

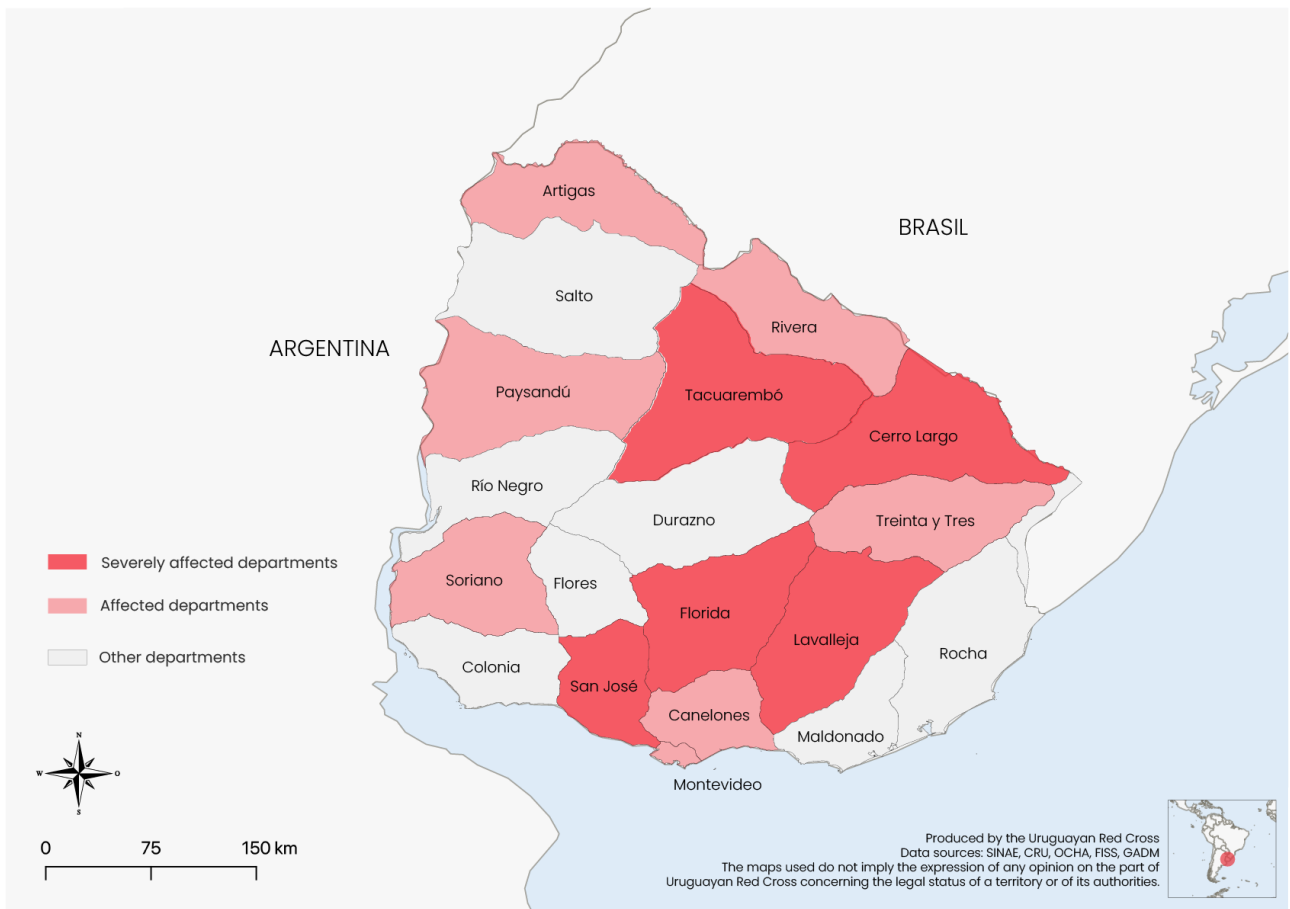


Multipurpose Cash Transfer Program, Department of Florida, June 2023. Source: Uruguayan Red Cross.

Appeal: MDRUY004	Total DREF Allocation CHF 381,390	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Drought
Glide Number: DR-2023-000010-URY	People Affected: 409,115 people	People Targeted: 12,000 people	
Event Onset: Slow	Operation Start Date: 2023-01-29	New Operational end date: 2023-08-31	Total operating timeframe: 7 months
Additional Allocation Re- quested -	Targeted Areas:	Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja, San Jose, Tacuarembó	

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 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 during the summer season.

On 20 January, the Uruguayan State, through the National Emergency System (SINAE), extended a formal request to the Uruguayan Red Cross to provide support in the assessment of needs and possible response to the consequences of the drought.

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. According to information released by the Uruguayan Institute of Meteorology (INUMET, for its acronym in Spanish), the entire country is currently affected by drought with 20.51% of the territory, equivalent to 3,623,300 hectares, reported under extreme drought (1).

The drought has affected the entire country, although at the beginning of the operation the most affected departments were mainly in the interior of the country and cattle raising areas (Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja and San José). Currently, according to information provided by SINAE, the most complex situation is related to the



lack of access to safe water which limits families' consumption and use of water (2). The Paso Severino dam, which supplies water to Montevideo and the metropolitan area (an area where more than 2,000,000 people live), only has a reserve of 1.84% of its capacity (3). For this reason, Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE) has been increasing the minimum permitted salinity and chlorine levels in the water. The new permitted figures are 420mg/l of sodium and 720 mg/l of chlorine; however, the latest reports state that the parameters present in the water are above these values, despite the established limits.

