plan of action to work on a communications strategy that can support the area of resource mobilization for the inclusion of different donors in the operation.</p>
<b>Coordination</b>	<p>Since the declaration of the agricultural emergency, the Uruguayan Red Cross has been in communication and coordination with the National Emergency System (SINAE by its initials in Spanish) and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP by its initials in Spanish). In turn, the branches are working together with the Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED by its initials in Spanish) and are at their disposal. This coordination will continue to develop in the same way throughout the response operation.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	<p>Since the beginning of the operation, secondary information and data provided by the National Emergency System (SINAE) have been used to follow up and monitor the emergency situation.</p> <p>Through this DREF Application, the National Society initially conducted a damage and needs assessment in the five most affected departments, with special emphasis on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene and Livelihoods.</p> <p>The assessment were conducted in coordination with the SINAE (National Emergency System) and the CECOED (Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers). In each department, activities were carried out in coordination with them in order to visit the affected communities in rural areas whom were previously identified by the State.</p> <p>During the assessments, the National Society also included other people who were not part of the list provided by the local authorities in order to complement data collected in person in the field. Additionally, telephone evaluations were also done, thus maximizing deadlines and increasing the number of people reached as part of the assessment.</p> <p>To meet this objective, a face-to-face training was carried out for staff and volunteers from various branches on the use of digital tools for evaluation (Kobo) and the conduct of damage and needs assessments in the field. The</p>



	assessment report is also shared as part of the justification for the implementation of this Emergency Plan of Action.
<b>National Society EOC</b>	<p>The Uruguayan Red Cross, through the team of its Headquarters, activated its Emergency Operations Center from the beginning of the events related to the drought. It is coordinated by the area of Risk Management and Disaster Response and has designated specific roles for the emergency (Communication, CEA, IM, finance, security and logistics).</p> <p>Weekly follow-up meetings were held and reports have been submitted to the National Governing Council. The National Intervention Team is also active, supporting DREF assessment activities and will continue to work during the response phase.</p>
<b>National Society Readiness</b>	<p>The Uruguayan Red Cross has a Department of Risk and Disaster Management, Finance, Volunteering, Resource Mobilization and Communication. The National Society has approximately 350 volunteers across the country. The team of the Directorate of Risk Management of the Headquarters and its National Intervention Team were available from the beginning of the emergency and monitoring the evolution of droughts, through the activation of the National Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and always working in coordination with local subsidiaries.</p> <p>Available supplies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1x institutional van for the transfer of personnel.</li> <li>- 2x vans for the transport of materials and supplies.</li> <li>- 2x Humanitarian Units ready to provide assistance.</li> <li>- Warehouse at the Headquarters (Montevideo)</li> </ul>

## Movement Partners Actions Related To The Current Event

<b>IFRC</b>	The IFRC has a country office in Argentina to support and assist the Southern Cone countries, which has maintained close contact and coordination with the Uruguayan Red Cross and the Disaster and Crisis Department of the IFRC Americas regional office in Panama. Since the beginning of the emergency, and with the government's request for support to the National Society, constant communication and technical assistance has been maintained through the Country Cluster Delegation (CCD) for the Southern Cone for the development of the DREF Application for assessment and transitioning to the DREF for Response.
<b>ICRC</b>	The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also has offices in Argentina and, in addition to carrying out actions within its mandate, such as working with the authorities to integrate, implement and disseminate international humanitarian law and rules on the use of force, it carries out actions to develop the National Society's capacity to respond to emergency situations in contexts of violence and crisis and to provide Restoring Family Links (RFL) services. So far, the ICRC has been in contact with the CCD for the Southern Cone, but they have not provided specific support for this emergency.

<b>Participating National Societies</b>	<p>The Uruguayan Red Cross is working in close collaboration with the Italian Red Cross (IRC). Although IRC has no physical representation in the country, they fund a Youth project with a focus on Climate Change, through which several branches will provide information to local communities during these periods of drought.</p> <p>The Uruguayan Red Cross will continue coordinating with Italian Red Cross and other Participating National Societies to discuss the potential implementation of climate-smart livelihoods micro-projects to support longer term livelihoods recovery of the families affected by the droughts.</p>
---	--

## Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

<b>Government has requested international assistance</b>	No
<b>National authorities</b>	<p>The National Emergency System (SINAE) is a national and decentralized system. In each department there is a Departmental Emergency Committee (CDE by its initials in Spanish) responsible for the formulation of Risk Management policies and strategies at the local level, in line with the global policies of SINAE. Each Committee is composed of the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Departmental Chief of Police</li> <li>- Chief of Detachment of the National Fire Department of the Ministry of the Interior</li> <li>- Representative of the Ministry of National Defense</li> <li>- Representative of the Ministry of Social Development</li> <li>- Representative of the Ministry of Public Health. Representative of the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents</li> <li>- Legal Prosecutor of the Office of the Attorney-General of the Nation</li> </ul> <p>Under the coordination of each CDE is the Departmental Emergency Coordination Center (CECOED), which is the operational coordination area for Integral Risk Management. Each CECOED has a coordinator. This is an officer appointed by the respective Quartermaster. Since December 2022, the Uruguayan Red Cross has a framework cooperation agreement signed with SINAE.</p> <p>On 20 January 2023, SINAE requested support from the Uruguayan Red Cross through a formal note, to carry out detailed assessments on the needs of the most affected communities and in the most remote areas of the country.</p> <p>National Emergency Service (SINAE) is responding to the families most affected by droughts. The response is based on distributing clean water to people with little or no access to water. So far, the government has distributed drinking water with tankers that travel to the five affected departments once a week. Additionally, the SINAE, through the different Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED) and the National Fire Department, has been working to combat fires caused by the combination of drought and high temperatures.- This work is being carried out in all departments of the country, reaching an estimated 15,000 people (applicants for support). The National Society will complement this response provided by the state through the distribution of water storage and purification elements and awareness-raising on safe</p>



	<p>storage and care of water.</p> <p>At the end of February, at the VIII UNDRR Regional Risk Management Platform (one week before the start of the first DREF evaluations), the National Society had the opportunity to present its work to different strategic partners and the first IFRC-URC-SINAE coordination meeting was held for the review of the advances to date and propose next steps. A final meeting was held to discuss the first stage of implementation of the DREF for assessment. In it, the results obtained during the visits with SINAE were shared as well as the the next steps and how the coordination mechanisms will continue during the response stage.</p>
--	--

UN or other actors	
--------------------	--

**Are there major coordination mechanisms in place?**

Uruguayan Red Cross (URC) is leading the response in coordination with the National Emergency System, holding in-person coordination meetings with all areas of the SINAE. So far, no gaps or overlaps in the response have been identified



# Needs (Gaps) Identified



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

### Availability and access to water:

As indicated in the assessment report, the families surveyed tended to have different water sources before the droughts including wells with pumps (51%); others (25%) among which are azud, aljibe, tajar and arroyo; rainwater collection systems (11%) and storage in different elements such as tanks or tubs or the use of tributaries near homes. Only (2%) reported to have drinking water network (OSE). It should be noted that although it is not necessarily their main source of water, 79% of families reported to collect rainwater. Additionally, 70% of families indicated that before the droughts they had enough water for consumption, livestock and crops.

Due to the droughts and little or no rainfall in recent months, access to water has been interrupted. Of the families that reported to collect rainwater, 40% indicated to do so using small-sized jars (less than 60 liters) as a storage system, and it was observed that they currently do not have systems installed that allow direct storage in tanks. Consequently, the water that families had collected in the first half of 2022 has already run out. Currently, 57% of families depend on the organisms that distribute water (OSE – intendencia – CECOED).

The assistance provided by government agencies is different depending on the department. For example, in the department of Cerro Largo many families receive water from CECOED that they use for personal consumption and do not have water for their animals, nor for the irrigation of crops or pastures. In Lavalleja, the Municipality provides water to small producers to support them with the maintenance of livestock and depending on the resources of each family, they must take care of the expenses for the personal consumption of water.

### Water storage:

Depending on the economic possibilities and the access that each family has to government assistance, different tools or water storage spaces were found and in general it is necessary at least 1 or 2 types of ways to store water. The ways to store water include tanks (60%), tubs (40%), drums (6%) reused drums (4%), and other forms (26%) such as cisterns and pumped water wells, with hookahs, water boxes, barrels, etc.

It was in the department of Tacuarembó where the most complex situation related to water storage was observed. Families do not have sufficient or adequate containers for the storage of drinking water distributed by the municipality. This requires continuous water distributions every 15 days, even once a week despite the fact that the distances are quite long. On the other hand, the conditions of these storage elements are not adequate, since many are reused drums, with impregnated toxic materials (such as pesticides), which makes the stored water unsafe for consumption.

### Water purification:

Only 19% of the families evaluated use some method or system of water purification prior to drought. Many of them say that they know that water is not suitable for consumption but that they do not have sufficient resources or information, nor can they prioritize the purchase of water purification elements or supplies. Boiling water is the method used by most families since it does not generate an extra expense in the family economy. In fact, 5% of families indicated to boil the water, 2% indicated the use of chlorine and some families (1%) have the resources to buy family filters.

