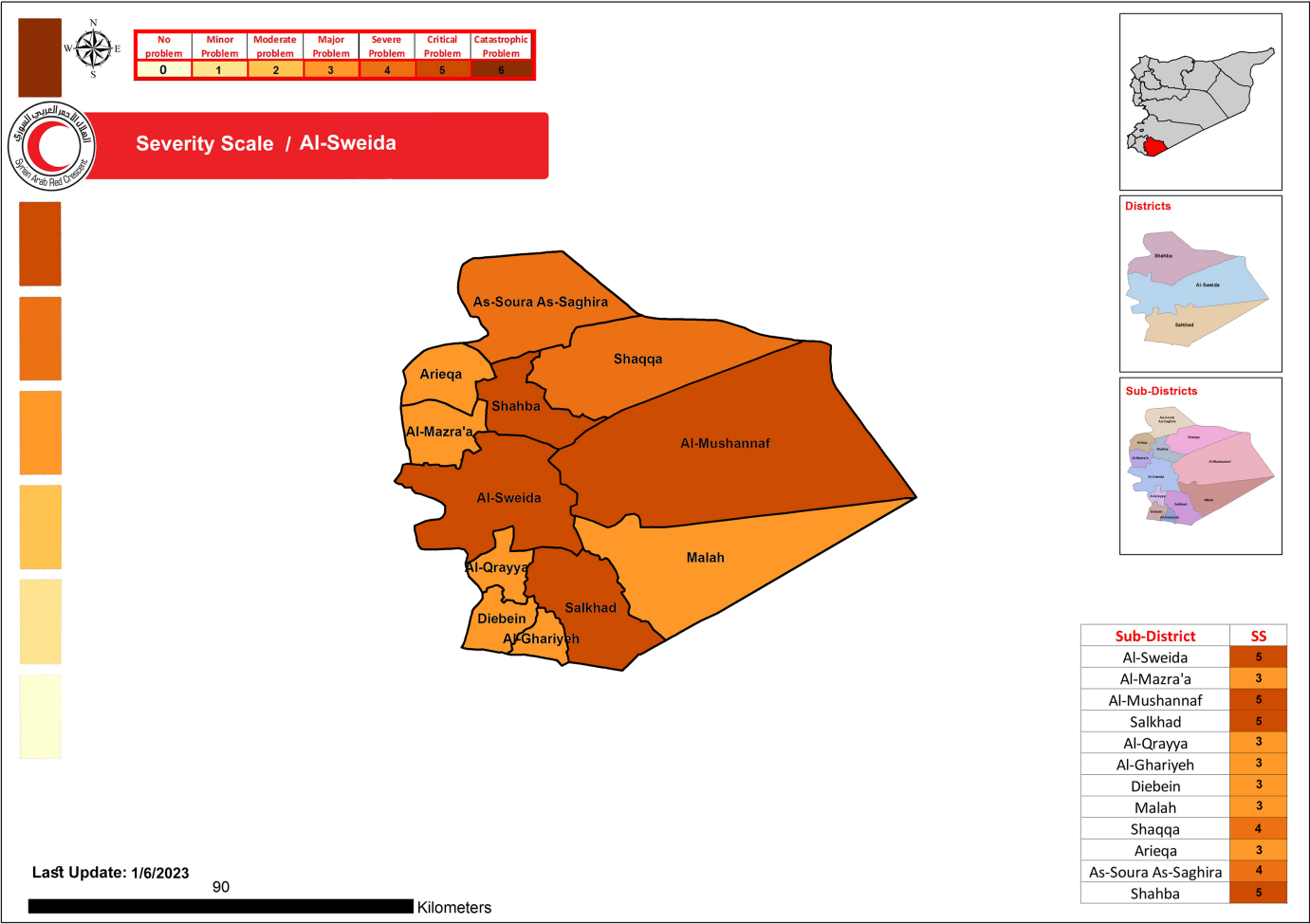




| | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Appeal: MDRSY011 | Country: Syrian Arab Republic | Hazard: Drought | Type of DREF Response |
| Crisis Category: Orange | Event Onset: Slow | DREF Allocation: CHF 799,070 | |
| Glide Number: SYR-2023-000142 | People Affected: 650,000 people | People Targeted: 650,000 people | |
| Operation Start Date: 2023-08-23 | Operation Timeframe: 9 months | Operation End Date: 2024-05-31 | DREF Published: 2023-08-24 |
| Targeted Areas: | Al-Sweida | | |

Description of the Event



What happened, where and when?