Although the Ministry of Public Health (MSP, for its acronym in Spanish) assures that the water is still potable and will not have adverse effects on the health of the general population, it has issued specific recommendations for people with arterial hypertension, renal problems, pregnant and lactating women. On the other hand, the Faculty of Chemistry of the Universidad de la República (UDELAR, for its acronym in Spanish) has issued the following recommendations:

- Boil water for 3 to 5 minutes before cooking, since trihalomethanes are largely eliminated during boiling.
- Take short baths in ventilated places to reduce the inhalation of these compounds.
- In the case of having water wells and filters, carry out periodic analyses of their quality and maintenance.

Likewise, during the month of June, the most significant rainfall was recorded in the Northeast and East of the country, especially in the departments of Cerro Largo and Tacuarembó. At the national level, the average rainfall in June 2023 was 35.5 mm, which is below the climatological average expected for this month, which is 91.9 mm. In terms of the frequency of rainy days, it was also below the climatological average, with only 4 days compared to the average of 6 days (based on the 1981-2010 reference period). In terms of precipitation anomalies, these were negative throughout the country, with the South and Southwest being the region with the largest water deficit. Anomalies ranged from -5.2% in Arbolito (Cerro Largo) to -98.8% in Nueva Palmira (Colonia). The evaluation carried out by the National Institute of Meteorology (INUMET) in the last year and quarter (April, May and June), shows that the water deficit persists in the country, especially in the central-south, southwest and east regions.

In view of this situation, on 5 July, the creation of a Water Emergency Fund was urgently approved, which is under the ownership and administration of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF, for its acronym in Spanish). Its main objective is to provide support to health services to attend to vulnerable populations that could be affected, as well as to support those who are experiencing labor difficulties due to the current or future situation of water deficit in the country. It also seeks to strengthen the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Social Development, the National Public Education Administration, the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents, and the Social Security Bank, which are working together to protect the population.

(1) URC Evaluation Report: https://prddsgofilestorage.blob.core.windows.net/api/sitreps/6330/Reporte_de_Evaluacion_-_DREF_Uruguay_Sequias.pdf

(2) INUMET Climate trends: <https://www.inumet.gub.uy/clima/tendencias-climaticas>

(3) Severino Pass Reserve: <https://www.elobservador.com.uy/nota/sirvio-la-lluvia-subieron-levemente-las-reservas-de-paso-severino-202377181656>





Severino Pass Dam, June 2023. Source: El País. Home purification methods, sensitization, May 2023. Source: Uruguayan Red Cross

Scope and Scale

During the assessment phase, the Uruguayan Red Cross conducted a comprehensive investigation on the impacts of the drought on livelihoods, health, and access to water, with the objective of determining the unmet needs of the affected population.

Through the assessment, which included personal interviews and collection of secondary information provided by the State and the official press, it became evident that around 2.3 million people are affected by the inability to regularly access water. This is because, as a preventive measure due to the drought, the use of water for non-essential purposes has been prohibited. In addition, it was estimated that approximately 409,115 people live in areas highly affected by drought and water scarcity, of which about 20,000 have unmet needs related to water, sanitation and hygiene services and livelihoods, such as: general access to water (32%), animal feed (12%), debt financing (10%), water storage inputs (10%), financing for well construction or procurement of water storage inputs (10%), and other water storage inputs (10%). Unmet needs include water for irrigation and animal feed (27%), water for drinking and cooking (25%), and water for personal hygiene (16%).

As a result of the assessment, it is also evident that households have had to take measures to cope with the consequences of the drought. This includes requesting help from institutions, relatives, or friends (34%), and taking other actions (27%), which may include using money earmarked for other needs to buy food and fodder for animals, purchasing containers and water troughs, completely suspending crop irrigation, reducing water and animal feed consumption, requesting unplanned loans, and using resources planned for the winter in advance. In addition, the sale of animals in larger quantities than usual (21%) is highlighted.

On the other hand, Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE) issued a statement on 8 March 2023, in which it reported on the current water deficit situation. According to the statement, the drought affecting the entire national territory has caused a continuous decrease in the levels of reservoirs and watercourses used as sources of water supply for the population. In this context, OSE's board of directors decided to implement a ban on the use of drinking water for non-priority purposes.

In addition to the assessment, there are the consequences of the increase in the levels of chloride, sodium and the presence of trihalomethanes in the water supplied by OSE in Montevideo and the metropolitan area. This has led to families having to buy bottled water for human consumption, which has generated an initial break in the available stock and has required additional unplanned spending by families.

In view of this situation, the Ministry of Social Development and the Municipalities of Montevideo and Canelones are distributing bottled drinking water to families in extremely critical contexts. For its part, the Uruguayan Red Cross, in

collaboration with the Salus company, is developing a logistics plan for the distribution of bottled water in 2.25-liter bottles to vulnerable communities with children and the elderly. For the first stage of distribution, 30,000 liters of water have been made available, and the possibility of further stages of distribution is not ruled out if the levels of sodium, chloride, and trihalomethanes do not decrease in the coming weeks.

If there is insufficient rainfall in the coming weeks, by the end of June or early July, Montevideo and the metropolitan area will run out of freshwater reserves in the Paso Severino reservoir. In that scenario, OSE will have to distribute fully salted water, drawn from the Río de la Plata, through the supply network. In view of this situation, the state utility is evaluating options to provide water fit for human consumption and has approved the acquisition of software for the subsidized delivery of bottled water.

