

OPERATION UPDATE

Namibia| Drought

Emergency appeal №: MDRNA014 Emergency appeal launched: 06/09/2024 Operational Strategy published: 27/11/2024	Glide №: DR-2024-000094-NAM
Operation update: #1 Date of issue: 14/04/2025	Timeframe covered by this update: From 06/09/2024 to 30/09/2024
Operation timeframe: 11 months 06/09/2024 to 31/08/2025	Number of people being assisted: 140,000 people (34,146 HHs)
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 5 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 7 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 750,000

To date, this Emergency Appeal, which seeks CHF 5,000,000, is 11.6 per cent funded. Further funding contributions are needed to enable the National Society with the support of the IFRC, to continue with the preparedness efforts of and provide humanitarian assistance and protection to people on the move.



Figure 1 illustrate Farmers observing crops in the Ohangwena Region

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis

For the past decade, Namibia has faced a prolonged drought, which continues to persist and has been further exacerbated by the El Niño phenomenon. This ongoing drought significantly impacts food security and the livelihoods of vulnerable populations in the country. The Namibia Meteorological Service's Climate Bulletin for March 2024 indicated that rainfall across Namibia has been minimal, with most of the country experiencing below-normal rainfall from October 2023 to April 2024 and on 22 May 2024, the President of the Republic of Namibia declared a state of emergency due to the ongoing drought. Through this Emergency Appeal, the Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS) aims to support 140,000 people (34,146 households) by providing direct assistance across five regions, i.e. Kavango West, Zambezi, Omusati, Oshana, and Kunene. The NRCS will be focusing on the population currently experiencing the most critical levels of food insecurity. The selected districts have been identified as some of the hardest hit by the ongoing drought, which has exacerbated food shortages and threatened the livelihoods of many residents. Eighty-five thousand individuals (17,000 HHs) out of the 140,000 targeted by this Emergency Appeal are among the most vulnerable, facing acute food insecurity and requiring urgent intervention to mitigate the severe impacts of the drought.

Summary of response

Overview of the host National Society and ongoing response

The Government of the Republic of Namibia approved and implemented a national drought relief programme per the country's National Drought Policy and Strategy, and this was extended for the 2024/2025 fiscal year to cover all 14 regions of the country with food assistance for 362,663 households. This programme (2024/2025) is comprised of (1) food assistance per household per month, (2) seed and horticulture provision at agricultural development centres, (3) livestock support programme with livestock marketing incentives, subsidies for transport to and from grazing areas, subsidies for lease of grazing, subsidies for purchase of animal feed, sale of subsidized animal feed to farmers, (4) provision of water including rehabilitation and installation of boreholes, extension of water pipelines and excavation of canals/earth dams for water harvesting and water tanker services. In collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister, NRCS has also created terms of reference addressing gaps in needs, funding, coordination and implementation identified in the national drought relief programme. The emergency appeal's outputs and activities are guided by the priority needs of the affected populations and per the agreed support parameters with the Directorate of Disaster Management.

In addition, the NRCS is recognized by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) as an auxiliary partner with respect to disaster risk reduction and management (DDRM) and serves on the National Disaster Risk Management Committee (NDRMC), chaired by the Secretary to the Cabinet, and on similar committees at the regional level.

Through its 19 staff members and 11 volunteers across 11 branches, the NRCS has been supporting communities with Disaster Management for years. The implementation of the activities defined in the operations strategy have not started as Namibia RC underwent a process of restoring its operational capacity as also supplemented by the IFRC. Furthermore, after the political transition in country, the NS has re-engaged with national authorities, especially those responsible for implementing the National Drought Relief Programme, which have recently endorsed the NS response plan. The IFRC has been accompanying Namibia RC throughout and is confident that the operation strategy will be rolled out shortly following the deployment of additional human resources and capacities to support the operation.

