

SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL FINAL REPORT

Kazakhstan | Cold Wave

22/06/2024



The Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan volunteers distributing hot meals and essential relief items, such as winter clothing and winter food to vulnerable communities, including unhoused people. Photo credit: The Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan.

sEAP №: EAP2022KZ01	Operation №: MDRKZ012	sEAP approved: 29/09/2022
sEAP timeframe: 2 years 27/10/2022 - 31/10/2024 (Revised timeframe: 27/10 2022 – 31/03/2022)	sEAP triggered: 08/12/2023 Early action lead time: 7 days	Period covered by this report: 27/10/2022 - 20/05/2024 Early action timeframe: 3 months

Budget: CHF 219,998
People targeted: 2,000 directly, 82,000 indirectly

People assisted: **1,201 people directly**

SUMMARY OF THE SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL



In October 2022, the IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated CHF 187,794 for the Red Crescent Society of the Republic of Kazakhstan to implement early actions to reduce and mitigate the impact of Cold Wave in Kazakhstan. The early actions to be conducted were pre-agreed with the National Society and are described in the [Simplified Early Action Protocol](#).

The Simplified Early Action Protocol (sEAP) for Cold Wave in Kazakhstan was activated on 08 December 2024, just after entering the second year of the sEAP.

The outcomes of this activation are detailed in the final report, which provides a comprehensive overview of activities and expenditures from the activation date until the end of the sEAP timeframe.

Summary

Kazakhstan is defined by extreme continental climate, with long, hot summers and cold winters. Winter in the north of the country is long and cold – in some years temperatures reached - 52°C (Astana) – but there are also thaws up to +5°C. The shortest season in the north is spring, which lasts for 1.5 months, while summer lasts for 3 months and winter extends from October to April. Snow generally starts falling in November but can continue through late April.

Extreme winters in Kazakhstan are not only characterized by low temperatures, but also by heavy snowstorms and strong winds that obstruct access to food and health services for the most vulnerable groups of population, including unhoused people (including unhoused children), people living with special needs, older people living alone, and single parents. Every winter about 3,000 people need rescue from snowstorms on the roads, hundreds of trucks and passenger vehicles, means of public transport are dug out and towed by specialized services and local communities. Early actions are required in order to prevent hypothermia that can lead to health problems.

The trigger was set as follows: if the 7-day temperature forecast of Kazhydromet shows that the minimum temperature will go below -40°C (-35°C in Karaganda region) with precipitation and increased speed of wind, and such conditions persist for at least two days in any target areas – North-Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, Kostanay, East-Kazakhstan, Abay, Akmola, Karaganda regions, Astana city.

On 8 December 2024, the Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan received information from the Kazhydromet Services that the trigger for the simplified EAP for Cold wave was reached in the North-Kazakhstan region of the country, where temperatures were forecasted to drop below -40°C. In February 2024, the trigger was met in East-Kazakhstan, Abay and Karaganda regions of the country with temperatures dropping below -40° and - 35°C respectively. Early actions to respond to extreme cold weather targeted unhoused people, older people living alone, people living with special needs, socially vulnerable people, and stranded drivers. To address their needs, the Red Crescent branches distributed hot kaz meals, sets of warm clothes and footwear, blankets, and heaters among target beneficiaries.

Thus, early actions were implemented in four out of eight target areas. Consequently, the coverage was lower than expected. There was also a balance of unused funds left that will be returned to the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (*See section on Financial Report*).

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Overall objective of the intervention

The operation aimed at mitigating the impact of severe cold wave on groups in vulnerable situations, drivers and passengers by protecting them from the exposure to the coldness, providing them with food, shelter, heating equipment and conduct awareness raising activities on road safety and first aid in advance to mitigate the risks of hypothermia, injuries that result in health issues/death and loss of income.

SUMMARY OF sEAP IMPLEMENTATION

The Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan

The operation focused on groups in vulnerable situations exposed to extreme cold, including older adults living alone, large families, single-parent households, people with disabilities, orphans, people living with HIV, and drivers who postponed travel or were evacuated to shelters due to road closures. These groups were identified as needing support with access to hot meals, warm clothing, and heaters, as severe weather conditions limited or prevented access to essential services.

As part of prepositioning efforts, the Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan procured essential household items such as warm gloves, socks, caps, shoes, blankets, food thermoses, teapots, microwave ovens, and heaters. Readiness activities included identifying and pre-contracting food service providers and mapping locations where unhoused people gather during winter. Once the protocol was activated, early actions involved distributing hot meals, warm clothing, and heaters to target groups. Additionally, the Red Crescent conducted awareness campaigns on cold weather safety and first aid for weather-related injuries through social media and in-person sessions during distributions.