Summary of changes

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

Please explain the summary of changes and justification

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

On 18 April, as a result of the evaluation stage, the National Society revised its DREF Plan of Action and issued Operations Update No. 1 to transition to a DREF for response.

Given the protracted duration of the droughts, coupled with the involvement of multiple departments and the need for coordination with the National Emergency System and CECOEDs (departmental emergency centers), has resulted in unanticipated challenges and delays that have impeded the progress of some activities. Added to this, the severity of the situation has been escalating. In fact, in late June 2023, the President of Uruguay declared a "water emergency" in the country after more than seven months of droughts. Consequently, the full execution of the plan has been hindered, requiring an extension of the timeline to ensure its completion.

Through this Operations Update No. 2, the Uruguayan Red Cross, with the support of the IFRC, aims to request a timeframe extension of one additional month, for a total of seven months (new end date: 30 August 2023).

During the additional month provided, the Uruguayan Red Cross will diligently tackle the remaining tasks, including finalizing the cash transfer program, distribution of water purification filters, post-distribution monitoring, sensitization sessions, and the lessons learned workshop.

By capitalizing on this extra time, the National Society can guarantee the successful implementation of the DREF



Plan of Action, while remaining aligned with the intervention strategy. This will effectively address the emergency needs and provide crucial assistance to the communities affected by the droughts.

Current National Society Actions

National Society Readiness	The Uruguayan Red Cross has several departments, including Risk and Disaster Management, Finance, Volunteering, Resource Mobilization and Communication. Throughout the country, the National Society has approximately 350 volunteers. The Risk Management Directorate team at headquarters and its National Intervention Team have been available since the beginning of the emergency and have been closely monitoring the evolution of the droughts. They have activated the National Emergency Operations Center (COE, for its acronym in Spanish) and have worked in constant coordination with local branches. The Uruguayan Red Cross has the following supplies available: - 1 institutional van for personnel transport. - 2 vans for the transport of materials and supplies. - 2 Humanitarian Units ready to provide assistance. - Warehouse at the Central Headquarters located in Montevideo.
National Society EOC	The Uruguayan Red Cross, through its team at Headquarters, has activated its Emergency Operations Center since the onset of the drought-related events. This center is coordinated by the Risk Management and Disaster Response area, and specific roles have been assigned to address the emergency, including communication, assessment and monitoring, information and analysis, finance, security and logistics. Weekly follow-up meetings have been held and reports have been submitted to the National Governing Council to keep them informed of the situation.
Assessment	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. The Uruguayan Red Cross requested a DREF fund to carry out a general damage and needs assessment in the five most affected departments, focusing especially on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene and Livelihoods. This assessment was carried out in coordination with SINAE and the Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED, for its acronym in Spanish). An operation was established in each department in coordination with these entities and visits were made to rural communities previously identified as affected by the State. In addition to using the lists provided by the government, the Uruguayan Red Cross included other people in its assessments to complement the data and strengthen the assessment. Telephone assessments were also conducted to complement the information collected in the field, allowing to maximize the timeframe and reach a larger number of people with the assessment. In order to accomplish this task, face-to-face training was conducted for staff and volunteers from various branches, teaching them how to use digital tools



	such as Kobo, as well as how to conduct damage and needs assessments in the field.
Coordination	Since the agricultural emergency was declared, the Uruguayan Red Cross has maintained constant communication and close coordination with the National Emergency System (SINAE) and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP, for its acronym in Spanish). In addition, Red Cross branches are working in collaboration with the Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED) and are available to provide support as needed. This coordination was maintained throughout the response operation on a permanent basis.
Resource Mobilization	The Uruguayan Red Cross has entered into two agreements with companies to obtain supplies to be used by volunteers in the field: - Salus: A donation of water drums with a capacity of 500 litres each has been obtained. - Farmashop: A donation of 250 sunscreens has been obtained. The Uruguayan Red Cross plans to conduct further negotiations once the DREF request has been developed and once the specific needs have been assessed. It also plans to include in the action plan a strategic line of communication to support the Resource Mobilization area and facilitate the inclusion of various donors in the operation.
Community Engagement And Accountability	The Uruguayan Red Cross has implemented a feedback and complaint management system for all activities carried out directly with the communities. This system allows for the collection of comments and suggestions from the people involved, and there is a team dedicated to case management and the reception of comments and suggestions. The team provides support and responds to any inconvenience, query or complaint that may arise during the development of the activities. In addition, based on the information gathered during the field assessment, a mailing list has been created to disseminate relevant information to the community. A telephone number has also been made available for community inquiries. The topics for dissemination are selected based on the relevance identified by the community and their interest in receiving such information.