### Sanitation and Hygiene:

So far, more than 60% of the families evaluated say they have personal hygiene items in their homes, although their income has been affected and they must save on the purchase of certain items (reducing or suspending them) they still say they have enough elements. The markets where they usually buy these items are supplied.

### Access to information:



Many families have expressed interest in receiving multiple water-related information. Water care (54%); Recommendations for safe water storage (47%); Drought recommendations (40%); Prevention and treatment of diseases (28%). Finally, it has been possible to observe a lack of information linked to the resources, services or different types of assistance provided by the state. Therefore, it is important to have an exhaustive mapping and through good coordination with government entities provide this information to all families who can access the different benefits.



## Health

So far, the families evaluated do not consider that the number of people with diseases has increased in the last 3 months (87%) and those who consider that they have increased relate it mainly to the appearance of diseases in animals. As for the affectation of diseases, families manifest feeling psycho-emotional overwhelmed and greater stress. The level of stress was reported to be increasing, especially in heads of households, because the routine of families must often change to deal with this context and because there is a constant concern about the consequences in the coming months.

Even so, Uruguay has a public and private health system. The public health system is free and available to all citizens and legal residents of the country. According to the latest report of the Ministry of Health, 64% of the population uses the public health system even though many families live far from areas where there are public health centers.

### Life expectancy:

Life expectancy at birth in Uruguay is currently around 77 years for men and 83 years for women. Since 1960, life expectancy has increased by more than 20 years for both.

### Infant mortality:

Uruguay's infant mortality rate is one of the lowest in Latin America, with 6.7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2020. Since 1990, Uruguay's infant mortality rate has fallen by more than two-thirds.

Noncommunicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes, are the leading cause of death in Uruguay. According to the latest report from the Ministry of Health, 88% of deaths in the country are due to noncommunicable diseases.



## Livelihoods And Basic Needs

### Household economics and sources of income:

Most households reported having at least two economically active people who contribute to the household economy. Of this, close to 45% are men, while women usually dedicate themselves to household chores and the field. Of the total number of families evaluated, 17% are dedicated to livestock and 6% to agriculture, while 55% of the families reported that their main source of income is related to the collection of social plans such as child allowances, retirement or pension. Additionally, close to 48% of the people who maintain the household economy are self-employed and depend on production or the availability of employment or temporary jobs, mainly related to the livestock or agricultural sector.

As a result of the droughts, more than 53% of families evaluated reported to have had their sources of income affected. Of this, 25% reported decreased access to water for animals, 16% reported decreased access to drinking





water for them, 16% reported the loss of crops, and 15% reported the loss of animals. Families usually harvest pastures to feed their livestock on their own land, with spring and summer being the seasons of greatest growth and harvest (as reported by the National Institute of Agricultural Research) In these seasons, families tend to generate reserves for the winter period, a time when pastures do not grow because the cold and short days do not allow it. However, the current droughts are preventing families from continuing this practice and they are being forced to use animal feed rations that are usually reserved for the winter season (1)

As mentioned before, 16% of families reported to have lost crops which they used for self-consumption and not for commercial purposes. With droughts and the impossibility of irrigation due to the lack of water, added to the heat waves, family gardens have been lost and people has been forced to access their daily food only through shopping in local businesses or neighbors in the area. Additionally, given the lack of resources, 9% of the families reported to have opted to borrow money for the purchase of animal feed and stockpiling for the winter, which increases family debts and ends up being a dangerous short-term strategy.

The consequences of droughts compromise not only production in the short term, but also in the medium and long term. It is estimated that recovery after a drought event could take between 2 and 3 years. Since fewer offspring are born, not enough pasture can be generated to store food for the spring and the reserves planned for the winter are being consumed.

Markets, access to cash and inputs:

More than 61% of households evaluated indicated that prices have increased due to droughts in recent years, agreeing that the largest increase is seen in household food and in the costs of labor inputs. Many families also say that the supply of markets is already beginning to be affected and fear that in the coming months it will be more difficult to buy food for animals and seeds. Consequently, the prices of the products will continue to increase and families will be forced to implement severe coping mechanisms such as selling animals that they have bought at less than half their initial value.

Technical information on livestock and agriculture:

Families of small producers have expressed the need to receive information related to droughts (40%) and technical recommendations to take into account in the coming years. They affirm that the situation and this new context has reached a scale not experienced before and that they do not have the tools, resources, or knowledge necessary to deal with it. Therefore, families have indicated that they want to learn about new methodologies, products or tools for planting and livestock that adapt to this new reality that came to stay for several more years.

Sources:

(1) Seasonal pasture calendar: <https://www.inia.uy/publicaciones/bovinos-uruguay/calendario-estacional-de-pasturas-para-ganado-bovino-en-el-uruguay.pdf>



## Community Engagement And Accountability

During the evaluation phase, special emphasis was placed on issues related to communication with other members of the community, information received, distinguishing lack of information perceived by people and the most appropriate means of communication to generate a direct link with the communities.

