



LESSONS LEARNED REPORT

FINAL REPORT

ROMANIA | IFRC DREF - Floods (MDRRO006)



Lessons Learned Workshop, 28th February 2025, Galați, Romania; Source: Dan Lucian Brumar, Romanian Red Cross

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A. Context

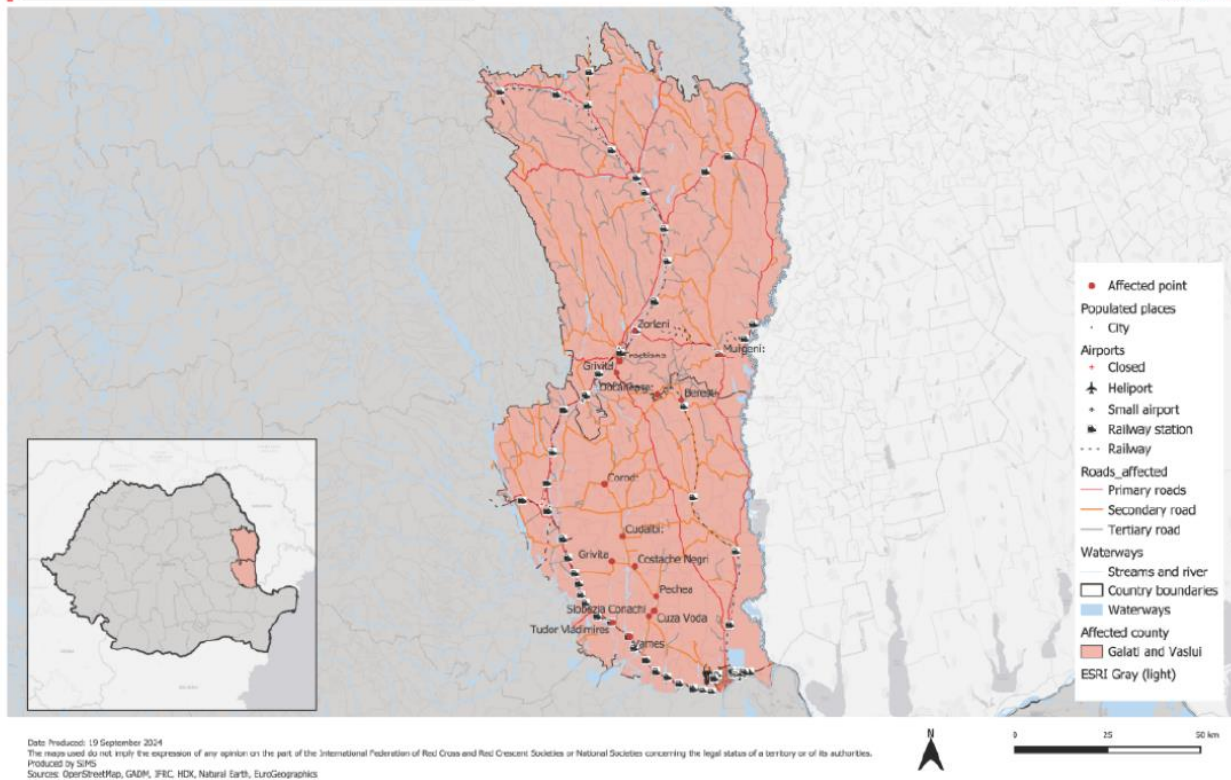
Lessons learned workshops (LLW) provided space for the National Society (NS) to reflect on what went well and what needs to be improved for future response. The main objective of the event was to assess how the implementation was conducted and identify key lessons learnt to further strengthen the NS preparedness to respond to future emergencies.

The event took place from 27th until 28th of March 2025, in Galați (Romania) and addressed the [floods](#) caused by Cyclone Boris, that occurred in Romania in September 2024.

The event gathered 33 participants, including representatives from the affected branches of the Red Cross, headquarter office of the Romanian Red Cross (RRC), International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), volunteers and local authorities.

