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Final Report

Marshall Islands/ Northern Pacific: Drought Response

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation	**Operation n° MDRMH002**
Date of Issue: 30 December 2022	**Glide number:** DR-2022-000176-MHL
Operation start date: 27 February 2022	**Operation end date:** 30 September 2022
Host National Society: Marshall Islands Red Cross Society	**Operation budget:** CHF 221,332
Number of people affected: 4,480	**Number of people assisted:** 32,835
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation: The National Society is working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), American Red Cross (AmCross) and Australian Red Cross (ARC), and New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC).	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Government has released its RMI drought response plan for general circulation. This plan details the work of the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster. The cluster consists of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), International Office of Migration (IOM), Ministry of Health and Human Services (MOHHS), Majuro Atoll Waste Company (MAWC), Majuro Water Sewage Company (MWSC). The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) leads the cluster, in which the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS) is also a member.	

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster

Located just north of the Equator in the Pacific Ocean, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) comprises 1,200 islands, islets, and atolls with a land area of 180 square kilometres. Common to most countries in the region, RMI faced increased challenges from climate change and natural hazard-related disasters.

The US Drought Monitoring Report received through the RMI National Weather Service Office (WSO) on 24 December 2021 indicated extreme drought for the Northern Marshall Islands. According to the Drought Information Statement (DIS) issued early in January 2022, some Northern islands reported limited to no rain during the first week of January and these conditions persisted during the following months. The classification of moderate drought (D1) was introduced for the Wotje atoll. Atolls near and North of Wotje faced the prospect of similar drought outlooks.

Due to the continuation of dry conditions in the northern islands west of the Republic, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) activated the National Emergency Operations Committee (NEOC) on 1 February 2022. The NEOC initially developed the “Immediate Drought Response Plan” in response to the critical conditions reported from 14 neighbouring islands. The RMI Government then released for general circulation the: "Immediate and Early Drought Response Plan for the Republic of the Marshall Islands.”

Led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the WASH Cluster organized a meeting to initiate partner coordination. The first meeting was held in January to provide technical input to the Drought Response Plan. The second meeting was held in February to review the plan with partners after the plan was endorsed by parliament.

Summary of drought impact
The severity of the drought conditions in the affected areas was categorized as follows:

- D3 (Extreme drought) in Wotje and RMI atolls.
- D1 (Moderate drought) in Kwajalein/Ailinglaplap (RMI).
- D3 (Extreme drought) in the Northern Marshall Islands near and north of Majuro. This included, but was not limited to, Wotje, Ailuk, Mejit, Wotho, Utirik, Maloelap, Ebadon, Namu, Jabot, Aur.

Many catchments were very low or empty, some wells were salty, however, well water levels were still decent. Catchment water was used for drinking on many islands, with some using coconuts for hydration. Plants were negatively impacted, and some fruits were dropping prematurely. Some islands had reverse osmosis units (RO), but many were inoperable. Many islands, at the time, had only two to four weeks of water supply remaining if no rain fell. Rains were predicted to return around mid-to-late March and there were expectations for waning La Nina conditions during the next few months.

It was anticipated that even if the rain had started to fall for the most drought-affected atolls/islands the impact of the drought condition would continue for several months. It would have taken months for water sources to replenish, for water quality to improve, and for lost crops to be replanted and harvested. Importantly, although RMI can receive large quantities of rainfall, its storage capacity is limited, thus, groundwater supplies are very limited. It has been estimated that due to evaporation, only 50 per cent of the rain falling on Majuro contributes to replenishing the freshwater lens beneath the island.

Rains were predicted to return around mid-March based on long-range model output and the expectation was for waning La Nina conditions in June onwards. There were also conflicting signals about how long the drought would last in the northern Marshall Islands. Climatologists predicted that rain (more than 4"/month) was likely by April, but confidence was low about when rains would return. Based on all guidance, it seemed likely that rain would return around mid to late March.

Drought conditions did ease during May with the onset of some heavy rains. By June, however, dry conditions lingered with extreme drought persisting in Wotje, in nearby atolls, and islands north of Majuro while moderate drought affected Kwajalein and Ailinglaplap[1]. During July and August, widespread rainfall across the drought-affected areas occurred, however, no official ending of the drought was announced by local authorities. The WASH cluster discontinued its operations in August and shifted its focus to the COVID-19 response, aligned with local government priorities.

Summary of response

Overview of Host National Society

Timeline	Activity
26 January – 1 February	• MIRCS communication officer attended the first meeting with NDMO staff and posted the drought press release from the NDMO office on MIRCS Facebook. This was shared with the network of staff and volunteers. • The National Disaster Committee approved the press release. • The WASH Cluster shared the Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) form and requested the MIRCS disaster management team, Ebeye branch and IFRC for support in adapting a drought detailed assessment form for a house-to-house needs assessment.
16 February	• MIRCS Secretary-General, disaster management officer and IFRC DRM delegate attended the second meeting of the WASH Cluster on 16 February 2022. During this meeting, the RMI Government Drought Response Plan was shared and MIRCS' role in the Drought Response plan was agreed upon. The agreed role of MIRCS was to: o assist with carrying out IDA in the outer islands o provide a detailed assessment of the situational impact o support the supply of RO spare parts o provide maintenance training for focal persons in charge of the RO units in the outer islands in partnership with IOM o provide technical support o provide water containers and hygiene kits o provide hygiene promotion and water safety measures in the outer islands. • This complemented Government measures and supported the outer island's efforts to respond to this event, while the Government focused on providing technical support.
	• The climate and DRM officers revised the drought assessment form and reviewed it against the NDMO Drought Situation Overview (DSO) assessment form.

[1] Republic of the Marshall Islands – Disaster Management Reference Handbook, December 2022