Stock prepositioning and pre-contracted services enabled a swift response when the trigger was met. During the early action activation, the distribution of hot meals, warm clothing, footwear, and heaters helped people stay warm and endure the extreme cold. As well as material support, the assistance also provided reassurance and a sense of care for those affected.

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

As soon as the relevant offices of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) were notified of the Cold Wave sEAP activation, the IFRC Project Manager began providing consultations on the activation process and coordinating activities with other IFRC staff from the Country Cluster Delegation for Central Asia and the Regional Office, who were on standby to support the response. The IFRC continued to provide guidance and support throughout the activation period until its conclusion.

Overview of non-Red Cross Red Crescent Actors in Country

Early action activities were coordinated by regional Red Crescent branches with emergency situations departments and local authorities in the regions. This contributed to complementarity in addressing the needs, as local authorities provided shelters for unhoused people, while emergency situations departments facilitated access to others affected, including assistance with transportation and hot meals distribution.


OVERALL CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The pre-defined trigger temperature appears too low, as there were periods over the past two years when temperatures approached -40°C, however, they did not cross the threshold. With strong winds, temperatures around -35°C can feel much colder and have the same adverse effects on health and well-being as those exceeding -40°C. However, under the current requirements, activating the simplified Early Action Protocol was only possible if the forecast met the trigger.

In some cases, Red Crescent target branches had to assist stranded drivers and passengers when roads were blocked due to low temperatures and snowstorms, relying on alternative resources and funding. For future sEAPs, it is recommended to raise the trigger temperature to at least -35°C.

Trigger monitoring was conducted by branches and headquarters using Kazhydromet forecasts (monthly, weekly, and on a three-day basis). Once the trigger was met, the sEAP was activated quickly, and the efficient transfer of funds allowed early action activities to be implemented on time. However, coordination and support for early action implementation need further improvement. Instances of unclear instructions and guidance led to misunderstandings, highlighting the need for more precise communication.

PLANNED INTERVENTIONS

 Livelihoods	Budget: CHF 145,350	Expenditure: CHF 110,243
	People targeted (directly): 2,000	People reached (directly): 1,201
Indicators:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2,000 people provided with hot meal 1,500 people provided with essential household items (warm clothes, shoes, blankets, heaters) 	
Readiness activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Pre-contracting of food service providers.</i> <i>Mapping of places where unhoused people are gathering and their place of living during winter.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Awareness raising about food distribution points and social adaptation centers run by the government.</i> <i>Agreements with the local police and social services about transportation of unhoused people to the food distribution point and centers.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Preparing the database/list of the most vulnerable elderly people who live alone, low-income single mothers, people with special needs.</i> <i>Mapping the bus stations, trucks' parking, gas stations, cafes at the city exits and on the highways.</i> 	
Prepositioning activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Procurement of essential household items (warm gloves, socks, caps, shoes, blankets).</i> <i>Procurement of food thermoses, tea pots, microwave ovens, heaters.</i> 	
Early actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Mobilization of unhoused people to the social adaptation centres with support of the local authorities.</i> <i>Provision of hot meals to unhoused people (including street children), older people, low-income single mothers, people with special needs.</i> <i>Provision of hot meal to drivers and passengers who postpone further travel due to the cold wave alert and are evacuated to the shelters because of the road closure.</i> <i>Distribution of non-food items (winter clothes and shoes, warm blankets) to homeless people (including children).</i> 	

6. *Distribution of the heaters to the elderly people (living in the private houses, those who do not have central heating).*

Narrative description of achievements

Within the readiness and prepositioning activities, the target branches of the Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan completed the planned procurement of essential household items, including warm gloves, socks, caps, shoes, and blankets, as well as food thermoses, tea pots, microwave ovens and heaters. Food service providers were also identified and pre-contracted. The living places of unhoused people had been mapped well in advance.

Table 1 Procured items

Description	East-Kazakhstan region	North-Kazakhstan region	Abay region	Kostanay region	Karaganda region	Astana city	Pavlodar region	Akmola region
	pcs	pcs	pcs	pcs	pcs	pcs	pcs	pcs
Set of warm clothes (pair of socks, blanket, cap, gloves, shoes)	100	100	250	200	370	260	120	100
Heaters	30	30	30	30	30	27	32	31
Kitchen utilities (microwave)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Kitchen utilities (thermoses)	4	3	3	5	3	3	3	6
Kitchen utilities (teapots)	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3
First Aid Kits (thermoses, blanket, FA items, pair of socks)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

On 8 December 2024, the Red Crescent of Kazakhstan received information from the Kazhydromet Services that the trigger for the simplified EAP for Cold wave was reached in the North-Kazakhstan region of the country where temperatures were expected to go below -40°C. The Red Crescent activated early actions to respond to extreme cold weather targeting unhoused people, as well as older people living alone. Over 3 days, 400 portions of hot meals, 46 sets of warm clothes and 5 heaters were distributed among the targeted people.

