



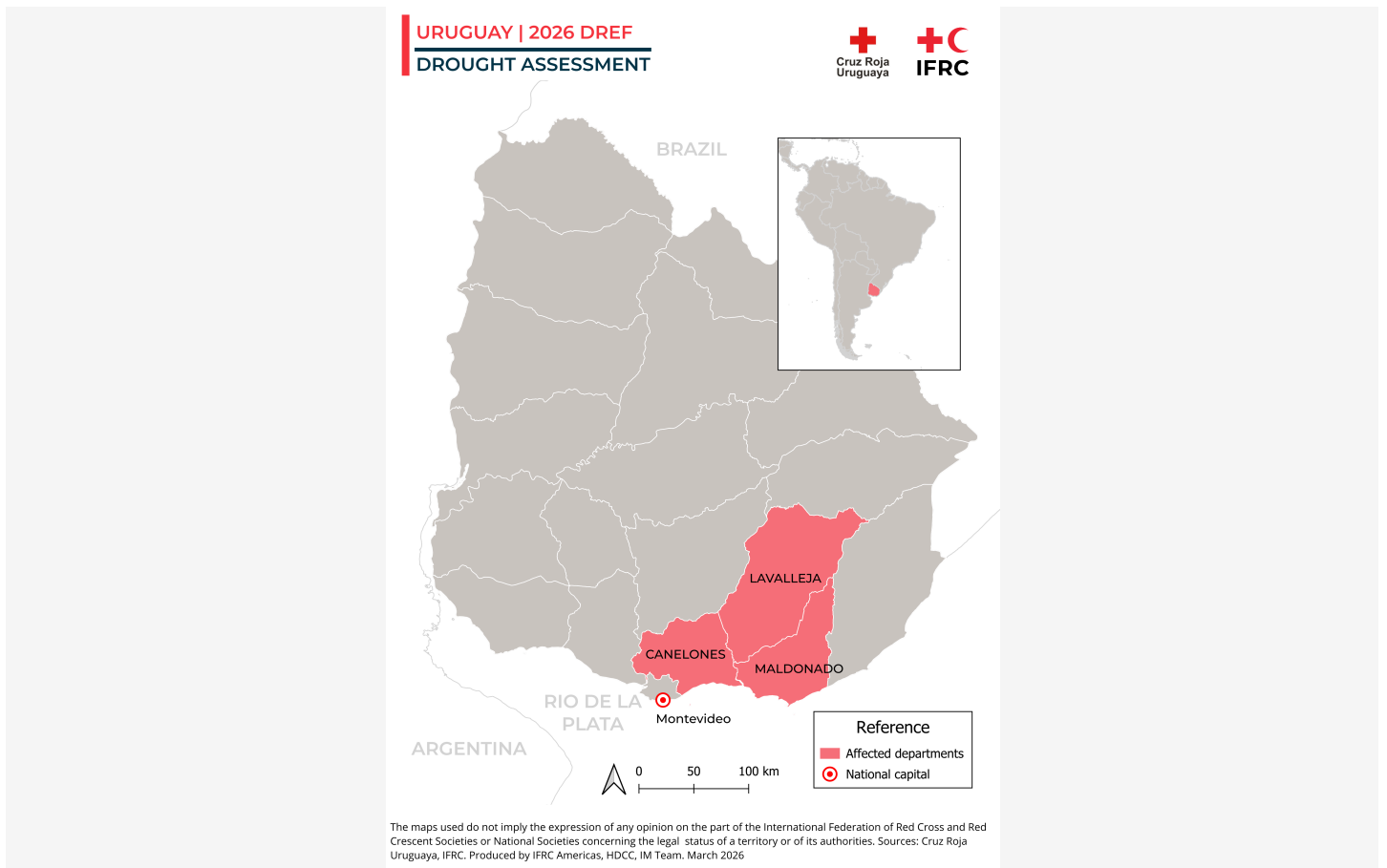
Natinal authorities have activated assistance to affected areas

Appeal: MDRUY006	Hazard: Drought	Country: Uruguay	Type of DREF: Assessment
Crisis Category: Yellow	Event Onset: Slow	DREF Allocation: CHF 62,329	
Glide Number: -	People at Risk: 15,000 people	People Targeted: 1,000 people	
Operation Start Date: 02-04-2026	Operation Timeframe: 2 months	Operation End Date: 30-06-2026	DREF Published: 03-04-2026
Targeted Regions: -			

Description of the Event

Date when the trigger was met

10-03-2026



Canelones, Maldonado y Lavalleja affected locations

What happened, where and when?