Although 83% of families indicate that there are no community meetings, it is often mentioned that useful spaces for exchange could be generated and that rural schools could be conducive spaces for this purpose.

Regarding flow of information, 52% of families said that they are not receiving information through any means, or only through the mass media. However, they indicate that the information is very general but they would like



to have a reliable source of information. For example, there have been government plans or programs related to field crops but they were not aware of their existence until after the deadline. In this sense, the need for better communication channels was specifically highlighted.

Since these are rural communities, far from large cities, services and activities require a specific communication channel that guarantees closeness to people and disseminate messages and important information, both related to emergencies and of a general nature. The channels that are most comfortable for the community to receive this information are radio, social networks and television. On the other hand, to communicate with other members of the community, family and friends, 58% use mobile phones and 24% use social networks.

For this reason, during the evaluation stage, a WhatsApp mailing list was launched with all the people who selected to be interested in receiving information from the Uruguayan Red Cross since 99% of the population reports knowing how to read and prefer the Spanish language for the reception of messages.



## **Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery**

As noted in the assessment report, the departments and areas where the damage and needs assessments were conducted are registered within the departments with the highest percentage of people living in rural Uruguay, San José (17.6%), Florida (16.0%) and Tacuarembó (15.6%) (Source: National Institute of Statistics).

Out of the total number of families evaluated, only 5% of the families reported to having faced other types of emergencies such as floods. In some of these areas, there is also presence of strong winds (11%) or thunderstorms that can damage housing structures such as roofs or water tanks in height, but it is not a recurring event but rather isolated. However, out of the total families evaluated, 59% of them reported that the most recurrent event they have faced in the last five years is related to droughts, and 100% of them affirmed that this has been the most severe drought since 1988. Families even speak of a mixture of conditions that make the event even more complex and that lead families to face even more extreme situations than previously in similar events. For example, heat waves. During the first months of the year, Uruguay registered high temperatures that ranged between 36-37°C and reached a maximum of 41.4°C (Source: <https://www.inumet.gub.uy/sites/default/files/2023-03/informe%20estacional%20VERANO%20V2.pdf>).

The anomalies of average temperature are remarkable, and last summer (December to January) was historic with a positive anomaly according to the Uruguayan Institute of Meteorology (INUMET, for its initials in Spanish): "Considering the summers of the last 42 years, the DEF quarter 2022-2023 was positioned in the first place with regard to the average maximum temperature, being the summer of 1989 the one that is located in second place." This situation, added to the lack of rain typical of droughts, means that both people and animals require greater hydration, and that crops and pastures fail to survive.

On the other hand, many families express that the monoculture of eucalyptus has had negative effects, since each tree consumes a large amount of water and produces a significant loss of organic matter and increased acidity of the soil. Finally, 66% of people say they have not received information, suggestions or recommendations regarding droughts prior to this stage of greatest impact, so it is important to promote a network of information and dissemination of messages that allow families to respond to the current situation or prepare in advance using measures to minimize future damage.



## **Protection, Gender And Inclusion**



According to the 2021 Gender Equity Index, published by the United Nations Economic and Social Development Organization (UNDESA), Uruguay ranks 36th worldwide in terms of gender equality. In terms of protecting the rights of the LGBTIQ + community, Uruguay has been recognized as one of the most progressive countries in Latin America. Even so, within the rural communities that were evaluated, there is evidence of some biases of discrimination or gender violence, and people with disabilities and older adults or children who may be in a situation of greater vulnerability than other types of population groups.

Therefore, for the intervention, it is of great importance that the strategy has an inclusive approach in each and every one of the workspaces, avoiding discriminating for any reason the participation of people who want it. For this, the guidance document entitled "Implementing Minimum Standards on Gender and Diversity in Emergency-Motivated Programmes" provides practical guidance on how to do this.

## Operational Strategy

### Overall objective of the operation

After the results obtained with the DREF for Assessment, the operation will transition into a DREF for Response through which the Uruguayan Red Cross aims to contribute to improving the living conditions of 12,000 people (2,400 families) affected by droughts in the departments of Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleya and San José through the implementation of actions in the areas of Livelihoods, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion and Multipurpose cash assistance.

With the results obtained during the assessment phase, differentiated actions have been planned in each of the departments according to the needs identified and the types of response prioritized by the communities

### Operation strategy rationale

The National Society will work in direct coordination with SINAE to respond to this emergency. SINAE will be the focal point for the rest of the Ministries and State Agencies.