Needs analysis

Namibia faces significant challenges in its drought response, particularly as the country grapples with prolonged drought conditions exacerbated by climate phenomena like el Niño. There are approximately 1.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, representing about 40 per cent of the population. As indicated, the government

has launched its drought response plan, targeting 362,633 households, needs remain largely unmet for a significant portion of the households. In addition, malnutrition is a growing concern, with **24 per cent** of children under 5 stunted (reduced growth relative to age), **6 per cent** experiencing wasting (weighing too little for their height) and **13 per cent** underweight. Within the period under review, there have been **1,101 deaths due to malnutrition** in all 14 regions.

Rising food insecurity: Recent reports indicate that nearly 1.2 million people face food shortages due to ongoing drought conditions, highlighting the urgent need for effective food assistance and other relief services, alongside drought incentives, such as cash, seeds and tools.

Impact of drought on vulnerable groups including marginalized populations: Drought has an impact for these groups. Livelihoods have been affected as many of these groups depend on crop production, livestock and collecting wild fruits, as well as fishing. As a result of persistent drought many are barely able to produce enough to feed their households. Many have lost livestock - a source of income - due to poor grazing and limited water.

Many families have developed negative coping strategies as they continue to suffer from the cycle of poverty. As household income levels continue to decrease and demands increase, families are forced to cut down on necessities, including meals. Additionally, families have resorted to selling off their livestock and agricultural tools to enable them to purchase maize.

Health implications brought on by the drought are primarily a result of below-average rainfall, poor crop production and the reduction of meals consumed in a day. Some communities reported cases of malnutrition coupled with reports of infant deaths due to lack of food.

Household income levels have decreased as a result of agricultural failures due to drought, which subsequently brings financial hardship on vulnerable communities. Female-headed households are in a particularly difficult situation, as men have migrated for income opportunities or to find grazing land, with some not returning, leaving the burden to fall on women. This creates additional responsibilities for women and coupled with a lack of knowledge and skills, leaving many women more vulnerable

Inadequate nutritional support: The drought has significantly increased malnutrition, leading to higher rates of acute and chronic malnutrition among vulnerable populations, particularly children and pregnant women. Reports indicate that many households are experiencing moderate to severe hunger, with a substantial number of children expected to fall into severe wasting if immediate action is not taken.

Insufficient access to safe water: Drought-affected areas have limited access to safe drinking water, which is crucial for maintaining crops and livestock, as well as for domestic consumption, hygiene and preventing waterborne diseases. The scarcity of water, or presence of unsafe water, increases the risk of gastrointestinal illnesses, further complicating health outcomes during the drought.

Health risks from contaminated water: As water sources dry up, communities may resort to using untreated water, leading to potential outbreaks of disease such as cholera or dysentery. This situation poses a significant threat to public health, especially among vulnerable groups.

Depleted resources: Herders are particularly affected due to inadequate grazing land and water resources, which have led to increased livestock deaths and further economic strain on farming communities.

Operational risk assessment

As much as the implementation has not started, the following operational risks might impact the implementation of the Appeal:

- **Inflation and price shocks:** The continuous decrease in productivity is resulting in inflation on food commodities and agricultural inputs. This is likely to persist until mid-2025, when positive yields are expected. Therefore, CVA programming and procurement will have to consider these increased costs and find ways of not distressing the market further.
- **Additional climate shocks:** While it is projected that 2025 could see an alleviation of the drought with positive impact brought by above-average rains, the operation will have to consider additional risks such as flash

floods, pests or animal disease that could happen simultaneously. This will require a major effort to work with communities in readiness and early actions against these risks.

