

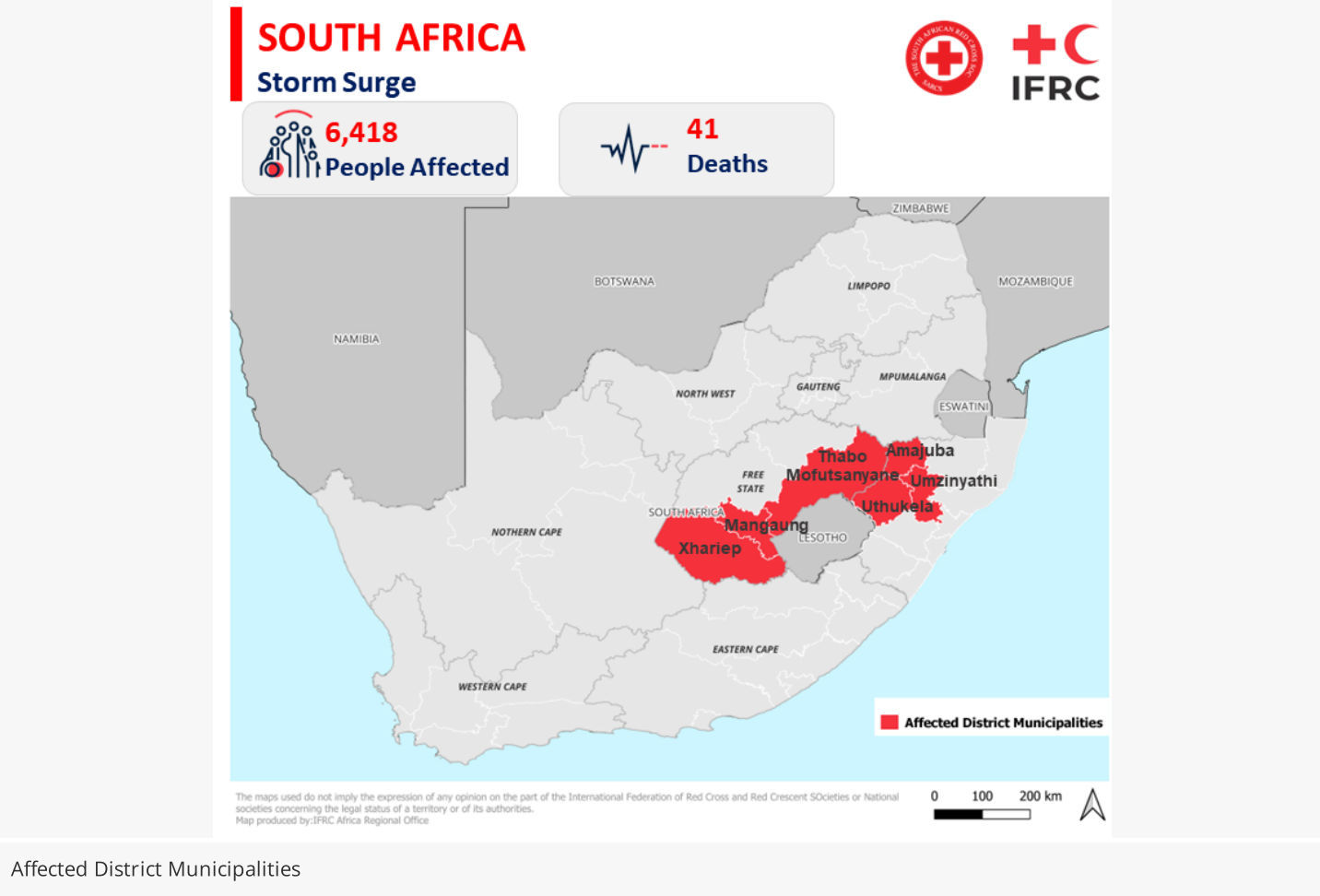


SARCS and IFRC field monitoring in uThukela district

Appeal: MDRZA016	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 353,285	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Storm Surge
Glide Number: -	People Affected: 7,813 people	People Targeted: 3,357 people	People Assisted: 3,357 people
Event Onset: Sudden	Operation Start Date: 25-01-2024	Operational End Date: 31-07-2025	Total Operating Timeframe: 6 months
Targeted Regions: Free State, Kwazulu-natal, North-west			

The major donors and partners of the IFRC-DREF include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, China, Czech, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the Netherlands, as well as DG ECHO, Mondelez Foundation, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

Description of the Event



Date of event

16-04-2024

What happened, where and when?

On 7 January 2024, severe storm surges led to extensive flooding in the Ladysmith area of KwaZulu-Natal and various parts of the Free State Province. Approximately 1,226 households (6,418 people) were affected, and 41 fatalities were recorded. Significant damage was reported, particularly in the uThukela (Ladysmith), uMzinyathi, and Amajuba District Municipalities, where most fatalities were attributed to drowning and people reported missing.

Between 15 and 17 April 2024, another wave of violent storms and heavy rainfall struck KwaZulu-Natal and the North West Province, while the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) was still actively responding to the January disaster. The most affected areas during this second wave included Margate in the Ugu District (KwaZulu-Natal) and Moshana Village in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District (North West Province). These storms impacted an additional 279 families (approximately 1,395 people), placing further pressure on already stretched local response capacities.

Following the April storms SARCS revised and expanded its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) operation to better address the growing needs of affected people. The scale-up aimed reach 6,190 people, with direct cash and in-kind assistance provided to 3,357 people (700 households), including newly impacted families in Ugu and Ngaka Modiri Molema districts. Furthermore, NS scaled up its emergency operations in coordination with local authorities and humanitarian partners. Relief items, including food parcels, hygiene kits, blankets, mattresses, and temporary shelter materials, were distributed to the newly affected households. Damage assessments and community engagement activities were carried out in high-risk and flood-prone areas such as Ugu and Ngaka Modiri Molema Districts. In preparation for potential future weather events, SARCS continues strengthened preparedness measures in light of the continued risks posed by the El Niño phenomenon. These included community sensitisation campaigns, pre-positioning of emergency supplies, and intensified coordination with local disaster management structures to enhance resilience and enable quicker response in the event of further disasters.