Appeal: **MDRRO006**

- [IFRC GO - Emergency - ROU: Flood - 09-2024 - Cyclone Boris](#)
- [Appeals | IFRC](#)
- Crisis Category: Yellow
- Hazard: Flood
- People affected: 15,000 people
- People Targeted: 5,000 people
- Event Onset: Sudden
- Operation Start Date: 30-09-2024
- New Operational End Date: 31-03-2025
- Total Operating Timeframe: 6 months
- Reporting Timeframe Start Date: 30-09-2024
- Reporting Timeframe End Date: 31-03-2025
- Targeted Areas: Galati, Vaslui



Romanian 2024 Floods - Galati and Vaslui (Source: Italian Red Cross)

Widespread flooding in Central and Eastern Europe, triggered by Storm Boris, has caused widespread devastation in Europe. In Romania, the storm unleashed torrential rains on September 14, 2024, severely affecting **Galati and Vaslui counties**.

In just 24 hours, the region was flooded with more than 150 mm of rain per square meter, resulting in rapid flooding that swept away several areas, causing significant damage to homes, infrastructure, and livelihoods.

Galati county suffered the most severe impact, with waters of 1.5 to 2 meters deep in localities such as Cudalbi, Cuza-Voda, Pechea, Slobozia-Conachi, Tudor Vladimirescu and Costache Negri. **In Vaslui county**, the southern localities of Zorleni, Grivița and Trestiana were the most affected by the disaster.

The floods have caused extensive destruction, severely damaging critical infrastructure, including roads, bridges, electrical installations and schools. Over 6,000 houses were damaged or destroyed in the two counties. About 400 people were displaced and housed in temporary shelters provided by the authorities. Tragically, the disaster took seven lives.

Although floodwater has receded, the consequences continue to pose significant challenges. In the weeks and months following the disaster, immediate needs for food,

essential supplies, and services persisted, underscoring the continued vulnerability of affected communities. The restoration of critical infrastructure, energy and water supply, roads, bridges and schools will remain a long-term effort, which will take months or even years to complete. Many damaged homes are still uninhabitable, requiring extensive repairs, while rebuilding destroyed homes or relocating affected people to safer areas will require even more time. Rural residents who have lost livestock and crops during floods are facing severe economic hardship, as these losses have deprived them of their main sources of income. Vulnerable groups, including the elderly, large families, people with disabilities and those who have lost their livelihoods from agriculture are particularly at risk in both the intervention and recovery phases.



Source: Dan Lucian Brumar, RRC

B. Methodology

Methodology of the Lessons Learned Workshop (LLW)

The general objective of the LLW was to reflect on the flood response operation and identify key lessons to strengthen future preparedness and response efforts. While the LLW is a required component of the DREF process, it is not mandatory to strictly adhere to the IFRC methodology. In this case, the National Society (NS) led and facilitated the workshop, opting for a flexible, context-specific approach tailored to its operational reality rather than applying the formal IFRC framework.

The workshop was held in person from 27th until 28th of March 2025, in Galați, Romania. It was facilitated by Daniel Modoacă, Head of the Department for Emergency Situations and Disaster Management (HoESDM), with the participation of Natalia Andruszko, PMER Officer from the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation (CCD).

More than 30 participants attended the event (full list attached), representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including NS headquarters staff, local branches affected by the floods, Romanian Red Cross volunteers, and local authorities.

The workshop format primarily relied on focused group discussions, guided by the HoESDM. These discussions were structured to promote open dialogue and the exchange of experiences. While the IFRC PER methodology was not formally applied, the approach drew on previous learning processes and built upon existing deliverables and outcomes. Supporting materials, such as the agenda and presentations, are annexed to this report.

Throughout the event, it was repeatedly emphasized that the purpose of the workshop was not to assign blame or criticize, but to learn, improve coordination, and enhance future action. The ultimate goal was to better serve the affected communities, many of whom were already vulnerable before the emergency. The emphasis was placed on dialogue, constructive feedback, and a solutions-oriented approach.

C. Lessons Learned & Recommendations

1. Preparedness, Prevention, and Education

The flood response highlighted the critical need for continuous investment in preparedness and prevention. Community-level education programs should be expanded, especially in vulnerable areas, to ensure people are aware of risks and know how to respond. Prevention initiatives—including cross-border projects and engagement of local stakeholders like schools, municipalities unofficial community “elders”—should be prioritized. Mobilizing untapped groups such as pensioners, who often have time and local knowledge, can enhance community readiness.