- **Access:** Some drought-affected areas are extremely remote and require significant investment in supply chain, which could increase the cost of operations. These remote areas require significant investment to ensure sustainability, including rain harvesting and storage systems.
- **Social tensions:** The drought has devastated both crop and livestock farming, particularly in northern regions, where rainfall has been inadequate, resulting in wilting crops and livestock deaths. With the population's dependence on rain-fed agriculture, the lack of natural resources is leading to social tensions within communities. Social cohesion therefore needs to be integrated in the response.
- **Transitioning to resilience building and recovery:** Immediate action is necessary to bolster resilience among affected populations and ensure equitable food access. The situation underscores the need for comprehensive solutions that address both immediate needs and long-term agricultural sustainability to mitigate future risks and improve food security.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Update on the strategy

It is important to note that there are no changes in the operation strategy. Through this operation the NS is intending to NRCS aims to support **143,000 (34 878 HHs)** by providing direct humanitarian and recovery assistance to support the most vulnerable people affected by food insecurity, shortage of water and disrupted livelihoods. They will provide unconditional cash transfers and voucher system aimed at meeting essential food and other basic requirements, including Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) needs; agricultural inputs; training programmes focused on climate-smart agriculture; Income Generating Activities (IGA); food conservation; and therapeutic feeding for severely malnourished children. All these activities are designed to enhance household food security and diversify income and diets. This multifaceted approach not only addresses urgent food needs but also fosters sustainable agricultural practices, thereby contributing to long-term resilience against future food insecurity challenges. By integrating these efforts, the strategy aims to create a more robust framework for achieving comprehensive food security across affected communities.

The support provided will encompass a range of assistance measures, including the distribution of food aid, water supply interventions and livelihood protection activities. By addressing both the urgent needs and longer-term resilience, NRCS aims to not only alleviate current suffering but also to help build the capacity of these communities to withstand future shocks. In addition to immediate relief efforts, NRCS will work with local authorities and other humanitarian organizations to ensure a coordinated response, leveraging resources and expertise to maximize the impact of their interventions.

The strategy will prioritize the regions of Kavango west, Zambezi, Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana, Oshikato and Kunene over 12 months beginning September 2024 and running to August 2025. This appeal intends to address the most vulnerable individuals, facing acute food insecurity and requiring urgent intervention to mitigate the severe impact of prolonged drought, and priority will be given to individuals classified under IPC Phase 4 – “Emergency” for the next 12 months. The selected districts have been identified as some of the hardest hit by the ongoing drought.

This s to complement the drought mitigation plans which are currently being implemented by government based on the identified gaps and recommendations by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The strategy is designed in such a way that it responds to the current pressing needs of the affected communities.

The response has been designed to extend beyond immediate crisis response too, offering continuous assistance as communities move into the winter and subsequent planting seasons. This approach seeks to bolster resilience against adverse climatic conditions and ensure ongoing support during critical periods for effective recovery and adaptation.

DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

 Livelihoods		Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0
		Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0
Objective:	<i>Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of households reached with farm inputs</i>	0	5,000
	<i># of farmers trained in smart agriculture technologies</i>	0	5,000
	<i># of households reached with vegetable seeds for nutritious gardens</i>	0	5,000
	<i># of farmers trained in water harvesting and soil moisture retention</i>	0	5,000
	<i># of vocational trainings for income-generating activities</i>	0	1,000
	<i># of communities with readiness and early action plans</i>	0	50
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 Multi-purpose Cash		Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0
		Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0
Objective:	<i>Enhance access to vital food, non-food items and essential services</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>% of households that report being able to meet their basic needs</i>	0	90
	<i># of households successfully received cash</i>	0	5,000

# of volunteers, partners and staff trained on CVA	0	219
# of market assessments conducted	0	5
# of new FSPs procured	0	1
# of staff and volunteers PDM data collection tools	0	219
# instances of post-distribution monitoring conducted during response	0	5
# of PDM reports produced	0	5

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	Health & Nutrition <i>(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)</i>	Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0
		Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0
Objective:	<i>To improve household nutrition and dietary diversity for families affected by drought.</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of staff and volunteers trained on IYCF, MUAC and disease awareness</i>	0	100
	<i>% of malnourished children/PLW identified and referred for treatment</i>	0	100
	<i># of people reached with IYCF awareness raising</i>	0	140,000
	<i>% of families with malnourished members receiving psychosocial support services PSS</i>	0	90
	<i># of cooking demonstrations conducted (monthly basis)</i>	0	10

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Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Female > 18: 0

Female < 18: 0

Male > 18: 0

Male < 18: 0

Objective:

To enhance access to clean water for both domestic and agricultural purposes, as well as to promote behaviour change on hygiene practices.