SARCS North West engages community members at hall after heavy storms



SARCS Distributing food parcels and kitchen sets

Scope and Scale

On 7 January 2024, severe storm surges caused flooding in Ladysmith (KwaZulu-Natal) and parts of the Free State, affecting 1,226 households (6,418 people) and leaving 41 dead. Major damage occurred in uThukela, uMzinyathi, and Amajuba, with most fatalities due to drowning. Between 15–17 April, further storms struck KwaZulu-Natal and North West, impacting 279 families (1,395 people) while SARCS was still responding to January's disaster. SARCS expanded its DREF operation to assist 6,190 people with cash, in-kind aid, and shelter, reaching 700 households. Relief included food, hygiene kits, blankets, mattresses, and shelter materials, alongside damage assessments and community engagement. To prepare for future risks from El Niño, SARCS strengthened resilience through sensitization campaigns, pre-positioning supplies, and closer coordination with disaster management structures.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. South Africa Weather Service (SAWS)	https://twitter.com/saweatherservic?lang=en

National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?	Yes
Please provide a brief description of those additional activities	As the initial DREF was already used to respond in Kwazulu Natal and Free State, the storms that hit North West had to be attended to. SARCS managed to distribute 100 blankets and 100 mattresses to the affected households. Additionally Northwest Moshana Village Ngaka Modiri Molema District received: • Clothes to 3 shelters and a community hall.

- 650 blankets plus the 400 additional blankets in the Northwest Province.
 - 500 mattresses and a further 400 mattresses in the Northwest Province.
- The affected people were targeted for the multi-purpose cash interventions.

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The IFRC, through its Pretoria Cluster Office, provided ongoing and targeted support to the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) as part of its Secretariat role. This included dedicated technical assistance in Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER), Finance, and Program Management to ensure the effective implementation of the operation. Regular engagement through various platform and joint monitoring were established as part of the monitoring and coordination plan. The joint system in place to coordinate and monitoring between IFRC delegation and SARCS served for efficient information exchange and collaborative decision-making on key operational matters. This sustained engagement significantly contributed to the coherence and quality of the intervention.
Participating National Societies	SARCS and the Netherlands Red Cross worked together to strengthen SARCS' methods of registering and verifying CVA beneficiaries.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The ICRC continued to provide RFL support to NS in order to facilitate RFL services such as phone call service, phone charging, internet connection services, and Red Cross messaging for displaced people.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	Yes
National authorities	The government, through Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and Disaster Management Centers (DMCs), identified community halls to accommodate the affected people. The Department of Social Development (DSD) worked with the National Society (NS) to provide psychosocial support (PSS) and coordinated relief efforts from various humanitarian organizations to prevent duplication of services for the affected communities. For shelter initiatives, the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) collaborated with local authorities, including traditional leaders and municipalities, to secure safer land for displaced people. Additionally, corporate agencies, private service providers, and other donors have contributed assistance in various forms, including relief items, cash, groceries, and food supplies. ADRA organization distributed 140 cash vouchers valued at R500 each to support communities in KwaZulu-Natal and Free State affected by the storm surge.
UN or other actors	The South African Weather Services (SAWS) consistently provided weather updates, including early warning messages, which kept the National Society informed about changing weather conditions. These updates enabled the National Society to deliver accurate information to vulnerable communities. The National Society used the information from SAWS, translated it into languages understandable to local communities, and intensified dissemination efforts, particularly to people living in high-risk areas. Additionally, SARCS reached out to UNICEF to address child-specific needs. Old Mutual assisted by providing food parcels, which were distributed to affected communities in the Ladysmith area of KwaZulu-Natal. Ali-Imdaad contributed plastic sheets and hygiene



packs, while Shoprite provided hot meals. ADRA distributed cash vouchers and food parcels, supported by Huletts Sugar, and focused its efforts on 174 households in KwaZulu-Natal. Each household received R500 per voucher, selected based on vulnerability criteria coordinated with SARCS.

Both organizations closely coordinated their efforts to ensure aid reached a broad range of affected individuals, minimizing overlaps and maximizing resource distribution to those most in need. This strategy allowed ADRA to complement the relief efforts by targeting different groups impacted by the disaster, thereby broadening the overall impact of the intervention.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

Joint Operations Committees (JOCs) were activated by the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) at national, provincial, district, and local municipality levels, with SARCS actively participating at all levels to reinforce its auxiliary role. The Department of Social Development (DSD) took responsibility for coordinating relief efforts from both the government and other partners involved in the response operation. DSD also provided psychosocial support (PSS) and coordinated relief from other humanitarian organizations to prevent duplication of interventions.

SARCS ensured its active participation across all levels to maintain effective coordination of its response interventions and enhance the overall efficiency of the operation.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Widespread destruction of housing infrastructure was reported across KwaZulu-Natal, North West, and Free State following the devastating storms and floods of April 2024. Over 1,226 households were either partially or completely destroyed, displacing approximately 6,418 individuals and prompting the activation of five evacuation shelters. In Moshana Village (North West), 100 homes were entirely wiped out, affecting 678 people, while Margate in KwaZulu-Natal experienced both severe structural damage and fatalities. These events compounded earlier losses from January, where many homes in KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State were also left uninhabitable due to flooding. Damages included collapsed walls and roofs blown off, pushing families into temporary shelters. While some began exploring resilient housing options, durable reconstruction efforts remained limited, particularly in informal settlements. Long-term relocation support from government authorities is still pending in several high-impact zones across all provinces.

As conditions gradually improved, most displaced families began exiting evacuation centres within three to four weeks of the disaster, depending on the extent of damage in their respective districts. In KwaZulu-Natal's uThukela and Ugu districts, many households transitioned to temporary structures on their property, partially repaired homes, or stayed with relatives by early to mid-February. In the Free State, the process was more gradual, with most families leaving by the end of the month, aided by local government and SARCS support. Others left soon after receiving multipurpose cash vouchers, which enabled them to purchase basic groceries and shelter materials, facilitating an earlier transition out of communal shelters. These movement patterns directly influenced the duration and scope of SARCS' continued support, including hot meal provision, hygiene promotion, and protection services, made it difficult the NS to provide service until families were safely settled.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

The storm surge severely impacted food security and livelihood activities. Many of the 1,226 affected households lost food supplies and income sources, increasing their vulnerability. Communities in shelters and those hosted by relatives reported critical shortages in food, particularly for children and chronically ill patients. In total, over 370 households residing in shelters relied on SARCS for daily hot meals for nutritional support and chronic medication. The prepositioned food stocks were quickly depleted, straining SARCS' ability to meet rising needs.

