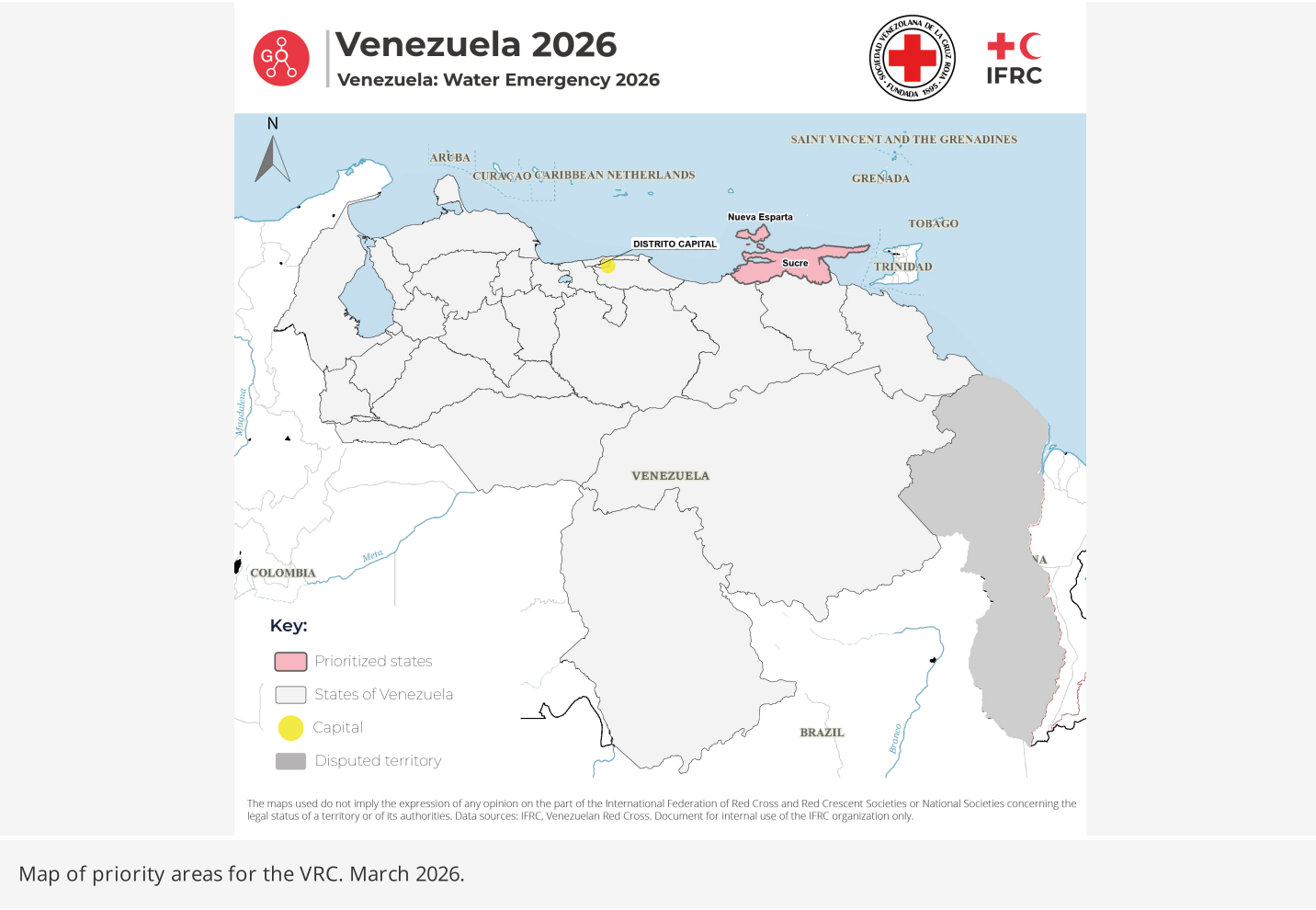




Water distribution point in Cumana. April 2026. Source: VRC.

Appeal: MDRVE014	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 366,388	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Other
Glide Number: -	People Affected: 640,000 people	People Targeted: 18,666 people	
Event Onset: Sudden	Operation Start Date: 13-03-2026	New Operational End Date: 30-09-2026	Total Operating Timeframe: 6 months
Reporting Timeframe Start Date: 13-03-2026		Reporting Timeframe End Date: 27-05-2026	
Additional Allocation Requested: -		Targeted Regions: Nueva Esparta, Sucre	

Description of the Event



Date of event

06-03-2026

What happened, where and when?

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is currently experiencing a major crisis affecting basic services in its eastern regions, particularly in the states of Sucre and Nueva Esparta. This follows the formal declaration of a Critical Water Emergency in the Official Gazette of the State of Sucre No. 3,247, dated 5 March 2026. This measure responds to a large-scale structural failure in the Turimiquire collection and distribution system — the most important strategic infrastructure in eastern Venezuela — which supplies drinking water to the continental area of Sucre State (covering the municipalities of Sucre, Bolívar and Cruz Salmerón Acosta) and the island area. The system affects 45% of the population of Margarita Island in the state of Nueva Esparta, which depends on its underwater branch via a complex network of underwater pipelines and aqueducts.

According to the technical report by the regional hydrological agency (Hidrocaribe), dated 3 March 2026, a rockslide at kilometre 7.6 of the 12.5 km transfer tunnel caused an obstruction of 82% of the tunnel's capacity. This drastically reduced the system's response capacity from 5,000 litres per second to 1,100 litres per second. This explains why there is not enough pressure in the water supply to reach the 'high areas' of Sucre and Nueva Esparta.

According to the media and local authorities, the collapse has been directly attributed to aftershocks and ground instability caused by an earthquake recorded in the region on 22 February 2026. This earthquake weakened infrastructure that was already compromised by decades of use, according to official spokespeople, including Governor Jhoanna Carrillo.

This emergency has had a negative multidimensional impact, affecting the lives of approximately 95,108 families in one of the three



affected municipalities in Sucre state. It has also compromised access to water for 45% of Nueva Esparta state's population, who depend on the underwater branch of the same system. In health terms, there is an imminent risk of an increase in waterborne and dermatological diseases due to inadequate storage of the resource in open containers and use of untreated alternative sources such as the Manzanares River. The event has led to the suspension of educational, commercial and tourism activities in the city of Cumaná in Sucre State, which are vital to the local economy, while extreme water rationing has undermined general well-being by prohibiting its use for anything other than basic human consumption and hygiene (Sucre State Government, Emergency Decree, 2026).