Movement Partners Actions Related To The Current Event

IFRC	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 Health, Disasters, Climate and Crises 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 CCD for the Southern Cone for the development of the DREF Application.
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ICRC	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.
Participating National Societies	The Uruguayan Red Cross works in close collaboration with the Italian Red Cross (IRC). Although the IRC has no physical representation in the country, they fund a Youth project with a focus on Climate Change, through which several branches provided information to local communities during these periods of drought.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	The National Emergency System (SINAE) is a decentralized system throughout the country. In each department, there is a Departmental Emergency Committee (CDE, for its acronym in Spanish) in charge of formulating policies and strategies for Risk Management at the local level, in line with the global policies of SINAE. Each CDE is composed of the following members: - Departmental Chief of Police. - Detachment Chief of the National Fire Department of the Ministry of the Interior. - Representative of the Ministry of National Defense. - Representative of the Ministry of Social Development. - Representative of the Ministry of Public Health. - Representative of the Institute for Children and Adolescents of Uruguay. - Legal Prosecutor of the Attorney General's Office. Under the coordination of each CDE is the Departmental Emergency Coordination Center (CECOED), which is the area in charge of operational coordination for Comprehensive Risk Management. Each CECOED has a coordinator appointed by the respective Intendant. Since December 2022, the Uruguayan Red Cross has a framework cooperation agreement signed with SINAE. On January 20, 2023, SINAE requested the support of the Uruguayan Red Cross to conduct detailed needs assessments of the most affected communities and in remote areas of the country, through a formal note. SINAE is responding to the families most affected by the droughts by distributing drinking water to those with limited or no access to water. So far, the government has carried out water distribution with water tankers that visit the affected areas once a week. In addition, SINAE, in collaboration with the



	Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED) and the National Fire Department, has been working to combat fires caused by the combination of drought and high temperatures. At the end of February, at the VIII UNDRR Regional Risk Management Platform, the National Society had the opportunity to present its work to several strategic partners and the first coordination meeting between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and SINAE took place, with the aim of reviewing the operation to date and planning the next steps. A final meeting was held related to the first stage of implementation of the DREF for evaluations. During the meeting, the results of the visits carried out jointly with SINAE were shared, and the next steps and coordination mechanisms during the response stage were discussed.
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UN or other actors	
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Are there major coordination mechanisms in place?

Throughout the operation, the Uruguayan Red Cross has coordinated with both the National Emergency System and the various Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED) for the planning and execution of actions. Although this has generated delays in the processes, it guarantees the non-duplication of actions and the maximization of efforts and people reached with the proposed responses. In turn, this allows for permanent coordination with the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Social Development, Departmental Intendancies and Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE) since they are all coordinated in the CECOED.



Needs (Gaps) Identified



Health

In the interior of the country, most of the families evaluated do not perceive an increase in the number of people with illnesses in the last 3 months (87%). Those that do notice an increase relate it mainly to animal diseases. However, a high level of stress and psychoemotional overwhelm is observed in the families due to the drought situation. Especially heads of household experience changes in family routine and a constant worry about future consequences.

In Uruguay, there is a public and private health care system. The public system is free and accessible 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 are far from the health centers available in some areas. The rest of the population uses the health system through private providers.

In the Montevideo and metropolitan areas, increases in the levels of chlorine, sodium and trihalomethanes have been detected in the water supplied by Obras Sanitarias del Estado (OSE). This may have negative effects on people with hypertension, kidney disease, infants, and pregnant women. The Ministry of Public Health issued specific recommendations, such as avoiding the consumption of OSE water for pregnant women and those with chronic kidney disease, heart failure or cirrhosis. For the rest of the population, it is suggested not to add salt to food and to use mineral water in the preparation of infant formulas. In addition, those taking antihypertensive and diuretic medications are advised not to exceed the consumption of 1 liter of water supplied by OSE.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

It was identified that the participating families usually had a variety of water sources. Most of them (51%) obtained water from wells equipped with pumps. Other resources used (25%) included azudes, cisterns, tajamares and streams. About 11% of the families collected rainwater through specific systems, while a small percentage (2%) had access to the drinking water network supplied by OSE. It is important to note that, although it does not constitute their main source of water, 79% of the families reported collecting rainwater.

However, due to recent droughts and low rainfall in recent months, access to water has been interrupted. Despite collecting rainwater, households were observed to store it in jars (40%) instead of having systems in place to store it directly in tanks. This has caused a radical change in the main water sources. The water collected by families during the first half of 2022 has been completely depleted, which has generated a total dependence on water supply agencies (OSE, municipalities, CECOED). Wells, even those deeper than 50 meters, have low water levels or have dried up completely. Only 1% of the families mentioned the possibility of buying drinking water for their consumption needs, livestock maintenance and agricultural activities, but this is costly, and, in the cases in which the agencies provide it, they also face difficulties in transporting it to their homes.

However, the assistance provided by government agencies varies by department. For example, in the department of Cerro Largo, many families receive water from CECOED for personal consumption, but do not have water for their animals or for irrigation of crops or pastures. In Lavalleja, the Municipality provides water to small producers to support them in maintaining their livestock, while families must cover the costs of personal water consumption based on their economic resources.

Water storage: It was identified that water storage varies according to the economic possibilities and access to government assistance of each family. In general, at least 1 or 2 forms of water storage are required. The main



forms of water storage include the use of tanks (60%), jars (40%), jerry cans (6%), reused jerry cans (4%) and other forms (26%), such as cisterns, pumped water wells, cachimbas, water boxes, barrels, tajamares, among others.

In the department of Tacuarembó, a particularly complex water storage situation was observed. Families lack sufficient or adequate containers to store the drinking water distributed by the municipality. Mostly because the available tanks (64%) are of limited capacity, families are forced to resort to additional forms of storage, such as jars (55%), jerry cans (27%) and reused jerry cans (18%). This leads to the need for continuous water distributions, at least every 15 days and even weekly, despite the long distances involved. In addition, the conditions of these containers are not adequate, as many of them are reused drums that may contain toxic materials, such as pesticides, which compromises the safety of the water stored for consumption.

Water purification: Only 19% of the families evaluated used some method or system for water purification before the drought. Many of them recognize that water is unfit for consumption but lack resources and sufficient information to acquire elements or supplies for water purification. Boiling water is the method most used by the families evaluated (5%), since it does not generate additional expenses for the family economy. The use of chlorine is also common (2%), and some families (1%) who have resources can access family filters.