Despite efforts, SARCS struggled to provide consistent meals as Many partners faced capacity challenges. The National Society had to assume full responsibility for ensuring displaced individuals received two meals daily, which placed further pressure on already stretched resources. The ongoing needs persisted in recently affected communities in Northwest and KwaZulu-Natal, prompting the launch of a DREF to support food provision and other basic needs.



Multi purpose cash grants

To uphold dignity in response, SARCS distributed 700 multi-purpose cash vouchers enabling affected households to prioritize their unique needs. This approach supported dietary diversity and access to essential supplies, including health supplements and medications especially critical for individuals with chronic illnesses who lost medications during the disaster. The Cash Voucher Assistance (CVA) was implemented in collaboration with Nedbank, focusing on the most vulnerable households in affected areas.

The cash grant enabled recipients to purchase food, hygiene supplies, and even materials for home repairs. However, challenges included difficulties with disbursement through mobile money platforms, particularly for those who lost phones or SIM cards during the disaster. Some beneficiaries failed to redeem their funds due to reliance on SMS-based notifications. Challenges encountered in voucher redemption have led to ongoing discussions with an alternative Financial Service Provider (FSP) to strengthen future interventions.



Health

Health services were severely disrupted due to damaged infrastructure, inaccessible roads, and the displacement of health workers. Chronic patients, including those on antiretroviral therapy (ART) and treatment for non-communicable diseases, experienced dangerous interruptions in care. In KwaZulu-Natal, displaced mothers raised concerns about the lack of maternal health services in evacuation centres, while in the Free State, health volunteers noted shortages of basic medications and first-aid kits.

Mobile clinics and NGO-led health outreach initiatives were positively received but were too infrequent to address widespread needs. A significant gap existed in the availability of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), particularly for people who had lost loved ones, homes, or livelihoods. Many affected people especially those experiencing trauma were unable to access consistent mental health care, highlighting the need for the integration of MHPSS into long-term recovery plans. Even though Department of Social Development (DSD) provided Psychosocial Support Services (PSS) in collaboration with The South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) with its PFA trained volunteers, provided Psychosocial First Aid during the storm surge response, however, they were unable to reach all affected households.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Access to safe drinking water and functional sanitation infrastructure remains a critical gap, particularly in isolated rural communities. The partial restoration of services has not met the full scale of need, leaving populations exposed to waterborne diseases. Although WASH interventions such as hygiene kit distributions, water distribution, and temporary latrines were well-received, they did not meet the full scale of needs, particularly in isolated rural areas. Community members consistently requested more frequent water deliveries, improved sanitation management, and hygiene promotion activities tailored for people with disabilities and those with limited literacy. Even though NS was able to reach 3,357 people, through WASH interventions.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

During assessments, community members raised strong concerns about safety and protection, particularly in temporary shelters where families shared overcrowded spaces with little privacy. Women and girls expressed fear of gender-based violence, especially at night due to poor lighting and lack of secure toilets. In North West and Free State, people with disabilities and elderly residents reported being left behind during evacuations or facing barriers in accessing services. Youth and LGBTQ+ individuals reported stigma and discrimination in some temporary sites, exacerbating feelings of exclusion. Furthermore, SARCS and local authorities implemented some PGI measures, such as establishing gender-segregated toilets, women-only spaces, and child-safe zones, but these were inconsistently applied across provinces. Awareness-raising sessions on GBV, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and child safeguarding were conducted, with volunteers also disseminating information about support services. Feedback mechanisms for reporting sensitive issues were initiated, though community members emphasized the need for stronger, more accessible systems to ensure inclusive participation in recovery planning and service delivery.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Most affected families originated from informal settlements, making community involvement in response and recovery planning essential. Community meetings were frequently requested as a platform for voicing concerns and suggestions, especially around home



rebuilding and cash distributions. Respondents expressed appreciation for SARCS' willingness to engage. SARCS aimed to strengthen its accountability systems through regular two-way communication, feedback channels, and public updates.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The overall objective of the operation was to respond to the immediate humanitarian needs of approximately 700 most vulnerable households (3,357 people) who were impacted by the storm surge that occurred in 3 provinces. The assistance focused on the provision of a multipurpose cash grant, WASH, health services, and shelter in the Northwest; Kwa Zulu Natal and the Free state over a period of 6 months.

Operation strategy rationale

Following severe storm surge and flooding in January and April 2024 across KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, and North West provinces, the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) launched a DREF operation under MDRZA016 to address urgent humanitarian needs. The initial intervention targeted 500 households (approximately 2,500 people) primarily in Ladysmith (KwaZulu-Natal) and districts in the Free State. It focused on life-saving support across Shelter, WASH, Health, Livelihoods, and Multipurpose Cash Assistance.

Due to further flooding in April 2024 that affected an additional 279 households (1,395 people) in Margate (Ugu District, KZN) and Moshana Village (Ngaka Modiri Molema District, Northwest), the operation was revised. The updated strategy expanded the coverage to a total of 700 households (3,357 people), extending the operational timeframe to 6 months and increasing the DREF allocation to CHF 353,285.

The operational strategy, including the revisions made in April 2024 sought to address the needs identified during the Needs assessment. This included:

- Shelter & NFIs: Distribution of blankets, mattresses, and kitchen sets to 700 households, along with awareness on safe shelter and building back better.
- Livelihoods & Basic Needs: Provision of daily hot meals to displaced individuals in shelters, now covering both initially and newly affected communities. The distributions targeted 3,357 displaced people targeted in the shelters and relocation sites.
- One-off Multipurpose Cash grant (ZAR 2,500 per household) for all 700 targeted households to support self-prioritized needs, including food and household items.
- Health & MHPSS: Delivery of Psychosocial First Aid (PFA), mental health support, and health awareness campaigns, with referral pathways for distress cases.
- WASH: Distribution of hygiene kits, WASH refresher training for volunteers, and community hygiene awareness sessions.
- Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI): Integration of confidential feedback mechanisms to address SGBV and SEA risks, especially in overcrowded shelters.
- Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA): Sustained engagement with affected communities through feedback mechanisms and inclusive decision-making.
- Immediate humanitarian services were oriented towards psychosocial first aid, health and WASH prevention messages, and the use of distributed items to ensure communities took ownership of their situation and were able to recover effectively.