The people most likely to suffer severe impacts from this hazard are those living in the so-called 'high areas' of Cumaná and Margarita Island, where low water pressure physically prevents water from reaching homes, even during emergency pumping cycles (Hidrocaribe, Operational Statement, 03/05/2026). The most vulnerable groups within these communities include children and the elderly, who are more susceptible to dehydration and viral infections, as well as people with disabilities, who face physical barriers when collecting water from tanker trucks or community sources. Vulnerability is accentuated in families living in poverty who lack the financial resources to purchase water from private suppliers, whose prices have escalated due to high demand (Public Expenditure Observatory/Local Reports, 2026).

The Turimiquire system has historically had chronic weaknesses, with leaks documented over the last 30 years. In July 2023, a critical incident occurred when an eight-metre underground leak caused the collapse of the western branch of the underwater aqueduct, leaving thousands of families in Margarita without access to this basic resource. This demonstrates that the current event is not an isolated incident, but rather the culmination of systematic structural deterioration, requiring major engineering intervention to prevent total collapse of the sanitation system in the eastern region (Historical Archive of Water Infrastructure / El Sol de Margarita, 2023–2026).

The Red Cross has mobilized following the declaration of a water emergency, conducting initial needs assessments with local staff and mobilizing national personnel since 6 March 2026, in addition to identifying potential sites for the installation of water treatment plants and coordinating with local authorities who have requested support from the branches to supplement the response plan.

During March and April 2026, the Ministry of Popular Power for Water Attention (MinAguas) and the government of the state of Sucre carried out the physical sediment removal phase. The works included the use of heavy machinery recommended by the National Scientific Council for deep excavation. The operational process recorded critical occupational safety complications; at the end of March 2026, an internationally coordinated rescue operation was carried out to extract eight specialized technicians who were temporarily trapped and isolated inside the Transfer Tunnel due to residual ground instability. Although the workers were rescued safe, the event forced a slowdown in the progress of clearing 82% of the original rock blockage.

Faced with extreme rationing and low pressure in the Turimiquire submarine pipeline, local authorities in Margarita Island (Nueva Esparta) adjusted their response strategy by shifting toward autonomous, island-based systems:

- Activation of desalination plants: In key municipalities such as Santiago Mariño (Porlamar), the local mayor's office reported the reactivation and conditioning of local desalination infrastructure to inject an estimated flow of up to 80,000 liters of drinking water per day directly into the system.
- Community distribution: The water processed by coastal desalination plants is being distributed exclusively through tanker truck fleets in the most vulnerable sectors of the island, gradually attempting to reduce immediate dependence on the damaged submarine aqueduct.

Meanwhile, the Government of Sucre implemented strict regulations through complementary decrees, establishing:

- An absolute ban on the use of hoses for cleaning sidewalks, facades, or non-essential commercial activities.
- A total restriction on vegetation and solid waste burning, due to the regional fire department lacking a regular water supply necessary to respond to forest or structural fires.
- The deployment of permanent contingency plans based on tanker truck routes coordinated by local municipalities, prioritizing supply to health centers and critical communities, although residents in "high-altitude zones" continue to report severe distribution failures.

By the end of May 2026, the water emergency in eastern Venezuela had exceeded 80 continuous days without the regular restoration of piped drinking water services. The scope of the contingency increased compared to initial estimates: according to local media monitoring reports and civil protection updates, the number of affected people rose to an estimated 210,000 families (approximately 840,000 people) across the mainland areas of Sucre and the sectors of Nueva Esparta directly dependent on the pipeline. The severity of the structural collapse prompted formal intervention from multilateral agencies due to documented health risks. In May 2026, the United Nations (UN) formally allocated USD 2 million specifically aimed at the technical rehabilitation of the Turimiquire infrastructure and the provision of community water purification supplies for affected families.





Distribution of WASH kits in the Tras La Vela community. April 2026



Drinking Water Distribution, Water Emergency, Cumana, April 2026



Official WASH Deployment, SURGE System, Seta 3000 Plant, April 2026.



Start-up of a water treatment plant in the La Pedrera community. May 2026

Scope and Scale

The water emergency declared in eastern Venezuela is critical in scale, with an interstate scope that directly affects the states of Sucre and Nueva Esparta. The magnitude of the event is defined by the operational collapse of the Turimiquire System, which has suffered an 82% obstruction of its capacity at kilometre 7.6 of its main transfer tunnel (12.5 km long), reducing the inflow from 5,000 litres per second to just 1,100 L/s (Hidrocaribe/MinAguas, 03/2026). This reduction in available flow makes it impossible to pressurise the network, leaving hundreds of communities without piped water supply.

Geographically, the scope covers three priority municipalities in Sucre State: Sucre (Cumaná), with 95,108 families affected (information provided by the operational command present in the area); Bolívar (Marigüitar), with more than 20,000 people approximately; and Cruz Salmerón Acosta (Araya), with more than 40,000 people (Sucre Official Gazette No. 3,247). However, the impact of the event is estimated to be greater than what has been recorded, with more than 640,000 people affected by the emergency. For example, the scale of the crisis extends to the island area of Nueva Esparta, where the supply of drinking water to Margarita Island has fallen by 45%, compromising access to this resource for a large part of its population, which depends on the Turimiquire underwater pipeline.

The scale of the emergency is aggravated by its geological origin, an earthquake on 22 February, and its structural nature, which requires major engineering works that cannot be resolved immediately. This forces the population to rely on contingency plans involving tanker trucks that do not meet the total demand, increasing the health risk due to the use of unsuitable sources, such as the Manzanare River, threatening the stability of livelihoods and the health of vulnerable groups in highland and rural areas, who face a total shortage that has already exceeded 15 consecutive days (Decree 277, 2026).