24 February	• MIRCS deployed the DRM officer as part of the initial situation overview (ISO) assessment with the WASH Cluster Committee determining the level of damage in Likieb Atoll as part of overview monitoring by the WASH cluster.
25 February	• MIRCS deployed the DRM officer as part of the ISO assessment with the WASH Cluster Committee to determine the level of damage in Wotje. Only 19 households were assessed by MIRCS due to grounding flights only availing 4 hours for the team to carry out their ISO. • A budget briefing discussion with Branches - Jaluit and Ebeye branch coordinators and all staff and volunteers in Majuro was conducted.
March	• Ebeye branch carried out assessments in Lib Island. • Headquarters and IFRC met with Deputy Chief Secretary who was also the Acting Director for NDMO discussed the Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) and budget and the way forward. • Namdrik Atoll Assessment was completed. • Hire of Finance Assistance for the short term was completed. • Hire of Logistics Surge locally was completed.
April	• Ebeye Branch carried out assessments in Mejatto- Ebandon, Namu atolls. • Jaluit Branch completed the assessment in Jabbort. • Logistics – procurement of water containers, buckets, soaps, and hand sanitizers was completed. • Fleet and drivers' authorization completed for all staff. • Finance procurement SOP signed off and disseminated to all staff in HQ and branches. • International Shipping of RO Unit spare parts was negotiated with the supplier and commenced.
May	• Assessment form printing was completed. • Resupply and printing of local IEC materials with key messages from MOHHS were completed. • Local media campaign, utilizing radio and Facebook, focusing on prevention measures for waterborne diseases was conducted by the MIRCS Communications officer. • Logistics briefing with local volunteers was held. • International Shipping of RO Unit spare parts negotiation with the supplier was conducted.
1 – 14 June	• Procurement of hygiene kits was processed locally. • ECV refresher discussion and agenda was finalized, and the training date was confirmed. • Data analysis and distribution plan were completed.
15 July – 30 September	• Procurement of hygiene supplies was completed. (Clorox and Soap) • RO Unit maintenance training for 13 outer islands RO unit focal co-facilitated with the WASH sector member was completed. • Hygiene supply distribution (Chartering boat, transporting supplies to the dock) was finalized. • Execution of the drought supplies distribution plan was finalized. • Handwashing techniques were demonstrated along with item distribution to communities. • IEC pamphlets were printed and distributed along with hygiene items. • Conclusion of distribution was achieved on 30 September. • Community feedback collection through door-to-door conducted with the distribution of non-food items (NFIs). • Lessons Learned workshop was completed for MIRCS internal staff and volunteers.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC was supported in-country through a DRM delegate stationed in RMI for the North Pacific sub-delegation, advising the National Society's planning and response. IFRC Pacific country cluster delegation in Suva, Fiji, and ICRC Pacific delegation provided remote technical assistance towards the operation through the coordination of updates and information to all regional partners and technical support. Specific IFRC in-country support included:

- Provision of technical assistance with adapting the drought assessment tools, supporting data collection, reviewing, analysis methods and approaches.
- Provision of guidance to MIRCS for planning and mobilization.
- Coordination of information disseminated to partners both locally and regionally.
- Provision of guidance for information management, reporting, and the drafting of the EPoA and accompanying budget for the MIRCS operation.
- Financial acquittal review and submission.
- Drafting of operation updates (OU#1 and OU#2).

MIRCS was an active member of the National Disaster Committee (NDC) and coordinated its efforts under the NDMO leadership in partnership with local governments throughout the response. The ICRC and IFRC supported the MIRCS communications officer in carrying out the dissemination of information and communication plans that the MIRCS was undertaking during this response.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country
A sound foundation for collaboration was established through the coordinated effort from NEOC members led by the NDMO. The combined response for the drought is outlined below:

Table 1: The cluster's activities and responses undertaken in response to the dry conditions.

Cluster/Sector	Response	Partners
WASH	Verified and collated an updated drought status with the National Weather Service Office and other International Agencies	RMI WSO/NOAA[2] NDMO
	Contacted NDMO Outer Island focal points /and Atoll local governments to collect updated data for drought by filling out the Drought Situation Report (DSO)	NDMO Outer Island Focal Points, Atoll Local Governments
	Conducted coordination meetings	NDMO, EPA, IOM, MIRCS, NDMO, MWSC, MAWC.
	Drafted request memos to IOM and MIRCS for further assistance in providing RO unit parts and a full set of RO units.	IOM, MIRCS, NDMO, EPA
	Conducted RO units inventory and maintenance	NDMO, MWSC, IOM, MIRCS

Details on the last available status of the Reverse Osmosis (RO) units' functionality, according to an assessment conducted by NEMO, are detailed in table 2 below. Of the 17 units, ten were reported as not working. The need for an additional eight units was identified, according to the assessment.

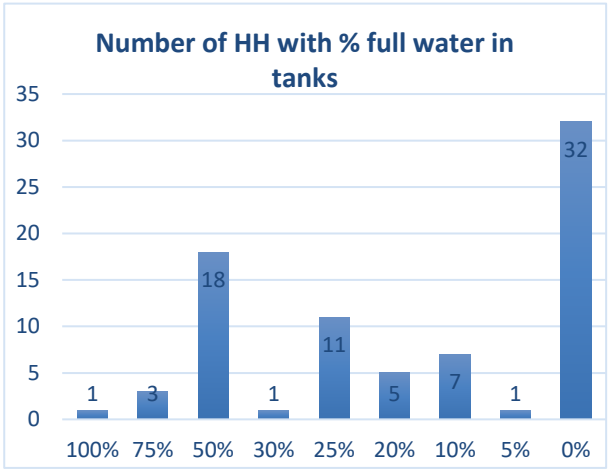
Table 2: Northern and Kabinmento RO units' status as of September 2022

Atoll	Total # RO	Status	New RO requested	Parts requested for RO's
Utrok	1	Operational	0	Batteries provided
Ailuk	1	Operational	0	All Spare parts replaced
Wotje	2	2 RO units on the island and they are both working	0	Maintenance and assessment completed in August
Aur	2	Operational	0	Batteries provided
Maloelap	4	Returned to Majuro	1	Replaced spare parts no new RO unit provided
Likiep	2	Operational	0	Batteries replaced
Mejit	1	RO unit not operational	0	Needs 1 RO. RO returned to Majuro
Jaluit	0	No RO on islands	1	Needs 1 RO
Ujae	0	No RO unit on island	1	Need 1 RO
Lae	0	No RO unit on island	1	Need 1 RO
Wotho	1	Operational	0	Regulator replaced
Lib	1	Operational	0	Pump provided
Namu	0	No RO unit on island	4	Need 4 RO units
Mejjato	1	Not Operational	0	Returned to Majuro
Ebaddon	1	Operational	0	Spare parts replaced
Jabot	0	No RO		Assessment done
Ailinglaplap	0	No RO		Assessment done
Namdrik	0	No RO		Assessment done
Total RO	**17**		**8**	**ROs required plus parts**

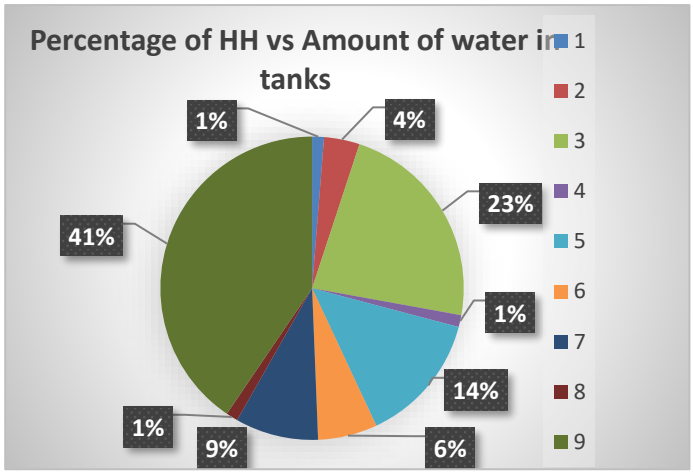
Coordination was crucial for the operation's success due to the distances between the affected atolls/islands, the limited means of transport, and the scarcity of transportation. The RMI Government released a plan titled, "Immediate and Near-Term Drought Response Plan for the Republic of the Marshall Islands" for general circulation. This plan detailed the work of the WASH Cluster, which consisted of NDMO, IOM, MIRCS, MOHHS, MAWC, MWSC, and was led by the EPA. The WASH Cluster was requested by the NEOC Chair (NDMO) to develop an immediate drought response plan.