After more than ten years of conflict in Syria, access to water has become one of the most prominent humanitarian challenges, which is exacerbated by climate change. According to SARC's severity scale updated in June 2023, all of Al-Sweida's districts are ranked at levels 3 to 5, meaning they are facing a major, severe, or critical problem in water needs. The Al-Sweida governorate faced during this period a sharp decline in water availability, the causes of which appear to be the intertwining of many factors: Loss of the main source of drinking water since 2012 which used to provide 15,000 cubic meters of water daily (half the city's population needs), the increase of the population between 2010 and 2022 by 75% increasing the demand on water and pressure on resources, the decrease in the number of hours of electrical supply from 24 hours/day to 4 hours/day negatively affecting the pumps and water pumping, and the decrease in the maintenance and technical level of logistical operating equipment. This deterioration in water resources and their scarcity, which are exacerbated by climate crises, have generated tensions in the local community regarding access to water points, agricultural lands, and pastures, especially since these communities rely primarily on agriculture as a source of income and life. Climate change has reduced pasture areas at an alarming pace due to the effects of high temperatures. Heat and lack of rain, in addition to the devastating impact of the long-term conflict in the region, made many pumping stations out of commission or insecure in terms of access thus out of service. The lack of management of vital natural resources may lead to an environmental disaster, perhaps the most prominent of which is the Cholera outbreak of 2022. In the past weeks, reports indicate an increase of hepatitis A cases in Al-Sweida, governorate, in light of emerging diseases linked to usage of unsafe water and food. The entire area of the governorate is threatened by water shortage, which is reflected in its impact on the entire population who rely mostly on rain-fed agriculture. The deterioration of this produce negatively affects



the food security situation. Water shortage is also exacerbated by the decline in purchasing power and the increase in financial burdens as a result of the unavailability of drinking water. The price of water transport of 25 barrels reached 100 thousand Syrian pounds, which suffices a family of five people for fifteen days at most. It is estimated that purification stations will be out of service within months at best due to the drying out of the dams which used to provide up to 22% of water needs.

In addition, there is a resulting decline in livestock, especially in the eastern and northern countryside, where the Bedouin population who depends on livestock breeding as the only source of livelihood, constitutes the largest proportion of the population. Ministry of Water Resources took measures trying to mitigate the impact of the water scarcity, nevertheless, the challenges are much bigger and beyond existing capacities.



Scope and Scale

The level of the surface dams has decreased to a hazardous level, with some close to being completely dry, and the main water wells (boreholes) that feed Al-Sweida governorate water network are out of service.

The main reasons relate to the fact that rainfall has decreased significantly in recent years, additionally climate change has led to a lack of snowfall in large quantities which is the main source of dam water collection. Other reasons involve low electrical voltage, which is the main cause of the malfunction of the pumps, in addition to the technical and logistical problems of the Water Authority in Al-Sweida Governorate, which led to a large number of wells being out of service (around 80%). Moreover, the excessive drilling of wells near the main water resource wells helped in leaving the wells out of service, as the cone of depression is between 0-350 m, and therefore any drilling within these limits constitutes a great danger to the amount of water produced as well as encroachments on network lines. Land irrigation, illegal extraction, and vandalism also helped exacerbate the water crisis in the governorate. In June of 2023, reports confirmed through official channels that the water crisis in Al-Sweida governorate is severe, and that within two months, water will run out in surface dams, which constitute 20% of the water source. Not solving the problem of pumps in the wells will lead to the exit of more wells from the service constituting 80% of the water sources, and thus exacerbate the water crisis that leads to a severe humanitarian disaster affecting 650,000 people. This will increase challenges and decrease resilience in these communities. A meeting was held on the 15th of May, chaired by the Ministry of Water Resources, and facilitated by SARC Wash & Rehabilitation Department, in the presence of local agencies and movement partners, to present the assessment findings of the water situation assessments, and proposed response options and plans. On the 27th of July, a following coordination meeting defined commitments from partners. Based on the outcomes, SARC invited a membership meeting on 8th of August to discuss the gaps needs, triggering the request for DREF support to complement SARC proposed intervention plan in responding to an Orange category emergency targeting around 650,000 people.