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Declaracion de gobernacion	https://www.instagram.com/p/DVi7kUFAIHB/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet
2. Water emergency declared in three municipalities in Sucre	https://ultimasnoticias.com.ve/sucre/decretaron-emergencia-hidrica-en-tres-municipios-de-sucre/
3. Sucre State Government declares Water Emergency	https://radiomiraflores.net.ve/la-gobernacion-de-sucre-decreta-emergencia-hidrica/
4. Declaration of repair work on the Turimiquire system transfer tunnel.	https://www.instagram.com/reel/DVo_Y2BjVR2/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet
5. Official measures taken by the state of Sucre	https://www.instagram.com/p/DVi9L0_AETI/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet
6. Water supply program by tanker, governor's office.	https://www.instagram.com/p/DVi7kUFAIHB/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet

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
Are you requesting an additional allocation?	No



Please explain the summary of changes and justification:

In summary, a no-cost 3-month extension is proposed for a total operational period of 6 months, considering that as of May 2026, no probable date has yet been established for the restoration of the public water supply network in the city of Cumaná. Therefore, the water treatment and distribution point operated by the Venezuelan Red Cross has significantly contributed to mitigating the need for access to safe water among the vulnerable population, given that the civil infrastructure works required to restore the water system involve a high degree of technical complexity that exceeds the originally established timeframe. Consequently, there is a critical need to maintain the operation of the water treatment plants at least until the month of August.

In Nueva Esparta State, field assessments conducted in the municipalities of Gaspar Marciano and Díaz revealed that the water intake sources present high levels of salinity, exceeding the processing capacity of the equipment currently available at the National Society. In this regard, it is necessary to acquire and operationalize specialized units for the treatment of this type of water (Reverse Osmosis systems), requiring an extension of the operational timeline for their implementation and commissioning.

Within the framework of the operational update, the "Support for the Health Network" line, which included the incorporation of a tanker truck for each facility related to the indicator "Number of health centres provided with safe water", was discontinued and reallocated to the WASH line in accordance with field needs and the evolving emergency operation. In this way, the Venezuelan Red Cross will be able to maintain the team responsible for the services provided during the operation throughout the requested extension period. In addition, based on a joint assessment by the National WASH Team and the IFRC security officer, it was determined that distributing supplies via water tankers was not feasible. This approach was ruled out because the prevailing conditions exposed volunteer staff to security risks during their travels, so efforts were focused on secure fixed distribution points and direct kit deliveries.

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The IFRC is continuously monitoring the situation and continues to provide technical support to the Venezuelan Red Cross (VRC). In the initial phase, the possibility of complementing the response actions through the Unified Plan Programme – Disaster Risk Management 2025, funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), was evaluated. This coordination would enable support for early actions and assessment processes, building on recent training of the WASH team and consolidating knowledge through a practical exercise in setting up a water treatment plant and applying risk management measures in the city of Cumaná. Based on recent reports and the declaration of emergency, the situation has been escalated to the regional level. Consequently, an emergency advance payment request for an estimated amount of CHF 30,000 is being processed to support initial response activities. In addition, the SURGE mechanism has been requested to mobilise WASH assistant staff. The IFRC is also coordinating closely with the Venezuelan Red Cross to manage and mobilise items pre-positioned by various donors, with the aim of ensuring a comprehensive, efficient and complementary response, avoiding duplication of efforts.
Participating National Societies	A delegation from the German Red Cross is currently in Venezuela to support the Venezuelan Red Cross's emergency response plans as needed. The German Red Cross currently has a program in the state of Apure, so it is coordinating support for health activities. Based on its previous experience, the delegation has provided funding for the logistical deployment of assessment missions and rapid emergency responses.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been present in Venezuela since 1999. The ICRC Delegation and the Venezuelan Red Cross are in constant coordination with the Movement's partners in the prioritised states.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	The National Government and regional authorities have activated a nationwide contingency plan under the supervision of the Sectoral Vice-Presidency of Public Works and Services. Among the main actions is the installation of a Water Command Post to centralise decision-making and monitor the contingency in real time (Últimas Noticias, 28/02/2026). The Sectoral Vice-President, Jorge Márquez, announced a special 24-hour deployment that includes the creation of driver brigades to operate tanker trucks around the clock, supported by a fleet sent from the states of Guárico, Carabobo, Lara, Anzoátegui and La Guaira (Prensa Oriente, 07/03/2026). In addition, the installation of community tanks has begun in strategic areas such as the Historic Centre of Cumaná, and technical teams from the Ministry of Water Management (MinAguas) have been mobilised for engineering work on the blocked tunnel (Radio Miraflores, 06/03/2026). Under Decree No. 277, strict restrictive measures have been established that prohibit the use of water for cleaning facades, ornamental irrigation and burning rubbish, imposing legal sanctions against speculative sales or hoarding of the resource, while the public administration operates on special schedules to prioritise human consumption (El Diario / Noticias Venevisión, 2026).
UN or other actors	Following the declaration of a state of emergency, the National Humanitarian Team requested that international and national organisations provide support in the form of water tanks and large-scale storage systems in response to a direct request from the national government (Situation Report by the VRC and OCHA, March 2026). The Venezuelan Red Cross and the IFRC continue to be observer partners within the country's humanitarian system. On Monday 9 March, the Working Group for Emergency Preparedness and Response (GTPRE) held an ad hoc session to identify gaps and required actions for humanitarian actors. Additionally, the IFRC Delegation is collaborating with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to monitor the situation continuously and coordinate with local health authorities. In response to the rapidly evolving water emergency in Sucre State, the humanitarian community, led by the Humanitarian Coordinator and with support from OCHA, has stepped up its response, particularly in the areas of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and health. In this context, the Venezuela Humanitarian Fund allocated USD 1 million on 17 April for priority interventions, while on 1 May, the CERF contributed an additional USD 2 million to strengthen assistance for some 80,000 affected people, in coordination with authorities and UN agencies. Although the complementary use of these funds has made it possible to maximize impact and expand coverage, a significant



funding gap remains given the magnitude of the crisis, which affects more than 140,000 households.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

Members of the Bolivarian Army of Venezuela, the Sucre State Government, the Ministry of Popular Power for Water (MinAguas), the Bolivarian National Police and Civil Protection are participating in the Water Command Post set up in the city of Cumaná, Sucre State. This space is the nerve centre of the operation, where inter-institutional efforts are coordinated and definitive strategic and operational decisions are made to manage the emergency situation, prioritise the distribution of resources and supervise technical progress in the Turimiquire system infrastructure.

