

SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL

ACTIVATION REPORT

Greece | Extreme Heat



Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) volunteers distributing water bottles and providing first aid during an extreme heatwave. Photo credit: HRC

sEAP №: SEAP2023GR01	sEAP timeframe: 2 Years	Date of activation: 08/06/2024
Appeal code: MDRGR005	Early Action timeframe: 3 months	Early action lead time: 5 days
sEAP approved: 22/09/2023	sEAP timeframe following activation: 22/09/2023-30/09/2024	Reporting period: 22/09/2023-30/09/2024

Total budget: CHF 217,260
People targeted: 2,000 people
People assisted: 147,583 people¹

¹ This figure is the total number of people reached, including 103,865 people through social media campaigns.

SUMMARY OF THE SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL



The extreme heat risk levels across Greece, with red indicating the highest risk and yellow the lowest. The triangles represent specific regions with their associated risk levels.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated CHF 217,260 to the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) for implementing anticipatory actions to mitigate the impact of Extreme Heat in Greece. A significant portion of this allocation, CHF 51,653, was earmarked for prepositioning stock and undertaking annual readiness activities as part of a simplified Early Action Protocol (sEAP).

The early actions to be conducted have been pre-agreed with the National Society (NS) and are described in the [Simplified Early Action Protocol](#).

During the reporting period (from 22 September 2023 to 30 September 2024), a series of readiness and prepositioning activities were undertaken to enhance preparedness for responding to extreme heat events in Greece across various domains, including Health and

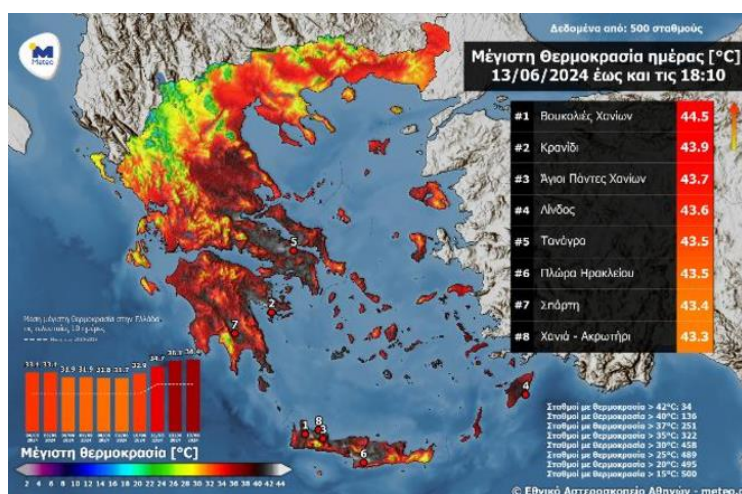
Care, Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation, Recovery, and National Society Strengthening.

This Simplified Early Action Protocol is a plan which guides the timely and effective implementation of early actions based on specific weather warnings for extreme heat. The forecast is received from the National Observatory of Athens (NOA) with a lead time of five days to implement early action activities.

Summary

The impacts of climate change are becoming evident worldwide, affecting ecosystems, economies, and public health across multiple sectors. Greece, like many other Mediterranean countries, is experiencing a worrying trend of intensifying extreme heat events, which are expected to become even more frequent and severe in the coming years.

Projections for the Greek climate, based on advanced climate models and climate indicators, provided paint a concerning picture for the summer months in the country. Forecasts indicate a significant increase in both the frequency and intensity of extreme high-temperature events, posing serious risks to public health, infrastructure, and overall societal well-being. Rising temperatures, particularly in urban areas, exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities, disproportionately affecting older people, and those lacking access to adequate cooling and healthcare services.



The heat map shows the eight locations with maximum temperatures recorded across Greece on 13 June 2024.

A major contributing factor to this escalating crisis is the **urban heat island (UHI) effect**. Cities absorb and retain more heat due to materials like concrete and asphalt, which trap solar radiation and elevate temperatures well above those in surrounding rural areas. Coupled with air pollution, limited green spaces, and high population density, urban heat islands intensify the risks associated with extreme heat, leading to increased causes of heat-related illnesses, dehydration, and even fatalities.

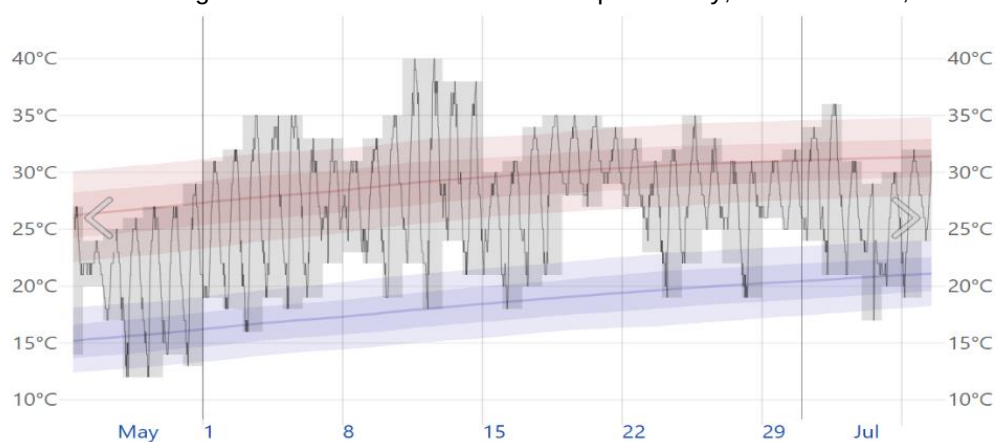
Given the clear trajectory of rising temperatures and their impact on Greece, it is essential to implement proactive measures to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of extreme heat. Targeted anticipatory actions can play a pivotal role in reducing health risks and enhancing community resilience.

Based on meteorological data, the **HRC**, in collaboration with **IFRC**, the **National Observatory of Athens**, and the **Atlantic Council's Climate Resilience Centre (formerly the Arsht-Rock Resilience Centre)**, has developed a comprehensive, science-based operational programme based on a predictive algorithm analysing historical meteorological data and health effects across six cities in Greece. The aim of the Simplified Early Action Protocol for Extreme Heat in Greece was launched with the aim of mitigating the health impacts of extreme heat, including morbidity and mortality. Using a holistic approach and evidence-based methodologies, this initiative sought to enhance community resilience to adapt to increasingly severe heat conditions.

Following an official level 3 heat warning issued by the National Observatory of Athens, with an excess mortality rate well above the 45 per cent that defines level 3, the HRC has activated the Simplified Early Action Protocol for Extreme Heat on Saturday, 8 June 2024.

Based on the warning, the pre-defined trigger for the activation of the protocol was met, as the forecasted extreme temperatures were anticipated to affect major urban centres, including Attica (Athens and Piraeus), Thessaloniki, and Patras. The early actions were implemented with a lead time of five days before the anticipated peak. This early activation aimed to protect people in vulnerable situations from severe heat-related health impacts at the beginning of the summer season.