The EPA carried out the ACWA (Addressing Climate Vulnerability in the Water Sector) project Technical Design Survey mission to Aur Atoll, the community of Tobal and Aur in late January.

[2] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



Amount of water in the 79 households surveyed in both Tobal and Aur communities.



Percentage of households in both communities with different levels of water in water catchments. (1-100%, 2-75%, 3-50%, 4-30%, 5-25%, 6-20%, 7-10%, 8-5%, 9-0%)

A total of 79 households were surveyed during this mission to assess the status of water supply. The following information was gleaned:

- 41 per cent of the households' reported that water catchments were empty
- 28 per cent of water catchments were at one-quarter capacity or less
- 23 per cent of water catchments were at half capacity
- only about five per cent of water catchments were near full
- only one per cent of the HH had a full tank
- over a third of HH had empty tanks

Communal water sources were also assessed and found to have the following capacity.

- Aur UCC church had three buildings with only one concrete water catchment with water level at about 20 per cent of total capacity.
- Aur Elementary School had two buildings with five water catchments: four - plastic water catchments are about 80 per cent full and the concrete catchment is completely empty.
- Aur Mon Council had two 1,500-gallon water tanks with one tank empty and the other at 25 per cent capacity.
- Aur Assembly of God Church was without a water tank.
- Aur Health Centre had two 1,500-gallon water tanks that were at 75 per cent capacity.
- Tobal airport terminal had one empty 750-gallon water tank
- AOG church was without a water tank.
- Tobal Health Center had four water catchments however, the team did not check the amount of water in them.
- Tobal Mon Council had a 1000-gallon water tank that was at 20per cent capacity.
- The UCC church had three buildings with one plastic and one concrete water tank. The 750-gallon plastic water tank was leaking and was empty, whereas the concrete tank was at 20per cent capacity.
- Tobal Elementary School had two main buildings with six water catchments (five plastic tanks and one concrete water tank). The concrete water tank was also being used by WIU staff, who were constructing the seawall at the airport. Two of the 1500-gallon were at 20 per cent capacity, the 750-gallon water tank was empty, and two of the 1000-gallon water tanks were both at full capacity.

In terms of water quality, the assessment team surveyed 54 groundwater wells during this mission and found the following: 93 per cent of the groundwater wells were of freshwater quality, and seven per cent were found to be slightly brackish. Groundwater was mostly used for washing and bathing, but some households used the wells for cooking purposes and drinking during this dry period. The systems, however, were highly sensitive, especially during dry periods. When lower rainfall persisted with higher temperatures, the groundwater resources of these atolls decreased, with less rain-fed recharge, increased evaporation, and increased water demand. Additionally, with sea-level rise, the freshwater lens which floats above a mixed saltwater base caused it to be elevated. This was likely to result in increased lateral saline mixing, increased evaporation through wells and increased loss of freshwater by coastal leakage. Saline water would be brought within reach of coconut and other tree crop roots or wells, pump intakes, and generally, freshwater

resources would be lost.[3] Possible increased storm surges accompanied with sea level rises and subsequent 'wash processes' would render groundwater saline until a state of stability returned, which would only be possible if the sea level rise ceased.

Both RO units in the two communities were found to be non-operational. The team was informed that the RO units required new batteries, as indicated in the table above.

The following additional elements were implemented and transferred as part of the normal program approach after the operation:

- Press releases and radio announcements were given to the communities and outer islands through the local government representatives in Majuro. The MIRCS communication officer established the Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) feedback mechanism and collected verbal feedback over the phone from the Outer Island Representatives while the implementation was underway. Community leaders met before the assessments, by EPA and MIRCS, to garner community support for the response and to provide local knowledge on assessment areas.
- The outer island atolls did not have access to the internet, phone lines were intermittent, and communities were heavily dependent on radio announcements for information. Focal people on the islands had sporadic access to network connectivity to relay requests to Majuro. HF Radios were commonly used to relay urgent messages to Ebeye, Majuro, and Jaluit.
- EPA continued to monitor freshwater lenses and rainwater harvesting efforts in the outer islands

Needs analysis and scenario planning

The press release by NDMO in January 2022 recommended general advice to the communities focussed on water conservation, cleaning water catchments, and advice about safe drinking water. The advice also flagged health risks associated with the consumption of poor-quality water, the importance of remaining hydrated and hand washing.

The anticipated needs identified during assessments were that there would be:

- Health needs: Due to a lack of safe water, diseases would spread. Outbreaks of diarrhoea and sickness linked to inadequate waste disposal could increase health risks and environmental degradation. Also, the socio-economic impact of the drought and the uncertainty/insecurity may have impacted the mental well-being of those affected.
- Food security and livelihood needs: Severe water shortages that lead to a loss of crops become critical for food security. The limited crops that can grow in the hostile atoll environment would likely continue to wilt and become inedible. The income for the atoll population was highly dependent on fishing and the selling of local produce. Dependency on canned and imported goods would increase, resulting in further risks of non-communicable diseases (NCD).
- Socio-economic needs: Droughts also have had socio-economic impacts. During extreme events, community gatherings were anticipated to be disrupted, schools, church gatherings and normal social practices were expected to decrease. Given this, there may be poor coping behaviours that can increase the risk of violence.

Targeting
Based on the Drought Situation Overview assessments done by NDMO outer Island focal points from the reported atolls /islands the drought had affected some 9,326 people (1,524 households) across the 17 atolls/islands in the North and West of Majuro. The RMI Government estimated that more than 9,000 people (18 per cent of the RMI total population) had experienced limited to no rain from the past two to three months prior to the assessment.

Targeting of protection gender and inclusion (PGI) was reviewed after assessments were completed and those most vulnerable requiring special assistance were revised/confirmed. The estimate was based on six per cent of the population requiring specific support.

Risk Analysis
The main operational risks identified for the operation are as follows:

- **Transport**: Planes leave Majuro every Friday, but it is difficult to confirm seating and boat transport is unpredictable. Therefore, the timely delivery of activities, scheduled in the timeline, was at risk given the unpredictable transport options available. Regular liaison with transport providers was conducted to assist with ensuring that transport

[3] Climate Country Risk Profile: Marshall Islands, World Bank (2021) HERE

options remained available and to anticipate the likelihood of delays so that contingency arrangements could be made.