2. Rapid Resource Mobilization

One of the strongest aspects of the response was the rapid activation of the Galați branch, the headquarters, and the collaboration with local authorities and IFRC. Human and material resources were effectively mobilized despite initial logistical challenges. However, there is room for improvement in regard to coordination between headquarters and local branches to ensure smoother deployment and avoid bottlenecks.

An important lesson is the significant impact of early media coverage on public fundraising. Prompt communication and storytelling during emergencies not only influence donations but also ensure long-term support beyond the initial disaster phase.

3. Movement Collaboration and IFRC Support

The involvement of the IFRC, including the DREF support, comprising deployment of Operational Coordination from the Regional Office for Europe (ROE), demonstrated the importance of international collaboration in emergency situations. Field experts provided added operational value and guidance. While there were challenges in coordinating between various entities, the key lesson is that good planning and transparency in communication can lead to a quicker and more effective response. It was noticed that comprehensive process of applying for the DREF mechanism revealed the strain on human resources. Additionally, the experience highlighted the importance of having internal emergency funds, as reliance solely on external mechanisms—such as DREF—may impact the timeliness of the initial response due to necessary administrative procedures.

4. Rapid Needs Assessment

One of the challenges encountered was the rapid assessment of the affected population's needs. While evaluation teams were mobilized by the authorities, the process was slower than anticipated due to difficult conditions and limited infrastructure in some areas. The lesson learned is that although local authorities deployed evaluation teams, the RRC must develop its own rapid needs assessment teams. These should be agile, trained, and immediately deployable, enabling RRC to act without waiting for external assessments.

5. Psychological Support

Initial psychosocial support (PSS) was insufficient. Future responses must ensure better coordination with local actors and prioritize early PSS deployment for both affected populations and volunteers.

6. Distribution of Aid/ Volunteers

The response placed significant pressure on logistics. A major constraint was the limited number of volunteers, many of whom were already engaged in the COVID-19 and Ukraine responses. Future operations require pre-planned logistics strategies and reserve volunteer pools to avoid fatigue and ensure adequate staffing.

7. Logistics/ Infrastructure

Investment in logistics and infrastructure—such as vehicles, storage facilities, and distribution equipment—is essential to ensure timely and effective emergency response. This need is particularly urgent given that the affected areas are prone to recurring floods, and recent climate changes have only increased the frequency and severity of such events.

8. Emergency Funds and Prepositioned Stock

The need for immediate funding and supplies at the onset of a disaster was evident. Delays in external funding can hinder initial actions. To address this, the RRC is developing an internal rescue fund and aims to preposition emergency kits in various locations (including food and

water for 72 hours). This will ensure the organization can act quickly, independent of bureaucratic delays. RRC is working on the national contingency plan that should significantly facilitate acting during emergencies.

9. National Coordination and Communications Center (CNCC)

The CNCC, developed with the Italian Red Cross, played a vital role in coordinating information and operational response. It centralized communications, facilitated data exchange with national authorities, and provided strategic guidance to branches. This event demonstrated the value of a centralized coordination system. Continued investment in training, simulations, and integration into national contingency planning is recommended to further strengthen CNCC's capacity.

The recent floods underscored the importance of reinforcing not only individual branches but the entire NS as a cohesive system. While the structural framework of the CNCC is now in place, continued practice and simulation are essential for full operational readiness, the flood event served as a valuable real-world test.

Furthermore, by streamlining operations and data flows, the centralized system positions the RRC to access emergency funding more quickly and efficiently, which is crucial for timely and effective disaster response.

10. Branch-HQ Support Mechanism

Emergencies can overwhelm small branches, especially those with limited staff. There must be a clearly defined mechanism for HQ to deploy support teams—including an operations manager, communications officer, and admin/logistics staff—for a minimum of three months when needed. While HQ provides tools and resources, successful implementation depends on local capacity and adequate support.

11. Local Authorities and Community Involvement

Cooperation with local authorities was one of the most successful aspects of the operation. Their involvement facilitated rapid mobilization and effective targeting of aid. Local authorities must be part of post-disaster recovery and play a role in setting and communicating distribution criteria to avoid misunderstandings. Mutual trust has been built through regular

interaction and formalized through Memorandums of Understanding that clarify RRC's mandate, role and scope of its activity.