The HRC implemented a wide range of humanitarian interventions up to Friday, 21 June 2024, in addition to the five-



The daily range of reported temperatures in Athens during June and 24-hour highs and lows, placed over the daily average high (faint red line) and low (faint blue line) temperature, with 25th to 75th and 10th to 90th percentile bands.

day official activation. There was a deviation from the predetermined operation of the programme, with an extension of the actions beyond the specified days, as the extreme high temperature, based on continuous updates from the NOA, remained at very high levels, with risk rates exceeding those expected. Thus, the HRC, prioritizing the health of citizens, continued with the implementation of actions beyond the specified five-day period.

The humanitarian actions implemented to mitigate the impact of extreme high temperatures on the health of citizens were aimed at the entire population, but prioritizing and focusing on people in vulnerable situations, including older people, isolated people, people living with chronic diseases, people with mobility problems, unemployed, uninsured, homeless, migrants, people experiencing social exclusion, infants, children, pregnant women, and people working outdoors. The safeguarding of health and well-being were the main priorities of the implementation of actions by the HRC, which were met with success.

The cooperation between the HRC and the National Observatory of Athens demonstrated that effective collaboration among competent partners yields the best results for the target population. As one of Greece's leading scientific organizations, combining research, observation, and forecasting, the National Observatory of Athens was a strategic partner for the HRC, which sought an agreement to enhance timely forecasting and preparedness.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Overall objective of the intervention:

HRC staff and volunteers, in close collaboration with public authorities, including the National Observatory of Athens and community leaders, focused on early action activities to mitigate the health impacts of forecasted extreme heat in the cities of Athens, Patras, and Thessaloniki.

The HRC has recognised the importance of prevention in addressing extreme heat issues. To proactively tackle the effects of extreme heat during the summer of 2024, the National Society has worked with government agencies to implement various preventive measures. This comprehensive approach prioritized the well-being of people by providing quality health services. By effectively preparing and coordinating efforts, the HRC successfully met the challenges of extreme heat and ensured the safety, well-being, and health of the community.



NOA and HRC Heat alert platform

Date National Society requested the early action funds: 8 June 2024

Date National Society received the early action funds: 19 June 2024

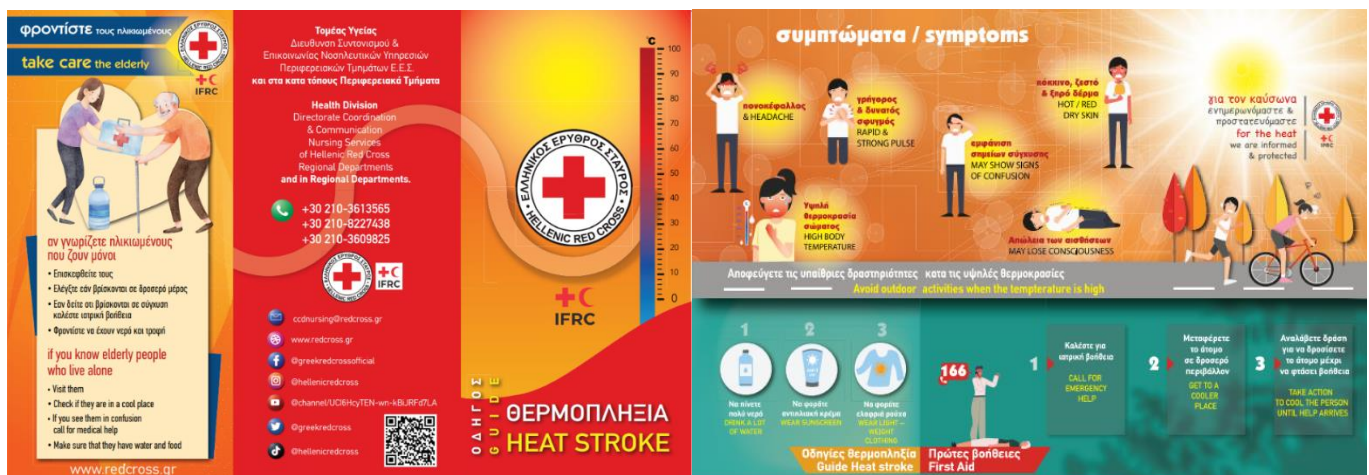
SUMMARY OF EAP IMPLEMENTATION

HRC

The HRC has implemented the sEAP in response to extreme heat events across Greece, targeting urban populations in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras. This was the first time the sEAP was implemented in Europe. The sEAP aimed to effectively manage risks, implement comprehensive interventions, and prioritize vulnerable groups. This multi-faceted approach ensured the well-being of citizens during extreme heat events.

The HRC focused on prevention, timely intervention, and post-event recovery. Key actions included:

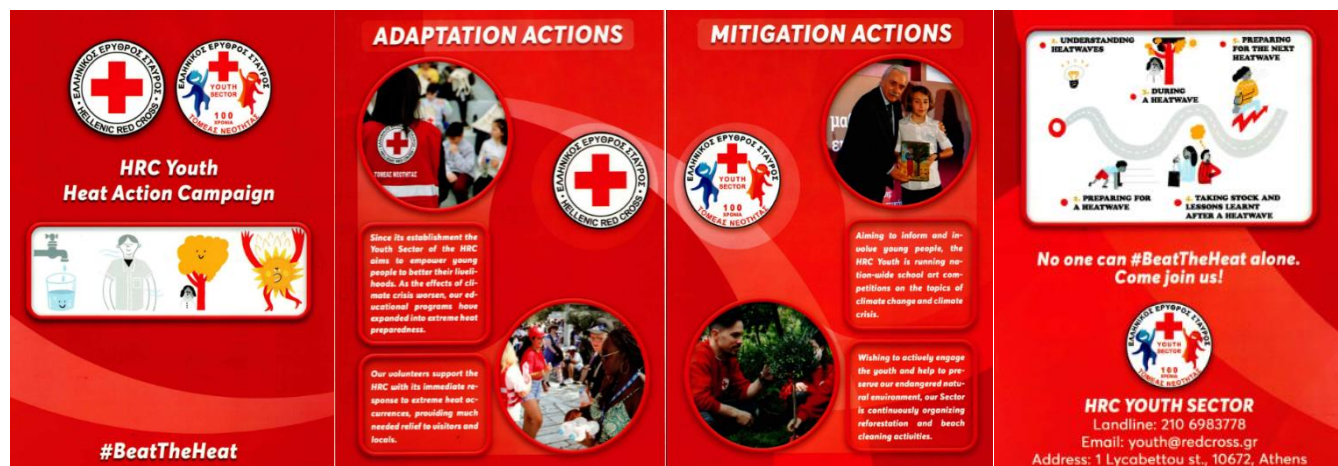
- **Public Health Awareness Campaign:** Launched a large-scale education campaign to raise public awareness about preventive measures against extreme heat, such as ways of staying hydrated, the importance of seeking shade, and avoiding strenuous outdoor activities.