- **Poor weather conditions** contributed to the delay of implementation given the remoteness and difficulties associated with travelling to the island locations. Monitoring of weather conditions was conducted by staff and contingency options were planned in case of delayed transport services occurred.
- COVID-19 outbreaks in communities located in the outer islands h would isolate them, and no one will be allowed to travel inter-island as part of the future prevention plans by the Ministry of Health. Where possible, contingency plans were made with outer island stakeholders in anticipation of such events.
- Procurement for materials/repair parts for the RO units might be delayed due to complex needs or procurement challenges such as identifying suppliers of materials. This would impact operationalizing the RO units, maintenance, and community access to clean water. In the logistics section below, relevant procurement timeframes, which were supported by IFRC CCD and Australia Red Cross, are detailed.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Proposed Strategy

This operation aimed to provide support to the RMI Government Drought Response Plan through the collation and analysis of more detailed data at the household level. This included providing support to:

- Develop and adapt a detailed needs assessment tool specific to drought
- Purchase and transport of the RO spare parts (shared cost with IMO)
- Distribute WASH items (shared costs with cluster)
- Develop training for the maintenance of equipment and household hygiene promotion and water safety awareness
- Print and translate hygiene and water safety IEC materials from previous responses (designed by the WHO[4]).

During the response, all activities were planned according to the RMI COVID-19 safe protocols. Forty volunteers provided the operational support for this operation - ten from each branch: Ebeye branch, Jaluit branch, Majuro and the outer island focal persons. Nine staff from the branches and headquarters also supported the response. Specific operational support was provided as follows:

Communications and CEA

- MIRCS has a strong communication team supported by ICRC and the IFRC communications manager. The MIRCS invested in training communication volunteers to support collating evidence and stories from the response. Internet and phone lines 2G and 4G were easily accessible on the main island. In Kwajalein and Ebeye, most of the outer islands affected by drought had no access to the internet and very sporadic access to the 2G network.
- Most CEA activities, particularly in the outer islands, were challenging to implement due to access and communication constraints. These constraints were largely overcome by utilizing existing communication channels, such as radio talk-back shows where the population could share what the assistance did to them and with door-to-door visits with the volunteers as a follow-up during the distribution.
- CEA capacity of MIRCS was new however, they had trained staff and could lead the CEA design and approaches. The MIRCS contextual knowledge enabled them to adapt their approach to ensure proper CEA throughout the response.
- MIRC monitored CEA implementation activities. This was supported by the IFRC Climate and Resilience and CCD PMER delegates.

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER)

- The RMI National Weather Service monitored water safety and weather context.
- The WASH Cluster Lead headed the coordination and monitoring of the activities with support from NDMO.
- Relevant participating government agencies monitored the implementation of their plans and activities. These were reported to the WASH Cluster through coordination meetings. NDMO were mandated to report to the NDC meetings when called.

[4] https://cities4health.org/assets/library-assets/handwashing-alternatives-20200608-(1).pdf

- MIRCS monitored the operational activities, with support provided by the IFRC DRM and CCD PMER delegates. This included conducting a lessons-learned workshop at the end of the operation. Monitoring was also conducted through CEA methods.

Logistics

- Local procurement was possible however, the suppliers are limited. Only a few service providers had systems to support a proper procurement process beyond the basic purchase. The IFRC CCD logistics manager sought guidance and support to ensure the local procurement was in line with the standard IFRC procurement process.
- MIRCS owned one pickup truck that was used for disaster response activities. For other MIRCS activities, rental vehicles were hired on a needed basis. The MIRCS has a vehicle policy that needs strengthening by the management.
- Necessary transportation services that were utilized include road and inter-island transport. Limited service providers were available.
- The main air freight terminal for the RMI was closed to operations and COVID-19 restrictions required pre-approval by the NDC for all arriving international flights to comply with the RMI Pandemic Travel Safety Program.
- Assistance to the IOM with identifying RO spare parts suppliers was achieved through the logistics manager in the IFRC CCD. Logistics delegates in the Australian Red Cross support IOM and GoP with their procurement.
- Following the distribution plan, the replenishment of the stocks was achieved locally. Basic logistics training was required for the MIRCS and this was organized by the CCD. An IFRC volunteer provided in-house support throughout the operation, and a surge delegate provided support for the supply chain management. Transportation from Majuro to nearby islands was via airplane or boat. The Likiep atoll and most atolls were equipped with airstrips that were utilized by the team for air travel. Staff were on the ground for a maximum of four to six hours before returning to Majuro. The outer islands further away were accessed by boat and travel was weather dependent. This took between two to eight days.
- IOM and MIRCS prepositioned WASH supplies in Mjuro, however as the capacity to reach outer islands were restricted. Shipment required bigger freight vessels and a coordinated effort among partners.
- Total stock count at the end of operation was as follows:

Hygiene kit	Kitchen set	Bucket	Shelter tool	Tarpaulin	Mosquito net	Blanket	Solar Lights	Jerry Cans
0	109	0	99	199	24	208	39	240

Security

- There were low-security issues in RMI, especially in the outer islands. The MIRCS's security framework will be applicable for the duration of the operation to their staff and volunteers.
- In case there was a need for deployment of personnel under IFRC security responsibility, including surge support, the existing IFRC security plan was applicable.
- All IFRC personnel were required, and Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers are encouraged to complete the IFRC Stay Safe e-learning courses. Staff and volunteers were made aware of the security situation and briefed on restrictions and reactions in an emergency before deployment in the operational area.
- All field missions that were undertaken by IFRC personnel were undertaken following the IFRC travel approval process, health advisories and business continuity planning (BCP) guidance regarding COVID-19. There were no significant security issues or threats for MIRCS and IFRC staff during the operation.

Finance

- MIRCS had only one finance officer who was fairly new to the organization and her role. Therefore, support from the Board members and one part-time consultant was given to bring their finance and administrative functions up to speed.
- The IFRC finance team in the Pacific CCD office supported financial matters and reports.
- Australia and New Zealand Red Cross delegates mentored the finance network in the Pacific and gave remote training and technical advice to the finance staff. The MIRCS had limited funding for programs, and the Government supported them with a small portion of its annual budget.

Information Communication Technology

- Information Technology, including the cost of communications (telephone, etc.), was detailed in the operational support budget however, a dedicated person was required for data entry and to provide oversight and analysis support to ensure the WASH Cluster received a timely analysis of the situation for planning purposes.
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C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

Health

People reached: 11,705
Male: 3,862
Female: 7,843

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

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of people reached with health promotion as a response to an emergency by community-based volunteers	9,326	9,320

Health Output 4.1: Community-based disease control and health promotion is provided to the target population

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of people reached with health promotion as a response to an emergency by community-based volunteers	9,326	9,320

Narrative description of achievements

- With COVID-19 Vaccine rollout continuing from February to May in the outer islands, the MIRCS Health team had been using the same window to roll out community-based disease control messaging to communities it visited in four outer islands.
- Eight[5] neighbouring islands were also reached with house-to-house community-based disease control and health promotion while the teams were deployed to do house-to-house assessments.
- In close coordination with the MOHHS, the media teams did talk back radio show, relaying preventative messages and addressing disease outbreaks both in Majuro, Ebeye and Jaluit.
- MIRCS Media team posted through social media the work of the MIRCS during the response to the drought conditions and hosted a radio talk-back show in collaboration with the NDMO to share the best ways to save water during drought conditions.
- Outreach teams were posted as a commemoration of World Red Cross Day on the week of 9 – 13 May to disseminate 1,000 IECs (posters) regarding saving water and handwashing in 8 locations around the main islands- Majuro, Ebeye and Jaluit.
- Amplified efforts to reach more population on Majuro, Ebeye and Jaluit utilizing the Epidemic Control for Volunteers utilizing these from house to house.