The last DREF for droughts requested by the National Society was in 2018 (Tacuarembó). Through this operation and others (Migration Call / COVID-19), the National Society has gained experience related to operations management and has trained volunteers in the department branches. It has also maintained relationships with SINAE since then, which continue to date to provide joint coordination. This was one of the key points to improve within the last DREF and it has been taken into account by the National Society. Also, in the aforementioned DREF operation, the importance of the inclusion of communities and local actors in the evaluation and planning stage was identified, and this has been considered for this intervention and future operations. Finally, given the distances between families within the rural context (another relevant aspect in the analysis of lessons learned), intervention strategies have been considered in strategic points of the communities for better access to the services provided.

The summary of the intervention will be as follows:

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:

- 2,400 families (12,000 people) of all prioritized departments (Cerro Largo, Lavalleya, San José, Florida and Tacuarembó) will receive awareness talks on water care, potabilization and safe storage of water.
- 400 family water purification kits will be distributed in all the prioritized departments (Cerro Largo, Lavalleya, San José, Florida and Tacuarembó.), since during the assessment stage, the lack of this input was identified in all households.





- 50 pumps for semi-surgent wells will be distributed in the department of Cerro Largo, so that together with the Departmental Emergency Coordination Centre, families will have a well for water supply.
- Water storage elements (tanks, tubs or jerry cans) will be distributed to 50 families (250 people) in the department of Tacuarembó, where a lack of supplies for safe water storage was identified.

#### Livelihoods:

Technical talks on rural work and climate-smart livelihoods will be given to 250 families (1,250 people) in the departments of Cerro Largo, Lavalleja and San José and a specific cash transfer program for Livelihoods will be developed for 200 families (1,000 people) in the departments of Lavalleja and San José.

The technical talks related to new livestock practices aimed at adapting to the climate consequences in recent years will be taught by personnel from the Ministry of Livestock and will be coordinated through SINAIE. This will provide technical tools to affected families to develop their resilience in future similar events, where they can put into practice what they have learned.

With respect to the cash transfer program, an amount of CHF 500 is proposed for the time being, which will enable families to partially cover the costs of fodder for animal feed for one month. The costs of agricultural products in Uruguay are high and have increased as a result of the drought. This generates the need to implement direct response actions with higher amounts than the National Society has implemented in the past. For instance, the average cost of fodder for one head of cattle for 2-3 days is 500 Uruguayan pesos (12 CHF), so a family with 10 head of cattle will need approximately CHF 1,800 to cover the animals' feeding needs for one month. Normally, families grow their own fodder during the summer season (when, according to the seasonal calendar, fodder grasses grow in greater quantity and quality) to have reserves during the winter (when, due to shorter days and prevailing frosts during the night, the grasses do not grow in sufficient quantity), but this year, due to the extreme summer drought, they have lost the investment of the crop, as it dried up. It is important to mention that the cash transfer amount to be provided to each family will depend on the amount of livestock that they have and their source of income, which will be identified through a feasibility study to be conducted in the first days of the intervention.

#### Multi-Purpose Cash:

In the department of Florida, a variety of needs were identified around the increase in costs due to the drought, the need to acquire new debts to alleviate the situation and the loss of crops for livestock feed.

Therefore, a one time multi-purpose cash transfer program will be developed for 100 families (500 people) for a total amount of CHF 500 per family to cover the basic food basket needs of each household for two months. This amount is approximate and estimated based on the information collected in the evaluation surveys as well as the basic food basket in the country. Currently, the basic food basket in the rural cities of Uruguay is approximately CHF 210. However, it should be noted that due to the droughts, the cost of products such as fruits and vegetables has increased by an average of 20% nationwide. Consequently, the specific amount to be received by each family (CHF 500) is aimed at covering the household basic food basket needs for two months. The amount and the transfer modality will be confirmed once feasibility study is completed.

The Uruguayan Red Cross has implemented multipurpose cash assistance in the past. In previous interventions, the National Society (NS) has used the modality of preloaded cards provided by a local supplier with whom there is an active agreement (Prex). Also, in the last DREF Operation, a cash transfer program was implemented for rural population in the modality of checks with a private bank.

For this DREF Operation, given that these are remote populations with limited access to ATMs or nearby banks, the modality to be used will be selected once the feasibility study is finalized.

#### Community resilience focus:

In all instances of outreach through workshops and awareness-raising, efforts will be made to link sectoral themes to community resilience development strategies. The National Society will work in collaboration with the Climate Center of the IFRC to monitor the drought-related forecast and its evolution until the end of the operation and have a projection for the following months. Finally, efforts will be made to develop a project linked to climate resilience (in



line with the Global Climate Resilience Program) that can complement the project already initiated with the Italian Red Cross. This will help to determine the best exit strategy for this operation and how to continue working with SINAE, CECOED and the affected communities.