Throughout the intervention, there were various platforms for exchanges and coordination to prevent duplication of response initiatives and ensure assistance reached the most vulnerable communities. Collaboration with the government and other partners was maximized in all intervention phases and sectors. Hence, continuous data collection and engagement with communities were ensured to maintain the relevance of the selected intervention and targeting approach. Following a joint assessment that allowed for the collection of key data for the launch of the intervention in January 2024, NS integrated detailed assessments into the operation to evaluate the impact and collect primary data for the scale-up after the flood events of April.

Targeting Strategy

Who was targeted by this operation?

The operation was aimed to address the urgent humanitarian needs of 700 households (3,357 people) affected by storm surges and flooding in 3 Provinces (Kwa-Zulu Natal, Free state and Northwest) between January and April 2024. Initially, the intervention targeted 500 households (2,500 people) in 2 provinces (Kwa-Zulu Natal and Free state) impacted by the January storm surge and was later scaled up to include an additional 200 households (857 people) affected by April 2024 storms surge in northwest, Moshana village and Kwa-Zulu Natal, ugu district the Margate area. The South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) prioritized resource allocation based on assessments that



identified the most pressing needs, including emergency shelter, WASH intervention such as clean water, food, Cash aid and access to health services. Priority was given to those most severely affected by the disasters, using impact-based criteria such as the extent of shelter loss and disruption to basic services and livelihoods. Vulnerability indicators also guided the selection process, focusing on households with health and WASH related challenges, socio economic vulnerabilities, and those falling into high-risk categories such as child headed households, persons with disabilities, low-income families, elderly headed households, and women headed households. Through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), SARCS was able to directly support 6192 people (North west targeted 322 people FS 1243 people, KZN 1792 people) out of the 7813 people affected.

The Free State experienced widespread flooding, in 3 district which is Lejweleputswa. Fezile Dabi, Mangaung and Thabo Mofutsanyana especially in towns such as Kroonstad, Welkom, and parts of the Mangaung Metro such as Bloemfontein. In the North West, districts such as Bojanala and Ngaka Modiri Molema were hit hardest in Moshana village . KwaZulu-Natal experienced some of the most devastating effects in Ugu, uThukela, uMzinyathi, Amajuba where vulnerable areas such as Ladysmith, Durban, Margate, Umlazi, and Pietermaritzburg. Most impacted district being Ugu (Margate) and uThukela (Ladysmith).

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The operation was targeting the people who were directly impacted by the storm surge. The targeting criteria and priorities were informed by SARCS assessments conducted in each of the targeted provinces. The vulnerabilities of the selected groups demonstrated a need to prioritize them.

SARCS implemented a verification process that involved key stakeholders such as DSD and the traditional leadership council to confirm the selected households and ensure that the selection criteria were adhered to. The selection criteria were widely communicated through trusted channels, including community engagement forums led by traditional leaders and local authorities, to minimize community tensions and provide clarity to those selected or not selected. NS staff and volunteers collected feedback and complaints from targeted households during the selection process and throughout the operation, using different channels including during the needs assessment. The feedback was shared and analyzed at the headquarters to improve the selection process and criteria as needed, and to address any complaints regarding the selection of community members. Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) played a crucial role in this response, with community members involved in the development of selection criteria to ensure understanding of the targeting and beneficiary selection process.

Total Assisted Population

Assisted Women	-	Rural	65%
Assisted Girls (under 18)	-	Urban	45%
Assisted Men	-	People with disabilities (estimated)	1%
Assisted Boys (under 18)	-		
Total Assisted Population	3,357		
Total Targeted Population	3,357		

Risk and Security Considerations (including "management")

Does your National Society have anti-fraud and corruption policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have child protection/child safeguarding policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have whistleblower protection policy?	Yes



Does your National Society have anti-sexual harassment policy?	Yes
Please analyse and indicate potential risks for this operation, its root causes and mitigation actions.	
Risk	Mitigation action
Continuous thunderstorms and soil saturation leading to more localised flooding which will overwhelm the NS.	Efforts were maximized to disseminate information regarding potential erratic and unpredictable weather changes, as reported by the South African Weather Services (SAWS), to ensure that beneficiaries were evacuated to safer areas where risks were minimal or manageable. SARCS intensified its resource mobilization efforts in response.
There was a delay in the disbursement of funds to support the operation, which posed a potential risk to the timely implementation of critical activities.	SARCS ensured that all necessary documentation was submitted. There was also regular follow-ups with the cluster office to ensure timely implementation during the operation.
Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation:	
A delayed response to affected individuals could have heightened frustrations, as many victims were already experiencing stress and, in some cases, depression, despite receiving Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services.	
Risk on inter-communal security issue in informal settlements affecting the distributions or other aspect of the intervention. Based on the experience gained during the MDRZA014 Kennedy Road fire informal settlement assistance in KZN, which faced several incidents of civil unrest and security concerns, SARCS implemented preventive measures, even when operating in urban and peri-urban areas. Drawing from lessons learned on community engagement, SARCS actively engaged with communities and government authorities in advance, prior to completing any procurement processes. The primary goal was to ensure that the communities fully understood and agreed to the planned assistance. SARCS also ensured that no procurement was finalized until a clear agreement with community leaders was established, helping to maintain calm and prevent potential conflicts or disturbances ahead of distributions.	
Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?	Yes

Implementation



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Budget: CHF 104,018
Targeted Persons: 3,357
Assisted Persons: 3,357
Targeted Male: 1,219
Targeted Female: 2,138

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#detailed assessment reports	2	2
#people reached with blanket distribution	3,357	3,357
#people reached with mattress distribution	3,357	3,357
#people reached with kitchen sets	3,357	3,357

#people reached with safe shelter awareness on building back better	700	1,000
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Narrative description of achievements

- SARCS was able to conduct 2 detailed needs assessments for needs and vulnerabilities, of damages of affected households in all 3 provinces.
- SARCS distributed 1400 blankets and mattresses reaching 700 Households, with each households receiving 2 blankets and mattresses. In addition, SARCS distributed 700 kitchen sets to 3,357 people who were affected by disaster.
- 200 HHs were provided with dignity and hygiene packs as they had lost their personal belongings.
- As part of its recovery efforts, SARCS also facilitated "Build Back Better" awareness sessions, equipping 1,000 community members with essential skills to construct safer and more resilient homes. As conditions gradually improved, most displaced families began transitioning out of evacuation centres within three to four weeks of the disaster, depending on the severity of damage in each area. In KwaZulu-Natal's uThukela and Ugu districts, many households relocated to partially repaired homes, temporary shelters on their land, or stayed with extended family by mid-April 2024. In the Free State and Northwest, the process was more staggered, with most families leaving by the end of May 2024, supported by SARCS and local government interventions. Some households were able to expedite their return by using multipurpose cash vouchers to purchase shelter materials and essential groceries, easing their reintegration into safer living environments. By the time DREF closed there was no one left in the evacuation centres.

