

EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL SUMMARY

Honduras | Drought

11 September 2026

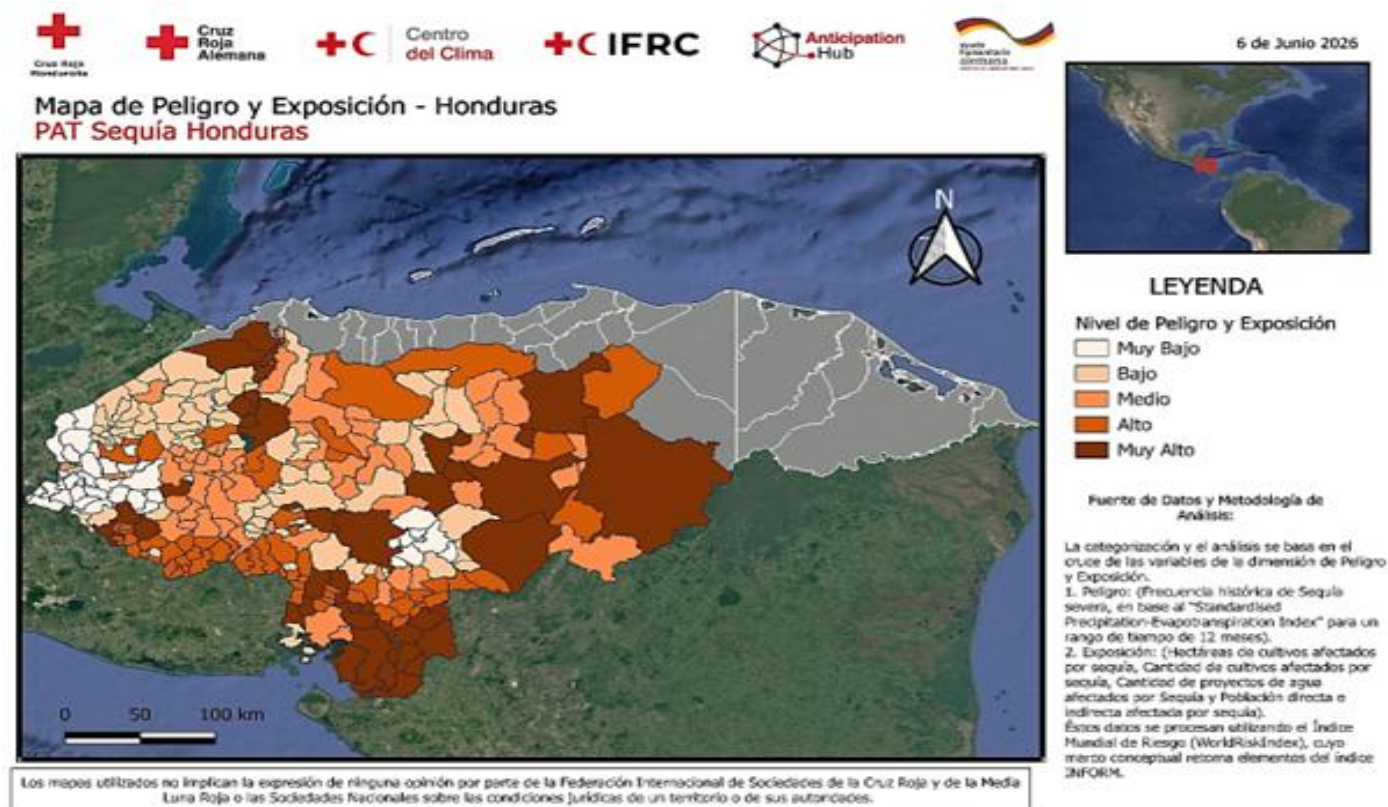


Dry maize crop in El Amate Village, Lauterique Municipality, La Paz Department, located in Honduras' Dry Corridor. 7 August 2026. Source: Honduran Red Cross.

EAP No.: EAP2026HN06	Early action lead time: 3 Months	Operation No.: MDRHN029
Approved EAP: 04/09/2026	EAP lifespan: 5 years	Activation time frame: 2 months

Budget: 856,326 CHF
To assist: 10,000 people

SUMMARY OF THE EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL



The IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) has approved a total of CHF 856,326 for the implementation of the Honduran Red Cross Early Action Plan (EAP). The approved amount consists of an allocation of CHF 368,466 for readiness and pre-positioning, and CHF 487,861 allocated to implement early actions once the defined triggers are met.