The Venezuelan Red Cross (CRV), in its role as an auxiliary to public authorities, has strengthened operational coordination in the states of Nueva Esparta and Sucre by collaborating with local authorities, MinAguas, and other key stakeholders, promoting technical and logistical solutions to the water emergency. In municipalities such as Gaspar Marciano, Arismendi, and Díaz (Isla de Margarita), it has led inter-institutional coordination efforts, validated water sources, and evaluated alternatives for safe water production, while on the Araya Peninsula (Cruz Salmerón Acosta municipality) it has coordinated logistical deployment and assistance to isolated communities. These actions are complemented by planning WASH distributions and mobilizing technical capabilities, maintaining close coordination with government and community actors to optimize the response and expand coverage in the most affected areas.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



Health

Given the magnitude of the water emergency, a potential health crisis has been identified, characterised by an exponential increase in waterborne and dermatological diseases. The interruption of supply has forced the affected population to resort to untreated sources, such as the Manzanares River, whose use for consumption and personal hygiene increases the risk of outbreaks of acute diarrhoea, amoebiasis and parasitosis, as well as skin conditions due to the lack of basic sanitation. In addition, extreme rationing forces families to store water in open containers for long periods of time, creating potential breeding grounds for vectors and increasing vulnerability to epidemics of dengue, Zika and chikungunya in a population that already suffers from high levels of food insecurity and immunological weakness (Water Emergency Report / UNICEF, 2026).

On the other hand, there is an urgent need to ensure the functioning of the public healthcare network, where health centres and outpatient clinics may face critical difficulties in maintaining basic hygiene and sterilisation protocols due to low water pressure in the pipes. The lack of safe water in these centres not only compromises patient safety, increasing the risk of hospital-acquired infections, but also exacerbates the situation of priority groups such as children with dehydration and older adults with chronic diseases.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

The drastic reduction in the flow entering the system, which fell from 5,000 L/s to just 1,100 L/s, has left the distribution network without the pressure needed to supply communities, especially in high and rural areas of the municipalities of Sucre, Bolívar and Cruz Salmerón Acosta. Given this supply deficit, there is a clear need to implement rapid response water purification systems. Given that the population has begun to extract water from untreated surface sources such as the Manzanares River, it is imperative to deploy mobile water treatment plants and distribute household treatment supplies, such as water purification tablets and disinfection solutions, on a large scale to ensure that the resource consumed meets minimum quality standards and to prevent outbreaks of waterborne diseases (Hidrocaribe / Emergency Report No. 3,247, 2026).

Additionally, the scale of the obstruction (82% of the transfer tunnel) suggests that structural repairs will not be immediate, creating an urgent need to strengthen safe storage capacity in homes and community centres. The lack of adequate containers has led to precarious storage practices that facilitate cross-contamination and the proliferation of vectors. Therefore, the provision of bulk storage tanks, jerry cans, and water purification tablets is required. These actions are essential to mitigate the impact of the extreme rationing that has been decreed and to ensure that the most vulnerable families, who cannot afford private tanker trucks, have access to water while major engineering works are carried out on the Turimiquire system.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

The water emergency places a disproportionate burden on single female heads of household, children, and older adults. Due to the need to collect water, these populations are forced to make long journeys to tanker trucks or natural sources such as the Manzanares River, where they must remain for several hours until they can benefit from the water supply. This situation can cause chronic ailments due to the physical effort of carrying heavy containers, as well as high exposure to dehydration and fainting due to waiting periods. It is a priority to incorporate protective measures at distribution points, ensuring adequate lighting and safe routes.

From an inclusion perspective, persons with disabilities and older adults face physical barriers to accessing tanker trucks or carrying water, exposing them to situations of exclusion and risks of severe dehydration if they do not have family support networks. Likewise, the shortage has begun to generate pockets of social tension in the streets and in supply lines, where the most vulnerable groups are often relegated or intimidated. It is essential to implement door-to-door delivery mechanisms for people with reduced mobility and to establish strict codes of conduct at water points in order to prevent abuse and ensure that aid reaches the entire population equitably and safely, regardless of age or physical condition.



Education

Although there is no formal suspension of the educational zone, in the city of Cumaná, the suspension of academic activities is already a forced reality in the vast majority of educational centres, including schools and universities, due to the impossibility of maintaining minimum conditions of hygiene, functioning sanitary services and food preparation on campus. This interruption not only represents a loss of school days and a cumulative educational gap, but also eliminates the "safe environment" that school provides. By not being in the classroom, many children and adolescents are integrated into the gruelling family tasks of carrying water under extreme weather conditions, exposing them to risks of physical exhaustion and harm that compromise their overall development.

Given this closure of educational centres, the need for intervention in the education sector is critical and urgent to enable a safe return to the classroom. It is imperative to equip educational centres with mass storage systems (large-capacity tanks) and immediate water purification technologies, in addition to establishing priority supply routes using tanker trucks. The reopening of schools is vital not only for academic education, but also to ensure food security for students who depend on school feeding programmes.



Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

The magnitude of the disruption to the water transfer system, coupled with prolonged climatic instability that has affected water availability in the eastern region of the country, highlights the urgent need to strengthen local capacities to reduce risks associated with recurring water supply failures. The combination of reduced flow, climate variability and progressive deterioration of infrastructure has increased the vulnerability of communities, particularly in peri-urban and rural areas where supply alternatives are limited. In this context, there is a clear need to incorporate climate adaptation and water risk management measures, such as the implementation of community water collection and safe storage systems, the adoption of efficient water use practices, and the establishment of community protocols for periods of extreme rationing. These actions will reduce exposure to future crises resulting from both structural failures and climatic events, ensuring the minimum operational continuity of essential services.

Furthermore, considering that repairing the Turimiquire system requires major works that could take some time, there is a need to strengthen early recovery processes that increase the resilience of livelihoods and the sustainability of supply in the medium term. The lack of adequate community infrastructure for water storage and management—such as elevated tanks, centralised reservoirs, or alternative supply systems—has forced the population to resort to improvised mechanisms that compromise the quality of the resource and increase health risks. Therefore, it is necessary to design and implement resilient solutions that include community storage infrastructure, rehabilitation of alternative supply points, promotion of low-cost technologies for domestic treatment, and strengthening of local capacities in climate risk management. These interventions are essential to ensure that affected communities can recover progressively and be better prepared for future events.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Given the technical complexity and uncertainty surrounding the repair times for the Turimiquire system, there is an urgent need to establish two-way communication channels to mitigate misinformation and social discontent. The population of Sucre and Nueva Esparta requires clear, real-time information in accessible formats on the distribution schedules for water tankers and the location of water treatment plants or distribution points that are installed. It is essential to strengthen the participation of community leaders in the design of delivery routes to ensure that resources reach the most isolated sectors, preventing aid from being perceived as discretionary or unfair, which is vital to prevent outbreaks of instability or protests due to prolonged shortages.