CEA:

As a result of the assessment conducted, where the majority of people indicate that they are interested in receiving information through various media, information will be disseminated to the communities through a WhatsApp mailing list. Additionally, printed materials will be generated to be distributed to those people who do not use digital media with information of interest and contact with the National Society throughout the response process.

The channels for receiving complaints and suggestions are active and will be available during all response activities. At the end of the operation, a lesson learned workshop will be held to report on best practices and areas of improvement for future experiences.

Similarly, together with the communications area, dissemination strategies will be developed to keep both the community and partners and collaborators informed about the stages of the response.

## Targeting Strategy

### Who will be targeted through this operation?

This operation will concentrate on the five most affected departments of the country and the response will be diversified depending on the needs of each department. The National Society will work to contribute to improving the living conditions of 12,000 people (2,400 families) affected by the drought in the departments of Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja, and San José, where, although there is a response being provided by the SINAE through the CECOED, a complementary response is still necessary, such as the one that the National Society can provide through its territorial network of branches.

As mentioned above, the effects of droughts have reached a large number of people throughout the country with different types and degrees of impact. On one hand, 2.3 million people are affected by the prohibition of using water for non-essential purposes, which requires strategies to reduce water use compared to normal times. Similarly, 409,115 people are directly affected by living in the departments most affected by the drought and water shortage, and it is estimated that 20,000 people require immediate humanitarian assistance due to unmet needs and damage to their livelihoods.

Out of the 2,400 families selected, about 200 families have been identified with livelihood needs (in the departments of San José and Lavalleja), 100 families with diversified needs related to basic needs to be addressed through multipurpose cash (in Florida), as well as 50 families with needs related to water storage and 50 families with needs related to access to drinking water in Cerro Largo and Tacuarembó that require more specific and urgent attention.

### Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

As this response will target families and communities with different characteristics in five different provinces, the target populations vary within each department and each sector of intervention. However, the following groups will always be prioritized:

- Families in context of vulnerability.
- Single-parent or female-headed households
- Families with elderly people, children or people with disabilities.
- Families that do not receive any type of benefit or support from any other organization.

The criteria for selecting the groups to be reached under each sector of intervention includes:

WASH:

- Families with no or almost no water availability.
- Households without safe and sufficient methods for water purification and storage.



#### Livelihoods:

- Households whose livelihoods depend on livestock or agriculture and whose incomes have been affected as a result of the drought.
- Households that have lost part or all of their livestock feed plantations.
- Households that have had their marketing plantations partially or totally affected.

The amount to be allocated to each family will depend on the amount of livestock and their source of income which will be determined through the feasibility study to be conducted in the first days of the intervention.

#### Multipurpose cash:

- Families whose source of income has been affected and cannot be fully recovered in the short term.
- Families that have had to go into debt as a result of the drought.
- Families with diverse unmet basic needs that cannot be met with livelihood support.

The needs of all population groups will be considered, taking into account age, sex, gender and people with disabilities or with special needs or requirements; therefore, within the prioritization process, special attention will be given to situations of single-parent families with dependent children, people with disabilities or elderly people.

## Total Targeted Population

Women:	3,720	Rural %	Urban %
Girls (under 18):	1,320	90.00 %	10.00 %
Men:	5,280	People with disabilities (estimated %)	
Boys (under 18):	1,680	4.00 %	
Total targeted population:	12,000		

## Risk and security considerations

### Please indicate about potential operational risk for this operations and mitigation actions

Risk	Mitigation action
The difficulty of access to remote areas.	There will be a vehicle prepared to enter this type of terrain and coordination will be made with SINAE for the use of vehicles or trucks prepared for this type of soil if necessary.
Increase or permanence of heat waves during the operation	Recommendations will be prepared and shared with all personnel involved in the operation. These recommendations will serve to prevent any incident such as heat stroke. Hydration and protective equipment (sunscreen or hats) will also be provided for all personnel.
Lack of scarce integration of the communities in the execution of possible future actions.	Community commitment and responsibility will be ensured through feedback mechanisms.
A low number of volunteers due to holidays.	There will be a survey of volunteers in the subsidiaries near the affected areas to assist the operation with per-





sonnel or volunteers from other subsidiaries who can travel to support the activities of this operation.


**Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation**


With regard to the main safety problems that may arise in this operation, include: - Difficulties related to the health of personnel and volunteers due to the effect of heat waves.

Risks related to driving on the routes between the different destinations to be evaluated. To mitigate this type of risk, the National Society will provide the necessary protective equipment to each person participating in the operation and will have personnel trained in first aid at the activities to respond to any inconvenience that may arise. The National Society also has a vehicle and driving safety plan and will only use authorized and trained drivers to drive institutional vehicles.