In Montevideo and its metropolitan area there has been an unprecedented increase in the sale of jerry cans and water bottles, with a 467% growth in the case of 5- and 6-liter jerry cans, and 217% in the case of water bottles.

Sanitation and Hygiene: So far, more than 60% of the families assessed claim to have personal hygiene items in their homes. Although their income has been affected and they must save on the purchase of certain items, they still have sufficient supplies. The markets where they usually buy these products are well stocked.

Access to information: Many families have expressed interest in receiving diverse information related to water. Among the main topics of interest were water care (54%), recommendations for safe water storage (47%), drought measures (40%), and disease prevention and treatment (28%). They also expressed that they would use some type of water purification tool if they had access to it. Finally, there was a lack of information about resources, services and various types of assistance provided by the government. It is essential to carry out an exhaustive mapping and establish good coordination with government entities to provide this information to all families so that they can access the different benefits available.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

According to the 2021 Gender Equity Index published by the United Nations Organization for Economic and Social Development (UNDESA), Uruguay ranks 36th worldwide in terms of gender equity. Furthermore, in terms of protecting the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community, Uruguay has been recognized as one of the most progressive countries in Latin America. However, in the rural communities assessed, cases of discrimination or gender violence have been evidenced, as well as situations of vulnerability for people with disabilities, the elderly and children.

Therefore, it is vitally important that the DREF's intervention strategy adopts an inclusive approach in all workspaces, avoiding any form of discrimination and encouraging the participation of all affected people. To this end, the Uruguayan Red Cross plans to incorporate into the operation elements proposed in the IFRC guide on minimum standards for Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in emergencies.





Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

The departments and areas visited during the needs assessment correspond to those with the highest percentage of population residing in rural areas in Uruguay, such as San José (17.6%), Florida (16.0%) and Tacuarembó (15.6%). In the last five years, people have not experienced other types of emergencies, such as floods (5%). It is common for some of these areas to be exposed to strong winds (11%) or turbonadas (sudden and strong increase in wind speed often associated or accompanied by storms, rains, tornadoes or snowstorms), which can damage housing structures, such as roofs or high-water tanks. However, these events are isolated and do not occur frequently.

The most recurrent event reported by 59% of the families assessed in these areas is drought. All the people assessed, of different ages, state that this has been the most severe drought since 1988. They also mention additional conditions that further complicate the situation, such as heat waves. During the summer, high temperatures were recorded in Uruguay, with values ranging between 36-37°C and reaching a maximum of 41.4°C. These high temperatures continued until the end of the summer (March).

It is important to highlight the anomalies in the average temperature. This summer has been historic, with a positive anomaly according to the Uruguayan Institute of Meteorology (INUMET). Compared to the last 42 years, the DEF 2022-2023 quarter ranked first in terms of average maximum temperature, with the summer of 1989 ranking second.

This situation, together with the scarcity of precipitation due to droughts, suggests that the average quarterly temperature in Uruguay was higher than normal, especially in the north of the country, from March to May. This generates greater hydration needs for people and animals, as well as difficulties for the survival of crops and pastures. In addition, many families express concern about the negative effects of eucalyptus monoculture, as each tree consumes a large amount of water and contributes to the loss of organic matter and increased soil acidity.

Finally, 66% of the people stated that they had not received information, suggestions or recommendations prior to this stage of greatest drought impact. This highlights the importance of establishing a network of information and message dissemination that allows families to respond to the current situation or to prepare in advance through measures that minimize future damage.



Community Engagement And Accountability

During the evaluation stage, special importance was given to aspects related to communication among community members, the information received, the identification of possible information gaps perceived by the people and the most appropriate means of communication to establish a direct link with the communities. 83% of the families indicate that there are no community meetings or instances, so they often highlight the importance of generating spaces for exchange that are useful, being the rural schools propitious places for these meetings.

Regarding the information they receive, 52% state that they are not receiving information through any means or only have access to very general information through the mass media. They express the desire to have a reliable and accessible source of information. In some specific cases, they mention the need to improve communication channels, since they found out about government programs or plans related to the countryside after their deadline.

Given that these rural communities are located far from large cities, services and activities, it is crucial to have a specific communication channel that guarantees proximity to people and the dissemination of relevant messages and information, both in emergency situations and in general. The channels that the community finds most



comfortable to receive this information are radio, social networks and television. In addition, to communicate with other community members, family and friends, 58% use cell phones and 24% use social networks.

For this reason, during the evaluation stage, a dissemination list was implemented through WhatsApp, addressed to all the people who expressed their interest in receiving information from the Uruguayan Red Cross. This is due to the fact that 99% of the population reported being able to read and prefer to receive messages in Spanish.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Household economy and sources of income: Most households have at least two economically active people, with more than 45% being men, and the women are usually engaged in household and farm work. About 17% are engaged in livestock raising and 6% in agriculture. However, the main source of income (55%) comes from social plans such as child allowances, retirement, or pension. More than 48% of the people who support the household economy are self-employed and depend on production or the availability of employment to obtain sufficient income.

Impact on sources of income: More than 53% of the households have experienced impacts on their sources of income due to droughts. This includes decreased access to water for animals, loss of income sources, loss of crops, decreased access to drinking water and loss of animals. It is important to note that the same family may have experienced different forms of impacts. As a result, many families are forced to use food reserves that they normally save for the winter, creating further stress and hardship.