On the other hand, accountability must be a cross-cutting issue to ensure the protection of people's dignity. There is a need to implement feedback and complaint mechanisms that allow the community to safely report any irregularities or inappropriate behaviour in water distribution. These channels are essential for adjusting the humanitarian response to maintain standards of transparency and ensure that the population participates in its own recovery process in the face of the emergency.

Any identified gaps/limitations in the assessment

During the needs assessment, limitations that may affect the accuracy, timeliness, and comparability of the information are identified. Among the main ones are the lack of updated official figures and the dispersion of sources, which makes it difficult to establish consistent baselines and robust estimates of the affected population and priority gaps.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

Through this DREF operation, The Venezuelan Red Cross seeks to support 18,666 people with the most urgent needs affected by the water emergency in the states of Sucre and Nueva Esparta for a period of 6 months, through the implementations of actions in the sectors of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA).

Operation strategy rationale

In order to address the urgent needs of the target population, the primary objective of this DREF is to mitigate the impact of the water emergency through a short-term technical response focused on providing safe water and safeguarding the dignity of those affected. In March 2026, the National Society began preparatory activities to ensure that affected people receive the necessary support and that the continuity of the water supply is maintained.

The operational strategy is based on proximity to people and the continuity of services. It recognises that the failure of the Turimiquire system is a structural crisis requiring high-impact technical solutions and rapid deployment. The VRC operation is organised into intervention areas:

1. Collection, treatment, storage and distribution of safe water

Four mobile water treatment plants (two in Sucre and two in Nueva Esparta) will form the main part of the response. Each plant has an estimated production capacity of 40,000 litres of treated water per day, which equates to a total of 160,000 litres of safe water per day for the region. To manage this volume and optimise delivery logistics, the strategy incorporates a staggered storage system.

- Plant Point: Each water treatment plant will have a 15,000-litre bladder tank located directly at the collection and treatment site. This will function as a reserve tank for filling trucks and immediate distribution.

Distribution network: Two storage tanks, each with a capacity of 10,000 litres, will be installed at different points in the city for each plant. This creates a network of two storage nodes per state (two in Sucre and two in Nueva Esparta), bringing the water closer to communities and reducing access barriers.

Upgrading of water supply points: The national WASH team will conduct a technical assessment to determine the optimal location for water treatment systems. This will be validated through a joint risk analysis with the IFRC's Security Officer.



This interdisciplinary coordination will ensure universal accessibility, identification of safe routes and adequate lighting, ensuring strict compliance with the DAPS (Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety) framework and proactively mitigating any protection risks for the beneficiary population during the operation.

The emergency situation is currently at a critical stage. Plans have been put in place to provide 15 litres of water per person per day for 30 days. This will involve distributing a total of 4,800,000 litres and providing safe drinking water to 10,666 people. The plan also involves reaching 2,000 families (8,000 people) in prioritised communities with WASH response supplies (jerry cans, water filters and water purification tablets), where these supplies are only partially provided by government agencies or infrastructure systems and VRC is unable to provide safe water.

2. Strengthening and Education within the Home

The intervention is complemented by the delivery of jerry cans and water purification tablets to individuals, ensuring that water remains safe from the point of distribution to the point of final consumption within the home. For this aid to be effective, the strategy incorporates educational sessions on hygiene and the safe use of water. These activities are epidemiological prevention tools designed to break the chain of transmission of waterborne diseases and encourage the rational use of resources in contexts of extreme scarcity.

4. Distribution of essential supplies for safe water management

This component will benefit an additional 2,000 families, prioritising not only vulnerable households in the immediate area, but also more remote communities who cannot access the VRC's safe water distribution plan and who rely exclusively on water supplied by water trucks operated by local authorities. The intervention includes delivering essential water, sanitation and hygiene supplies, such as jerry cans, purification sachets, household storage tanks and bucket filters, to strengthen water safety from collection to consumption. Distribution will be based on vulnerability criteria and carried out through community structures to ensure equity and transparency. Additionally, WASH and CEA teams will provide guidance on how to use, clean and maintain the supplies, ensuring they are used effectively and sustainably — especially in households far from regular distribution points — thereby reducing the risk of waterborne diseases during the emergency.

Finally, integrating the PGI and CEA components ensures inclusive and transparent operations by applying the DAPS framework (Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety). Physical adjustments will be made at distribution points to ensure differentiated care for minority groups and people with reduced mobility. This will be complemented by an awareness campaign and informational capsules for staff and volunteers on child safeguarding and protection in emergencies.

To strengthen institutional trust, the CEA component will provide training sessions for all staff on the Code of Conduct to ensure dignified treatment in every interaction. The central focus will be community participation, with satisfaction surveys being used to assess the relevance of the aid and volunteers' treatment. This approach enables communities to participate, ensuring that resources reach those in greatest need in an equitable and dignified manner.

As part of the transition and exit strategy, the Venezuelan Red Cross has collaborated closely with local authorities, Ministry of Water, Attention, and community stakeholders to enhance risk communication, encourage the adoption of safe water management practices, and provide support for interim measures while rehabilitation work on the Turimiquire system is ongoing. In Sucre State, particularly in the city of Cumaná, community awareness activities and technical coordination have been undertaken to help the authorities maintain access to safe water and promote informed water usage during the prolonged emergency. In Nueva Esparta, where high salinity levels have made conventional treatment solutions unfeasible, the National Society and IFRC have conducted technical assessments and planning processes to establish a sustainable safe water production point. As part of this effort, the regional WASH team has provided support for technical consultations, including exchanges with the Swedish Red Cross, to identify the most appropriate treatment alternative and assess the potential installation of a water treatment system capable of producing safe drinking water under local conditions. These efforts are intended to facilitate a progressive handover to longer-term solutions led by competent authorities and partners.