Additionally, long-term recovery must involve local communities. Investing in their capacities fosters resilience and reduces reliance on external aid.

12. Strategic Communication and Media Engagement

Communication played a vital role in the success of the emergency appeal. Rapid, human-centered storytelling—through social media, press, and visual content—resulted in over RON 6.3 M (CHF 1,175,000) in donations. However, there is a need for stronger communication capacity at branch level. Staff and volunteers should be trained in basic communication, and someone should always be designated for comms in emergencies. The motto "Emergency is an opportunity" proved true—it's a chance to engage the public, raise funds, and strengthen the Red Cross's public image.

Even modest actions deserve recognition. Volunteers should understand that sharing stories helps build trust and transparency. Branches must not underestimate the value of their work or assume it is unworthy of attention. In future operations, communication must be considered a strategic function from the outset. The headquarters expressed its commitment to further supporting branches in strengthening their communication efforts.

13. Volunteer Engagement and Capacity Building

Experienced volunteers, particularly elder members, were instrumental in the response. However, it's essential to enrich the base of volunteers, attract new people, also young volunteers and integrate their digital and media skills. Strengthening volunteer engagement before, during, and after emergencies is a strategic priority. Psychosocial support for volunteers must also be systematically included in future response plans.

14. National Contingency Planning

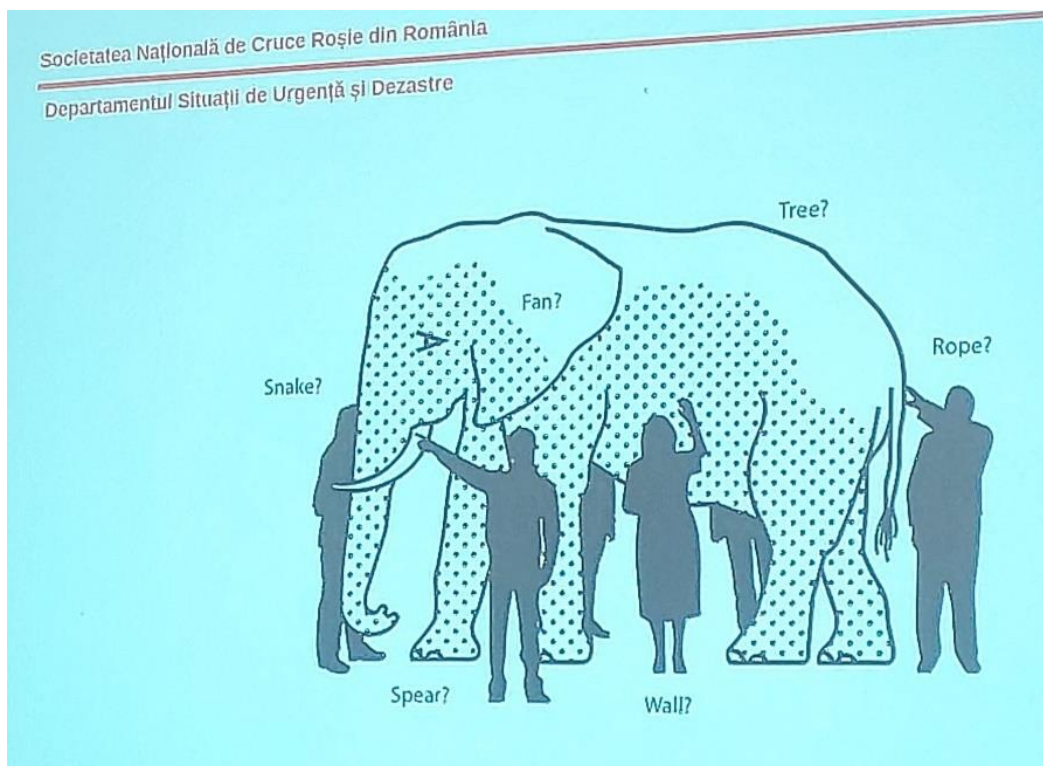
The response highlighted the need for national contingency plan, that should be revised and approved. It must be streamlined and practical, serving to facilitate the response at branch level.