# Planned Intervention

	Health	Budget		CHF 511
		Targeted Persons		0
Indicators		Target	Actual	
Number of first aid kits completed		4	4	
Progress Towards Outcome				
During the ninth week of the operation, the purchase process has been carried out for the acquisition of first aid supplies for the first aid kits that were used during the evaluations in the different vehicles. The supplies purchased include supplies for dry medicine cabinet, splints and tourniquet.				

	Water, Sanitation And Hygiene	Budget		CHF 66,592
		Targeted Persons		12000
Indicators		Target	Actual	
Number of families reached through the delivery of water storage supplies.		50	0	
Distribution of family purification supplies		400	0	
Distribution of pumps for semi-emergent wells.		50	0	
Number of people reached with WASH sensibilization		12000	0	
Progress Towards Outcome				
New activities included as part of the Operations Update No. 1: - Distribution of supplies for water storage - Distribution of family purification filters - Distribution of pumps for semi-emergent wells - Awareness of care, purification and safe storage of drinking water				

	<b>Community Engagement And Accountability</b>	<b>Budget</b>		CHF 2,130
		<b>Targeted Persons</b>		5000



Indicators	Target	Actual
Percentage of people satisfied with receiving distributions in good quality and with dignity	90	0
Number of people receiving relevant information related to droughts	5000	0

### Progress Towards Outcome

New activities included as part of the Operations Update No. 1:

- Generation of a strategy for the dissemination of key messages and recommendations relevant to the community.
- Activation of a hotline to address doubts and queries from the community.
- Dissemination of information on government assistance and programmes of interest to the rural population.
- Activation of a community feedback mechanism through focus groups, surveys and interviews
- Activation of a channel for receiving complaints and comments from the community.

	<b>Secretariat Services</b>	<b>Budget</b>	CHF 85,360
		<b>Targeted Persons</b>	0
Indicators	Target	Actual	
Humanitarian Information Analysis Officer	1	1	
CVA Coordinator	1	0	
WASH Coordinator	1	0	

### Progress Towards Outcome

New activities included as part of the Operations Update No. 1:

- Surge deployments:  
1x CVA Coordinator (4 months)  
1x WASH Coordinator (3 months)

Monitoring missions:

To date, a monitoring visit has been carried out by the Coordinator of Programs and Operations of the delegation of the countries of the Southern Cone to follow up on the actions carried out and to be able to work on updating the operation. During this visit, different meetings were coordinated through the VIII UNDRR Risk Management Platform in conjunction with the regional director and the head of the Delegation of the countries of the Southern Cone, SINAE and the National Society, which served as a review and coordination of next steps.□

Surge Humanitarian Information Analysis Officer:

A person from the Delegation of Venezuela was deployed through the Surge system to support this position for a total of two months (February and March). This person supported the team that collects the information in the field, in the processing and analysis of the data collected, as well as in the preparation of the final report.



	<b>National Society Strengthening</b>	<b>Budget</b>	CHF 48,479
		<b>Targeted Persons</b>	0
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	
Lessons learned workshop	1	0	
Data collection and analysis workshop	1	1	
Purchase of equipment to conduct evaluations (3x tablets)	3	3	

### Progress Towards Outcome

Purchase of equipment for evaluations.

The National Society has acquired elements that were used for data collection during the surveys and will be used to develop future evaluations or during the response stage of this operation, if required. A data collection and analysis kit was created consisting of the following elements: safe storage case for supplies, tablets, portable chargers, universal cables, charger tokens and a wireless modem for use with cell phone chips.

Purchase of personal protective equipment for volunteering:

The purchase process has been carried out for the acquisition of personal protection supplies for volunteers and personnel who will work during the evaluations. The supplies purchased were the following: hats with visor and mosquito repellent (in bracelet and spray mode) that were complemented with sunscreen donated to the National Society by a private company.

Data collection workshop (ODK – KoBo):

Workshop held in the Hall of headquarters, with a face-to-face modality and a duration of 8 hours. The content of the workshop consisted of: What is a DREF, Description of the DREF, Actions to be implemented, Tools to be used for data collection, Introduction to Kobo, and how data collection works with tablets.


A description of the interview to be conducted with families, practical exercise of data collection and Q&A was also carried out under a theoretical and practical component, where half of the session was practical to ensure that participants could receive timely feedback. A total of 12 people attended, of which 9 were volunteers and 3 staff from Headquarters (4 men and 8 women) and there were 2 facilitators.


Lessons learned workshop.

At the end of this first stage, a meeting will be held internally in the National Society that will serve as a review of what has been developed to date. This meeting will work on the positive aspects and aspects to improve to have recommendations for the next stage of response of this action plan. At the end of the operation, a lessons learned workshop of the entire operation will be conducted.