In February 2024, the trigger was met in East-Kazakhstan, Abay and Karaganda regions of the country with temperatures dropping below -40°C and -35°C respectively. Early actions in these regions included:

East-Kazakhstan region

6. Provision of 90 portions of hot meals per day over 5 days to unhoused people, people living with HIV.
7. Provision of 40 portions of hot meals per day over 5 days to drivers who were on the roads and postponed further travel due to the cold wave alert or were evacuated to the shelters because of the road closure,
8. Distribution of 100 sets of essential household items (winter clothes and shoes, warm blankets) to unhoused people.
 - Distribution of 30 heaters to older people living alone, families with many children, single mothers, people with disabilities.

Abay region


9. Provision of 300 portions of hot meals per day over 4 days to unhoused people.
10. Distribution of 250 sets of essential household items (winter clothes and shoes, warm blankets) to unhoused people, socially vulnerable people (former orphans).
 - Distribution of 30 heaters to single-parent families, older people living alone, people living with disabilities, and families with many children.

Karaganda region

11. Provision of 460 portions of hot meals per day over 7 days to unhoused people.
12. Distribution of 370 sets of essential household items (winter clothes and shoes, warm blankets) to unhoused people.
13. Distribution of 30 heaters to single mothers, socially vulnerable, family with many children.

Challenges and lessons learned specific to this sector

To better address needs, it is worth revising the list of warm items for distribution to include winter coats and trousers. Additionally, since cold waves can last longer than six days, updating the mechanism for extending the early action period will enhance the effectiveness of future responses. The trigger was not met in Pavlodar, Kostanay, Akmola, Astana city, and the number of the people reached was smaller than planned.

 Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery	Budget: CHF 16,868	Expenditure: CHF 2,361
	People targeted: 80,000 (indirectly)	People reached: 4,352 (indirectly)
Indicators:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 80,000 people are informed about the extreme weather conditions and provided with information about how to recognize symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite and first aid actions when symptoms appear via Information, Education, and Communications (IEC) materials, and social media. 2. 40 First Aid kits are prepositioned in the targeted branches. 	
Readiness activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Awareness raising activities (distribution of IEC materials, key messages in social media) about prevention measures during the extreme winter weather conditions. (annual activities).</i> 2. <i>Awareness raising activities (distribution of IEC materials, key messages in social media) about the symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite and First Aid (annual activities).</i> 3. <i>Conducting First Aid training on cold weather causalities and injures to the road police officers and representatives of Emergency department.</i> 	
Prepositioning activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Design and printing of IEC materials (leaflets).</i> 2. <i>Procurement of First Aid kits.</i> 	
Early actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. <i>Awareness raising activities on cold weather safety and FA during cold weather causalities and injures to the drivers at the city exits, gas stations, local radio, social media. (Early actions, to prevent those drivers and passengers who can't avoid traveling).</i> 5. <i>Provision of First Aid to the affected people at the warm-up shelters.</i> 	


Narrative description of achievements

During the early action phase, the Red Crescent carried out awareness raising activities on cold weather safety and FA during cold weather casualties and injuries via social media and face-to-face meetings during distributions. In total, 4,352 people have been reached through social media.

Challenges and lessons learned specific to this sector


IEC materials (leaflets) containing guidance on behavior during extreme weather conditions, as well as symptoms of hypothermia, frostbite, and first aid measures, were developed with delays. Their printing was canceled as it fell outside the readiness activities phase. Due to these reasons, a limited number of people received information (mainly through social media) leading to the people reached being considerably lower than the initially targeted. For future sEAPs, these materials should be printed and stocked in advance.

Enabling approaches

 Secretariat Services	Budget: CHF 19,997	Expenditure: CHF 1,137
Indicators:	Two accompaniment missions by the IFRC Delegation	
Readiness activities:	1. Support the National Society to complete readiness activities through regular missions by the IFRC Delegations.	
Prepositioning activities:	1. N/A	
Early actions:	1. Support implementation of early action 2. Support operation reporting and learning	

Narrative description of achievements

The IFRC Cluster Delegation for Central Asia and the Regional Office provided timely consultation and funding to the Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan from the onset of the emergency.