- On radio, talkback shows and health promotion were conducted weekly with coverage only in Ebeye and Majuro on the same issues. The focus was on health issues arising due to the lack of access to clean water, and how to address these issues.

[5] *Although WASH assessments were completed in nine islands, only eight were reached with health awareness messaging due to time limitations. One outer island was not reached at this time.*

- Established community surveillance steps together with the MOHHS Health Assistance (HA) on the islands on their role in addressing health issues associated with drought was also achieved in consultation with the HA.

Challenges

Teams that were conducting house-to-house campaigns were debriefed on the key challenges and lessons learned of rolling out health promotion and most answers were:

- Timing of door-to-door had to be arranged around the community's busy schedule.
- Transportation to neighbouring islands was unreliable and the team needed to stay longer on one island delaying the work for the next island. Availability of seats was also an issue.
- Health awareness, when done with the communities, was often combined with many other diseases that the information becomes overwhelming, and communities lost interest.
- Most volunteers conducting health promotion were not equipped to be on their own- staffs need to accompany them.
- Media access from the outer islands was limited to radio broadcasts only.
- IEC materials were too wordy and most needed a translation.

Lessons learned

- Health promotion focused on COVID-19 risk reduction was often misunderstood and communities were unwilling to absorb what was taught.
- More teams and more resources were required for the Ebeye branch implementation as the costs allocated to the health promotion activities were insufficient to cover the islands the Ebeye Branch covers.
- Jaluit Branch didn't have access to print IEC so had to make use of health communication messages that were relayed to the Branch coordinator by phone.
- MOHHS lacked sufficient staff to be allocated to support the operation. Subsequently, this resulted in coordination conducted through the Mayor's offices and HA in all islands involved in the operation.

Health Outcome 6: The psychosocial impacts of the emergency are lessened

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of people who receive mental health and psychosocial services in emergency situations from RCRC.	9,326	2,360

Health Output 6.1: Psychological first aid (PFA) support provided to the target population as well as to RCRC volunteers and staff

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of staff trained to provide psychological first aid PFA	40	25

Narrative description of achievements

- Briefings with the Branch staff and their volunteers (11 males; 4 females) included providing a short information session on PFA.
- An assessment of PSS needs and relevant resources available in the community was completed. As part of the household assessment, it was the leaders from each team engaged with communities to discuss some of the stress associated with the lack of water and the major concerns about what had been affected by the lack of water. A total of 1,690 people (328 households) were reached with these assessments and were provided with PFA by the team leaders.
- An additional 15 volunteers were briefed on PFA in August as part of the efforts to augment in amplify community outreach activities through an integrated approach.

Challenges

- Most of the MIRCS teams had a very tight timeline allocated for community visits due to logistical constraints. Consequently, this resulted in the inadequate time available for teams to accurately determine community PFA needs. The lack of time spent in communities also limited the extent that rapport could be established.
- The directory of PFA services was only accessible via online access or phone connection. This meant that access, for those in need, is problematic given that communities have no or very limited access to these means of communication. Consequently, with no other options, the teams informed those needing support to contact local police and church groups for support.

- Communities were not open to visiting teams discussing issues as the approach was new to them and the teams were not permanently working with community members on longer-term and sustainable programming.

Lessons learned

- PFA interventions must be part of the initial response of the MIRCS. Communities appreciate it more if the volunteers and staff can stay longer to implement more MHPSS interventions.
- Rapport needs to be established between MIRCS personnel (staff and volunteers) and with communities for PFA to be effective.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene

People reached: 15,306

WASH Outcome 1: Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water related diseases in targeted communities

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of people targeted for WASH assistance in the response phase	9,326	9,320

WASH Output 1.1: Continuous assessment of water, sanitation, and hygiene situation is carried out in targeted communities

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of target communities/sites with WASH situation assessments conducted at least once	17	17
# of volunteers trained in WASH M&E	49	40

Narrative description of achievements

- The development of the drought (water, sanitation, and hygiene) assessment form with minimum standards for PGI in emergencies was completed with guidance from the IFRC climate centre adviser and DRM delegate, and it has been uploaded on Kobo for digital collation.
- 40 MIRCS volunteers (16 male; 24 female) have been trained in carrying out the water, sanitation, and hygiene assessment- 15 in Ebeye, 6 in Jaluit and 19 in Majuro. These training were completed with their 4 deployments to areas divided for each of the Branches and HQ to cover.

Majuro Volunteers being acknowledged and thanked by President Dr Pinano and Staffs for their support during Drought Response. (Photo: IFRC/Lemau Afamasaga)

- The combined effort by MIRCS and WASH cluster members enabled developing community awareness and training of people who were not in target communities about the storage and management of water tanks. Specific training of the population of targeted communities on safe water storage and management was also conducted.
- Continuous monitoring of water, sanitation, and hygiene situations in targeted communities was conducted. Each neighbouring island community had a water monitoring person, that conducted the monitoring for their islands and sent monitoring reports to the Lead of the WASH Cluster monthly. The majority of these water monitoring personnel were also trained on reporting issues from their assessments

- In close coordination with the WASH Cluster and the NDC, a RO technician training was held for 4 days in Majuro to train 18 RO unit technicians on how to troubleshoot and maintain the existing RO units.


Participants attending RO unit technician training. (Photo: IFRC/Lemau Afamasagaa)

- Seventeen targeted neighbouring islands completed an initial assessment of the water, sanitation, and hygiene situation. However, with some of these islands, only a small percentage of the island was assessed due to the lack of timing allowed by grounding flights. The majority of the assessments were also very concentrated on the main atoll, and the inlets around the atolls were not covered due to the lack of transportation and fuel available to get to them. For example, Jaluit has 21 inlets inhabited by some households, but only two could be assessed, and the rest of the inlets' information will be gathered using pre-existing secondary data collated from other ministries.
- Analysis and assessment of the approach to support these outer islands were done through the data collection team of volunteers at Majuro with assistance from the WASH cluster. The approach of the EPoA remains the same, with some of the requests being covered by other WASH actors. Most of the neighbouring islands have requested support in fixing their RO units and this is in the Government's plan of action with support from IOM.

Challenges

- Community transmission of COVID-19 within RMIs derailed the schedule for distribution to the outer island. Thankfully the NDC understood the activities and allowed the shipment and deployment of personnel from Majuro only to happen at the end of August to September with very strict testing protocols for all personnel deployed.
- The international shipment of items had issues with procurement where the supplier refused payment from IFRC as the contract to supply the items was with the government and the agreement with the government was done without any agreement with a third party, however, the team was able to persuade them to accept the payment from IFRC as it is the only funding available to support government efforts.
- Flights for 2 RO unit focal points were delayed for over three weeks resulting in MIRCS office and other partners responsible for bringing them in having to fund their cost of living whilst in Majuro. Consequently, some unbudgeted costs exceeded the budget limit.