Activities will be publicised through the Venezuelan Red Cross's official social media channels, with fieldwork integrated with the collection of audiovisual material to demonstrate the operation's impact to internal and external audiences. As part of the communication strategy and CEA mechanisms, coordination with local authorities and community leaders will be included to provide timely information on the scope of the intervention, the support criteria, and the expected duration of actions. It will be clearly established that mobile water purification operations will not exceed one month while the local system is restored and the responsible institutions resume full capacity. In coordination with the communication managers of the subsidiaries and focal points, guidelines regarding institutional image and logo visibility will be followed. Additionally, the materials required by the National Communications Directorate for official dissemination will be compiled.

Within the framework of the operational update, the "Support for the Health Network" line, which included the incorporation of a tanker truck for each facility, was discontinued and reallocated to the WASH line in accordance with field needs and the evolving emergency operation. In this way, the Venezuelan Red Cross will be able to maintain the team responsible for the services provided during the operation throughout the requested extension period.



Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

The operation is designed to reach the population of the municipality of Sucre (Sucre state) and in Nueva Esparta state, who are directly affected by the collapse of the Turimiquire water system. The logic behind the VRC intervention is based on universal access with prioritisation of vulnerability. Although the shortage affects 100% of the inhabitants of these areas, the Venezuelan Red Cross directs its main efforts towards those groups that lack the financial means to purchase water through private tanker trucks or that face physical and social barriers to accessing alternative sources.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The main criterion is to prioritise those who, in the absence of water, face an imminent danger to their life, health or physical integrity.

- Communities in geographically critical areas: Low-income neighbourhoods and high-altitude areas where there is no water pressure and access for institutional tanker trucks is limited.
- Healthcare network users: The priority of supplying clinics and hospitals with 5,000-litre tankers and bladders responds to the need to maintain the operational continuity of vital services.
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women: They have higher biological hydration needs and strict hygiene requirements to prevent postpartum or neonatal infections. It must be ensured that shortages do not lead to obstetric complications or the interruption of breastfeeding due to dehydration of the mother.
- People with disabilities and older adults: Due to mobility barriers that prevent them from carrying water or standing in long queues under the sun. They are selected to ensure that aid reaches their immediate environment (or through priority delivery), preventing them from being excluded from the supply due to their physical inability to compete for the resource at mass distribution points.
- Children and adolescents: They are the demographic group most vulnerable to rapid dehydration and secondary malnutrition due to parasitic infections. By providing safe water and hygiene promotion sessions, we reduce infant mortality.

Total Targeted Population

Women	11,200	Rural	20%
Girls (under 18)	-	Urban	80%
Men	7,466	People with disabilities (estimated)	5%
Boys (under 18)	-		
Total targeted population	18,666		

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?	No



Does your National Society have child protection/child safeguarding policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have whistleblower protection policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have anti-sexual harassment policy?	No

Please analyse and indicate potential risks for this operation, its root causes and mitigation actions.

Risk	Mitigation action
Possible disturbances or public order issues at water distribution points.	- Implement a robust community engagement strategy to clearly communicate schedules and selection criteria. Work in coordination with authorities and other agencies to manage queues, complying with humanitarian principles
Mechanical failures at water treatment plants due to intensive use	Establish a preventive maintenance plan for each plant. Maintain a stock of critical spare parts (filters, membranes, hoses) for immediate repairs.
Water contamination due to improper handling by the community or poor hygiene in domestic containers.	- Reinforce hygiene promotion sessions on washing containers before filling. - Take daily samples at water treatment plants (VRC own analyses and independent laboratory analyses at the nearest laboratory (City of Barcelona, Anzoátegui)).
Failures in the supply chain delaying the distribution of water treatment plants, replacement of supplies and high costs of WASH equipment	- Procurement through a rapid purchasing plan with assistance from the IFRC office in Venezuela using existing stock at the IFRC regional office. - Replenishment strategy and no major dependence on procurement processes.
Increased social tensions due to water shortages or discontent at distribution points.	- Prior assessment of community safety with support from the IFRC Safety Assistant. - Coordination with community leaders by the VRC team. Clear communication of the scope of the project.
Demand from the population exceeds the capacity of the project	- Establish transparent selection criteria. - Dissemination of clear messages about coverage and scope. - Prioritisation based on vulnerability.
Lack of coordination between humanitarian actors or authorities.	- Continuous participation in coordination platforms (EHP, Ad Hoc). - Monitoring and regular updates with the humanitarian architecture. - Alignment with official response plans
Unintended association with political actors in a highly sensitive emergency.	- Reinforce neutrality in all messages. - Maintain technical, not political, coordination. - Record all interactions with authorities.
Lack of key regulatory frameworks (AF&C, PSEA, and anti-sexual harassment)	- Although the National Society does not have anti-fraud, PSEA or sexual harassment policies, it does have an approved Code of Conduct.



By signing the Project Agreement, the National Society formally adheres to the IFRC's integrity policies and Code of Conduct.

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers sign the updated Code of Conduct of the Venezuelan Red Cross.
- Ensure that 100% of operational staff complete the mandatory PGI induction prior to deployment.

Implement enhanced protection measures with the support of the Regional PGI Officer.

- Implement enhanced protection measures with support from the Regional PGI Officer.

Conduct periodic field monitoring visits by the IFRC Delegation to verify safeguards.

- Continue to strengthen the consolidation of institutional policies within the unified plan by the Delegation.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation:

Exposure of women, children, older adults, or persons with disabilities to security incidents or harassment when attending distribution points. As a mitigation measure, distribution points will be located in visible, well-lit, easily accessible places, with safe distribution schedules and priority queues for duly identified vulnerable groups.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

Yes

Planned Intervention



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Budget: CHF 261,746

Targeted Persons: 18,666

Targeted Male: -

Targeted Female: -

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of liters of safe water distributed	4,800,000	2,502,000
Number of families receiving jerry cans	2,000	646
Number of people receiving educational sessions	2,000	646
Number of families receiving water filters	2,000	646
Number of families receiving water purification methods	1,000	646