The allocations are made under the DREF's anticipatory pillar, under appeal code DREF MDRHN029. Unrestricted contributions to the DREF are encouraged to ensure that sufficient funding is available for the Early Action Protocols currently being developed.

Honduras is one of the Central American countries most exposed to the effects of climate variability and phenomena associated with ENSO (El Niño-Southern Oscillation). Among hydrometeorological threats, meteorological drought is one of the most recurrent events with the greatest humanitarian impact, particularly in the Honduran Dry Corridor, where the population relies mainly on subsistence agriculture and livestock farming. Historical drought events have caused significant losses to crops and livestock, reduced water availability, undermined food security and affected the livelihoods of vulnerable rural families.

The Early Action Protocol (EAP) for Meteorological Drought was developed by the Honduran Red Cross with the support of the German Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre. The protocol aims to reduce the humanitarian impacts caused by droughts associated with the El Niño phenomenon through the implementation of forecast-based anticipatory actions.

The intervention will prioritise communities located in areas historically affected by severe droughts, particularly in the departments of Choluteca, Valle, Lempira, Francisco Morazán, Comayagua, Yoro, La Paz, Intibucá, El Paraíso and Olancho. The target population totals 10,000 people (2,000 families),

prioritising households dependent on subsistence agriculture and livestock farming, families at risk of food insecurity and the most vulnerable groups.

The EAP addresses three priority impacts: losses and damage to subsistence agricultural and livestock livelihoods; increased food insecurity; and limited access to safe water due to a decline in water sources and rising costs associated with water resources.

The activation of the protocol is based on official information issued by COPECO/CENAOS and requires the simultaneous fulfilment of two trigger criteria: a probability of 60 per cent or higher that an El Niño event will occur in the Niño 3.4 region, and a probability of 60 per cent or higher that cumulative rainfall will fall below the 20th percentile in the Dry Corridor of Honduras during at least one of the periods between June and November. These triggers provide an approximate three-month lead time for the implementation of early action.

The selected proactive measures include awareness-raising campaigns on drought preparedness and water management, multi-purpose cash transfers to protect livelihoods and alleviate food insecurity, the distribution of filters for domestic water treatment, water quality assessment using specialised WASH equipment, and the distribution of water for human consumption and multi-purpose use in communities affected by water scarcity. These actions are complemented by mechanisms for Community Participation and Accountability (CEA), Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning.

The EAP has a total budget of CHF 856,326.00 and will be implemented by the Honduran Red Cross, which has a nationwide presence, specialised technical staff, expertise in WASH and cash transfer programmes, and an extensive network of volunteers to carry out the anticipatory actions in a timely and effective manner. Through this mechanism, the National Society aims to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities and reduce humanitarian impacts before the drought reaches its peak severity.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

1. Who will implement the EAP – The National Society

The Early Action Protocol (EAP) for Meteorological Drought will be implemented by the Honduran Red Cross (CRH). All stakeholders involved in this protocol play a key role in the coordination, preparation and activation of the Early Action mechanism. The EAP has been developed with technical support from the German Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre.

The Honduran Red Cross has a nationwide presence through 53 branches spread across four regions of the country and a network of more than 6,300 active volunteers, enabling it to maintain operational capacity in areas historically affected by severe droughts. Furthermore, it forms part of the National Risk Management System (SINAGER) and maintains coordination mechanisms with national and local authorities responsible for risk management and emergency response.

The National Society has specialised capabilities in Comprehensive Risk Management, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Cash Transfer Programmes (CTPs), Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL). It also leads the WASH Hub for Central America, with a production capacity of up

to 442,000 litres of water per day and expertise in water quality analysis and the distribution of safe water.

The Honduran Red Cross has significant experience in implementing anticipatory measures, emergency response, food security, livelihood protection and cash transfer programmes through various delivery mechanisms. Lessons learnt during previous drought activations have been incorporated into this protocol.

Preparedness activities include activation drills, institutional capacity-building, market monitoring, updating risk analyses, strengthening WASH teams, recruiting technical staff specialising in early action, cash transfer programmes and geographic information management, as well as coordination and outreach activities with communities and key stakeholders.