Uruguay is experiencing a slow-onset drought and water deficit event affecting primarily the southern, south-central, and eastern regions of the country. The crisis has developed progressively over recent months because of accumulated rainfall significantly below historical norms, compounded by above-average summer temperatures.

These combined conditions have accelerated soil moisture loss and caused a sustained severe decline in water levels across rivers, ponds, and surface reservoirs (Uruguayan Institute of Meteorology (INUMET); Sistema Nacional de Emergencias — water situation reports, 2026). Agro-climatic monitoring by INUME and the national drought observatory (sequia.uy) classifies current conditions in the departments of Canelones, Maldonado, and surrounding areas as severe.

The monitoring platform registers high to very high drought intensity in the south and southeast, which indicates a sustained, severe structural deficit, not a small, transitory weather anomaly. Meanwhile, below normal soil moisture values are affecting water availability for both productive systems and human consumption in rural, high vulnerability areas.

In response to confirmed technical evidence, the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture, and Fisheries (MGAP) declared an agricultural emergency due to water deficit on 24 February 2026, covering the entire departments of Canelones, Montevideo, and Maldonado, as well as specific police districts in Durazno, Flores, Florida, Lavalleja, Rocha, San José, and Treinta y Tres (MGAP Resolution No. 149/026, 2026).

Following continued deterioration and further technical assessment, the emergency was expanded on 10 March 2026 to incorporate new districts in Durazno, Flores, Florida, Lavalleja, Rocha, San José, and Treinta y Tres, extend coverage to the entire departments of Colonia and Soriano, and add affected areas in Río Negro. As of mid-March 2026, most of the territory south of the Río Negro is under official water deficit emergency. Which means an expansion of geographic scope within less than three weeks that reflects the rate of hydrometeorological deterioration.

The current drought cannot be assessed in isolation. Between 2022 and 2023, Uruguay experienced one of the most severe droughts on



record, which depleted reserves in the Santa Lucía River basin, which is the primary drinking water source for metropolitan Montevideo. This forced national authorities to declare a national water emergency in June 2023. The fact that we now have in hand comparable drought conditions within three years means that affected households are entering the current crisis without having fully recovered productive assets, financial reserves, or water infrastructure from the previous event.

International evidence consistently shows that recurrent climate shocks progressively erode the resilience of rural livelihood systems. In the prioritized departments, small-scale farmers and family production units, who lack storage capacity, alternative water sources, and financial buffers, are now absorbing a second major shock before recovering from the first.

This cumulative dynamic elevates the current event above a standard agricultural emergency: it represents a structural vulnerability trigger with the potential to generate protracted humanitarian impact.

Secondary risks compound the situation. Dry vegetation cover and sustained high temperatures are increasing the probability of rural and forest fires in the most affected areas, adding a concurrent risk layer for communities and productive infrastructure already operating under acute stress. Although thresholds for action have not been reached yet.

Documented coping responses already underway confirm that affected populations have crossed the humanitarian threshold. Declining water levels in ponds, surface watercourses, and rural intake systems have been confirmed across Canelones and Maldonado. Rural families are actively resorting to emergency water transport. Livestock herd reductions are being carried out to manage water demand. Household expenditure on water acquisition and livestock supplementation has increased. These behavioral adaptations signal material deterioration in water access and livelihood security for the most exposed populations.

Although Uruguay's macroeconomic profile is comparatively favorable in the regional context, the national-level response, while formally activated through the MGAP emergency declaration, does not currently extend to targeted household-level support for the most vulnerable rural populations. National emergency mechanisms address productive losses at the sector level; they do not reach the household water access, food security, and livelihood stabilization needs of micro-producers and family farmers identified as priority beneficiaries. The funding gap is not one of will, but of coverage, and the cumulative vulnerability of a second major drought within three years constitutes the exceptional circumstance that warrants international humanitarian support.

Moreover, on March 25th based on prospectations and initial impact assessment, the SINAE (National Emergency System) has requested the support of the NS to respond to the emergency under the cooperation framework agreement between both institutions calling upon the URC auxiliary role.