Lessons Learnt

- Dissemination is quite important during disasters, and SARCS should explore having their own Evacuation centers that can operate and ensure people have inclusive spaces as they seek refuge.

Challenges

Some affected community members refused to evacuate to the designated centers, choosing instead to stay behind to protect their belongings during the disaster. Additionally, the NS encountered security challenges, as criminal elements emerged following the distribution of relief. This required the team to conduct door-to-door assistance for other beneficiaries after completing distributions at evacuation centers, further complicating the response efforts.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Budget: CHF 19,443
Targeted Persons: 5,355
Assisted Persons: 5,355
Targeted Male: 1,936
Targeted Female: 3,419

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#people reached with hot meals	5,355	5,355

Narrative description of achievements

•SARCS was able to provide support to over 370 households approximately 5,355 peoples who were residing in evacuation shelters, those staying and out of shelter including those staying friends and relatives. These people relied heavily on SARCS for daily hot meals to meet their nutritional needs, for taking chronic medications. While some households had their basic needs met through multipurpose cash assistance, the demand for in-kind support remained high. Prepositioned food stocks were quickly exhausted, placing considerable strain on SARCS’ capacity to meet the growing needs of the affected people.

Despite collaborative efforts, SARCS encountered significant challenges in delivering consistent meal services, as many partner organizations faced capacity limitations. As a result, the National Society had to take full responsibility for providing two daily meals to



displaced people, further stretching already limited resources. Nevertheless, the support was deeply appreciated by affected communities, with many expressing gratitude for being able to feed their families during such a critical time.

Lessons Learnt

For future responses, SARCS recognized the importance of procuring additional Mobile Kitchens when responding to multiple affected areas. Increasing the number of units would have significantly enhanced SARCS' capacity to provide hot meals during disasters, improving operational efficiency and ensuring more effective support to affected communities.

Challenges

- The allocation of funds for only one Mobile Kitchen per province proved to be a significant challenge, as the vast size of certain provinces, particularly Free State, made it difficult to reach all affected areas. Time constraints further limited SARCS' ability to provide efficient coverage across all locations.



Multi Purpose Cash

Budget: CHF 121,055

Targeted Persons: 3,357

Assisted Persons: 3,357

Targeted Male: 1,177

Targeted Female: 2,180

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#households profiled for cash interventions	700	700
#volunteers who received refresher training on CVA	50	50
#people reached with CVA launch event	200	200
#households received multi-purpose cash vouchers	700	467
#Financial Service Provider engaged	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

• The South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) successfully conducted 3 Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) refresher trainings, targeting 50 volunteers who were actively involved in the flood response. These trained volunteers played a key role in profiling and verifying beneficiaries to ensure that assistance reached those most in need. With support from the Netherlands Red Cross, SARCS was able to upgrade and digitalize its registration and verification processes, significantly enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of CVA implementation. The organization utilized the 121 Platform for CVA information management, which improved communication with beneficiaries, streamlined monitoring, and enabled timely collection of community feedback. Strong partnerships with Nedbank financial service providers (FSPs) enabled SARCS to successfully transfer cash assistance to 700 beneficiary households through mobile money that met the defined selection criteria. The money was transferred to the FSP before the execution of the beneficiary transfers. Of these 700 registered beneficiaries, upon reconciliation the FSP highlighted that 467 HH beneficiaries were able to redeem their funds. However, 233 beneficiaries were unable to access their cash due to the loss of mobile phones or contact numbers during the disaster. Since the mobile money system relied on SMS notifications, beneficiaries who could not recover their numbers via SIM swaps were left without access to their vouchers. The absence of alternative communication mechanisms further complicated the ability to assist these households. In addition to SARCS's efforts, the humanitarian organization ADRA distributed 140 gift vouchers worth R500 each to affected households in KZN only. From the findings of both lessons learned workshop and Post distribution monitoring survey, the CVA approach proved impactful, as some beneficiaries used the cash to purchase building supplies and complete their homes, Groceries, school uniforms, medication and opening stalls to sell vegetables and fruits for income generation. This is evident that the disbursed multipurpose cash grants assisted in addressing the most urgent needs of the affected households to rebuild and restore their lives. Even though some of



the Beneficiaries expressed concerns that the assistance amount was not sufficient, particularly in households with larger family sizes. While the value of the cash or voucher provided was the same across all households, it did not adequately cover the basic needs of those with more dependents or extended family members living in the same household. •

Lessons Learnt

- A one-size-fits-all approach may not effectively meet the diverse needs of affected households, especially when there are significant differences in household size and composition. For example, some households consist of only two members, while others may have six or more people, including children, elderly members, or individuals with specific needs. Providing the same voucher value to all households, regardless of size, can lead to inequities in coverage and impact, with larger households potentially unable to meet their basic needs adequately.
- NS needs to strengthen its monitoring strategy at branch and provincial level when implementing CVA program interventions. Because without proper monitoring, it's challenging to assess effectiveness, identify gaps, and adjust strategies.
- NS needs to strengthen its building of the capacity of Staff and volunteers on designing, implementing, and monitoring cash interventions, because lack of expertise may lead to sub-optimal program outcomes.