 National Society Strengthening	Budget: CHF 37,782	Expenditure: CHF 21,486
Indicators	1. 40 volunteers are trained in First Aid for cold weather casualties and injuries. 2. Eight branches participated in the National Disaster Preparedness Training "Winter 2022." 3. Lessons Learned Workshop conducted.	
Readiness activities:	1. Organize FA training for volunteers with emphasis on cold weather-related injuries/consequences. 2. Conduct Monitoring visits to the project sites.	
Prepositioning activities:	N/A	

Early actions:

3. Conduct lessons learned workshop to provide recommendations for future response operations.

Narrative description of achievements

As part of readiness activities, eight branches participated in the National Disaster Preparedness Simulation Exercises "Winter 2022" and "Winter 2023." Additionally, 40 winter uniforms were produced for staff and volunteers in target branches to support future winter response efforts. Monitoring visits to selected branches involved in the implementation were conducted in 2023 and 2024.

First Aid training for volunteers, with a focus on cold weather-related injuries and their consequences, reached 108 participants, including staff from emergency situations departments.

A Lessons Learned Workshop was initially planned for April 2024 but was postponed due to the Red Crescent's flood response operation, which involved the target branches. The workshop was later canceled as the project timeline was not extended in time, and the response to the unprecedented flooding in Kazakhstan lasted longer than expected, with Red Crescent staff heavily engaged in relief efforts.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The total approved budget for the two-year Simplified Early Action Protocol for Kazakhstan Cold Wave was CHF 219,998; CHF 49,361 for readiness activities, CHF 95,045 for prepositioning of stocks, and CHF 75,592 for the implementation of early action activities.

The sEAP was activated within the first year of its lifetime, with early action activities implemented in four out of the eight target areas, explaining the variance due to savings on hot meals. A total of CHF 134,090 has been utilised out of the total approved budget; the remaining balance of CHF 85,908 will be returned to the Disaster Response Emergency Fund.

Further savings include:

- Production of printed material and transportation: CHF 8,106.
- Courier services: CHF 944.7.
- Lessons Learned Workshop: CHF 2,854.

Savings on staff are explained by the fact that once the EAP was activated the early action activities finished within three months following the activation, while the implementation period was initially set until 31/10/2024.

Further explanation on variances is explained under the respective narrative sections of this report.

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRKZ012 - Kazakhstan - Cold Wave

Operating Timeframe: 27 Oct 2022 to 31 Mar 2024

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2022/10-2024/8	Operation	MDRKZ012
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 05/Dec/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	219,998
DREF Anticipatory Pillar	219,998
Expenditure	-134,090
Closing Balance	85,908

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items			0
PO02 - Livelihoods	145,350	110,243	35,108
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash			0
PO04 - Health			0
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			0
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion			0
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	16,868	2,361	14,507
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability			0
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	162,218	112,604	49,615
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	19,997	1,137	18,860
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	37,782	20,349	17,434
Enabling Approaches Total	57,779	21,486	36,293
Grand Total	219,998	134,090	85,908

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRKZ012 - Kazakhstan - Cold Wave

Operating Timeframe: 27 Oct 2022 to 31 Mar 2024

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2022/10-2024/8	Operation	MDRKZ012
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 05/Dec/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	145,966	79,999	65,967
Clothing & Textiles	63,315	63,398	-83
Food	60,300	2,011	58,289
Medical & First Aid	2,251	2,097	154
Teaching Materials	7,236		7,236
Utensils & Tools	3,216		3,216
Other Supplies & Services	9,648	12,493	-2,845
Logistics, Transport & Storage	4,824		4,824
Transport & Vehicles Costs	4,824		4,824
Personnel	30,693	9,668	21,025
National Staff	5,608		5,608
National Society Staff	21,869	9,668	12,201
Volunteers	3,216		3,216
Consultants & Professional Fees	3,216	2,894	322
Consultants	3,216	2,894	322
Workshops & Training	1,568		1,568
Workshops & Training	1,568		1,568
General Expenditure	20,304	1,811	18,493
Travel	8,663	218	8,445
Information & Public Relations	362		362
Office Costs	1,000	1,005	-5
Communications	1,910		1,910
Financial Charges	2,201	589	1,612
Shared Office and Services Costs	6,169		6,169
Contributions & Transfers		31,534	-31,534
National Society Expenses		31,534	-31,534
Indirect Costs	13,427	8,184	5,243
Programme & Services Support Recover	13,427	8,184	5,243
Grand Total	219,998	134,090	85,908

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Reference



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