Brochures on heat stroke guidance were distributed by the HRC, raising awareness on symptoms, providing guidance on actions to be taken, informing people on first aid steps to be able to support people, and highlighting the need to pay special attention on older people as they are the most vulnerable to the effects of heatwaves.

- **Hydration Stations and Mobile First Aid:** Established hydration stations and mobile first aid units to provide hydration, first aid, and psychological support to people in vulnerable situations.
- **Street outreach:** Conducted Street outreach to provide essential supplies, such as water, food, and hygiene items, to homeless people, and populations living in vulnerable situations.
- **Psychosocial Support:** Activated psychosocial support helplines and a Multifunctional Centre (MFC) for refugees to offer counselling and mental health services.
- **Call Centre:** Activated helplines for home care in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras.

- **Bicycle First Aid Teams:** Mobilized the Bicycle First Aid Teams to provide first aid and supervision for homeless people and older people.
- **Home Visits:** Provided home care services to older people, lonely, and chronically ill people in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras.
- **Extended Healthcare Services:** Extended the working hours of health centres and healthcare stations to accommodate increased demand.



A HRC Youth Heat Action Campaign, #BeatTheHeat, raised awareness on the anticipation and mitigation actions to be taken to strengthen community resilience to the increasing temperatures.

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

The HRC collaborated with the IFRC to strengthen its response to extreme heat events. By leveraging the IFRC's global expertise and tools, such as the [Heat Toolkit](#), the HRC was able to enhance its capacity building and operational support. This collaboration facilitated the mobilization of resources, ensured alignment with international best practices, and ultimately contributed to the programme's success. Through coordinated efforts, the HRC and IFRC aimed to maximize their humanitarian impact, prioritize vulnerable populations, and uphold high ethical and practical standards.

Overview of non-Red Cross Red Crescent Actors in Country

Coordination with external actors, particularly the NOA, was essential for accurate early warnings and triggering the sEAP. The NOA's heatwave categorization system allowed the HRC to respond proactively to extreme heat risks. Collaboration also extended to local municipalities, which provided logistical support, such as hydration centres for the public.

The HRC worked closely with the Greek government and civil protection agencies to ensure seamless integration of early actions with national disaster management plans. No significant overlapping efforts from other organizations were observed, highlighting the central role of the HRC in heatwave response.

OVERALL CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

While the sEAP for Extreme Heat in Greece proved to be a successful intervention, there were several challenges encountered during its implementation. Challenges and lessons learned were discussed on a continuous basis with HRC staff involved in the implementation of the operation. The following overall challenges and lessons learned have been noted, which are further outlined in this report at the respective sections on sectoral interventions.

- **Enhancing Predictive Models for Extreme Heat:** While the collaboration with the NOA allowed for precise activation based on heat and mortality data, there is potential for improving further the predictive model to enhance timeliness as high temperatures remained even during at night, often with increased humidity levels. Improving the predictive model in collaboration with scientific partners would allow for more accurate and timely forecasts of extreme heat events, providing valuable information to better prepare and respond to these challenges. This could involve incorporating additional factors such as humidity levels and specific weather

patterns to enhance the model's accuracy.

- **Addressing Procurement Challenges:** There was also a difficulty in sourcing specific products that meet the required standards and availability in the local market, particularly in terms of shelf life and production methods. This often led to delays in procurement and limited the availability of certain items, such as nutrition bars with a long expiration date. To address this issue, future planning and implementation will consider alternative sourcing options, flexible contract terms, and potential adjustments to product specifications.
- **Navigating Political and Electoral Transitions:** Political transitions and electoral processes can pose challenges to the implementation of a programme, as they may lead to shifts in personnel, policy adjustments, and temporary delays in decision-making. During periods of administrative change, government officials may face competing priorities, which delay collaboration on external programmes. Additionally, if leadership transitions occur, new officials often require time to familiarize themselves with existing initiatives, potentially impacting the programme's implementation. To mitigate these challenges, future implementations of sEAP should prioritize early planning, flexibility, and proactive engagement with government agencies. Strengthening partnerships and maintaining open communication can help ensure continuity, even during periods of political administrative transition, thereby enhancing the programme's overall effectiveness and long-term sustainability.
- **Prioritizing Environmental Sustainability:** Additionally, the HRC should continue to prioritize environmental sustainability by promoting the use of reusable materials and reducing waste to reduce the environmental footprint. During the implementation of the activities under the sEAP, the HRC endeavoured to produce informational materials in recyclable paper, in addition to limiting paper use by investing in online solutions, such as television broadcasts of campaigns. To limit travel and inform a wide audience, online conferences were prioritized. The HRC will continue to prioritize national service providers for procurement purposes. A new activity planned for future responses is procuring thermoses to enable water refills and maintain its cool temperature, while also reducing waste. An information campaign promoting the use of thermoses for hydration would accompany this activity. By educating citizens from an early age through adulthood about the impact of using thermoses can significantly contribute to reducing environmental pollution. This simple change of behaviour not only minimizes plastic waste, but also ensures access to fresh, cool water at all times. Encouraging this practice through awareness programmes and educational efforts can lead to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious society.

Date of the impact of the hazard

As highlighted above, following an official level 3 heat warning issued by the National Observatory of Athens, with an excess mortality rate well above the 45% that defines level 3, the HRC has activated the Simplified Early Action Protocol for Extreme Heat on Saturday, 8 June 2024.

Early actions were implemented within the five-day lead time from the activation of 8 June 2024 until 13 June 2024.

As the warnings of very high rates of heat stress continued, the HRC has extended its actions until 21 June 2024. This reflects the HRC's ability to adapt its programmes based on the dynamics of the situation to prioritize the health and well-being of people vulnerable to the impact of extreme heat.

Implementation of early actions: 8 June – 13 June 2024.

Actions continued to be implemented until 21 June 2024 by the HRC outside of the sEAP.

PLANNED OPERATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

 Health & Care	Budget: CHF 68,693	Expenditure: CHF 32,732	
	People targeted: 2,000	People reached: 21,527	
	Female: 8,559	Female >18: 7,804	Girls <18: 755
	Male: 3,728	Male > 18: 3,460	Boys < 18: 268