Source Name	Source Link
1. Sistema Labrador Monitoreo de Sequias	https://sequia.uy/
2. Centro de Investigaciones Economicas	https://cinve.org.uy/
3. CERES Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Economica y Social	https://ceres.uy/
4. Instituto Nacional de Estadistica	https://www.gub.uy/instituto-nacional-estadistica/
5. FAO Uruguay	https://www.fao.org/uruguay/es/
6. National Newspaper El Pais	https://www.elpais.com.uy/informacion/sociedad/abastecimiento-de-agua-en-minas-ose-afirma-que-represa-maggiolo-llego-a-un-bajo-historico
7. National Government Web	https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ganaderia-agricultura-pesca/institucional/normativa/resolucion-n-254026-se-amplia-declaracion-emergencia-agropecuaria

Current National Society Actions

Start date of National Society actions

26-02-2026

Coordination	The Uruguayan Red Cross has established permanent coordination mechanisms with the Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED) of Canelones and
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	Maldonado, including joint planning meetings to monitor the evolution of the event and identify potential complementary actions to support affected communities
National Society Readiness	The Uruguayan Red Cross has initiated preparedness actions in response to the ongoing water deficit event, including the review of existing operational documentation, internal protocols and response procedures relevant to slow-onset events such as drought. In addition, a national call for volunteers was launched to support response activities. To date, approximately 50 registered volunteers from different branches across the country have been mobilized and will provide direct support to the branches involved in the response
Assessment	The National Society is strengthening its capacity to support rapid field assessments, in coordination with departmental authorities and actors of the National Emergency System (SINAE). These assessments aim to identify priority needs related to access to water, impacts on rural livelihoods and risks associated with the water deficit in most vulnerable communities.
Resource Mobilization	The Uruguayan Red Cross is reactivating the LAZOS initiative of phone calls fundraising for this response plan as well as a national donation button on their website. An informative session and press release will be launched to private companies and general public
Activation Of Contingency Plans	The Uruguayan Red Cross updated and activated its Drought Contingency Plan (February 2026), which guides preparedness actions, institutional coordination and potential operational mobilization in response to water deficit events affecting rural livelihoods and access to water in vulnerable communities.

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The IFRC Country Cluster Delegations sits in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Program and Operations Coordinator has provided follow-up and support to the NS team in relation to coordination and assessment of the situation as well as in the preparation and early revision of this DREF application. Support will be provided to mainstream national fundraising efforts.
Participating National Societies	No PNS in country

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

No ICRC actions

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
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<p>National authorities</p>	<p>National authorities have implemented several measures to mitigate the impacts of the water deficit, particularly in the productive sector and in access to water. The Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) has activated financial support mechanisms, including credit lines and loans for affected agricultural producers, with the aim of sustaining production systems facing reduced water availability and deteriorating pasture conditions.</p> <p>In addition, departmental authorities, in coordination with national agencies, have deployed water supply actions in the most affected areas. In the department of Canelones, potable water is being transported for human consumption to communities experiencing difficulties in accessing water resources. In Maldonado, operations are being implemented to transport water for livestock and crops, in order to mitigate the impacts of the water deficit on rural livelihoods.</p> <p>These actions are being implemented within the framework of the agricultural emergency declaration and are part of the measures adopted by authorities to respond to the effects of drought in the affected territories.</p> <p>There are no impact evaluations done at the national level, the SINAE has no information beyond having opened the presentations for large producers to sign up for assistance.</p> <p>In the case of Canelones, the rural development agency conducted assessments of all producers requesting water support, as they only provide it in cases of vulnerability; in Maldonado, it is less formal but similar.</p> <p>These emergency loans end up only going to large producers because they are for those who have all their records 100% in order; family producers don't have that, so they never receive any support.</p>
<p>UN or other actors</p>	<p>The Uruguayan Red Cross has established direct communication and coordination channels with the Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED) in the potentially affected departments, particularly Canelones and Maldonado.</p> <p>These mechanisms include regular information exchanges and coordination meetings aimed at articulating response actions, avoiding duplication of efforts, and facilitating the systematization of available information on needs and impacts at the territorial level.</p> <p>Coordination with the CECOED also strengthens the complementarity between the National Society's actions and the measures implemented by departmental and national authorities, ensuring a response aligned with the mechanisms of the National Emergency System (SINAE).</p> <p>In this context, the National Emergency System (SINAE) has formally requested on 25 March the support of the Uruguayan Red Cross to contribute to the assessment and response efforts related to the drought situation.</p>

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

This DREF allocation aims to support a multisectoral assessment of households affected by water deficit and drought in Uruguay through whilst providing a limited initial support on wash.

The operation will focus on assessing the humanitarian impact of the drought while improving access to safe water for vulnerable households currently receiving water supply support from public authorities, by providing safe water storage kits and household water treatment kits.

These actions will be complemented by community engagement and awareness activities on safe water use, health, and risk reduction, ensuring the proper use of the distributed items and reducing public health risks associated with unsafe water storage and consumption.