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

of water sources rehabilitated

0

15

of low-cost water treatment units distributed

0

5,000

of hygiene/dignity kits distributed

0

10,000

of communities supported to develop Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) plans

0

50

of WASH campaigns promoted in schools and communities

0

250

of volunteers trained in WASH

0

100

of PDM reports produced

0

3

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Protection, Gender and Inclusion

Female > 18: 0

Female < 18: 0

Male > 18: 0

Male < 18: 0

Objective:	<i>To contribute to the protection and safety of the most exposed population cohorts and their access to humanitarian services.</i>		
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Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of community meetings to discuss issues related to PGI</i>	0	50
	<i># of staff and volunteers trained on PGI and CEA</i>	0	200
	<i># of school kits distributed to girls</i>	0	5,000
	<i>% of response activities integrating CEA approaches in their activities</i>	0	100
	<i>% of people surveyed who feel their opinion is taken into account in decisions about services, programmes and operations.</i>	0	80
	<i>% individuals who trust authorities and Red Cross Red Crescent leading the response.</i>	0	100

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Enabling approaches



National Society Strengthening

Objective:	<i>Strengthen and facilitate the capacity of NRCS to respond to shocks</i>
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	Indicator	Actual	Target
Key indicators:	# of volunteers supported	0	300
	# of volunteers recruited	0	100
	# of volunteer data bank and management systems finalized	0	1
	# of staff trained in digitalization	0	19
	# of branches supported	0	4
	# of NRCS resource mobilization strategies	0	1

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Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:	To enhance coordination measures during the response.		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of membership coordination meetings promoted		4
	# of events promoting the work of NRCS		3
	# of cross-border, peer to peer coordination meetings		3
	# of international fora and meetings participated		1

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Secretariat Services

Objective:	<i>To promote effective support from IFRC per the NRCS request of international assistance.</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of international fora and meetings participated</i>	0	2
	<i># of staff in country</i>	0	1
	<i>Updated MSR (Y/N)</i>	0	Y
	<i># of HD and Communication events</i>	0	2

The IFRC Secretariat has supported the NS in developing the Operational Strategy which was published. Through its 19 staff members and 11 volunteers across 11 branches, the NRCS has been supporting communities with Disaster Management for years. The implementation of the activities defined in the operations strategy have not started as Namibia RC underwent a process of restoring its operational capacity as also supplemented by the IFRC. Furthermore, after the political transition in country, the NS has re-engaged with national authorities, especially those responsible for implementing the National Drought Relief Programme, which have recently endorsed the NS response plan. The IFRC has been accompanying Namibia RC throughout and is confident that the operation strategy will be rolled out shortly following the deployment of additional human resources and capacities to support the operation.



Community Engagement and Accountability

Objective:	<i>To enhance community involvement throughout all phases of the response.</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Insert indicators here</i>		

The activities will be reported in the next update.

C. FUNDING

A detailed financial report will be reported in the next update.

Contact information

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

In the Namibian Red Cross- National Society

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In the IFRC

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For In-Kind donations and Mobilization table support:

- **IFRC Africa Regional Office for Logistics Unit:** Allan Kilaka Masavah, Head, Global Humanitarian Services & Supply Chain Management, Africa; email: allan.masavah@ifrc.org

For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting enquiries)

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Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Operations Strategy](#)
- [Emergency Plan of Action \(EPoA\)](#)

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.