Markets, access to cash and inputs: More than 61% of households have experienced price increases due to the droughts, especially in food and labor input costs. Many families also report that market supplies are beginning to be affected, raising concerns about the availability of food and the acquisition of necessary inputs, such as animal feed and seeds. In addition, product prices have increased, leading families to sell animals at prices below their initial value.

Livestock and agricultural technical information: Smallholder families express the need to receive drought-related information and technical recommendations for the coming years. They recognize the lack of tools, resources and knowledge necessary to deal with this unprecedented situation. They wanted to be trained to learn about new methodologies, products and tools adapted to this new reality that will last several years.

The costs of products related to the livestock and agricultural sector in Uruguay are high and have increased due to the drought. This requires a direct response through the cash transfer mechanism with a focus on recovery and/or livelihood protection with higher amounts than those previously implemented by the Uruguayan Red Cross. 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 heads of cattle needs approximately 1800 CHF per month to cover animal feeding needs. In addition, expenses related to fertilizers and seeds, both for human consumption and for the livestock during the rest of the year, must be considered. The amounts initially estimated per family are approximate and are calculated based on the information gathered in the assessment surveys.

Any identified gaps/limitations in the assessment



Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

Following the results obtained in the DREF assessment, an expansion of the operation was carried out through a DREF Action Plan. Through this plan, the Uruguayan Red Cross aims to improve the living conditions of 12,000 people (2,400 families) affected by droughts in the departments of Tacuarembó, Cerro Largo, Florida, Lavalleja and San José. Actions focus on the areas of Livelihoods, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion and Cash-Multipurpose.

Operation strategy rationale

The Needs Assessment was designed with a participatory approach, in coordination with government authorities and affiliates of the different selected departments. To ensure good coordination, meetings were held to share the structure of the assessment and adapt it to the information needs of all stakeholders. In addition, the National Society worked closely with the Departmental Emergency Operations Centers (CECOEDs), who facilitated access to local communities and shared previously collected information, thus enriching the data obtained in the assessment.

A sampling approach was used to ensure adequate representation of community groups in the selected departments. The process included participatory methodologies, such as interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials and community representatives, and visits for direct observation and data verification with secondary information. The aim was to include all population groups in order to achieve a better representation of the community. At the same time, a communication and dissemination strategy was implemented for key messages related to the drought, addressing topics such as drought and high temperature prevention, responsible water use, and messages aimed at children and adolescents.

In parallel, the Uruguayan Red Cross has implemented a training and skills transfer system that allows staff and volunteers involved in training or response experiences to transmit these skills to the rest of the National Society. The follow-up of these skills is carried out through the National Intervention Teams (NITs). In addition, it has a profile of assessment experts who provided support to the team in charge of collecting information in the field.

The Uruguayan Red Cross also held a workshop to review assessment operations in order to identify good practices and areas for improvement to be implemented during the response phase. The workshop was attended by volunteers, Uruguayan Red Cross staff and members of the National Council of Government.

During the response phase of this DREF, the Uruguayan Red Cross relied on the Damage and Needs Assessment (DANA) developed, as well as on impact data provided by government authorities. In that sense, the intervention was based on official data and reports that were aligned with the needs of the affected population.

The damage and needs assessment revealed that the main needs were mainly related to water access and availability, as well as losses of resources linked to the livelihoods of families affected by the droughts. A significant need for information related to water care, adequate storage and recommendations on how to act in the face of possible future droughts was also identified. Based on this, the intervention proposed by the Uruguayan Red Cross can be summarized as follows:

Livelihoods:

- Technical talks on rural work are given to 250 families (1,250 people) in the departments of Cerro Largo, Lavalleja and San José.
- A specific cash transfer program for the recovery and/or protection of livelihoods is being implemented to assist 200 families (1,000 people) in the departments of Lavalleja and San José through the delivery of vouchers.

Multi-Purpose Cash:



A multi-purpose cash transfer program is being implemented to assist 100 families (500 people) in the department of Florida.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:

- Awareness-raising talks on the care, potabilization and safe storage of water are being given to 2,400 families (12,000 people) in the departments of Cerro Largo, Lavalleja, San José, Florida and Tacuarembó.
- 400 family water purification kits are being distributed in the same departments.
- 50 pumps for semi-surgent wells are also being delivered in the department of Cerro Largo.
- 50 families (250 people) are being provided with water storage elements, such as tanks, tubs or jerry cans in the department of Tacuarembó.

Community, Engagement and Accountability:

Based on the results of the evaluation survey, where the majority of people expressed interest in receiving information through various media, useful information is being disseminated to the communities through a WhatsApp mailing list. In addition, printed materials are being generated for those who do not use digital media, which contain relevant information and the National Society's contacts throughout the response process. The channels for receiving complaints and suggestions are active during all response activities. At the end of the operation, a lessons learned workshop will be held to share best practices and areas of improvement for future experiences. In addition, in collaboration with the communications area, dissemination strategies will be implemented to keep the community, partners, and employees informed about the response stages. The aim is to maximize the reach of key messages related to the drought and strengthen the National Society's presence in the Uruguayan population.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

This operation focused on the five most affected departments in the country and the response was diversified according to the needs of each department. The National Society is working to help improve 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 SINAE is providing a response through CECOED, a complementary response is still needed, 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

Since this response was directed to families and communities with different characteristics in five different provinces, the target populations varied within each department and each intervention sector. However, priority was always given to the following groups:

- 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 depends on the number of livestock and their source of income, which was determined by 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 are considered, keeping in mind age, sex, gender and people with disabilities or with special needs or requirements; therefore, within the prioritization process, special attention is paid to the 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
Increase or permanence of heat waves during the operation	Recommendations were made and shared with all personnel involved in the operation. These recommendations served to prevent any incident such as heat stroke. Hydration and protective equipment (sunscreen or hats) were also provided to all personnel.
The difficulty of access to remote areas.	There is a vehicle prepared to enter this type of terrain and, if necessary, the use of vehicles or trucks prepared for this type of soil is coordinated with SINAE.
A low number of volunteers due to holidays.	A volunteer survey was carried out in the subsidiaries close to the affected areas to help the operation with



personnel or volunteers from other subsidiaries who could travel to support the activities of this operation.