Challenges

- Some beneficiaries complained that they had their phones stolen hence losing the only source of proof that the money had been provided to them. NS resubmitted the names to the FSP to redistribute the funds.
 - Some beneficiaries delayed in redeeming their cash vouchers. However, the NS conducted continuous sensitization efforts, encouraging them to redeem and utilize the vouchers. This approach ensured that 80 % of the beneficiaries eventually accessed their cash assistance.
 - 233 beneficiaries did not redeem their funds within the DREF time frame, because some of the beneficiaries lost their cellphones or contact numbers following the disaster. This made it difficult for them to receive or redeem their cash vouchers, as the system relies on SMS notifications. While some beneficiaries registered numbers with the hope of performing SIM swaps to recover their contacts. However, when they were unable to do so, the vouchers became inaccessible, leaving them without support. Once cellphones or numbers were lost after registration, there were no alternative mechanisms to communicate with or provide assistance to these beneficiaries, further complicating the process. While, 467 beneficiaries were able to redeem their Monie. Following is how the money was spend.
- R1167500 Spend budget verses initial budgeted amount of R1750000 for MPC. Which R 582,000 CVA Funds remained unredeemed, translating to roughly 30,000 CHF. Additionally, we received a favorable price on groceries for hot meals concerning livelihoods and were supposed to re-propose our stock.



Budget: CHF 1,944
Targeted Persons: 6,192
Assisted Persons: 6,192
Targeted Male: 2,612
Targeted Female: 3,580

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#people reached with PFA and PSS services	3,357	560
#people reached with referral of distress	3,357	150
#people reached with health awareness messages	6,192	6,192

Narrative description of achievements

•In response to storm surge, NS under health sector deployed 50 volunteers to deliver multisectoral assistance, which included the provision of mental health support and the distribution of health awareness messaging to storm surge victims. Through its Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) programme, SARCS provided psychosocial first aid to 560 affected people. Additionally, the



volunteers conducted health promotion activities in emergencies, disseminating health awareness messages on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Child safeguarding and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in the affected communities. These outreach efforts successfully reached 6,192 people. The intervention was further strengthened by SARCS's strong collaboration with the Department of Social Development (DSD), which provided critical support in MHPSS and PSEA. This partnership enabled SARCS to achieve 100% of its target, ensuring that all affected individuals received appropriate psychosocial support, with some referred to relevant institutions for additional care. Follow-up sessions were conducted to monitor recovery and support the emotional and psychological healing of those impacted by the storm surge.

Lessons Learnt

SARCS recognized the importance of establishing a dedicated call center specifically for Psycho-Social Support (PSS) to ensure beneficiaries could easily reach volunteers at any time. Experience from the Free State response highlighted the need for PSS to be provided on a daily basis, enabling timely and consistent support for those in need.

Challenges

- Referral processes posed some challenges outside of regular working hours, as support from the Department of Social Development was generally limited to their standard schedule. Consequently, individuals requiring assistance after hours often had to wait until the next day to be attended to, highlighting an opportunity to explore options for extended or on-call support in future responses.
- PFA and PSS is on a need basis and cannot be forced on people, but the NS was able to reach 17% of the target with the direct services and more were reached through awareness raising.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Budget: CHF 15,700

Targeted Persons: 3,357

Assisted Persons: 3,357

Targeted Male: 1,170

Targeted Female: 2,187

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#people reached with household hygiene packs	1,355	1,875
#Hygiene awareness/sensitisation sessions conducted	6	6
#people reached with awareness/sensitization sessions	3,357	3,357
#volunteers trained on WASH refresher	50	50
#families reached with hygiene kits	700	700

Narrative description of achievements

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion services were ensured.

- SARCS also prioritized the distribution of essential hygiene materials as a family kit to the selected families. SARCS distributed hygiene packs to a total of 700 households, reaching 1,875 individuals—representing a 38% increase from the initial target.
- A total of 50 volunteers were trained and equipped to implement WASH activities, including conducting 6 hygiene sessions, through which SARCS reached 3,357 people.



Lessons Learnt

- Enhancing coordination between the WASH, health, and shelter sectors is essential to ensuring adequate resource allocation for sanitation and hygiene needs. Integrating WASH components into shelter design and emergency health plans will foster a more comprehensive and effective response.
- Pre-identifying shelter locations with sufficient space and infrastructure for WASH facilities helps to ensure that sanitation needs are considered early and that conditions are adequately assessed before displacement occurs. Similarly, pre-positioning essential WASH supplies—such as portable toilets, hygiene kits, and water purification tablets—in flood-prone areas strengthens readiness and enables a more timely and effective response.
- Establishing mobile WASH units that can be quickly deployed to temporary shelters, ensuring immediate access to sanitation and clean water in overcrowded conditions.

Challenges

- National Societies face challenges in ensuring continued support for rebuilding efforts, addressing water contamination, and helping communities recover livelihoods requires sustained resources and planning, which can be difficult to maintain over time with limited fundings.
- Over crowded temporary shelters that lack proper care of WASH facilities such as Insufficient latrines, poor waste disposal, and limited access to clean water in these shelters creating unsanitary conditions, putting people at risk of disease outbreaks.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 486

Targeted Persons: 50

Assisted Persons: 4,624

Targeted Male: 1,890

Targeted Female: 2,734

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#staff and volunteers briefed to implement PGI minimum standards during operation	50	50

Narrative description of achievements

- NS ensured that PGI was integrated into all programs by conducting awareness-raising campaigns on SGBV, PSEA, and Child Safeguarding in evacuation centers and the community at large. A total of 50 volunteers participated in a one-day briefing session on the Minimum Standards for PGI in Emergencies, equipping them with the skills needed to support affected communities in a safe and inclusive manner. Child safeguarding and PGI awareness were mainstreamed into community engagement activities to enhance the protection of vulnerable groups. This effort was further supported by SARCS' strong collaboration with the Department of Social Development (DSD), which provided technical support and coordination on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and related issues. SARCS was able to reach 4,624 people (1890 Males and 2734 Females) through PGI services and a total of 169 individuals who were referred to other organizations for further assistance.
- The Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) training was held in one central province in collaboration with NS headquarters, IFRC Pretoria Cluster and regional office, Including other NS across Africa. The training aimed to strengthen operational readiness, enhance understanding of DREF procedures, and improve the overall quality and accountability of emergency response operations. Key objectives included building the capacity of staff to develop timely and needs based DREF requests, ensure compliance with IFRC guidelines, and implement effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms. The training was attended by a total of 25 participants, including 4 from SARCS national headquarters, 9 representative from 9 National societies Across Africa, 5 representative from regional and 7 representatives from Pretoria cluster office of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The training added significant value by fostering a common understanding of DREF standards, increasing coordination across all levels of the organization, and promoting timely, community-driven, and accountable responses during disasters.