Previous Operations

| | |
|---|----------|
| Has a similar event affected the same area(s) in the last 3 years? | Yes |
| Did it affect the same population groups? | Yes |
| Did the National Society respond? | Yes |
| Did the National Society request funding from DREF for that event(s)? | Yes |
| If yes, please specify which operations | MDRSY006 |

If you have answered yes to all questions above, justify why the use of DREF for a recurrent event, or how this event should not be considered recurrent

In October 2021, a DREF was launched to support SARC in responding to the droughts targeting 15,000 people in the most affected governorates Ar-Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor. While Suwayda was also affected, a prioritization exercise had to be conducted to fit within the scope of the DREF, excluding Al-Sweida. The impact of droughts has a long term impact that is foreseen to continue in light of climate change. Nevertheless, though this strategic DREF, SARC aims to stabilize the water situation for the local community's eminent needs and there resilience for coming seasons through hard-wash considering sustainable solutions, in coordination with other partners and the local authorities.

Lessons learned

Lessons learned have been collected from the staff and volunteers involved in previous droughts response operation. Main lessons include:

- Strengthen and expand the technical support for assessment teams through training and workshops to increase their expertise in the assessment process.
- Setting up interdepartmental coordination at the HQ level immediately after the launch of the operation would make it more effective and efficient in terms of clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the departments and resources available for the mobilization of assistance and support functions including follow-up on the operation and any necessary adjustments to the operational strategy.
- Strong community engagement and dissemination, communication activities with various stakeholders and communities from the start of the operation about SARC, its mandate, principles, and values ensured uninterrupted access to the remote and highly vulnerable areas

Current National Society Actions

Assessment

SARC's staff and volunteer sector specialists at HQ and in branches and sub-branches have been monitoring the drought conditions throughout the recent months, observing the further deterioration of the situation over the past weeks, and are coordinating with the relevant local stakeholders for information sharing, response planning, and coordinated actions. Rapid assessment were conducted and multi sectorial assessment is prepared to identify needs and gaps.

Dam water levels have dropped substantially and will be out of service in the coming two months. Satellite images show the drastic drop between the years of 2019 and 2022/23. The economic crisis that is currently affecting Syria has led to the immigration of youths and labor rendering the majority



| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| | of the population composed of children and elderly. Due to this demographic shift, water shortage is preventing the success of other initiatives targeting families at household level such as kitchen gardens which usually provides a sustainable food income and leading to a dire need to address the water availability issue. |
| National Society Readiness | The staff and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent are well prepared to respond to prolonged and natural disasters, and have extensive experience and learnings from previous operations, including water crises in other governorates. SARC Water and Rehabilitation department have been monitoring the situation and conducting periodical assessments, the team of engineers developed a detailed reports and response options, in coordination with the Ministry of Water that was presented to partners |
| Water, Sanitation And Hygiene | SARC's Water and Rehabilitation department reaches 80% of the total Syrian population annually with water treatment, maintenance, and rehabilitation work of water stations, pipeline, and sewage systems as well as water emergency response. SARC has continued to provide the above-mentioned ongoing humanitarian assistance during the build-up to the water crises and drought conditions. SARC Al-Sweida branch have collected information on the compound effects on the already vulnerable population in consultation and coordination with sub-national government departments and authorities and analyzed secondary data to inform the response strategy. |

Movement Partners Actions Related To The Current Event

| | |
|---|--|
| IFRC | In addition to the regular support, IFRC is a member in the coordination meetings, and facilitated the application for DREF support to SARC in their response operation complementing other actors' contributions, aligned with SARC mandate. IFRC Syria CD conducted a field visit to Al-Sweida for primary data and direct observations to have an in-depth understanding of the context and needs |
| ICRC | ICRC has regular program support for the affected branches to cover their running costs. In addition, the ICRC committed through this response in providing ten submersible pumps and ten motors to cover twenty wells equipped with protection systems. |
| Participating National Societies | RCRC actors continue their support of SARC on a regular basis, allowing The SARC to be the first responder, ready to scale up as per needs and support their response. Norwegian RC have committed to purchase high-power mobile generators to power the water pumps. |