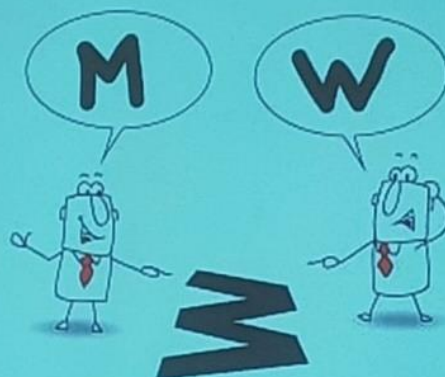
15. Integration of Past Lessons

The workshop emphasized the value of institutional learning. Lessons from past disasters must be actively integrated into planning and training processes. This helps improve operational efficiency and enhances community resilience.

Conclusions

Despite the significant challenges, the flood response demonstrated the Romanian Red Cross's growing capacity for rapid and coordinated action. By improving collaboration, enhancing preparedness, and investing in strategic communication and local engagement, future operations can become more effective and impactful. The Galați experience serves as a model for integrating local response with national coordination and international support. Participants of the workshop expressed a strong commitment to strengthening cooperation and taking concrete steps toward drafting the key documents discussed during the event, which will serve to improve coordination and response in future operations. The workshop concluded with a renewed focus on collaboration, preparedness, and the continued development of the Romanian Red Cross's operational capacity at all levels.





D. Annexes

Agenda

Day 1 - Thursday, 27th of March 2025, Galati, Romania	
TIME	TOPICS
11:00 - 12:00	Welcome & opening Introduction of sessions.
12:00 - 13:00	National Society response mechanism overview & Operation overview
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 15:00	Lessons learnt exercise (Local vs. National) – Focus Group Discussion
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 - 16:30	Lessons learnt exercise (Local vs. National vs. International) – Focus Group Discussion
16:30 - 17:00	Final remarks and questions

Day 2 - Friday, 28th of March 2025, Galati, Romania	
TIME	TOPICS
9:30 - 10:00	Review of Day 1
10:00 - 11:00	Local cooperation: public Authorities and RC Galati Branch
11:00 - 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 - 13:00	Plenary discussion
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 15:00	Prioritisation and LLW wrap up
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 - 16:00	Recommendations and next steps
16:00 - 17:00	Focus Group Discussion – Final remarks

List of Participants

Nr. crt.	Nume	Prenume	Proveniență	Nr. crt.	Nume	Prenume	Proveniență
1	PANAITE	DANIELA	CR GALATI	16	Polcanu	Mihail	SNCRR
2	DEBILCU	NICOLAI	CR GALATI	17	ION	MARINUS	CRK
3	HOGEA	GHEORGHI	CRUCEA ROSIE	18	Abageru	Maria	SNCRR
4	CUCU	GABRIEL	CR GALATI	19	Andrusko	Natalia	IFRC CCD
5	HOGEA	MITRITA	CR GALATI	20	PAENESCU	MAINA	SNCRR
6	BUIA	ADRIAN	CR GALATI	21	POPESCU	SABRINA	SNCRP
7	GLAVAN	DUMITRA	CR GALATI	22	PARSIAN	RĂZVAN	SNCRR
8	STANCIU	SAPOSCA	CR GALATI	23	DIHALACHE	VLADUT	CRR-SC
9	STANCIU	MIRICA	CR GALATI	24	REINOLD	IULIANE	SNCRP
10	GLAVAN	GHEORGHI	CR GALATI	25	HOBOACU	YAMIL	SNCRP-SC
11	IVANCEA	SĂNDEL	CR GALATI	26	BRUDAR	DAVIDUCIA	SNCRR
12	ARUDOOS	Alex.	CR GALATI	27	GHEBNEA	PETRIEA	CUDAZBI
13	PULBERE	Cosmin	CR GALATI	28	EM	DOMINIC	Stobozia Com.
14	SPINDEM	Marian	C.R. GALATI	29	NIANDARU	DAN-G.	Stobozia
15	DUMITRU	JANA	SNCRR	30	MANELA	MICHAELA	Peebea
				31	ANGHELINA	DANIEL	VALEA MARULUI
				32	DOBRE	VICTOR PAUL	
				33	TOFAN	MARIAN	Costache Iogai
				34			

Photos

All pictures can be found here: [GALLERY](#)

Presentation:

1. General overview
2. Galați branch perspective
3. [Department for Emergency Situations and Disaster Management](#)
4. [Communication Team](#)