Lessons Learned

- Negotiation of agreements between the Government and suppliers and having IFRC vet suppliers prior to the agreement would help future international procurement arrangements.

WASH Output 1.2: Daily access to safe water which meets Sphere and WHO standards in terms of quantity and quality is provided to target population

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of people that have access to sufficient safe water	9,326	9,320

- The NDMO office partnered with MIRCS to bring in spare parts for the broken RO Units. These spare parts were identified in the first assessment round and were procured internationally with the assistance of only one vendor in the country Moana Marines.
- A boat was chartered, and six volunteers and staff assigned for the operation, travelled for a week to carry out distributions of WASH items to the outer islands affected.
- Spare parts for RO units requiring maintenance were procured and RO unit maintenance focal people for all 17 affected units, provided the necessary maintenance to the RO units. For units that were beyond repair, NDMO requested for them to be shipped back to Majuro and technicians from MWSC were asked to investigate these units. Government plans to replace them with new ones from funding sources outside of the response plan.

- Distribution of NFIs to all affected Islands including the provision of storage facilities such as water buckets and disinfectant solutions, which were done together with a demonstration of treating water by EPA. IEC materials were distributed to communities as beneficiaries ensured that the beneficiaries were receiving clean and sufficient safe water.


Community members receiving NFIs. (Photo: MIRCS)

Challenges

- RO units currently in service in all three islands were damaged. As a result, the boat chartered by MIRCS was used to transport the units back to the capital.
- Buckets and water bottles distributed for water storage were asked by community members if they could be distributed to everyone instead of just the selected families
- Distribution of items without proper understanding of those doing the distribution caused some confusion from the beneficiaries and their neighbouring families complaining that they missed out.

Lessons Learned

- The selection process of beneficiaries needs to be re-examined again in the future with a view to developing a better process that results in greater precision.
- Consultations and arrangements done through the RO unit technicians need to also be communicated and discussed with Mayors and local group leaders to ensure no one is left without.

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 people reached by hygiene promotion activities	9,326	15,306

Narrative description of achievements

- Designed/printed IEC materials - 300 completed. One of the key elements used for the door-to-door, distribution and assessment campaigns was to also distribute these to all public places, neighbouring islands dispensaries and clinics, as well as individual households. Talking through these materials so that all that had access to these Posters understood what they meant.
- Hygiene promotion conducted through media, Facebook, and handwashing demonstration was integrated into the HH assessments.
- Handwashing techniques, cleaning storage containers and gutters clearance were demonstrated to community members. Status of RO units inspected during the trip.



Handwashing demonstration in the outer islands by MIRCS personnel. (Photo: MIRCS)

- Hygiene promotion was also done through radio talkback shows and through the COVID-19 rollout as an integrated messaging platform for the 17 targeted communities.
- Mass telephone texts were also sent to all subscribers to the National Telecommunication Authority (NTA) about the importance of hand hygiene.

Challenges

- The communication plan was developed at the last minute and dissemination of the messages to the population was conducted in a rush.
- Access to mass text was only within Ebeye and Majuro and some parts of the neighbouring island with communication towers but not all in the affected areas received the text messages
- Training of volunteers to carry out the communication strategy was not completed as there were competing priorities for these volunteers to attend to.

Lessons Learned

- Devising the communication strategy needs to be established prior to any disaster response as a whole of NS approach and standard options as there are not many needs to be developed into an SOP for any disaster response
- In addition to communications training, volunteers need to be recruited for and trained on DM- preparedness and response means.

WASH Output 1.5: Hygiene-related goods (NFIs) which meet Sphere standards and training on how to use those goods is provided to the target population

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of the most vulnerable people reached by hygiene kits	400	400

Narrative description of achievements

- Determined the needs for hygiene NFIs, including soap, hand sanitizer, water storage, and menstrual hygiene for each community based on health risks and user preference in targeted communities in coordination with the WASH cluster and other WASH actors.
- Local procurement of soaps, hand sanitizers, and water storage containers has been completed.
- Local procurement of hygiene kits has been completed.

- Distribution of hygiene items was arranged for all local government representatives to collect their hygiene kits from the Red Cross and distribute to identified 400 households in the neighbouring islands targeting the most vulnerable population, especially households with people with disabilities. Distribution of hygiene items alongside the orientation to the islands within the reach of the headquarters and deployment teams were conducted directly by MIRCS staff and volunteers.


Distribution of hygiene items by MIRCS personnel. (Photo: MIRCS)

Challenges

- Distribution done by the local government representatives was based on the listing that was given and some were left out as their names were not captured during the assessment and validation process.
- Establishing contact with local focal points was through the NDMO and local government, and delays in acceptance from local counterparts in the neighboring island forced the team to drop NFIs and depart to the next destination returning only when the local distribution volunteers and island government representatives were available for distribution.
- Limited timing for distribution (1 hour in Maloelap, 2 hours Mejit) forced the team to change their strategy and worked with some of the local representatives to brief them on how distribution is done, the items distributed usage, and signatures of forms for proof of acceptance from beneficiaries.
- Some of the local leaders were not cooperative in Wotje. The local church (The main gathering hall for the community) was not provided. The team improvised and used another location to demonstrate handwashing techniques and carry out the distribution.
- Mejit Island focal point was not informed on the day of arrival for distribution. Due to this, a slight delay was experienced in transporting items from the boat to the shore.
- Lack of standard items locally and cost of items are higher than expected.
- Back ordering of some of the items meant that the distribution plan was delayed while awaiting the arrival of supplies from overseas through the local supplier.

Lessons Learned

- Notifying outer island focal points prior to departure will greatly benefit distribution in a timely manner.
- Reservation of community hall/center prior to departure in advance will ensure a suitable site for the community to gather for demonstrations and other activities.
- Prepositioning of standard items by Branches will expedite the assistance available to those islands nearer to Ebeye and Jaluit Branch instead of centralized stocks deployed from Majuro

Protection Gender and Inclusion

People reached: 40
Male: 24
Female: 16

Outcome 1: **Protection, Gender & Inclusion Outcome 1: Communities become more peaceful, safe, and inclusive through meeting the needs and rights of the most vulnerable.**

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Does the response adhere to IFRC Protection, Gender and Minimum Standards	Yes	Yes

Data collected is segregated according to sex, age, and disability.	Yes	Yes
Volunteers briefed on CoC and relevant policies	40	40

Narrative description of achievements

All the activities below have been completed through the planning phase and the drought assessment form development:

- Conducting the assessment for specific needs of the affected population based on criteria selected from the minimum standards for PGI in emergencies. (This is integrated into the IDA with other sectors)
- Support sectoral teams (WASH and health) to mainstream gender and inclusion in their planning including measures to address vulnerabilities specific to gender and diversity factors (including people with disabilities) in their planning
- Selection of recipients of distribution with criteria of households with people with disability was done through a partnership with the WASH Cluster and the office of the Outer Island clinics under the MOHHS.
- Support sectoral teams to ensure the collection and analysis of sex-age and disability-disaggregated data
- MIRCS staff and 40 volunteers were briefed on MIRCS policies including the code of conduct, PSEA and child protection/child safeguarding policies
- For SGBV, MIRCS reports to and partners with other capable actors. This is done through PFA however, SGBV was not an issue identified in the assessment.