	Percentage of activities implemented before the impact of the hazard	100%
Indicator:	<i>Number of people reached with health services in advance of the peak of a heatwave</i>	
Readiness activities:	1. Produce and revise training material for first aid training. 2. Conduct annual refresher training for HRC staff and volunteers (including helpline) on the dangers of extreme heat, best practices, and referrals. 3. Conduct annual first aid training with city officials and front-line responders. 4. Conduct annual checks and maintenance of bicycles and vehicles. 5. Check annually licenses of drivers of mobile medical vehicles. 6. Produce messaging in multiple languages for first aid activities, in coordination between Health, Samaritans, Social Welfare and Communications sectors. 7. Coordinate with other actors (including those who refer people to be assisted) to ensure consistent messaging on first aid. 8. Prepare lists of the targeted population, including confirming contact details. 9. Develop a simple Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) / guideline for the helpline operation for wellness checks. 10. Adapt and review a simple SOP/ guideline for the deployment of the bicycle first aid teams, nursing at home and Mobile health teams during a heatwave activation (early action activities). 11. Practicing using the telephone-based wellness calling system.	
Prepositioning activities:	1. Preposition communication materials for first aid (including referral cards with emergency phone numbers). 2. Preposition of first aid material (fans, ice packs, hats) and sunscreen to distribute to the target population. 3. Preposition food items (including nutritional bars, Isotonic Drinks, and bottled water) to distribute to the target population. 4. Procure bicycles, helmets, and personal protective equipment (PPE) for volunteers. 5. Telephone/headsets for the helpline.	
Early actions:	1. Activate a helpline for two-way outreach – proactive telephone wellness checks as well as reactive calls for information and assistance. 2. Deploy Bicycle First Aid Teams to do follow-up wellness checks for homeless, markets, and house-to-house visits targeting older people and people with chronic illnesses. 3. Deploy Mobile Health and Nursing at Home teams, when needed, to provide emergency first aid support to assist with referrals to cooling centres or medical facilities. 4. Distribute bottled Water, Food (nutritional bars), and Sun Cream to homeless population and groups in vulnerable situations. 5. Refer seriously at-risk/affected people to local hospitals. 6. Monitor the distribution process and other activities provided on the field level.	

Narrative description of achievements

The HRC played a crucial role in mitigating risks and vulnerabilities associated with extreme heat. By closely monitoring weather conditions along with NOA and identifying potential risks, HRC developed a comprehensive, proactive approach focused on well-being and safety.

During periods of extreme heat, HRC took several key actions. **Primary Healthcare programmes and Educational Health Stations (EHSs)** have extended their operating hours to provide essential services, including medical consultations, maternal and infant care, first aid, and health education. HRC also emphasized in providing information and prevention strategies to educate the public about the risks of heat-related illnesses and promote health in general.

To ensure the emotional well-being of people supported, mental health, first aid, and well-being checks were provided. Additionally, HRC staff, equipped with necessary medical supplies, conducted home visits to assess the health status of people living in vulnerable situations, provide medical and nursing care, and deliver essential information on heat safety and mental health support.

The total number of people reached includes both those directly supported and those reached indirectly through the broader impact of the HRC's actions. The higher-than-forecasted percentage of the population supported can be attributed to several key factors. First, the thorough preparation and efficient organization of HRC services ensured a

well-coordinated and effective response. Second, the strong public trust in the HRC, built through its continuous and significant contributions to humanitarian efforts throughout the year, encouraged more people to engage with its services. Lastly, the strategic selection of high-traffic locations—such as Syntagma Square in Athens, the area around the Acropolis, Aristotelous Square in Thessaloniki, and the central square of Patra—maximized outreach, as these areas saw a consistently high daily attendance. It is important to note that the work of the HRC is extensive and multifaceted, addressing a wide range of needs. Through public visibility, awareness campaigns, and community engagement, the indirect reach extended well beyond those who directly accessed services, significantly amplifying the overall impact.

As part of the sEAP activation, the HRC successfully conducted key health and care interventions, with a focus on mitigating the impact of extreme heat on populations living in vulnerable situations as follows:

1. Hydration Centres and Mobile First Aid stations in central squares

The HRC established hydration centres and mobile first aid stations in central squares to help the population maintain proper hydration levels during extreme heat. These stations provided cool water and first aid services, including psychological support. Mobile First Aid stations were deployed to various locations within the city to offer further assistance and handled **85 emergency incidents**. Additionally, to enhance further public awareness, over **4,790 flyers** were distributed containing **information about heatwaves and guidelines for preventing heatstroke**.

2. Helpline Activation:

A helpline was activated, providing two-way outreach communication for wellness checks and offering information about managing extreme heat. The helpline handled **1,396 proactive and reactive calls** from vulnerable groups such as older people and people with chronic illnesses. This allowed early detection of heat-related health risks and timely interventions.

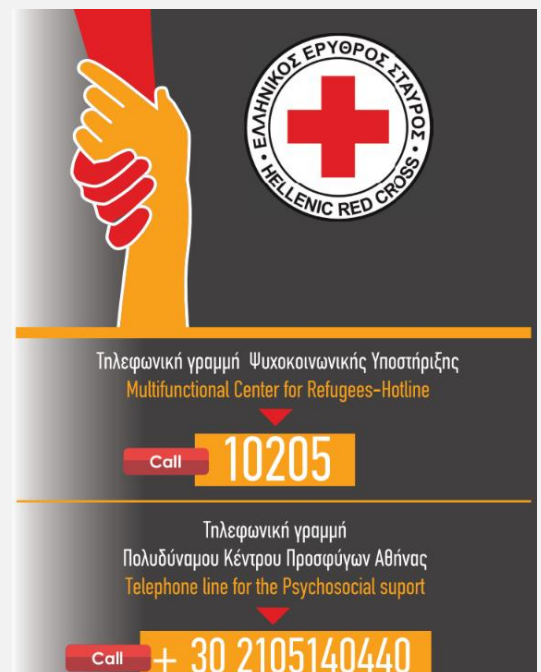
3. Bicycle First Aid Teams:

Bicycle First Aid Teams were deployed in high-risk areas, including market districts and residential neighbourhoods. They conducted house-to-house visits and wellness checks, focusing on older adults and people with chronic illnesses in Athens and Patras.

4. Mobile Health and Nursing at Home Teams:

Mobile Health and Nursing Home Teams reached **558 people** through home visits, providing emergency first aid and mental health support. A total of **244 phone communications** were made to people in high-risk situations, ensuring continuity of care.

5. Distribution of Supplies:



Brochure of the telephone helpline for the Multifunctional Center for Refugees and the Psychosocial support helplines, also informing on the opening hours between 8:30 AM to 5 PM (Greek time).

During the heatwave, in hydration centres and First Aid stations, the HRC distributed **over 14,000 bottles of water**, alongside nutritional bars. Specific figures include **6,750 bottles** distributed at Syntagma Square and **5,200 bottles** at the Acropolis area. Vulnerable groups, including homeless people, have also received **sun cream, protective hats, and ice packs**, improving their resilience to heat exposure.



HRC provide essential support to vulnerable individuals during the heatwave, distributing water, food, and first aid supplies.
Photo credits: HRC

6. Patras First Aid Station:

During the heatwave, the HRC First Aid Station in Patras, provided **specialized assistance to 62 citizens** due to serious health issues related to high temperatures.