		<b>Budget</b>	CHF 119,003
		<b>Targeted Persons</b>	1250



	<b>Livelihoods And Basic Needs</b>		
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	
Number of families that received cash to recover their livelihoods	200	0	
Feasibility and market study	1	0	
Number of people reached through technical awareness of rural work.	1250	0	
<b>Progress Towards Outcome</b>			
New activities included as part of the Operations Update No. 1: - Feasibility and market study. - Design and distribution of the cash transfer program. - Post-distribution monitoring of the cash transfer program. - Technical awareness of rural work.			

	Multi-purpose Cash	Budget	CHF 59,315
		Targeted Persons	500
Indicators		Target	Actual
Number of families that received cash for their basic needs for 2 months		100	0
Feasibility and market study		1	0
Progress Towards Outcome			
New activities included as part of the Operations Update No. 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Feasibility and market study.</li><li>- Volunteer induction for the development of the cash transfer program.</li><li>- Design and distribution of the cash transfer program.</li><li>- Post- distribution monitoring</li></ul>			

# About Support Services

## **How many staff and volunteers will be involved in this operation. Briefly describe their role.**

A total of 30 volunteers will work for this operation, from which 15 are part of the National Intervention Team, and 5 people from the Headquarters team.

Throughout the operation, volunteers from nearby departments will be deployed as back-up and replacements to relieve local volunteers in order to reduce the "burn out" effect. All volunteers and HQ staff will be insured and provided with the necessary personal protective equipment.

## **Will surge personnel be deployed? Please provide the role profile needed.**

SURGE support is required for this operation, the profiles to be recruited include:

- 1x Humanitarian Information Analysis Officer (2 months) - Deployed during assessment phase.
- 1x CVA Coordinator (4 months) - To be deployed for the response phase.
- 1x WASH Coordinator (3 months) - To be deployed for the response phase.

The National Society will manage and coordinate the operation through its risk and emergency management directorate in close collaboration with the program and operations coordination of the Southern Cone countries' delegation. This is why priority is given to the mobilization of technicians specialized in CVA Livelihoods and Wash.

## **If there is procurement, will it be done by National Society or IFRC?**

All procurement related to this operation will follow the IFRC's standard procurement procedures, National Society financial SOPs and Sphere Standards for household item purchases. The National Society and CCD for South Cone will coordinate with the Americas Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) for any major procurement (replenishment). The National Society has the capacity in the procurement processes through logistics personnel at headquarters to buy the necessary supplies for the operation in a centralised manner to regulate the items needed to respond to this emergency.

## **How will this operation be monitored?**

Reporting on the operation will be conducted in accordance with the IFRC's minimum reporting standards. A final report will be issued within three months of the operation's completion. The results of past lessons learned will also be presented to the implementation team, and the corresponding reports' preparation will be monitored. The CCD for South Cone will also assign a dedicated Project Manager to support the National Society. The IFRC's PMER and finance team will also provide necessary support and guidance to the National Society operations team to ensure that IFRC policies and procedures are followed during the implementation of the planned activities under the DREF.

## **Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation.**

During the assessment stage, the National Society disseminated its activities in the field through social networks (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) through images and videos, in turn news was generated on the web in order to keep the community in general updated on the actions developed. These campaigns sought to explain what a DREF is and what it consisted of, its scope and make visible the actions in each of the departments. This information was complemented by publications with key messages and recommendations in the face of the emergency. Various instances were also managed with the main media of the country, where the Presidency, Executive Directorate and the management of the DREF provided information and updates on the progress of the operation. It is foreseen the contracting of external audiovisual services that allow to maximize the scope of our contents and the correct diffusion of them. All volunteers and staff who participate in the activities receive key messages about the operation and the organization, in order to unify criteria and the information we provide.



# Contact Information

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

- **National Society contact:**

Paula Vairoletti, National Director for Risk Management and Disaster Response, paula.vairoletti@cuzroja.org.uy, +598 98 463 972

- **IFRC Appeal Manager:**

Daniel Bolaños, Head of Country Cluster Delegation, daniel.bolanos@ifrc.org, +54 9 11 3396 2819

- **IFRC Project Manager:**

Melina Miele, Programs and Operations, Coordinator, melina.miele@ifrc.org, +54 9 11 5471 2155

- **IFRC focal point for the emergency:**

Melina Miele, Programs and Operations Coordinator, melina.miele@ifrc.org, +54 9 11 5471 2155

- **Media Contact:** Camila Rodriguez, National Communication Coordinator, comunicacion@cuzroja.org.uy

[Click here for the reference](#)