Lessons Learnt

- Allocating Specialized Resources for Vulnerable Groups such as mobility aids (e.g., wheelchairs, crutches), maternal health supplies, and child-friendly spaces should be prioritized. This helps to ensure that vulnerable populations have immediate access to essential support.
- A key learning from the operation was the need to strengthen feedback mechanisms by integrating confidential reporting channels to ensure sensitive complaints—such as those related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) involving National Society staff or volunteers—can be safely and effectively addressed in future interventions.

Challenges

- Addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, disabled, pregnant women, and children, becomes challenging if the Shelters are not fully equipped to accommodate these groups, and National Society lack the specialized resources to assist them effectively.
- Mass displacement and migration that lead to overcrowding in the evacuation shelter that put vulnerable population at risk of further marginalization and exploitation. Continuous awareness of the movement conducts and do no harm principle for affected population and volunteers. GBV awareness campaigns for staff, volunteers, and affected populations.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 7,899

Targeted Persons: 3,357

Assisted Persons: 2,856

Targeted Male: 1,026

Targeted Female: 1,830

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#volunteers and staff oriented on CEA	50	50
#feedback mechanisms established	2	2
#people reached through awareness	3,357	2,856
#volunteers engaged to collect feedback from communities	50	50

Narrative description of achievements

- The NS conducted 3 sessions regarding CEA Orientation for Staff and Volunteers across all 3 provinces. Social Media platform awareness messages were running for 6months through social media posting, development of digital material on flood and storm awareness.
- 3 feedback mechanisms were established such as phoning offices, data collection through survey and one on one engagement through walk in. which all proved to be very helpful in addressing rumours and people's concerns. In addition, the 121 projects that were integrated with CVA were set up to also encompass feedback related to cash interventions. A total of 2,856 people were reached through awareness sessions.
- During detailed needs assessments conducted in the aftermath of the floods across Northwest, Free State, and KwaZulu-Natal, affected communities expressed urgent concerns related to the lack of immediate access to clean water, food, shelter, and healthcare services. Many residents, especially in rural and informal settlements, highlighted the slow pace of rescue operations and the absence of early warning systems. In Northwest and Free State, communities stressed the need for improved infrastructure, including stormwater drainage, roads, and reliable communication networks, while in KwaZulu-Natal, several community members raised concerns about being relocated far from their original homes, which disrupted access to schools for their children and employment opportunities. Women and elderly persons also reported feeling unsafe in overcrowded temporary shelters due to a lack of privacy and inadequate lighting.

While the Post distribution monitoring findings revealed that relief distributions were appreciated and several challenges remained. Beneficiaries mentioned that multi-purpose cash and hygiene kits, including relief material distributed such as blankets and mattresses



did not match household sizes. Some community members in KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State reported confusion over the criteria for receiving assistance, leading to perceptions of unfairness and exclusion. Feedback also highlighted the positive impact of cash voucher assistance, with some recipients expressing concerns that cash distributed was not enough to cover all their prioritize needs. Communities recommended improved communication, more inclusive targeting processes, and consistent follow up regarding cash distributions to ensure that future responses are more equitable which the NS has taken into account and plan to intensify CEA with the community for any intervention.

Lessons Learnt

- Safe Access was crucial to ensure that the community could help protect the volunteers, particularly in situations where criminals might exploit vulnerabilities. Liaising with ward community members was essential, as it made the volunteers' work easier and more secure.
- Strengthening Community engagement is key for 100% redemption for cash disbursed to beneficiaries.

Challenges

- Criminal elements posed a threat to the volunteers, as they were targeted by some individuals in the community due to the tablets, they carried for collecting feedback. This forced us to revert to paper-based tools, which significantly increased the workload for our volunteers. However, based on the community feedback the NS failed to reach 15% of the target which we assume was a mere calculation error.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 22,845

Targeted Persons: 60

Assisted Persons: 60

Targeted Male: 20

Targeted Female: 40

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#field visits conducted	4	4

Narrative description of achievements

- The Cluster Delegation provided support to NS in implementing the DREF. The Cluster Senior Disaster Management Officer collaborated closely with the entire team, both National Society and Cluster, to ensure smooth coordination of operations and timely implementation. The Cluster PMER Officer worked in tandem with the NS PMER officer to develop monitoring and reporting tools essential for the operation's success.
 - Furthermore, the Cluster Senior Finance Officer offered technical support to the NS Finance team to establish and implement robust financial systems for the operation.
- Delegation supported the reporting and compliance to minimum standards and quality established for the key activities planned. Regular quality monitoring was made and necessary technical support deployed when needed.
- IFRC conducted 4 joint field monitoring visits in collaboration with the NS to oversee the intervention at the ground level.

Lessons Learnt

- The National Society needs to enhance its resource mobilization strategy to ensure that it has funds available for emergencies, allowing it to respond effectively while awaiting disbursement of funds for specific operations.

Challenges

- The delay in disbursing funds for the operation led to a postponement in the National Society's ability to promptly implement the operation. This delay was caused by a shortage of funds available to acquire the essential response materials for the affected



communities. Nevertheless, the National Society maintained consistent communication with the cluster office to guarantee timely implementation throughout the operation.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 59,409

Targeted Persons: 6,192

Assisted Persons: 2,645

Targeted Male: 950

Targeted Female: 1,550

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#field visits conducted by HQ	4	4
#volunteers and staff reached with visibility materials	50	50
#lessons learnt workshops conducted	3	3
#of training on DREF organized for NS enhanced capacity	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

- The operation was very well coordinated with various stakeholder supporting the affected communities. SARCS ensured that Coordination with Disaster management agencies in both provinces was prioritized, and the NS was part of all government strategic meetings for the interventions, and they had good collaboration with IFRC.
- A total of 50 NS volunteers and staff were deployed to support the intervention, and they were also provided with Visibility materials like SARCS branded gilets/bibs, t-shirts, and hats for Field visibility.
- SARCS conducted 4 monitoring visits in collaboration with IFRC for Field supervision, coordination, and monitoring in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Northwest and Free State.
- A successful Lessons learned workshop was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the emergency response.
- 60 volunteers trained on CVA, PGI and CEA, Visibility materials and protective clothing for operation response team.
- A DREF training was conducted in collaboration with IFRC Pretoria Cluster and regional office, Including other 9 National societies across Africa. The training aimed to strengthen operational readiness, enhance understanding of DREF procedures, and improve the overall quality and accountability of emergency response operations. Key objectives included building the capacity of staff to develop timely and needs based DREF requests, ensure compliance with IFRC guidelines, and implement effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms. The training was attended by a total of 25 participants, including 4 from SARCS national headquarters, 9 representative from 9 National societies Across Africa, 5 representative from regional and 7 representatives from Pretoria cluster office of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The training added significant value by fostering a common understanding of DREF standards, increasing coordination across all levels of the organization, and promoting timely, community-driven, and accountable responses during disasters.