7. Street outreach in Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras:

Street outreach teams were deployed in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras to assist vulnerable populations such as the homeless, uninsured citizens, and people arriving from abroad. These teams distributed humanitarian aid, including personal hygiene items, cool water, nutritional bars, information leaflets on heatstroke prevention, and protective items like hats, sun cream, and ice packs. A total of **180 people** were reached through these outreach efforts. Additionally, **866 people received humanitarian aid and wellness checks, including children and pregnant women.**

Discrepancies and Challenges:

- The range of **activities expanded to address increased needs and challenges beyond the identified vulnerable groups.** For example, the hydration station and first aid post at the Acropolis remained operational throughout the activation period due to the influx of visitors, particularly older adults aged 60 and above.

- During periods of extremely high temperatures, citizens prefer to travel by personal vehicles, rather than public transport, increasing traffic on the roads. Congested urban areas can pose a risk to bicycle first aid teams as cycling routes may be limited in urban areas

Challenges and lessons learned specific to this sector

A key area for future expansion of activities includes outdoors and workplaces, particularly field workers exposed to extreme heat as well as external environments, such as construction sites and factories, which may lack adequate ventilation. Collaborating with major construction companies and factories could involve **implementing pre-summer training programmes to educate workers on heat stress prevention and first aid**, as well as providing workers with essential safety equipment during hazardous summer days. By addressing workplace heat stress, the health and safety of workers in these demanding environments can be significantly improved. One of the future activities planned by the HRC is procuring thermoses to enable water refills and maintain its cool temperature. In addition, the HRC will invest in educating and raising awareness of the environmental impact of using individual thermoses rather than water bottles.

 Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery	Budget: CHF 41,535	Expenditure: CHF 11,311
	People targeted: 10,000	People reached: 125,351 Direct reach: 21,486 Indirect reach through HRC's social media campaigns: 103,865
	Percentage of activities implemented before the impact of the hazard	100%
Indicator:	Number of people reached with information in advance of the peak of a heatwave	
Readiness activities:	1. Prepare and revise key messaging in multiple languages for information awareness-raising activities and campaigns, developed in close coordination between the Health, Social Welfare and Communication sectors of the HRC and in coordination with local and national government officials and the Chief Heat Officer. 2. Produce a map of cooling stations (municipalities and HRC-led locations²) in each targeted city, which will be hosted. The digital version will be hosted by METEO.GR, alongside the heat categorization system, in multiple languages. 3. Produce information boards for care homes, HRC Branches, Multifunctional Centres (MFCs) and Educational Health Stations (EHSs) to raise awareness, including on general protection measures against heat. 4. Prepare content for a website, social media campaigns, newspaper advertisements and radio jingles (based on 8 community feedback), including investing in paid social media boosts to increase reach and impact when soft triggers are met. 5. Conduct awareness-raising sessions and trainings with relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Education. 6. Conduct outreach / awareness-raising sessions with people at risk, including youth and children. 7. Conduct interactive awareness sessions on the risks of extreme heat and the ways to prevent health risks targeting children/students.	
Prepositioning activities:	1. Maintain annual inventory, including a log of maintenance checks (vehicles) at city/district level warehouse. 2. Print and preposition communication materials, brochures and kits for public outreach, including maps of cooling stations in each city targeted. Ensure they are available in multiple languages.	
Early actions:	1. Launch a large-scale information campaign, including TV spots, social media paid posts and face-to-face outreach to inform the wider population as well as targeting at-risk groups of the a) health risks of extreme heat, b) the ways to mitigate them, as	

²In the report, "cooling stations" refer to hydration stations established by the HRC. These stations consist of tents providing shade, where the organization distributes bottled water, ice packs, sunscreen, and hats to vulnerable populations.

well as c) the category system of the METEO.GR platform. Ensure that information is accessible, available in multiple languages.

2. Conduct/intensify outreach activities through existing HRC programs, such as homelessness outreach programme, Nursing at Home (Health Sector) and Home Care (Social welfare sector).

Narrative description of achievements

The HRC effectively established a hub for knowledge sharing, proactive intervention, and coordinated response. By focusing on knowledge dissemination, they empowered the population to better understand and manage the risks associated with extreme heat, enhancing their resilience. Additionally, the HRC aimed to strengthen the preparedness of both citizens and the National Society to effectively respond to increased health needs during the summer season.

The HRC executed a series of risk reduction and climate adaptation interventions as part of the sEAP to prepare the population for extreme heat. The following achievements were recorded:

1. Large-Scale Information Campaign

A comprehensive public awareness campaign was launched, involving **TV spots, social media posts, and face-to-face outreach**. Key information focused on the health risks of extreme heat and preventive actions, along with an introduction to the METEO.GR heatwave category system. TV spots and key messages were broadcasted across major stations such as ERT, ANT1, CNN, OPEN and others, reaching a wide audience.

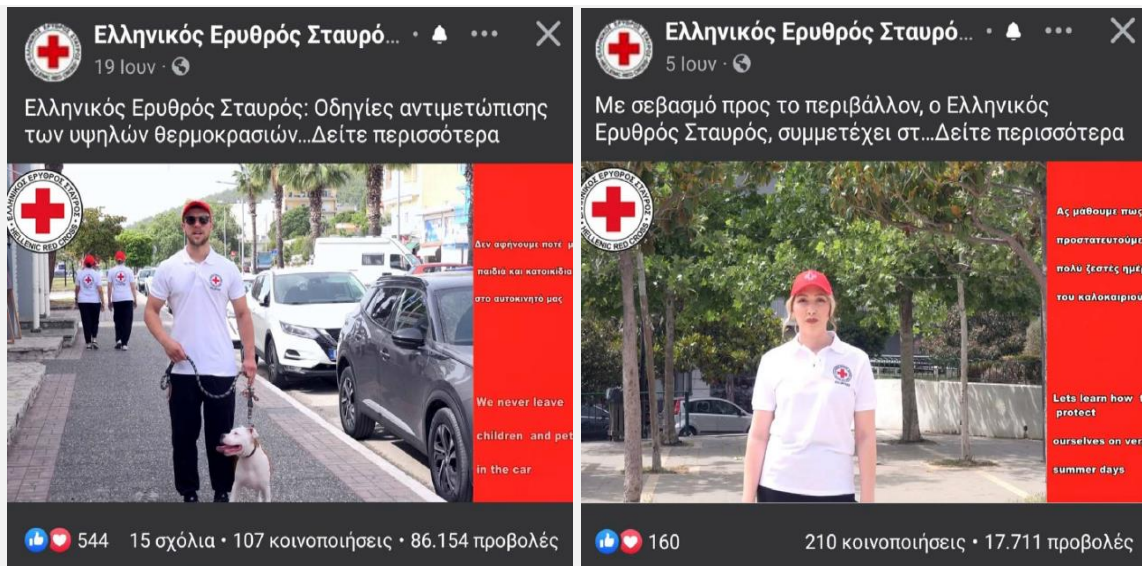


Paid social media boosts ensured critical information reached at-risk groups, including older people and those living with chronic with health conditions. For instance, via [this Facebook campaign](#) on the HRC's Climate Change Strategy, the population were able to learn on the alternative approach of the National Society to natural disasters. The campaign slogan also highlights the importance of collaboration and coordination: ***“Let us love nature and coexist in harmony with it, all together, joining forces for a better tomorrow.”***

A video campaign [“Guidelines for Coping with High Temperatures”](#) was also launched on the HRC's Facebook page.