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

| | |
|--|----|
| Government has requested international assistance | No |
|--|----|



| | |
|--|--|
| National authorities | Ministry of water recourses and its directorate in Al-Sweida are working on emergency plan since last year trying to rehabilitate boreholes and maintain pumps to compensate the shortage in water resources, water tracking, and new tanks. National authorities lead coordination meetings with SARC and in-country partners to present the findings of the assessments done and response options. |
| UN or other actors | UN are supporting efforts and will cover part of the needs, but the gaps still huge and all the solutions is just to stabilize the shortage and will never cover the standard needs 125 L/person/Day, only reduce the gap. UNICEF committed to fully equip seven wells, in addition to providing batteries and tires for five water tanks belonging to the Water Corporation in Al-Sweida. |
| Are there major coordination mechanisms in place? | |
| Following to the assessment done by SARC, in coordination with the local authorities, regular meetings are taking place including INGOs and movement partners to present the assessment findings and propose the intervention plan. These meetings continue to facilitate the contributions in a coordinated manner, ensuring a harmonized approach to complement SARC's overall response plan, including follow up and monitoring to ensure sustainability on the long run. | |



Needs (Gaps) Identified

Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Low levels of water in reservoirs resulted in reduced energy production capacity causing power blackouts across Syria. With only 1-2 hours of electricity in some locations people have been affected by reduced electricity generation and availability. Compounded by ongoing fuel shortages, water pumping stations have limited functionality, affecting safe access to and availability of drinking water of the population of Al-Sweida. The lack of water and the drought situation contribute to the deterioration of living standards, coupled with increasing costs of food, water, and basic goods due to the massive devaluation of the local currency whilst the income and purchasing power of people are shrinking. The situation is particularly challenging for the internally displaced with a lack of very basic infrastructure including water and sanitation. Due to the unavailability of clean water, households are increasingly consuming unsafe water, and with an increasing number of water-borne diseases. The reduction in safe and sufficient water is affecting hygiene and other preventative measures, such as handwashing which is critical to prevent the spread.

Livelihoods And Basic Needs

The combined effect of reduced water levels and drought conditions have impacted the food and nutrition security of households dependent on agriculture in Al-Sweida. Significant shortages and high cost of agriculture inputs, including diesel fuel, have limited the ability to provide supplementary irrigation for cultivated crops as the breadbasket of the country, reduction in both rainfall and river water for irrigation are predicted to further cause substantial loss, indicating a major drop in harvest. Moreover, with poor yields and crop failures undermining revenues, farmers will struggle to obtain necessary inputs for the sowing season in November, which will have an impact on the 2024 harvest season. This, in turn, has an impact on the livelihoods and food security. For livestock, the production of fodder crops has been adversely affected and pastures are not in good condition due to the erratic climatic conditions. Herders are unable to access some locations in the Badia for natural grazing of their animals (particularly sheep), as a result of the unstable security situation. This is expected to result in destocking, and animal prices have dropped by at least 20 - 30 per cent.

Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

In-light of the impact of climate change and prolonged water scarcity, community awareness on mitigation measures and public awareness is needed to build their resilience through clever usage of existing water, and avoiding negative coping mechanisms.

Any identified gaps/limitations in the assessment

The complete assessment and the analysis of the water crises severity and the status of the water sources that provide safe water to Al-Sweida governorate was carried by SARC teams and Al-Sweida water establishment. The



findings set a concrete response plan that would ease the severity of the situation through rehabilitation of the water network starting from the source (boreholes) to the collection points for distribution. There were limitations in the complete assessments of boreholes' underground pumps that would reach in some cases around 950 meters below ground at water level. To have a detailed assessment of the functioning of these pumps would require costly resources to extract to the surface and check their status, thus the level of the damages would can only be identified on site during the implementation and maintained accordingly.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

This DREF allocation aims at supporting 650,000 people in need affected by the water scarcity crises, providing hard-WASH support in all of Al-Sweida Governorate for 9 months.

Operation strategy rationale

The overall objective of this DREF operation is to provide dignified access to clean water and humanitarian assistance to around 650,000 most vulnerable people affected by droughts leading to water scarcity in Al-Sweida governorate through the rehabilitation of the water systems at points of water source to ensure sufficient water collection at main pumps that feeds affected communities.