Progress Towards Outcome

- 1 Feasibility study in Cumana
- Installation of three water treatment plants (Watsan, LMS, and SETA) in Cumana, Sucre State. A processing flow of 80,000 liters of raw water per day has been standardized. The implementation of 12- to 15-hour workdays organized into rotating shifts doubled the system's efficiency. The commissioning of three water treatment plants reduced the processing time for 40,000 liters from 8 hours to just 4 hours. The total installed storage and distribution capacity stands at 80,000 liters.
- Installation of a safe water distribution point in downtown Cumana, accompanied by key messages promoting hygiene and CEA, accessible to all beneficiaries. Operating continuously from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., the distribution center ensures an average daily supply of 50,000 liters, reaching peaks of up to 75,000 liters in a single day. Rigorous monitoring of free residual chlorine is maintained, ensuring regulatory levels between 0.3 and 0.5 mg/L at the delivery point.
- 1 joint feasibility analysis with the Ministry of Water on potential water sources for the installation of a water treatment plant on Margarita Island, Nueva Esparta State.
- 2 feasibility assessments of water sources in the municipalities of Gaspar Marciano and Diaz.
- Thorough maintenance and complete replacement of filter media at the OX-06 Water Treatment Plant pre-positioned at the Porlamar Branch.
- Distribution of 646 water containers, water purification tablets, and Sawyer filters in the Ayara Peninsula, Sucre State, and the municipality of Diaz, Nueva Esparta State.
- Planning with the Cumana and Porlamar branches to resume deliveries of WASH kits.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 2,542

Targeted Persons: 2,000

Targeted Male: -

Targeted Female: -

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of assessments and/or analyses carried out integrating considerations of protection, gender, diversity and inclusion during the operation	2	1
Number of PGI campaigns implemented	1	1

Progress Towards Outcome

- Planning with the National Society's PGI team for the implementation of a rapid child protection risk assessment.
- Dissemination of key messages on water management, hygiene promotion, and accessibility of safe water distribution points through social media and radio stations.
- Display board with information at water distribution points, including key messages and laboratory water quality analysis results.
- Implementation of a CEA feedback form at water distribution points and during kit distributions.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 491

Targeted Persons: 2,000

Targeted Male: -

Targeted Female: -

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of volunteers made aware of the VRC code of conduct and its importance in response operations	100	51
Number of prioritised individuals receiving information on safe water management and the prevention of waterborne diseases	2,000	646
Implementation of community feedback mechanisms	1	1

Progress Towards Outcome

- Volunteers participating in the rotations receive briefings on the code of conduct and PSEA.
- Dissemination of key messages on water management, hygiene promotion, and access to safe water distribution points via social media and radio stations. As part of a communication strategy aimed at building community trust, an information board equipped with a QR code was set up at the distribution point. This system allows users to scan the QR code and view the official health certifications from Eurolab, HidroCaribe, and the Ministry of Health in real time.
- Planning with the CEA team and VRC communications staff to develop implementation strategies related to the reach of radio messages.
- As part of the process of distributing water containers, water purification tablets, and Sawyer filters, 646 heads of household have received training on safe water management and disease prevention; taking family composition into account, an estimated total of 2,131 people have been reached.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 37,871

Targeted Persons: 0

Targeted Male: -

Targeted Female: -

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of follow-up visits made by the IFRC Delegation	5	5
Number of international and national procurement processes conducted for supply replenishment	2	1
Number of surge personnel deployed	1	1

Progress Towards Outcome

- The IFRC has provided continuous technical and strategic support to the Venezuelan Red Cross, strengthening the implementation of the operation through specialized guidance, ongoing monitoring, and humanitarian diplomacy efforts. Through the Programs and Operations Coordinator, at least five field missions have been conducted, including preparatory and operational visits, which have helped optimize resources, strengthen decision-making, and improve coordination with key stakeholders at both the local and national levels.
- Situation monitoring has been maintained consistently through active communication channels and regular follow-up meetings. As part



of strengthening information management, a real-time monitoring dashboard was implemented and continuously updated by field teams, facilitating activity traceability, progress visualization, and more timely evidence-based decision-making.

- In terms of coordination, the IFRC has maintained active participation in the Country Humanitarian Team spaces, including the Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group (GTPRE), as well as in meetings with United Nations agencies and technical actors such as PAHO. This coordination has helped promote complementarity of actions, avoid duplication of efforts, and align the response with sectoral priorities in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and health.

- The monitoring and evaluation component has been continuously supported by the PMER area, which has developed the operation's monitoring plan and ensures the tracking of indicators, analysis of progress, and technical support for reporting and accountability. In parallel, the IFRC has supported logistical processes, including the management of international procurement of WASH supplies and replenishment items in coordination with the regional team, as well as providing guidance on local procurement processes, thereby strengthening the operational capacity of the VRC.

- In terms of security, specific missions have been carried out to assess risks and define mitigation measures, ensuring safe conditions for deployed staff and volunteers. Likewise, direct support has been provided through multiple field visits, including technical accompaniment for the deployment and operation of the SETA 3000 water treatment plant in Cumaná, as well as monitoring missions and coordination with authorities.

- The deployment of specialized SURGE WASH personnel from the Ecuadorian Red Cross has been particularly noteworthy, providing direct technical assistance in the commissioning, operation, and optimization of the SETA EA3000 treatment plant. This support made it possible to significantly increase potable water production from approximately 30,000 to 55,000 liters per day, strengthen operational control systems through monitoring and recording tools, and build local capacities through knowledge transfer and on-site training.

- Overall, these actions have helped strengthen the VRC's response capacity, improve the quality and coverage of humanitarian assistance, and ensure a coordinated, efficient intervention aligned with IFRC standards.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 63,738

Targeted Persons: 0

Targeted Male: -

Targeted Female: -

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
Number of personnel hired directly for the operation	7	4
Number of monitoring and evaluation visits by the National Society	3	5
The number of communication and visibility plans that have been implemented.	1	1
The number of lessons learned workshops.	1	0

Progress Towards Outcome

- The National Society has strengthened coordination and humanitarian diplomacy, particularly in the states of Sucre and Nueva Esparta, through coordination spaces with local authorities and key stakeholders. These actions have helped prevent duplication of efforts, define the scope of the intervention, and align response strategies, including the management of the communications component in a context of high public sensitivity.

- In particular, risk communication and community engagement activities have been implemented to address negative perceptions associated with the use of the Manzanares River as a water intake source, where there was initially distrust regarding water quality. Through the dissemination of technical information, validation with authorities, and greater transparency in processes, misinformation was reduced and community acceptance progressively improved. Likewise, these actions have been integrated into the planning of the operation's exit strategy, with technical support from IFRC.