Public spaces like the **Athens Metro** displayed video messages to further amplify awareness.

The organization has also taken advantage of **international days** to raise awareness about climate change and high temperatures. On **World High Temperature Day**, a campaign was launched in the Athens Metro, and on **World Environment Day** (5 June), a large event was held at Areos Field area to raise awareness among schoolchildren and distributed informative **flyers to over 2,560 people**. Over **4,790 people** visited the hydration centres, where information was provided in Greek and English to ensure accessibility for all communities, including groups living in vulnerable situations such as people from abroad and homeless people.



Large-scale public awareness campaign on social media about prevention and protection from extreme heat. Source: HRC

2. Outreach through HRC Programmes

The HRC intensified its outreach activities through its existing programmes, such as the **homelessness outreach programme** and **Nursing at Home services**. These programmes were critical in reaching highly vulnerable people, particularly those unable to access mainstream media. The outreach was aimed at preparing these people for the heatwave by distributing educational materials on heat safety and providing hydration and first aid supplies. As part of this effort, **866 wellness checks** were conducted over the phone, and **558 home visits** were completed by the Nursing at Home teams. These interventions ensured that at-risk people were informed about the upcoming heatwave and could access hydration centres or other support services if necessary.

3. Training programmes for the public

As part of its readiness activities, the HRC has organized a **training programme** to educate citizens on dealing with high temperatures and providing first aid. The training has been conducted in Athens, Patras, and Thessaloniki, with a total of **11,421 people received valuable knowledge and skills**. Specifically, 4,935 people were trained in Athens, 4,047 in Patras, and 2,439 in Thessaloniki.

4. Webinars for the public, HRC staff and volunteers

In addition to in-person training, the HRC has also utilized online platforms to reach a wider audience. A series of webinars were conducted as part of readiness activities, with a total of **2,715 views**. These webinars covered crucial topics such as:

5. **Extreme High Temperatures:** [Timely Action and Effective Operation of the HRC](#) and [Preparing for High Temperatures](#).
6. [Needs Assessment and Assessment of Activities](#) oriented towards emergency conditions of extreme temperatures.
7. **Follow the HRC and protect yourself in the summer**

Furthermore, the HRC has established a collaborative platform with the NOA to assess emergency conditions resulting from extreme temperatures.

8. Conferences

To raise awareness among the public and relevant organizations, the HRC participated in the following key events:

9. **“Climate Change and Cities - The Preparedness of Thessaloniki”** A presentation of the Greece Extreme Heat programme was delivered at Thessaloniki City Hall on 18 April 2024. Participants included representatives of the Thessaloniki Municipality City Hall, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.
10. **“Online Educational Day”** In collaboration with the British Red Cross, an online educational day was organized for National Societies across Europe and Central Asia on 14 May 2024, featuring the sEAP programme.

11. “1st Peloponnese Scientific Meeting of Nurses” A presentation on the Greece Extreme Heat programme from 17 to 18 June 2024.

Discrepancies and Challenges:

While implementing the large-scale awareness campaign, the HRC did not encounter any significant difficulties. By taking advantage of the international climate days as opportunities to inform the public, the HRC was able to effectively raise awareness and educate populations about extreme heat and its associated risks.

Challenges and lessons learned specific to this sector:

One major challenge that HRC faced was the tight timeframe for implementing the extensive awareness campaign. Since there is no such way to predict exactly when the heatwave will hit, HRC only had a few days to get into action once the trigger was reached. Based on the learnings from the sEAP, to address his HRC aims to integrate awareness-raising activities into its longer-term planning aimed at disaster risk reduction, to ensure that the activities are conducted well in advance the summer season. An extensive information campaign aimed at improving the population's preparation will leverage various environmental days, such as World Environment Day, and include timely First Aid training courses for citizens. This approach will create a more impactful and sustained campaign, strengthening community resilience to heatwaves.

 Community Engagement and Accountability	Budget: CHF 0 (No cost activities)	Expenditure: CHF 0	
	People targeted: 2,000	People reached directly: 319	
	Female: 152	Female > 18: 152	Female < 18: 0
	Male: 167	Male > 18: 167	Male < 18: 0
Indicator:	Percentage of activities implemented before the impact of the hazard	100%	
	<i>Number of tools and mechanisms established and used to collect information and feedback</i>		
Readiness activities:	1. <i>Build staff and volunteer capacity in community engagement and accountability mechanisms and tools.</i> 2. <i>Conduct a survey to identify the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the target groups in order to refine activities, messages and approaches in line with the information obtained, taking into consideration their ability to access services.</i> 3. <i>Establish feedback tools and mechanisms which are accessible to the target population.</i> 4. <i>Ensure that activities (including distributions), information provided, and two-way communication channels are adequate, active and people are aware of and trust them.</i> 5. <i>Ensure that information materials are culturally appropriate and adapted according to gender, age, disability, language.</i>		
Early actions:	1. <i>Collect, analyse, and report on feedback received, when possible, adapt the activities using the analysis received to improve the response.</i>		

Narrative description of achievements

The HRC implemented key actions under the Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) framework during the sEAP activation. The primary focus was on gathering feedback from affected communities, analysing the data, and using the findings to improve heatwave response activities. The primary goal was to improve heatwave response

activities by understanding the community's need, perceptions and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented actions.

12. Pre-Activation Needs Assessment: The HRC conducted a survey to gather the public's knowledge, perceptions, practices, and needs related to heatwaves. This research helped identify specific areas where interventions could be most impactful.

13. Post-Activation Evaluation: The HRC conducted internal discussion to assess the effectiveness of the implemented actions. This analysis provided valuable insights on lesson and best practices for future improvements.

14. Collection and Analysis of Feedback:

15. A structured feedback mechanism was established, where **surveys were distributed** both in physical and electronic formats during and after heatwave interventions. These surveys aimed to capture the knowledge, attitudes, and satisfaction levels of people receiving assistance during the heatwave.

16. The feedback process targeted 2,000 people, with responses gathered during outreach activities in public places such as the Athens Metro, healthcare centres, and hydration stations. The surveys focused on evaluating people's understanding of heatwave risks, the usefulness of the distributed materials, and their experience with the helpline and mobile health teams.

17. Results were analysed and the key insights were used to adapt implemented activities. For example, based on community feedback, the distribution of hydration supplies was adjusted to target more critical locations where the need was higher. Feedback also highlighted the need for improved communication on the availability of hydration centres.

18. Adaptation of Activities:

19. The feedback analysis led to the **modification of some outreach activities**, such as increasing the availability of materials in additional languages to cater to non-Greek speaking populations. This was particularly important in reaching groups living in vulnerable situations, including migrant people and people with refugee status, many of whom may not have had access to the initial information.