Challenges

- For SGBV, MIRCS reported to relevant stakeholder organisations. This was achieved through PFA where PFA volunteers referred SGBV survivors to MIRCS partners who had the capacity to respond to cases of SGBV. SGBV, however, was not an issue identified during the assessment. The reason for this is not certain but may be due to the sensitivity of the topic resulting in communities not wanting to openly discuss it.
- National staff were not keen to change the way data collection was done, even though the forms are inclusive the collection came back as incomplete. Efforts were made to fill in the missing data with discussions with the EPPSO (Economic planning and statistics office*)* office and MOHHS
- Trainings were done virtually through the support of IFRC, and follow-up on the ground was very minimal as the teams were scattered at different times and on different neighbouring islands making monitoring and evaluation very difficult.

Lessons Learned

- MIRCS needs to carry out more discussions and training on the issue of SGBV and how to address issues where access to referral systems is inaccessible
- More work is needed for the digital assessment forms and integration of disaggregated data collection needs to be stressed to all staffs and volunteers
- Further training is needed to understand the analysis of data and the importance of these data in selecting beneficiaries
- Further training in the country needed for the PGI Minimum standards and implementation through other programs needs to be discussed with management and not just during response time.

Strengthen National Society

Indicators:	Target	Actual
Volunteers that are insured and equipped to perform their duties	Yes	Yes
Number of staff and volunteers engaged in the lessons learned workshop	45	18
Number of volunteers insured	45	45

Narrative description of achievements

- Prior to deployment, all volunteers had briefing sessions on safety and behaviour appropriate for field deployment as well as ensuring that they were adequately briefed on customary rules of where they are going. No incidents were reported to the HQ.

- Provided psychosocial support to volunteers which was achieved through debriefing after they return home. Most only suffered from heat exposure during deployment, had high spirits and were intent on participating with future operations.
- Training on the Assessment and Promotion of Health and WASH is done through the Branches and the HQ staffs.
- Financial assistance hire was completed however the selected candidate started further educations at summer school and was no longer available for employment. The MIRCS management were unable to rehire further financial assistance.
- Acknowledgement of volunteer's contribution through presentation of certification and refreshments was carried out by the MIRCS board and management
- The insurance list was submitted to the IFRC volunteer senior officer and was able to confirm that all volunteers have been insured.
- Uniforms and IDs were printed and issued to all volunteers in HQ and Branches for visibility.
- A lessons learnt workshop was conducted for two days. The first day was for internal staff, volunteers and board members. The second day was for external partners to participate in a virtual lesson learnt workshop and for staff to engage with a team building activity. The lessons learned workshop report was facilitated by the Climate Action Officer. The overall structure for the workshop was a review of what went well and what didn't go so well. A reflection of the challenges and key recommendations for future operations was conducted. The following provides a summary of the workshop outcomes.

  Finance:
  - Good communication with the Branch
  - Branch was submitting financial paperwork most of the time
  - Felt supported by Ebeye branch on missing documentation

  Communication:
  - Able to get some radio and IEC completed
  - First time to develop a communications plan for an operation
  - Maintaining the visibility of the branches and headquarters as good as the information and the data made available by staffs and volunteers

  Disaster Management:
  - Assessment process was supported by the branches well with limited resources available
  - First experience carrying out an operation but felt supported through the assistance from IFRC

  Logistics:
  - HQ supported with training Branches on Logistics forms, requisition, and waybill; Goods Received notes (GRN)

  Health:
  - Reach the people through the work of the branches

  Board & Management:
  - All financial requests were approved and signed by the board

  - During Q and A sessions, attendees were requested to submit their feedback via slido.com. Responses were recorded and are as follows

    - *'How supported were you in your role and representing the MIRCS to National meetings, and other areas of the response?' Results for this question were spread broadly across the range from minimal support provided to strong support.*

    - *'How effective do you think our MIRCS response was from December 2021 until now to this disaster?' 11 responses were received with the majority (64%) voting for 'somehow effective'. This highlighted the logistical and distribution issues which did not go according to schedule or were delayed due to the COVID response*

Challenges

- Participation from some partners in the lessons learnt workshop, conducted virtually, was unsuccessful as most had a prior engagements and were unable to attend. Their feedback, however, was collected through and online questionnaire. Most feedback was positive of the level of support provided by the MIRCS towards the operation.

- A lack of consistency in volunteer coordination negatively impacted the implementation of the operation at all levels. Staff responsible for volunteer coordination did not have the capacity to provide coordination due to a lack of understanding of the overall response plan from the leadership team
- Volunteers in branches did not receive their support allowances on time and continued additional days of work without pay.
- Recruitment and mobilization of volunteers was very slow due to planning challenges from HQ and this resulted in a low motivation of volunteers interested in supporting the operation.
- Poor problem-solving skills of peers compounded difficulties of issues that needed to be resolved.
- The office was too small for all personnel involved in the operation and a lack of resources contributed to poor performance among peers.

Lessons Learned

- Where possible, lessons learnt workshops should be facilitated in person rather than virtually
- Participation from partners needs to be better coordinated, invitations to be shared well in advance and followed up with reminders
- Volunteer recruitment, coordination and retention need to be conducted by someone organized and not over tasked with duties for other sectors of the response. Dedicated personnel, responsible for volunteer mobilization, is key to the success of any MIRCS operation
- Financial management needs to be punctual to avoid losing the momentum of the operation
- Each department must collaborate to train and develop pool volunteers to ensure they have adequate capacity for the tasks that they have been assigned.

International Disaster Response

Indicators:	Target	Actual
NS implements CEA mechanisms	Yes	Yes
Transportation and logistics effectively support the operation	Yes	Yes

Narrative description of achievements

- The CEA rollout was completed during the last month of the operation. Communities visited during resource distribution were consulted for their feedback regarding the level of MIRCS assistance received and most feedback was positive.
- Use of feedback mechanisms, via Facebook and phone, was limited to Majuro and Ebeye only however feedback from communities residing in neighbouring islands was achieved by word of mouth through the volunteers.
- Basic logistics training (provided by the IFRC CCD Pacific Logistics Manager) for DMO of MIRCS in Majuro was completed, while Surge support provided on-the-job training to the two branches. Recipients of the training included two regular volunteers from Majuro. These trainings included warehouse, procurement, and fleet management.
- Development of MIRCS Fleet policy was completed and signed off by the SG.
- Development of the procurement and payment SOP was completed and disseminated to all staff and volunteers.
- Logistics management support (Surge) was hired locally and was done so for a 4-month contract period.
- Part of the surge role was to ensure good management for warehousing, goods reception, forwarding, fleet, fuel costs, customs clearance of drought, and COVID-19 response.
- Chartered boats for distribution to neighbouring islands and hired local outer island trucks were used for the transportation of people and resources from docks to distribution points.
- Interisland transportation was hired to distribute people and goods to inlets on the mainland.