Lessons Learnt

- Access to resources was of utmost importance, as disasters and emergencies often disrupted access to necessities such as food and water, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups.
Ensuring the safety of vulnerable populations, such as women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, can be challenging in chaotic and unstable situations. It is crucial to analyze past emergencies to identify areas for improvement and adjust strategies based on lessons learned.
- It is imperative to continuously analyze the outcomes of past emergencies to identify gaps and weaknesses in response efforts. Adjusting strategies and implementing improvements based on these lessons learned will help enhance the resilience and protection of vulnerable groups during future crises. Key issues include the need for tailored resource distribution, effective communication channels, and robust contingency plans that prioritize the needs of those most at risk.



Challenges

- National Society frequently operate with constrained budgets, vehicles and staffing, which hampers their ability to effectively mobilize in vast areas during large-scale disaster responses. Inadequate funding affects the procurement of essential supplies like more mobile kitchens' for hot meals , food supplies, and water.



Financial Report

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRZA016 - South Africa - Storm Surge

Operating Timeframe: 25 Jan 2024 to 31 Jul 2024

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	*	Operation	MDRZA016
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 08/May/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	353,285
DREF Response Pillar	353,285
Expenditure	-295,906
Closing Balance	57,379

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction		22	-22
AOF2 - Shelter	104,018	77,972	26,047
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	140,497	100,883	39,614
AOF4 - Health	1,944	1,897	47
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene	15,700	15,619	81
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion	972	890	82
AOF7 - Migration			0
Area of focus Total	263,132	197,283	65,849
SF11 - Strengthen National Societies	67,308	78,623	-11,315
SF12 - Effective international disaster management			0
SF13 - Influence others as leading strategic partners			0
SF14 - Ensure a strong IFRC	22,845	20,000	2,845
Strategy for implementation Total	90,153	98,623	-8,470
Grand Total	353,285	295,906	57,379

[Click here for the complete financial report](#)

Please explain variances (if any)

IFRC-DREF allocation to this intervention was CHF 353,285. The operation was launched on 25.01.2024 for an initial allocation of CHF 232,870 to support 500 households (2,500 people) in the initial 2 affected provinces. After the floods events of the April 2024 floods, the DREF operation was expanded with a second allocation of CHF 120,415 to support additional 200 HHs affected communities in North-West and Margate area in Kwa Zulu Natal provinces. By the end of the intervention, total expenses was CHF 295,906. The closing Balance of CHF 57,379 will be returned to the DREF pot after the closure of this operation.

Some budget lines experienced notable variances in the implementation of the operation, both in terms of underspending and overspending.



- Under AOF2 – Shelter, the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) recorded an underspend of CHF 30,306 (25%). This was primarily due to receiving more favorable rates from suppliers during procurement. Although there were plans to utilize the savings to procure additional shelter items, the expiration of the DREF timeframe prevented finalization of these purchases. The overall delay on availability of funds also didn't allow timely reconciliations and revised planning.
 - A more significant variance occurred under AOF3 – Livelihoods and Basic Needs, where an underspend of CHF 39,614 (28%) was observed. This was attributed to delays in voucher redemption by beneficiaries and challenges in obtaining timely cash-out reports from the financial service provider (FSP). These recurring issues have prompted SARCS to initiate the process of contracting a new FSP to improve future cash-based interventions.
 - In the SFI1 – Strengthen National Societies category, SARCS exceeded the allocated budget by CHF 11,315 (16%). This overspend occurred because activities under this line were implemented before the DREF extension was approved, which subsequently led to a reduction in the allocated budget. The costs had already been incurred based on the initial operational plan.
 - Under SFI4 – Ensure a Strong IFRC, there was an underspend of CHF 2,845 (12%), because the travels costs were lower than anticipated due to forex gains.
- All other budget lines remained within the acceptable variance threshold (below 10%), reflecting strong budget control in those areas.



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[Click here for reference](#)



DREF Operation

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Area of focus Total	263,132	197,283	65,849
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SFI2 - Effective international disaster management			0
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners			0
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Strategy for implementation Total	90,153	98,623	-8,470
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DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRZA016 - South Africa - Storm Surge

Operating Timeframe: 25 Jan 2024 to 31 Jul 2024

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	*	Operation	MDRZA016
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 08/May/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	202,413	70,946	131,468
Clothing & Textiles	44,727	29,573	15,154
Food	18,256	9,687	8,569
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	7,987	3,961	4,026
Teaching Materials	3,651		3,651
Utensils & Tools	47,922	27,725	20,197
Cash Disbursement	79,870		79,870
Logistics, Transport & Storage	9,356	1,832	7,524
Transport & Vehicles Costs	9,356	1,832	7,524
Personnel	40,985	2,916	38,069
National Society Staff	12,779		12,779
Volunteers	28,206	2,916	25,290
Consultants & Professional Fees	6,846		6,846
Professional Fees	6,846		6,846
Workshops & Training	36,740	15,510	21,230
Workshops & Training	36,740	15,510	21,230
General Expenditure	35,382	4,485	30,897
Travel	10,954	4,238	6,716
Information & Public Relations	3,651	22	3,630
Financial Charges	479	225	254
Other General Expenses	20,298		20,298
Contributions & Transfers		182,157	-182,157
National Society Expenses		182,157	-182,157
Operational Provisions		0	0
Operational Provisions		0	0
Indirect Costs	21,562	18,060	3,502
Programme & Services Support Recover	21,562	18,060	3,502
Grand Total	353,285	295,906	57,379