Providing information on preventive measures and protective actions against high temperatures during home care services. Photo credits: HRC

Discrepancies and Challenges:

The main challenge during the implementation of the feedback mechanism was the **cultural diversity of the Greek population**. Many citizens were unfamiliar with evaluation procedures and feedback mechanisms, which may have limited the number of responses received, with **only 319 people** completing the surveys.

Challenges and lessons learned specific to this sector:

Given the large number of visitors to Greece from many different countries, a need for multilingual information on heatwave protection was highlighted. To ensure that non-Greek speaking visitors can access crucial information and stay safe during extreme heat and provide feedback effectively: future campaigns will include materials in additional languages.

Enabling approaches

	Coordination and Partnerships	
	Budget: CHF 37,808	Expenditure: CHF 34,261
	Target: 4 meetings	Actual: 6 meetings
Indicator:	<i>Number of coordination meetings held with stakeholders and relevant actors</i>	

Readiness activities:	1. Conduct annual meetings with NOA regarding the Heat Alert system, including signing the agreement for service provision. 2. Conduct outreach to relevant municipalities in the targeted areas, in coordination with key partners, to brief them on the sEAP and ensure that they are aware of the Extreme Weather Categorization System and the desire of HRC to respond. 3. Conduct annual stakeholder meetings with for City and Frontline officials (Department of Health, Civil Defense and Chief Heat Officer) at the start of the summer to refresh awareness of sEAP and the early action activities. 4. Conduct annual meetings with the Ministry of Health/Social Welfare to identify preidentified at-risk people. 5. Conduct annual simulation of an activation including NOA, local and central government, if required (Civil Defense, Health, Social Welfare), HRC HQ and branch staff and volunteers – including lessons learned to debrief and update to the sEAP, if required. 6. Forecast monitoring by NOA: ensure ongoing communication maintained by NOA to the HRC focal points in case a level 1 and above in the Heat alert system threshold is reached. Proactive communication if there is a high likelihood for the trigger of the sEAP to be reached, to increase the preparation time in case of activation
Prepositioning activities:	1. National Observatory of Athens equipment for forecast monitoring.
Early actions:	1. Initiate/join early action coordination meetings with stakeholders and relevant actors.

Narrative description of achievements

The HRC played a pivotal role in coordinating efforts and collaborating with key stakeholders during the sEAP activation. The HRC President held crucial meetings with the **Minister of Health**, the **Minister of Civil Protection and Climate Change**, as well as with the **mayors of Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras** and other competed bodies.

Strategic partnerships were formed with organizations like the **NOA** and the **Atlantic Council's Climate Resilience Centre** to enhance the heat alert system and improve response capabilities. The coordination was reinforced through joint simulation exercises, which allowed to test the response plan, as well as roles and responsibilities during the activation of the sEAP. Looking ahead, in 2025, the HRC will continue its collaboration with the National Observatory of Athens outside the framework of the simplified Early Action Protocol, to ensure readiness and capacities to continue to address the immediate needs of vulnerable populations at times of heatwaves.

Additionally, the HRC worked closely with the **municipalities of Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras** to establish hydration centres for vulnerable populations. While the collaboration with **IFRC** offered technical support to ensure alignment with global practices.

Challenges and Lessons Learned:

- Coordination with local actors was occasionally complex, particularly during transition periods following municipal elections, leading to slight delays in implementing certain aspects of the programme. To address this, future implementations of sEAP should prioritize early planning, flexibility, and proactive engagement with government agencies. Strengthening partnerships and maintaining open communication can help ensure continuity, even during administrative transitions, reducing the risk of delays, overlapping efforts, and maximizing the impact of the response.
- The limited timeframe between the activation of the heatwave alert and the implementation of all planned actions. This often meant that decisions had to be made quickly, sometimes before all necessary information was available. It also presented the risk of overlapping efforts with other organizations that might have already initiated their own response plans.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 16,614

Expenditure: CHF 1,580

People targeted: 5

People reached: 9

Indicator:

Number of staff engaged in the maintenance and activation of the sEAP

Readiness activities:

1. *Participate in annual meetings, prepare tabletop simulation exercise, and facilitate lessons learned.*
2. *Conduct visits to Athens, as well as Patras and Thessaloniki to conduct monitoring and evaluation activities and provide technical support if needed.*
3. *Accompany readiness activities and facilitate reporting.*

Prepositioning activities:

1. *Support prepositioning activities (including procurement processes if required).*

Early actions:

1. *Support activation of the sEAP when the trigger is reached.*
2. *Facilitate lessons-learned workshop, post-action evaluation and reporting.*

Narrative description of achievements

The HRC General Secretariat actively engaged with other organizations and bodies by taking on key responsibilities and fostering interdepartmental collaboration, effectively managing cross-sectoral activities, leading to optimal outcomes to strengthen partnerships and improve coordination.

The General Secretariat played a crucial role in maintaining and activating the sEAP. Key activities included:

- **Kick off meeting and capacity building** of the key employees involved in the sEAP programme regarding the implementation of the programme, the methodology of the implementation as well as the operational procedures of the trigger of the sEAP with the participation of trainers from the IFRC. Communications and collaborations with various agencies such as NOA, civil protection and others.
- **NOA Partnership:** Numerous meetings were held with NOA to refine the heat alert platform and optimize notification mechanisms, ensuring timely and effective communication.
- **Simulation exercise with the IFRC and NOA:** A joint simulation exercise was conducted on 10 May 2024, by the HRC, IFRC, and NOA to assess their operational readiness and coordination during a heatwave. The exercise aimed to identify potential weaknesses and improve response strategies to ensure effective intervention during real-world heatwave events. The simulation exercise was a success, demonstrating the strong cooperation and operational capabilities of the HRC, IFRC, and NOA. It highlighted the HRC's ability to respond effectively to diverse challenges and provided valuable insights for improving future collaboration and response efforts.



*Kick off meeting and DREF training with IFRC experts.
Photo credits: HRC*

On the other hand, the HRC actively supported the programme by:

- **Activation Support:** When the **National Observatory of Athens** issued a heat alert, the HRC promptly activated the sEAP. Staff played a vital role in executing the operational response plan, which included deploying mobile health teams, setting up hydration stations, and facilitating communication with the community.

- **Lessons Learned:** Following the activation, **lessons learned** were discussed to evaluate the response. This included gathering feedback from staff and volunteers, analysing what worked well, and identifying areas for improvement.
- **Post-Action Evaluation: Online feedback meetings** were held between the Social Welfare Division, the Health Division and the Procurement Division to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

Discrepancies and Challenges:

The **unexpected early activation** of the sEAP for Extreme Heat highlighted the need for increased readiness and flexibility in responding to rapidly changing climate conditions, as extreme heat typically begins later in June, not in the first days.

Lessons Learned:

- Clear role definitions and regular training sessions are crucial for efficient activation and response and will also improve readiness for future events.
- Establishing a routine for post-action evaluations will ensure continuous improvement of the sEAP, enabling the HRC to identify areas for improvement and adapt to evolving circumstances.