The Honduran Red Cross has the institutional capacity to advance funds earmarked for the launch of anticipatory actions whilst the DREF disbursement processes are being finalised. The IFRC will provide technical, operational and financial support during the implementation of the protocol, whilst the German Red Cross will continue to provide technical assistance for capacity building and the consolidation of anticipatory action mechanisms in Honduras.

2. How the EAP will be activated – The trigger

The Honduran Red Cross has developed a meteorological drought risk index that enables it to prioritise municipalities and communities for intervention through a joint analysis of hazard, exposure, vulnerability and response capacity. This analysis identifies the Honduran Dry Corridor as the area of greatest risk, comprising the departments of Choluteca, Valle, Lempira, Francisco Morazán, Comayagua, La Paz, Intibucá, El Paraíso, Olancho and Yoro, where the greatest impacts associated with drought have historically been recorded.

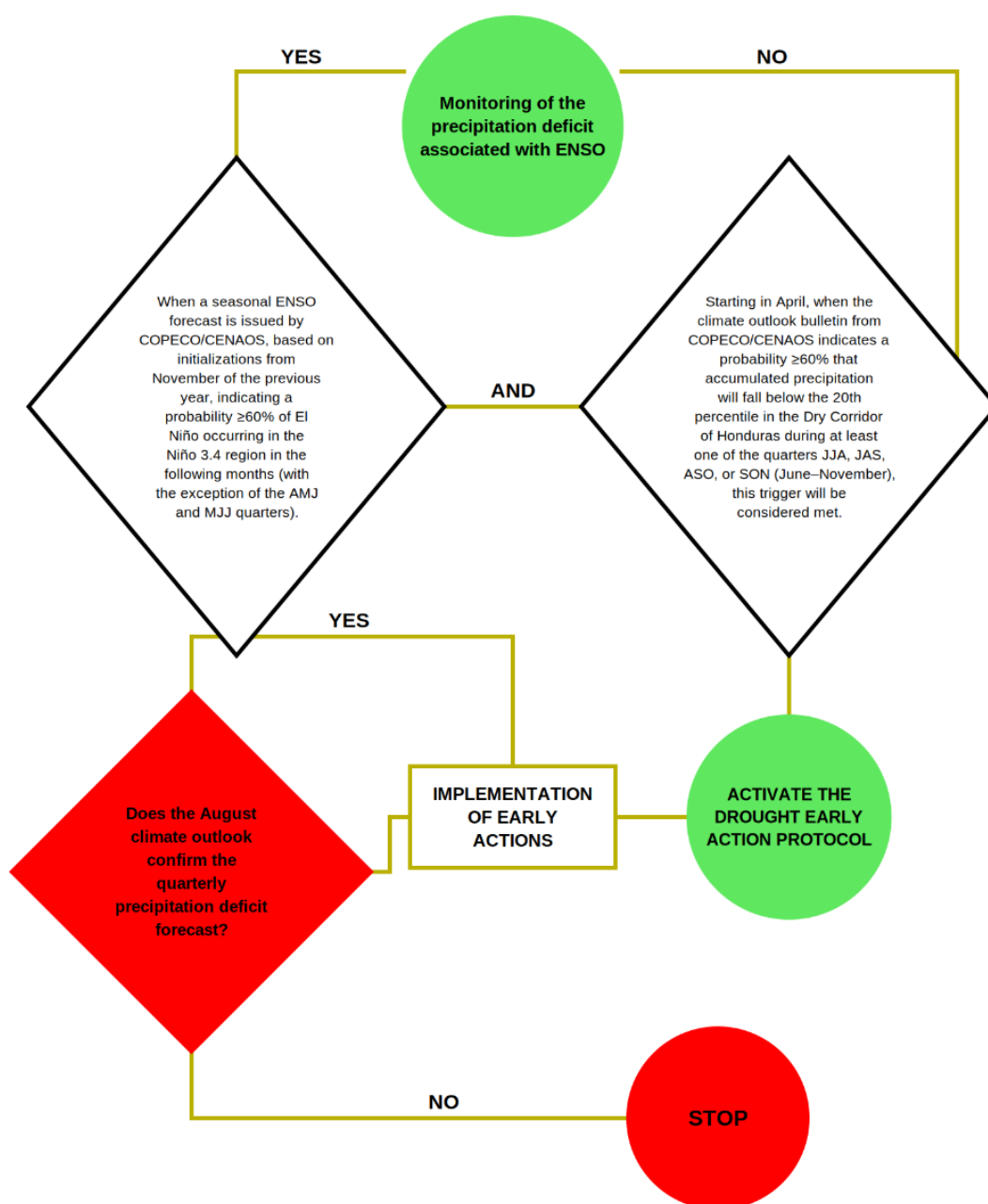
Prioritised impacts

The rainfall deficit associated with the El Niño phenomenon has direct effects on the following priority humanitarian impacts:

- Damage to and loss of subsistence livelihoods, including damage to crops and the death of large and small livestock.
- Increased food insecurity and the adoption of negative coping strategies by vulnerable households.
- Limited access to safe water due to water scarcity and rising supply costs, increasing the risk of diseases related to the consumption of unsafe water.