A convenience sample of at least 1000 families will be engaged in the assessment actions, and a total of 100 families will be assisted through the distribution of water treatment kits and safe water storage kits, complemented by four community awareness workshops. In addition, the operation will conduct in-depth assessments to better understand the needs of affected populations.



The intervention will target rural and peri-urban communities in departments affected by the agricultural emergency due to water deficit, particularly in Canelones and Maldonado, and will contribute to generating evidence to inform potential scale-up of response actions

Operation strategy rationale

To address the needs of the target population, this DREF operation will focus on generating evidence through an in-depth assessment while simultaneously implementing targeted initial response actions aimed at reducing immediate risks associated with water deficit and drought.

The operation will prioritize the collection of reliable and disaggregated data to better understand the impacts of the drought on rural and peri-urban households. Building on the experience of the National Society's previous drought assessment conducted in 2023, a structured household-level assessment will be carried out using digital data collection tools (KoBo), enabling real-time data processing and analysis.

Volunteer teams will be deployed to the most affected areas to ensure representative geographic coverage and capture variations in needs across different departments. This approach will allow the National Society to identify priority needs related to water access, storage practices, water quality, and coping mechanisms, while also informing potential scale-up of response interventions.

In parallel to the assessment, the operation will implement limited and targeted initial response actions focused on improving safe water access at the household level. These actions will be adapted to the context of each department and coordinated with the Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED), particularly in areas where public authorities are already supporting water supply.

In locations where water is being distributed but is not potable, the operation will prioritize the distribution of household water treatment kits to ensure safe consumption. In areas where potable water is being provided, the intervention will focus on the distribution of safe water storage kits to reduce contamination risks during transport and storage at the household level.

A total of 100 families will be supported through the distribution of water treatment kits and/or safe water storage kits, based on the specific conditions of water supply in each targeted area.

All distribution activities will be accompanied by four community awareness workshops, as well as targeted household-level sensitization, focusing on safe water storage, water treatment practices, container cleaning, and hygiene behaviors. In addition, all distributed kits will include clear and user-friendly information materials explaining proper use, dosage (where applicable), and maintenance of the items.

These actions aim to reduce public health risks associated with unsafe water handling, while ensuring that affected populations can effectively use the provided assistance.

Complementing these operational activities, the National Society will launch a national fundraising campaign through social media, institutional communication channels, and its call center. This initiative aims to mobilize additional resources to sustain and potentially scale up the response based on the findings of the assessment.

Overall, this strategy combines evidence generation with immediate, context-adapted assistance, ensuring that the response is needs-based, coordinated with national and departmental authorities, and aligned with the mechanisms of the National Emergency System (SINAE). It also positions the National Society to inform future interventions, including potential expansion of humanitarian assistance or anticipatory action mechanisms for drought.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

This operation will target rural and peri-urban households affected by water deficit and drought, with a particular focus on micro-producers and small-scale producers whose livelihoods and/or access to safe water for human consumption have been impacted by the current situation.

These groups are prioritized due to their high dependency on climate-sensitive livelihoods, limited coping capacity, and increased exposure to water scarcity, which directly affects both their income and basic needs.

The operation will focus on areas identified as most affected by the National Emergency System (SINAE) and the Departmental Emergency Coordination Centers (CECOED), ensuring alignment with national response mechanisms and prioritization of territories with higher levels of impact.

For the assessment component, the selection of households will be based on existing information from SINAE, CECOED, and other available datasets identifying the most affected areas. This will allow the National Society to conduct a representative and geographically



balanced sample of affected populations, ensuring that the assessment captures variations in needs across different contexts.

This approach is grounded in a needs-based and evidence-driven response, where the assessment will serve as a key tool to validate humanitarian needs and inform potential future interventions aimed at early recovery and resilience strengthening

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The selection of households for both the assessment and the initial response actions will follow a combination of eligibility and prioritization criteria to ensure that assistance reaches those most affected and vulnerable.

For the assessment, a representative sample of affected households will be selected in the targeted areas to ensure adequate coverage and diversity of profiles, including variations in livelihood types, access to water, and levels of impact.

For the distribution of 100 kits (water treatment and/or safe water storage), households will be selected based on the following eligibility criteria:

- Households experiencing difficulties in accessing safe water for human consumption, including those dependent on external water supply (e.g., tanker trucks or similar mechanisms);
- Households whose livelihoods have been partially or severely affected by the drought, particularly micro-producers and small-scale farmers;
- Households located in the most affected areas as identified by CECOED and local authorities.

The type of kit to be distributed will be defined based on the characteristics of water supply in each location. Households receiving potable water from CECOED will be provided with safe water storage kits to prevent contamination during transport and storage. Households receiving non-potable water will be provided with water treatment kits to ensure safe consumption.