 National Society Strengthening	Budget: CHF 52,611	Expenditure: CHF 28,742
	People targeted: 150	People reached: 377
Indicator:	<i>Number of staff and volunteers engaged in early action</i>	
Readiness activities:	1. Annual internal meeting for HRC Headquarters (HQ) and Branches. 2. Annual training for HRCS staff on the NOA Alert System. 3. Salary contribution for staff (EAP lead and communications focal point).	
Prepositioning activities:	1. Procure volunteer visibility (e.g., t-shirts, badges, sunhats, sunglasses).	
Early actions:	1. Staff and volunteer costs for monitoring during activation, communication/awareness-raising activities, and post distribution monitoring.	

Narrative description of achievements

The HRC, adopting a more insightful perception of the changing climate and the occurrence of extreme high temperatures, focused on the necessity of social activation and awareness of its employees and volunteers as well as a large portion of the citizens. The strengthening of the National Society and the involved divisions was the main key to the success of the programme. Through specialization and continuous trainings, HRC was fully prepared and responded in a timely manner to the demands of diverse climate changes. Key achievements in this area include:

- **Training of staff:** The multi-level approach of the HRC, starts from the stage of education, including the provision of information and training of HRC staff. The implementation of courses on dealing with and managing extreme weather conditions and risks affecting the health of citizens formed the basis of everyone's education and preparedness. A total of **120 staff members** were actively engaged in the implementation and management of the sEAP, including operational staff and coordinators on a kick of meeting, who ensured timely activation when heatwave trigger was reached.
- **Training of volunteers:** HRC conducted training seminars for **227 volunteers** to renew and validate their knowledge to achieve the most efficient and complete provision of services to vulnerable populations during the summer months. Trainings were held for the volunteers of the Health, Social Welfare and Samaritans - Lifeguards, Lifeguards and Youth in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras.

- **Online webinars:** In implementing its Climate Change Strategy, HRC, in addition to **live trainings**, adopted the culture of **webinars** for the volunteers and staff. The National Society aims not only to provide environmental education and training, but also to adopt carefully planned policies to prevent and reduce environmental footprint by limiting travel for additional trainings.
- **Online meetings of involved services:** From the beginning and throughout the implementation of the programme, there were many online meetings both with the IFRC and the involved services of the HRC to provide support and evaluate the progress of the program through the simulation meeting.
- **Visibility:** The HRC's strong visibility during the activation, through branded uniforms of the volunteers and the staff with the very large badges on their technical equipment that were clearly visible from a long distance (tents, vehicles, banners, bicycles) strengthened the feeling of trust and security among people resulting in a larger than expected turnout of their assistance.

Lessons Learned:

- As a large humanitarian organization, the HRC recognizes the importance of integrating sustainability principles into all its activities. This includes evaluating the environmental impact of projects and taking steps to minimize HRC's carbon footprint.
- A strong visual presence, through branded uniforms and equipment, can significantly enhance public trust and encourage people to seek help. Investing in clear and immediate visibility is crucial for effective outreach and engagement.

Overall achievement of the implementation of the operation:

The implementation of the Simplified Early Action Protocol for Extreme Heat in Greece has reaffirmed that prevention is the most effective approach to addressing heat-related challenges. The HRC has made significant investments in proactive measures, employing innovative and multi-faceted strategies to safeguard public well-being.

The success of the sEAP is not solely a reflection of individual efforts but rather the result of a collective commitment, built on hard work, diligence, and perseverance. Recognizing the responsibility to protect vulnerable populations, the initiative was driven not only by the intention but by the determination to ensure its most effective implementation.

The HRC, in collaboration with the IFRC, remains committed to strengthening anticipatory action efforts, with the aim to uphold the highest possible standards of health services through a holistic and well-structure approach that enhances resilience at the community level.

The positive outcomes of the sEAP underscore the importance of anticipatory action. The HRC expresses its sincere gratitude to the IFRC, the National Observatory of Athens, and the Atlantic Council's Climate Resilience Centre for this valuable collaboration. A heartfelt thank you also goes to the dedicated volunteers and staff of the HRC, whose unwavering commitment and efforts were instrumental in achieving the programme's success.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The total approved budget for the two-years was **CHF 217,260**. However, as the Simplified Early Action Protocol for Greece Extreme Heat was activated within the first year of its two-year lifetime, the Hellenic Red Cross has only received the funds to implement the planned readiness and pre-positioning activities for the first year.

Out of the total budget, **CHF 108,546** has been spent and **CHF 108,714** was returned to the IFRC-DREF.

In line of the contractual commitment as per the agreement between the HRC and the National Observatory of Athens, a second instalment of CHF 11,842 was allocated for the cooperation between the National Society and NOA in Q1 2025.

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	*	Operation	MDRGR005
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 28/May/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRGR005 - Greece - Extreme Heat sEAP

Operating Timeframe: 22 Sep 2023 to 30 Sep 2024

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	217,260
DREF Anticipatory Pillar	217,260
Expenditure	-108,546
Closing Balance	108,714

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items			0
PO02 - Livelihoods			0
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash			0
PO04 - Health	68,693	32,732	35,961
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			0
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion			0
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	41,535	11,311	30,224
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability			0
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability		-78	78
Planned Operations Total	110,228	43,964	66,263
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships	37,908	34,261	3,647
EA02 - Secretariat Services	16,514	1,580	14,934
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	52,611	28,742	23,869
Enabling Approaches Total	107,033	64,582	42,450
Grand Total	217,260	108,546	108,714

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	*	Operation	MDRGR005
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 28/May/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRGR005 - Greece - Extreme Heat sEAP

Operating Timeframe: 22 Sep 2023 to 30 Sep 2024

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	40,500		40,500
Food	9,000		9,000
Medical & First Aid	20,500		20,500
Other Supplies & Services	11,000		11,000
Logistics, Transport & Storage	39,000		39,000
Distribution & Monitoring	35,500		35,500
Logistics Services	3,500		3,500
Personnel	41,400		41,400
National Society Staff	32,400		32,400
Volunteers	9,000		9,000
Consultants & Professional Fees	25,094		25,094
Professional Fees	25,094		25,094
Workshops & Training	13,406	77	13,329
Workshops & Training	13,406	77	13,329
General Expenditure	44,600	1,410	43,190
Travel	26,600	1,471	25,129
Information & Public Relations	18,000		18,000
Financial Charges		-61	61
Contributions & Transfers		100,435	-100,435
Cash Transfers National Societies		100,435	-100,435
Indirect Costs	13,260	6,625	6,635
Programme & Services Support Recover	13,260	6,625	6,635
Grand Total	217,260	108,546	108,714

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Reference

🔗 Click here for:

- [Previous Appeals and updates](#)
- [sEAP summary and budget](#)
- [HRC Newsletter on the Simplified Early Action Protocol \[in Greek\]](#)
- [The Climate Change Strategy of the HRC \[in Greek\]](#)