Activation model

The triggers were developed based on the monitoring of climatic conditions associated with the ENSO phenomenon and the seasonal forecasts issued by COPECO/CENAOS. The protocol provides an approximate three-month lead time, allowing actions to be implemented before the drought reaches its most severe impact.



Activation declaration

Activation of the EAP requires the simultaneous fulfilment of the following triggers:

Trigger 1	- When COPECO/CENAOS issues an ENSO seasonal forecast, based on initialisations from November of the previous year, indicating a probability of ≥ 60 per cent of an El Niño event occurring in the Niño 3.4 region in the following months (with the exception of the AMJ and MJJ quarters).
Trigger 2	- From April onwards, the COPECO/CENAOS climate outlook bulletin indicates a probability of ≥ 60 per cent that cumulative rainfall in one or more of the JJA, JAS, ASO or SON quarters (June–November) will fall below the 20th percentile in the Dry Corridor.

Historical data and return period

Historical evidence shows that severe drought events associated with El Niño conditions were recorded in the periods 1982–1983, 1997–1998, 2002–2003, 2014–2016 and 2023–2024, causing significant losses in terms of livelihoods, food security and access to water. Analysis carried out during the development of the EAP indicates that this type of event has an approximate return period of seven years in relation to the most intense ENSO events.

Selection of the forecast

In Honduras, COPECO/CENAOS is the official institution responsible for issuing the climate forecasts used to activate the protocol. The ENSO forecast was selected due to the strong historical correlation between the occurrence of the El Niño phenomenon and the rainfall deficits observed in the Honduran Dry Corridor.

Forecast	Institution	Forecast lead time
ENSO forecast	COPECO/CENAOS – CPC/IRI	3 months
Seasonal precipitation deficit forecast	COPECO/CENAOS	3 months

Responsibility for activation

The Honduran Red Cross will be responsible for activating the protocol, through the National Emergency Operations Centre (COEN) and the Risk Management Department, which will analyse the information issued by COPECO/CENAOS and verify that both trigger criteria have been met. Once the established thresholds have been reached, the administrative and operational activation of the EAP will proceed, along with the deployment of resources and specialist teams.

Selection of the target population

The target population will be selected based on the intervention map and previously defined vulnerability criteria. Priority will be given to households dependent on subsistence agriculture and livestock farming, families at risk of food insecurity, older people, people with disabilities, pregnant or breastfeeding women, and households with children under the age of five. Assistance will be targeted at approximately 10,000 people (2,000 families) per activation.

Area of intervention

The intervention zones will be defined by cross-referencing the national drought risk map with the forecasts issued by COPECO/CENAOS. Pre-emptive actions will focus on communities located within the Honduran Dry Corridor and other municipalities presenting high-risk and vulnerable conditions in the face of meteorological drought.

Stop mechanism

The stop mechanism will be triggered when the updated quarterly forecast indicates that weather conditions no longer meet the thresholds defined for the protocol's activation. In this scenario, the implementation of anticipatory actions will be suspended, whilst hydrometeorological monitoring will continue to assess the evolution of weather conditions.

3. How the EAP will reduce the impact on the population – Initial actions

The early actions included in the EAP were selected based on a historical analysis of the impacts of droughts associated with the El Niño phenomenon, technical consultations with specialists from the Honduran Red Cross, government institutions and partners within the Movement, as well as lessons learnt from the activation of the Early Action Framework for drought implemented in Honduras during 2023–2024. The evaluation carried out following that activation showed that anticipatory assistance helped to improve household preparedness, increase planting capacity, reduce the need for emergency coping strategies and strengthen the protection of livelihoods.