In addition, prioritization criteria will be applied to ensure that assistance reaches the most vulnerable households, including:

- Households with higher levels of socioeconomic vulnerability and limited coping capacity;
- Households with children under 18 years of age or dependents;
- Households that have experienced total or severe loss of livelihoods due to drought;
- Households not receiving assistance from other governmental or non-governmental actors;
- Households with members in situations of increased vulnerability (such as older persons, persons with disabilities, or chronic health conditions), where relevant.

This combined approach ensures that the limited initial response is targeted, equitable, and aligned with humanitarian principles, while the assessment component provides the necessary evidence to inform a potential scale-up of assistance.

Total Targeted Population

Rural	100%	Urban	-
People with disabilities (estimated)	5%		
Total targeted population	1,000		

Risk and Security Considerations (including "management")

Does your National Society have anti-fraud and corruption policy?	No
Does your National Society have prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse policy?	Yes



Does your National Society have child protection/child safeguarding policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have whistleblower protection policy?	No
Does your National Society have anti-sexual harassment policy?	Yes
Please analyse and indicate potential risks for this operation, its root causes and mitigation actions.	
Risk	Mitigation action
Operational overload of staff and volunteers during the emergency	National call for volunteers, team rotation planning, monitoring of workload and continuous reinforcement from nearby branches.
Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation:	
<p>If the drought persists, there is a risk of forest and rural fires in affected areas, which could affect accessibility to certain locations. Climate variability may also modify the operational scenario.</p> <p>The operation will maintain continuous monitoring of the climatic and humanitarian context, in coordination with national authorities (SINAE, INUMET and MGAP).</p>	
Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?	Yes

Planned Intervention



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Budget: CHF 9,585

Targeted Persons: 500

Indicators

Title	Target
Number of households provided with safe water storage kits and/or water treatment kits	100
Number of people reached with safe water access through household-level interventions	500
Number of community awareness workshops conducted on safe water management	4

Priority Actions

Conduct distribution of 100 household-level kits, including: safe water storage kits in areas where potable water is provided by CEOED water treatment kits in areas where non-potable water is distributed

Ensure context-based targeting, adapting the type of assistance



Carry out four community awareness workshops, complemented by household-level sensitization during distributions, focusing on: safe water storage practices, correct water treatment and dosage, cleaning of containers, hygiene and risk reduction practices

Distribute clear and user-friendly information materials together with kits, explaining: proper use, maintenance safe handling of water



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 11,609

Targeted Persons: -

Indicators

Title	Target
surge deployment (months)	1
solid evaluation report	1
support missions from CCD	1

Priority Actions

- Surge with IM and Assessment profile for one month
- CCD support on PMER
- Operational support for fundraising efforts and monitoring visits.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 41,136

Targeted Persons: 3,000

Indicators

Title	Target
Number of households that participated in the assessment	1,000
Number of staff engaged in the assessment	3
number of volunteers engaged in the assessment and distribution	40

Priority Actions

- Conduct and in depth multisectoral assessment in communities affected by the drought in the areas of Canelones and Maldonado.



About Support Services

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

40 volunteers from branches across the country and 3 NS staff will be engaged in the operation. The activities will be overseen and coordinated by the National Risk Reduction Coordinator.

Does your volunteer team reflect the gender, age, and cultural diversity of the people you're helping? What gaps exist in your volunteer team's gender, age, or cultural diversity, and how are you addressing them to ensure inclusive and appropriate support?

yes

Will surge personnel be deployed? If yes, please provide the role profile needed.

Yes

To strengthen the quality and timeliness of the assessment, the operation will deploy a Surge Information Management (IM) profile with experience in field data collection and analysis. This profile will support the National Society in the design and configuration of digital data collection tools (KoBo), ensuring that assessment forms are aligned with operational needs and enable efficient data capture.

In addition, the IM Surge will support the systematization and analysis of the data collected during the assessment, contributing to the production of clear, evidence-based outputs, including dashboards, visualizations, and key analytical insights. This will facilitate timely decision-making and enhance the quality of the final assessment report, including the development of graphs, summaries, and data-driven recommendations to inform potential scale-up of the response.



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

**MDRUY006 - Uruguayan Red Cross
UY: Evaluación Sequía**

Operating Budget

Planned Operations	9,585
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	0
Health	0
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	9,585
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	0
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	0
Community Engagement and Accountability	0
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	52,744
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	11,609
National Society Strengthening	41,136
TOTAL BUDGET	62,329

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)



Contact Information

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

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[Click here for the reference](#)