Water supply for Al-Sweida depends on 80% boreholes, 15% dams, and 1% springs. The local Water Establishment whose capacities have been reduced due to years-long conflict, severe water scarcity, and prioritization of other governorates in worse condition, requested locally acting operating partners to support in extracting water from existing deep wells (between 300 and 725 meters) that remain the only major water source after the drying out of the dams and springs that used to cover the governorate water needs. Of the 310 boreholes, 95 are out of service. Proposed intervention aims to prioritize 67 for rehabilitation considered to have highest impact in terms of reach. As a result, UNICEF are supporting with 7 new boreholes and maintenance of water trucks, ICRC rehabilitation of 20 boreholes, and SARC will cover the remaining 39 boreholes and needs through the support of this DREF by complete rehabilitation of 2 main boreholes and maintenance of the remaining 37 pumps. In addition, water tanks (70-90 m3) will be installed in different locations to increase the water collection capacity. This DREF operation will address emerging humanitarian needs caused by the drought conditions and it does not duplicate or overlap response under the ongoing Syria emergency operations and regular programs. An emergency plan of action has been developed based on analysis of primary and secondary data sources and SARC's in-depth knowledge about the conditions in the targeted area through its network of staff and volunteers, in addition to Initiating a multi-sectoral planning process for a longer-term response that combines immediate lifesaving humanitarian assistance with early recovery to support a more sustainable solution that builds the resilience of the population to drought conditions. The response strategy for the immediate phase (nine months) is straight forward to cover the emergency needs, focusing on water rehabilitation and risk reduction through public awareness, as well as carrying a detailed multi-sector impact and needs assessment to inform the response strategy for the subsequent phase covering a multi-sectoral and holistic approach integrating food security, health and WASH. The methodologies for the assessment ensure community participation and include household interviews, Key Informant Interviews with communities, observation, and collection and analysis of secondary data from relevant local government departments and institutions.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

This operation aims to assist 650,000 people (130,000 households) affected by the droughts.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population



SARC intends to assist the population of Al-Sweida in dire need of humanitarian assistance as a result of water crises and drought conditions. These are severely affected by the drought and low water level as well as the consequences, and have high level of vulnerability and low coping capacity as a result of the compound effects from years of crises and disasters. The below criteria prevails:

- Households directly affected by the water crisis and drought conditions.

In the targeted area, SARC has established branches and sub-branches with trained staff and volunteers in emergency relief operations as well as support staff. Sex and age disaggregated household data will be collected during the beneficiary registration and presented in the final report.

Total Targeted Population

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|--|----------------|
| Women: | - | Rural % | Urban % |
| Girls (under 18): | - | 53.00 % | 47.00 % |
| Men: | - | People with disabilities (estimated %) | |
| Boys (under 18): | - | 2.00 % | |
| Total targeted population: | 650,000 | | |

Risk and security considerations

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

| Risk | Mitigation action |
|---|---|
| Lack of enough skilled human resources in the affected areas to respond to the increased needs | SARC will mobilize more trained volunteers from the affected branches to support this particular operation. |
| Governmental approvals to carry the intervention plan might face some delays and thus affect the implementation timeframe. | Requested implementation timeframe for this DREF consider risk of delays |
| Financial risks include currency devaluation, inflation of market, limitations in banking withdrawals, cash transfer impact by sanctions. | Monitoring the financial situation and market exchange rate, and taking actions accordingly that would include reservation of the transferred funds in the CHF currency until processing for payment. |

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

A further decline of value in the Syrian Pound is expected, consequently, this will inevitably exacerbate the hardships of the civilian population. The economic crisis and its corollaries are relevant to the humanitarian community as needs continue to soar. As a result, they are amplifying the multi-variegated threats ranging from interference in programming to disruptions during implementation.

In terms of conflict activity at the local level, there are no signs of an imminent and radical shift in prevailing trends. Meanwhile, notwithstanding irregular attacks/flare-ups, relative stability will likely prevail in Al-Sweida, where the space and appetite for political activism and armed struggle are limited by state repression, war fatigue, displacement, and socioeconomic deficiency. Given dire socioeconomic conditions across South Syria, inter-communal violence and localized conflicts between various actors are expected to recur - but in a decreasing frequency in Al-Sweida- and potentially disruptive effects on operations and acceptance. Furthermore, the possibility of triggering events sparking confrontations that are more significant cannot be dismissed.