Challenges

- Basic logistics training was done however the consistency in the use of SOP and forms was lacking practice from staffs.
- Management resources and storage needed significant supervision and attention because casual workers responsible did not demonstrate leadership in management of the storage space.
- Transportation to outer islands was costly and very few could support the distribution.
- A rental fleet option to operate on islands was not possible because MIRCS did not have a proper agreement with fleet suppliers. Furthermore, credibility and trust from most of the suppliers were not in favour of the MIRCS operation

- Outer island cost of fleet and fuel was expensive, typically double the price compared to Majuro and very few up-to-standard fleet options were available.
- CEA implementation was conducted too late in the operation and its rushed implementation resulted in compromised quality.

Lessons Learned

- Greater allocation of budget to meet the expense of transport reach to out islands is required.
- Management resources and storage require a dedicated staff member or volunteer for the task to be managed effectively.
- CEA training and approach for MIRCS needs to be refocused. Having one person champion CEA under the communications portfolio may need to be readjustment. A systematic feedback mechanism needs to be established
- Unless the prior financial management issues are resolved, the MIRCS relationship with vendors and suppliers may need to be addressed by the Board and senior management.
- Staff and volunteer capacity to manage fleet, warehousing and handling of NFIs needs to be increased and reinforced.

Influence others as leading strategic partner

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of communications pieces released regarding the drought situation and operational response.	4	4
NS is present on social media regularly posting activities and needs.	Yes	Yes

Narrative description of achievements

- Communications work – photography and videography including collecting human interest stories from the ground was collected and editing was conducted in Marshallese. The release of results remains pending at the end of the operation due to the unavailability of the service provider.
- Facebook posting was conducted with resources provided by field-based volunteers and staff
- Four press releases were achieved through newspaper and Radio 103.5 which announced drought assistance provided by MIRCS to the affected islands

Challenges

- This was the first operation that the RMI communications personnel had to develop a communications plan specifically for drought response. Competing priorities, including the COVID-19 response and other demands, negatively impacted the implementation of the operation.

Lessons Learned

- Select key volunteers and train them to capture videos of all aspects of the operation – this would avoid being dependent on service providers
- Planning cooperation and collaboration for fresh communication products and informative reports are required from field-based personnel. Setting deadlines for submission from program staff is recommended.

Effective, credible, and accountable IFRC

Indicators:	Target	Actual
NS financial acquittals are submitted monthly	Yes	Ongoing
# of lessons learned completed	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

- MIRCS financial acquittals and support was very slow and challenging, which resulted in an extraordinary extension of the operation for one more month to allow completion of submissions of payments

- Lessons learned completed and allowed some space for team building as this is the first time most of them have operated on several responses simultaneously with very little capacity and training

Participants of Day 2 from partners and staffs and volunteers (Photo: IFRC)

Participants in a team building activity- Day 1 Lessons learned session (Photo: IFRC)

Challenges

- Finance personnel lacked experience in dealing with multiple pledges, therefore there was always a delay in payments being made and reporting of activity expenditure.

- No financial separation of accounts and slow posting resulted in very slow progress
- Staff did not adhering to proper procurement procedures, consequently it unnecessarily burdened the finance team with additional administrative tasks.
- Incomplete procurement administration resulted in queries presented to IFRC from previous acquittals were rejected. This caused a significant administration burden that needed to be addressed.
- Insufficient financial administration capacity was caused by the early departure of the financial assistance officer and the inability of MIRCS to recruit a replacement.
- The administrative demands associated with handling multiple funding sources were overwhelming for the one junior staff
- Financial management capacity of MIRCS leadership was limited.

Lessons Learned

- Hire of full-time personnel to deal with future operations management and to assist with reporting will improve management of future operations.

D. Financial Report

The total budget for the DREF operation was CHF 221,332. By the end of the operation, an expenditure of CHF 164,609 was recorded (74.4 per cent of the budget). The balance of CHF 56,723 will be returned to the DREF pot.

The remaining budget allocation was not spent. This was due to the delay in the administration of acquittals and the reduced rate of implementing operational activities. The sudden surge of COVID-19 cases in August 2022 heavily impacted the planned activities including restriction of movement and diverting some resources in supporting local authorities as highlighted in Operations Update number 2 of this response.

The major donors and partners of the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, German, 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. The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

Full financial report is attached at the end of this report.

Contact information

Reference documents ↘

Click here for:

- Previous updates
- Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)

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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.

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2022/2-11	Operation	MDRMH002
Budget Timeframe	2022/2-9	Budget	APPROVED

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 20/Dec/2022

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRMH002 - Marshall Islands - Drought Response

Operating Timeframe: 27 Feb 2022 to 30 Sep 2022

I. Summary

Opening Balance	**0**
Funds & Other Income	**221,332**
DREF Allocations	221,332
Expenditure	**-164,609**
Closing Balance	**56,723**

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items			**0**
PO02 - Livelihoods			**0**
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash			**0**
PO04 - Health	19,559		**19,559**
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	94,596		**94,596**
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	2,937		**2,937**
PO07 - Education			**0**
PO08 - Migration			**0**
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery		164,609	**-164,609**
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	21,052		**21,052**
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			**0**
Planned Operations Total	**138,143**	**164,609**	**-26,465**
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			**0**
EA02 - Secretariat Services	76,765		**76,765**
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	6,423		**6,423**
Enabling Approaches Total	**83,189**		**83,189**
Grand Total	**221,332**	**164,609**	**56,723**

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2022/2-11	Operation	MDRMH002
Budget Timeframe	2022/2-9	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 20/Dec/2022

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRMH002 - Marshall Islands - Drought Response

Operating Timeframe: 27 Feb 2022 to 30 Sep 2022

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	**50,153**	**23,048**	**27,104**
Construction Materials		66	-66
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	50,153	6,587	43,565
Medical & First Aid		4,864	-4,864
Utensils & Tools		10,325	-10,325
Other Supplies & Services		1,206	-1,206
Land, vehicles & equipment	**1,673**		**1,673**
Computers & Telecom	1,673		1,673
Logistics, Transport & Storage	**44,085**	**44,878**	**-793**
Storage	8,275		8,275
Distribution & Monitoring	4,597	4,945	-348
Transport & Vehicles Costs	19,261	39,433	-20,172
Logistics Services	11,952	500	11,452
Personnel	**34,914**	**46,160**	**-11,246**
National Society Staff	10,541	36,635	-26,094
Volunteers	24,373	9,525	14,848
Workshops & Training	**24,640**	**3,832**	**20,808**
Workshops & Training	24,640	3,832	20,808
General Expenditure	**52,359**	**36,644**	**15,715**
Travel	18,388		18,388
Information & Public Relations	4,137	9,075	-4,938
Office Costs	6,666	10,740	-4,074
Communications	4,413	2,167	2,246
Financial Charges	368	71	297
Other General Expenses	18,388	14,591	3,797
Indirect Costs	**13,509**	**10,047**	**3,462**
Programme & Services Support Recover	13,509	10,047	3,462
Grand Total	**221,332**	**164,609**	**56,723**