- The WASH component activated response mechanisms and updated the contingency plan in line with the evolution of the emergency,



which was characterized by the prolonged interruption of the water supply system. Anticipatory actions were implemented to facilitate the mobilization of equipment, the pre-positioning of treatment plants, and the initial distribution of supplies, enabling the operation to continue despite demanding technical conditions, including high turbidity levels and equipment maintenance requirements.

- From a technical perspective, assessments were conducted at multiple locations to identify viable water sources. In Sucre, a single distribution point was prioritized following water quality analyses and access condition assessments, with validation provided by external laboratories and authorities. In Nueva Esparta, the assessments revealed limitations due to high salinity levels in most water sources, leading to the identification of alternative sources in Díaz municipality and the determination that reverse osmosis systems needed to be incorporated as a technical solution to ensure the safe treatment of water.

- At the same time, volunteers were mobilized nationwide, with the participation of at least 10 branches and 51 volunteers, who have consistently contributed to plant operations, water distribution, and the strengthening of local capacities.

- The operational team has been strengthened through the recruitment of key personnel in the areas of coordination, WASH, and logistics, ensuring the necessary technical support and adequate monitoring of financial resources. In addition, a comprehensive communications plan has been implemented, combining the dissemination of key messages, informational materials, and the monitoring of community perceptions, thereby helping to strengthen trust and maintain acceptance of the operation, with no formal complaints recorded regarding water quality.

- Regarding implementation, progress has been made in the distribution of pre-positioned materials, while the replenishment of critical supplies continues to be managed. Monitoring missions have provided technical support for the installation and operation of the treatment plants, as well as strengthening institutional coordination. As a result, the operation has delivered more than 2.2 million liters of safe water, while maintaining quality standards within the established parameters.

- Finally, a lessons learned workshop is planned toward the end of the operation, with the objective of systematizing experiences, identifying good practices, and strengthening future responses to emergencies with similar characteristics.

About Support Services

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

To implement this emergency response, an operational team has been set up, consisting of seven permanent staff members and a mobile force of around 40 volunteers per day (20 per state). These volunteers will rotate on a scheduled basis to ensure continuity of service during the months of operation. A General Coordinator will provide strategic leadership, making decisions and liaising with partners and authorities. They will be supported by an Administrative Assistant based at headquarters, who will manage resources and ensure accountability. In the field, a Logistics Officer will oversee technical operations, taking responsibility for the supply chain, fuel, and the well-being of volunteers. They will be supported by four Water and Sanitation Technical Assistants, who will directly supervise the mechanical operation and chemical quality of the water in each water treatment plant.

The volunteers will be at the heart of the intervention in the communities of Sucre and Nueva Esparta, with roles diversified to meet the most critical needs of the population. While one group will manage water distribution points, others will promote hygiene, facilitate educational sessions, and distribute jerry cans and water purification tablets. They will also act as key Community Participation and Accountability (CEA) liaisons, gathering feedback from beneficiaries and ensuring that assistance is delivered efficiently. This rotating structure allows for constant deployment of fresh staff, mitigating physical exhaustion in the face of high temperatures and the intensity of the water emergency.

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?

Volunteers are deployed in accordance with the National Society's internal procedures, based on available resources at national and local levels, prioritising those familiar with the socio-cultural dynamics of each branch. The aim is to ensure that the volunteer team reflects diversity and has a strong understanding of local dynamics, enabling greater reach and responsiveness to the needs of the target population.



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

According to the Venezuelan Red Cross's assessment, a WASH Assistant is required for one month, given the magnitude of the emergency and the need for specialised technical development in WASH, particularly with regard to operating and commissioning the Seta EA3000 water treatment plant.

This additional WASH personnel will assist with the maintenance and commissioning of equipment pre-positioned by the Red Cross, as well as contributing to technical assessments to support the Venezuelan Red Cross in strengthening its existing systems and procedures. The role will also involve close collaboration with the IFRC Country Delegation and the National Society to ensure compliance with standards.

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

The IFRC will be responsible for all purchases of goods and equipment. This ensures compliance with international procurement and quality standards. Purchases will be made on a restocking basis for the National Society's contingency stocks, which are deployed immediately at the onset of an emergency. These include items such as water purification tablets, jerry cans, and spare parts for generators. The Venezuelan Red Cross (National Society) will assume direct responsibility for operating expenses, including fuel, tanker truck rental, staff travel expenses, minor equipment maintenance, and deployment logistics in Sucre and Nueva Esparta.

As this is a mechanism for replenishing existing stock in regional warehouses for rapid response, the pressure on initial tendering times is reduced, enabling assistance to reach the community immediately.

How will this operation be monitored?

Monitoring will be based on joint deployments, in which technical teams from the VRC national office and IFRC delegates will conduct regular on-site visits. The aim of these monitoring missions is to verify compliance with the targets according to the established on-site indicators. During these visits, IFRC staff will oversee distribution days to ensure that the Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) criteria and Accountability (CEA) mechanisms are implemented in accordance with the approved operational plan.

Monitoring will be supported by real-time data collection tools (Kobo), enabling the generation of weekly progress reports on not only the litres of water produced and distributed and the number of families reached with distributions, but also the educational sessions planned and feedback on services provided to the population (questionnaire designed for CEA in emergency contexts). This constant monitoring will facilitate the early identification of operational risks or logistical bottlenecks, allowing for immediate adjustments to the strategy. At the end of the three-month period, a lessons learned workshop will be held with volunteers and staff from both institutions in attendance. This will ensure that the experience of the water emergency strengthens the National Society's future response capacity.

Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation

The Venezuelan Red Cross has a communications team that will implement a strategic plan to increase the visibility and transparency of the operation. This plan includes producing photographs, technical videos and direct testimonies from beneficiaries in Sucre and Nueva Esparta to document the impact that access to safe water has on people's lives.

The IFRC will provide technical support for international dissemination and ensure compliance with visibility standards.



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

- Venezuela Red Cross
Venezuela: Water Emergency

Operating Budget

Planned Operations	264.779
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	0
Health	0
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	261.746
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	2.542
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	0
Community Engagement and Accountability	491
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	101.609
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	37.871
National Society Strengthening	63.738
TOTAL BUDGET	366.388

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)

Internal

27/05/2026

#V2022.01

[Click here to download the budget file](#)



Contact Information

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

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