Lack of scarce integration of the communities in the execution of possible future actions.

Community engagement and accountability were ensured through feedback mechanisms.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

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 provided the necessary protective equipment to each person participating in the operation and included personnel trained in first aid in the activities to respond to any inconvenience that may arise. The National Society also has a vehicle and driving safety plan and uses only authorized and trained drivers to drive institutional vehicles.



Planned Intervention

	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	60	
Feasibility and market study		1	1	
Progress Towards Outcome				
A workshop was held for volunteers on basic issues related to the CVA program. The workshop also addressed the methodology to be used in the actual distribution of the operation, and to this end, simulations of the process were carried out to ensure that all the people involved handle the same information and that there is better coordination. At the same time, a feasibility and market study was carried out for the implementation of a multipurpose cash transfer program, where it was determined that, for this distribution, taking into account the needs of the people and the particular characteristics of the context, the mechanism to be used would be through cards with a certain amount to be used in different stores. The Uruguayan Red Cross already has a supplier (PREX), with whom it coordinates the making and delivery of cards. To date, 40 PREX cards have been delivered to families in the department of Florida, who report that they have already begun to use them. It is planned to resume distributions in the second week of July. The value assigned to each family depends on the number of members and was selected according to the amount of the basic food basket. In the case of a family of four members, the amount is 400 CHF (approximately 21,000 Uruguayan pesos). The Uruguayan Red Cross, as part of its transparency mechanisms, has activated a line to resolve doubts or complaints about the process.				

	Livelihoods And Basic Needs	Budget		CHF 119,003
		Targeted Persons		1250
Indicators		Target	Actual	
Number of families that received cash to recover their livelihoods		200	0	
Feasibility and market study		1	1	
		1250	0	

Number of people reached through technical awareness of rural work.

Progress Towards Outcome

A feasibility and market study was conducted in the departments of San José and Lavalleja to assess the feasibility of implementing a cash transfer program, where it was identified that the modality selected by the people and appropriate to the contextual characteristics, is through vouchers for the exchange of food for livestock. In total, 6 suppliers have been selected (3 in Lavalleja and 3 in San José) to participate in this program, who meet the quality and transparency requirements.

It is planned to provide assistance to a total of 200 families in the following groups:

- Small producers: Families primarily engaged in raising and caring for farm animals, such as cows, pigs, sheep, goats and poultry. Their main activity is focused on the production and marketing of livestock products, such as meat, milk, eggs or dairy products.
- Livestock specialization: Families that specialize in livestock as their main source of income and economic activity. Their focus is on raising, feeding and caring for animals, as well as selling the resulting livestock products.
- Drought risks: Livestock-raising families face significant risks due to drought, as the lack of pasture and fodder directly affects the availability of feed for livestock. Water scarcity can also pose a challenge, as adequate water is required for animal consumption.
- Animal feed needs: Livestock families who have a great need for access to specific livestock feeds that meet the nutritional requirements of their animals. These feeds may include concentrates, vitamin supplements, hay, silage or other balanced feeds.
- Family sustenance: Families whose income is generated by the sale of livestock products, which contributes significantly to income and economic sustenance to cover the family's basic needs.
- Need for external support: Families that require external support due to lack of resources and the emergency situation they face. They depend on voucher exchange to access livestock feed and overcome the constraints caused by the drought.
- Sustainability orientation: Families who have an interest in developing long-term sustainable agricultural and livestock practices. They seek solutions that allow them to maintain their productive activity in harmony with the environment and mitigate the adverse impacts of drought on their production systems.

A voucher in the amount of 500 CHF (approximately 21,000 Uruguayan pesos) will be issued for the purchase of the following products: concentrate for cattle, alfalfa hay, corn silage, mixed grains for poultry and balanced feed for poultry. The contracts have already been signed and the delivery of the vouchers will take place in the next two weeks of July.

In the case of San José, the actions will be coordinated directly with the Department's operational branch, and in the case of Lavalleja, they will be coordinated from the Headquarters with volunteers from nearby branches. In both departments the families were divided respecting the supplier they usually use, so as not to affect the local economy and to favor the economy of the small suppliers.

To date, a total of 60 families have been reached.

Budget

CHF 48,479



	National Society Strengthening	Targeted Persons	0
Indicators	Target	Actual	
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

The National Society purchased items 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 has been created, consisting of the following items: a suitcase for safe storage of supplies, tablets, portable chargers, universal cables, charger cards and a wireless modem for use with cell phone chips.

In addition, a purchase process was carried out for the acquisition of personal protection supplies for volunteers and personnel who will work during the evaluations. The items purchased were as follows: hats with visors and mosquito repellent (bracelet and spray), which were complemented with sunscreen donated to the National Society by a private company.