The selection of actions also took into account criteria such as operational feasibility, institutional capacity, community acceptance, technical evidence and alignment with IFRC standards and the Sphere Standards for humanitarian assistance. The Honduran Red Cross has specialist capacities in Cash Transfer Programmes (CTPs), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and Comprehensive Risk Management, ensuring the viability of the proposed interventions.

The prioritised anticipatory actions are as follows:

1. Awareness-raising campaigns on drought and household preparedness: Awareness-raising campaigns will be implemented in vulnerable communities to improve understanding of the risks associated with drought, promote water-saving and efficient water use practices, encourage measures to protect livelihoods, and strengthen household preparedness for water scarcity scenarios. These actions will help to reduce the impact on livelihoods, food security and access to water.

2. Multi-purpose cash transfers to protect livelihoods: Proactive cash assistance will be provided to households dependent on subsistence farming and livestock rearing, with the aim of protecting productive assets, purchasing agricultural and livestock inputs, reducing production losses and strengthening resilience to drought. This measure seeks to minimise damage and losses to subsistence livelihoods.

3. Multi-purpose cash transfers for households at risk of food insecurity: Cash assistance will be provided to highly vulnerable families to facilitate timely access to food, water and other essential needs, thereby reducing the adoption of negative coping strategies and mitigating the deterioration of food security during the critical drought period.

4. Distribution of filters for domestic water treatment: The distribution of filters will improve access to safe water for human consumption in communities where usual water sources experience a reduction in quantity or a deterioration in quality during the drought. This initiative helps to reduce the risks associated with the consumption of contaminated water and to lower the incidence of waterborne diseases.

5. Water quality assessment and monitoring: Through the deployment of specialist teams and mobile WASH laboratories, rapid water quality assessments will be carried out and safe alternative water sources identified. This intervention will help guide water supply measures and ensure that communities have access to water fit for human consumption.

6. Distribution of water for human consumption and multipurpose use: Where technical assessments identify significant risks of water shortages, the Honduran Red Cross will implement water distribution measures for human consumption and general use, helping to meet basic needs

whilst water scarcity persists. This action directly addresses the priority impact related to limited access to safe water

7. Community Participation and Accountability: All actions under the EAP will incorporate Community Participation and Accountability (CEA) mechanisms across the board, including community consultations, communication campaigns, feedback mechanisms and satisfaction surveys. These mechanisms will help to strengthen community ownership, ensure the relevance of interventions and promote the continuous improvement of the actions implemented.

Together, these actions aim to reduce the impacts of drought on livelihoods, food security and access to safe water for up to 10,000 people exposed to severe drought conditions in Honduras, whilst strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities in the face of future climate crises.

PLANNED OPERATIONS

 Multi-purpose cash assistance	People:	1,800 (360 families)	375,883 CHF
			AP code: 081
Indicator:	1,800 people reached with multi-purpose cash assistance prior to a crisis		
Readiness activities	1. Design and preparation of community awareness campaigns on cash transfers and how to use them in early response actions (These campaigns are not part of the activation phase but rather provide feedback to the various stakeholders). 2. Recruitment of a Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) Focal Point. 3. Training workshop on topics including anticipation, information gathering, mapping, risk analysis, CTP and others. 4. Workshop to update administrative processes. 5. Assessment of families' historical coping strategies in the face of drought. 6. Updating of market analyses and feasibility studies 7. Monitoring of prices and markets prior to the drought season. 8. Purchase of mobile phones for collecting field data.		
Pre-positioning activities:	1. Pre-positioning of CTP (cost of plastic).		
Priority early actions:	1. Delivery of Multi-Purpose Cash Transfers (MCTs) to protect the livelihoods of families in the selected communities (phases 1 and 2). 2. Delivery of Multi-Purpose Cash Transfers (MCTs) to families at risk of food insecurity in the selected communities.		

	3. Launch of an awareness-raising campaign on the onset of an extreme drought and readiness measures at household level and in relation to their livelihoods.
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 Water, sanitation and hygiene	People:	8,500 (1,700 families)	293,744 CHF
			AP code: 110, 111
Indicator:	8,500 people reached with water, sanitation and hygiene interventions prior to a hazard		
Readiness activities:	1. Design of awareness-raising campaigns (water culture, optimal water use). 2. National Intervention Teams (NIT)-WASH training. 3. Purchase of equipment for water quality analysis. 4. Purchase of WASH equipment (water pumps, lighting systems, fittings and other items). 5. Refresher training on NIT- WASH.		
Pre-positioning activities:	1. Pre-positioning of personal water filters (driver per diem, two volunteers, and truck freight costs) 2. Purchase of family hygiene kits. 3. Purchase of filters for domestic water treatment. 4. Purchase of reagents for water quality analysis.		
Priority early actions:	1. Deployment of NIT WASH, machinery and logistical equipment. 2. Distribution of household water purification filters and delivery of family hygiene kits. 3. Conducting rapid water quality assessments with community members		

 Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and recovery	People	0	9,752 CHF
			AP Code: 101, 103, 105,106
Indicator:	Number of EAP activation simulations conducted		
Readiness Activities:	1. EAP Activation Simulation (year 1) 2. EAP Update Workshop (year 2) 3. EAP Update Workshop (year 3)		
Prepositioning Activities:	N/A		
Priority Early Actions:	1. Monitoring of early actions (monthly)		

 Community participation and accountability	People:	10,000	15,108 CHF
			AP Code: 129

Indicator:	10,000 people reached through community participation and accountability interventions prior to a hazard
Readiness activities:	1. Design and preparation of community awareness campaigns on cash transfers and how to use them in early response actions (these campaigns are not part of the activation phase but rather provide feedback to the various stakeholders).
Pre-positioning activities	N/A
Priority early actions:	1. Engagement with community leaders regarding the activities to be carried out with the EAP. 2. Satisfaction surveys and focus groups. 3. Implementing CEA mechanisms as a cross-cutting priority in the communities.

 Environmental Sustainability	People	0	2,842 CHF
			AP Code: 102
Indicator:	2 Number of monitoring and reporting sessions conducted during EAP implementation		
Readiness Activities:	1. Monitoring and reporting session (Year 1) 2. Monitoring and reporting session (Year 2) 3. Monitoring and reporting session (Year 3)		
Prepositioning Activities:	N/A		
Priority Early Actions:	N/A		

Enabling approaches

 Secretariat Services			46,362 CHF
			AP code: 122
Readiness activities:	1. Monitoring visits. 2. Salary for DM Cluster CA. 3. Administrator's salary. 4. PMER salary. 5. Financial expenses. 6. Office expenses.		
Pre-positioning activities:	N/A		
Priority early actions:	1. Monitoring visits during activation (1 per activation).		

 Strengthening of National Societies	People:	0	112,634 CHF
			AP code: 105, 124, 125,
Readiness activities:	1. Drill. 2. Workshop on EAP updates. 3. Proactive Measures Manager. 4. Proactive Measures Liaison. 5. GIS Technician.		
Pre-positioning activities:	N/A		
Priority early actions:	1. Lessons learned workshop. 2. Self-care session		

Budget

 Early Action Protocol Summary Code – Honduran Red Cross Drought associated with the El Niño phenomenon EA Protocol - EAP2026HN06				
<u>Operating Budget</u>	Readiness	Pre-Pos Stock	Early Action	TOTAL
Planned Operations	66,746	189,101	441,483	697,330
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0	0	0	0
Livelihoods	0	0	0	0
Multi-purpose cash	34,399	1,486	339,998	375,883
Health	0	0	0	0
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	15,480	187,615	90,650	293,744
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	0	0	0	0
Education	0	0	0	0
Migration	0	0	0	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Rec	7,275	0	2,477	9,752
Community Engagement and Accountability	6,749	0	8,359	15,108
Environmental Sustainability	2,842	0	0	2,842
Enabling Approaches	112,619	0	46,377	158,996
Coordination and Partnerships	0	0	0	0
Secretariat Services	42,028	0	4,334	46,362
Strengthening National Societies	70,591	0	42,043	112,634
TOTAL BUDGET	179,365	189,101	487,861	856,326
<i>all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)</i>				

Contact details

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

In the Honduran Red Cross

- Alexei Castro, Secretary General alexei.castro@cuzroja.org.hn
- Yanci Lopez, National Risk Management Manager, yanci.lopez@cuzroja.org.hn

In the IFRC

- **IFRC Country Cluster Delegation:** Marjorie Soto Franco, Head of Central America CCD, marjorie.sotofranco@ifrc.org
- **IFRC Country Cluster Delegation:** Katherine Fuentes, Operation and Programs Coordinator, katherine.fuentes@ifrc.org
- **Geneva DREF Team:** Malika Noisette, DREF Senior Officer Anticipatory Action, malika.noisette@ifrc.org