Acceptance and respect for SARC in Al-Sweida province is the first step in the mitigation measures proposed to reduce the risks. Moreover, following the MSFA, the risks security support by SARC aims to support the movement's



coordinated response to the needs of the population affected by the crisis in Syria, taking advantage of entire SARC resources, networks, contingency plans, communication tools, and other mitigation measures.



Planned Intervention

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------|
| | Water, Sanitation And Hygiene | Budget | CHF 735,383 |
| | | Targeted Persons | 650000 |
| Indicators | | Target | |
| % of population reached satisfied with re-habilitation and maintenance activities | | 85 | |
| % of water supply increase | | 30 | |
| # of water tanks installed | | 7 | |
| # of submersible pumps maintained | | 37 | |
| # of boreholes fully rehabilitated | | 2 | |
| Priority Actions: | | • Rehabilitation of 2 main boreholes including mechanical, electrical, and civil work • Maintenance of 37 submersible pumps including mechanical and electrical spare parts • Procurement and installation of 7 water Tanks | |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|------------|
| | Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery | Budget | CHF 53,250 |
| | | Targeted Persons | 65000 |
| | | | |
| Indicators | | Target | |
| % of people satisfied with the relevance of the awareness messages | | 85 | |
| multi-assessment report issued | | 1 | |
| % of knowledge shift to clever usage of household water | | 10 | |
| # of people reached with key messages | | 65000 | |
| Priority Actions: | | • Number of people reached through public awareness on clever usage of household water • Carrying multi-sectorial assessments to identify needs gaps | |



| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---|------------|
| | | • Conduct Satisfaction survey on the awareness sessions and re-habilitation activities done | |
| | Secretariat Services | Budget | CHF 10,437 |
| | | Targeted Persons | |
| Indicators | | Target | |
| # of timely final financial report | | 1 | |
| # of lessons learned report developed | | 1 | |
| Priority Actions: | | • Conducting a lessons learned WS • Financial support leading to timely closure of the operation | |

About Support Services

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

In all of Syria, SARC has a network of 13,780 staff and trained and active volunteers. Between HQ, Al-Sweida branch and sub-branches, 75 staff and volunteers are involved in the intervention. Based on need, additional staff and volunteers can be deployed for the implementation of the operation. The DM department at SARC's HQ has the overall responsibility for the timely and quality implementation of the operation in coordination with the water, and rehabilitation.

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

Procurement will be carried both nationally and internationally depending on availability and cost of items. Logistic support to the intervention will be provided following standard procedures to ensure efficient and timely provision to affected people. IFRC's MENA regional office will support SARC with the international procurement of items required for the operation.

How will this operation be monitored?

SARC standard operating procedures for monitoring are adopted for all SARC operations and programs including in addition to coordinated visits with implementing partners including the IFRC. The Partnerships and Performance Support Department (PPSD) will be responsible for supporting inter-departmental coordination and reporting and data collection and analysis together with the other departments. The IFRC Syria country delegation will support SARC in the monitoring and reporting of the operation with the IFRC MENA regional office based in Beirut providing technical inputs and support.

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

SARCs have a crucial role in community awareness to improve their knowledge of drought and hazards. SARC communication teams are highly active to feed into different media platforms to ensure and reflect SARC's efforts and humanitarian actions, even extending evident support in reporting to partners. Public communication content will be produced and published on SARC and IFRC MENA social media platforms and IFRC.org.

In collaboration with SARC, testimonies of people who have benefitted from the reach will be collected and published. Information on the operation will be disseminated in coordination with the IFRC and Movement partners to highlight the response to the humanitarian needs and the evolving and emerging humanitarian concerns.



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

MDRSY011 - Syrian Arab Red Crescent SARC Syria Al-Sweida Droughts 2023

Operating Budget

| Planned Operations | 788,633 |
|---|---------|
| Shelter and Basic Household Items | 0 |
| Livelihoods | 0 |
| Multi-purpose Cash | 0 |
| Health | 0 |
| Water, Sanitation & Hygiene | 735,383 |
| Protection, Gender and Inclusion | 0 |
| Education | 0 |
| Migration | 0 |
| Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery | 53,250 |
| Community Engagement and Accountability | 0 |
| Environmental Sustainability | 0 |
| Enabling Approaches | 10,437 |
| Coordination and Partnerships | 0 |
| Secretariat Services | 5,112 |
| National Society Strengthening | 5,325 |
| TOTAL BUDGET | 799,070 |

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)





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[Click here for the reference](#)