In addition, a workshop on data collection and analysis (ODK-KoBo) was held for 8 hours. The content of the workshop consisted of: What is a DREF, Description of the DREF, Actions to be implemented, what tools they will use for data collection, Introduction to Kobo, how data collection with tablets works, Description of the interview with families, DREF and how it works.

Description of the interview with families, Doubts and questions, Practical exercise of data collection (Role of the collector). It was conducted under a theoretical and practical component, where half of the session was totally practical to ensure that they can have timely feedback. A total of 12 people attended, of which 9 were volunteers and 3 were Headquarters staff (4 men and 8 women) and there was a total of 2 facilitators who carried out the training.

At the end of this first stage, a meeting will be held internally at the National Society to review what has been developed to date. This meeting will focus on positive aspects and aspects to be improved in order to have recommendations for the next stage of the response to this action plan. At the end of the operation, a lesson learned workshop will be held for the entire operation.

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

WASH Coordinator	1	1
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Progress Towards Outcome

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

- Surge deployments:

1x CVA Coordinator (4 months)

To date, three monitoring visits were made by the Programs and Operations Coordinator and the Finance Coordinator of the Southern Cone countries' delegation to follow up on the actions carried out and to work on updating the operation. During the first visit, different meetings were coordinated through the VIII UNDRR Risk Management Platform together with the regional director and the head of the Delegation of the Southern Cone countries, SINAE and the National Society, which served to review and coordinate next steps. During the other two visits, activities were carried out to follow up and monitor actions and project expenditures.

In addition, a person from the Venezuelan Delegation was deployed through the Surge system to support this position for a total of two months (February and March). This person supported the team collecting information in the field, processing and analyzing the data collected, as well as preparing the final report. In a second instance, three rapid response persons have also been deployed:

- WASH Coordinator (3 months),

- CVA (2 months)

- Livelihoods (1 month).

	Community Engagement And Accountability	Budget	CHF 2,130
		Targeted Persons	5000
Indicators	Target	Actual	
Percentage of people satisfied with receiving distributions in good quality and with dignity	90	90	
Number of people receiving relevant information related to droughts	5000	2500	

Progress Towards Outcome

The Uruguayan Red Cross has begun to distribute information material on the cash transfer program, emphasizing what it is, how it works and how to resolve doubts and share suggestions about it. At the same time, exit surveys have begun to be carried out on the same day the card is received.

Informative material has also been prepared and will be delivered to the participants of the money transfer program, with key messages and information. Likewise, as part of the communication and community relations strategy, a WhatsApp line has been created for community members to raise concerns, congratulations or complaints regarding the program. In addition, an email address has been provided to receive cases where there have been problems using their card. These mechanisms have made it possible to provide quick responses and solutions.

Post-distribution surveys are planned once the distributions have been completed and the families have used their money.

	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	5400	

Progress Towards Outcome

The Uruguayan Red Cross has developed informative and educational materials for both adult audiences and schools. In addition, it developed a workshop to raise awareness on safe storage, purification and care of water. 25 volunteers participated in the workshop.

In addition, 50 pumps for semi-surgent wells and 50 1,000-liter tanks were purchased and will be distributed in mid-July. The release of 400 family filters sent from Panama, which will also be distributed during July, is also in the administrative process of customs clearance.

In addition, as part of its communication and dissemination strategy, the Uruguayan Red Cross is making videos in reel format for social networks with recommendations and tips on safe water storage and water purification using home methods.

To date, a total of 5,400 families have been reached through awareness-raising activities carried out in schools, during deliveries of humanitarian supplies and in community spaces.

	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.



About Support Services

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

Thirty volunteers participated in this operation, 15 of them from the National Intervention Team and 5 from the HQ team. Volunteers from nearby departments were deployed to support and relieve local volunteers, avoiding burnout. All volunteers and headquarters staff are insured and have the necessary personal protective equipment.

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

Support from SURGE was necessary for this operation; the profiles recruited were:

- 1x Humanitarian Information Analysis Officer.
- 1x CVA Coordinator (4 months).
- 1x WASH Coordinator (3 months).

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

Procurement related to this operation followed IFRC standard procurement procedures, the National Society's financial SOPs and Sphere Standards for domestic purchases. The National Society and the CCD for the Southern Cone coordinated with the Americas Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) for any major procurement (replenishment).

The National Society has the capacity in the procurement processes through the logistics staff at headquarters to buy the necessary supplies for the operation centrally to regulate the items needed to respond to this emergency.

How will this operation be monitored?

Reporting on the operation is carried out in accordance with IFRC minimum reporting standards. A final report will be issued within three months of completion of the operation. The CCD for the Southern Cone also assigned a specific Project Manager to support the National Society. The IFRC PMER and finance team also provide the necessary support and guidance to the National Society's operations team to ensure that IFRC policies and procedures are followed during the implementation of the activities planned under the DREF.

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

During the evaluation stage of the DREFs, the National Society disseminated its activities in the field through social networks (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) using images and videos, and generated news on the web in order to keep the community in general updated on the actions carried out. These campaigns sought to explain what a DREF is and what it consists of, its scope and to make visible the actions in each of the departments. This information was complemented with publications containing key messages and recommendations for dealing with the emergency.

The Presidency, the Executive Directorate and DREF management provided information and updates on the progress of the operation.

The National Society contracted external audiovisual services to maximize the reach of our content and its proper dissemination. All volunteers and staff involved in the activities receive key messages about the operation and the organization, in order to unify criteria and the information they provide.



Contact Information

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

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