

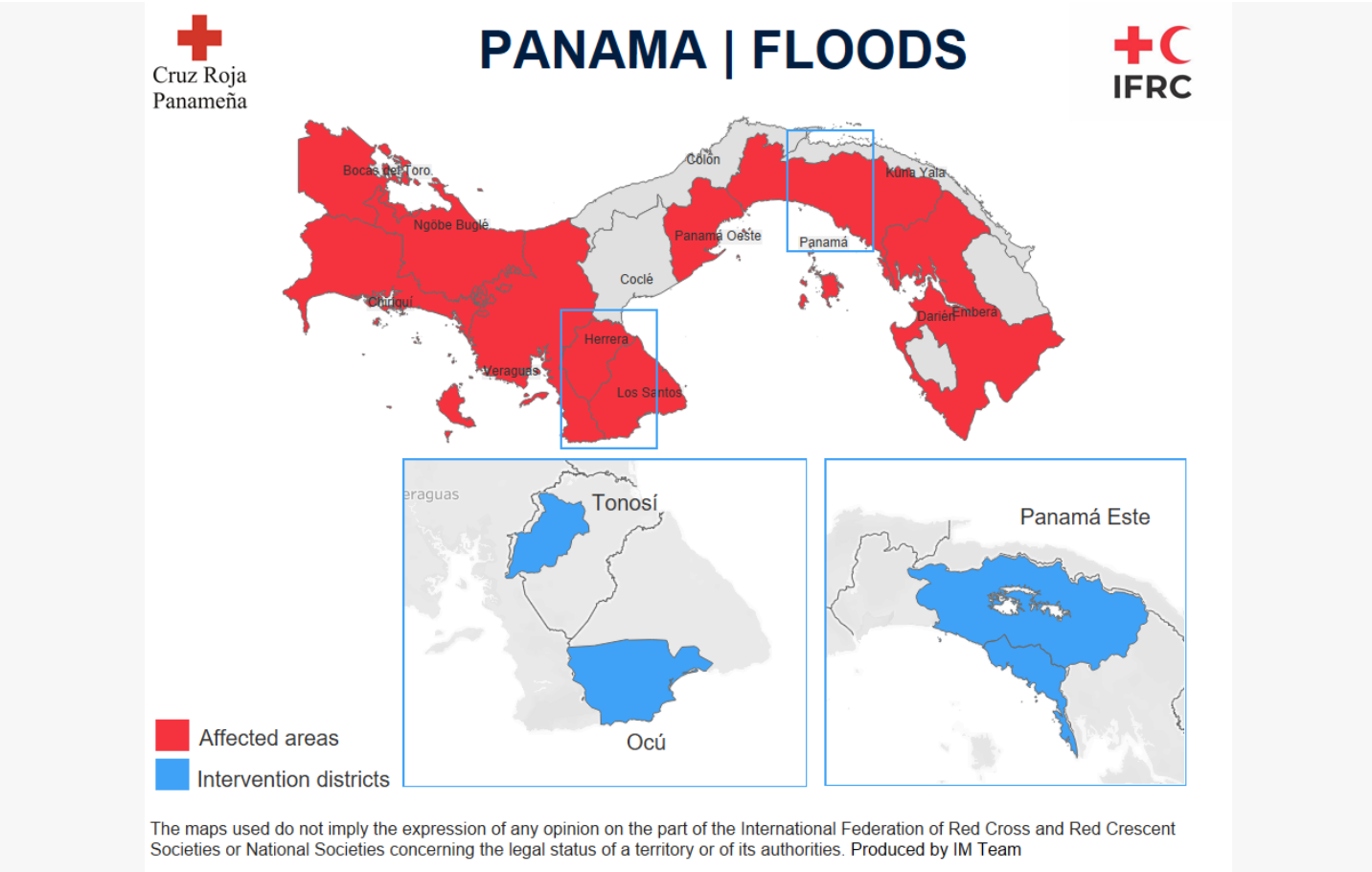


Person reached with CVA. February 2025. Source: RCSP

Appeal: MDRPA020	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 249,979	Hazard: Flood	Crisis Category: Yellow
Glide Number: -	People at Risk: 3,895 people	People Targeted: 2,500 people	People Assisted: 2,500 people
Event Onset: Sudden	Operation Start Date: 12-11-2024	Operational End Date: 31-03-2025	Total Operating Timeframe: 4 months
Targeted Regions: Los Santos, Panama, Herrera			

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



Affected areas and targeted areas (Tonosí, Ocú, Panamá Este).

Date of event

02-11-2024

What happened, where and when?

On 1 November 2024, the Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology of Panama (IMHPA) issued a watch warning for abundant rainfall with significant thunderstorms across Panama and its maritime areas. The alert included a forecast of intensifying winds from the west and southwest, with possible gusts exceeding 50 km/h, which could generate choppy seas on both coasts of the country.

On 2 November, heavy rains were recorded due to a tropical disturbance centered north of Panama over the Caribbean Sea. This primarily affected the provinces of Los Santos, Herrera, Veraguas, Chiriquí, Bocas del Toro, and the Ngäbe Buglé indigenous region, which were placed under red alert. The rest of the country remained under yellow alert.

On 4 November, due to soil saturation, the National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC) extended the red alert to eastern Panama, Darién, and surrounding areas, warning that the rains could persist over the following days, increasing the risk of floods and landslides (1).

By 5 November, rainfall forecasts indicated continued precipitation in the central and western provinces as a result of the indirect effects of Tropical Storm Rafael. The provinces of Panama and Panamá Oeste remained on yellow alert. Soil saturation had reached up to 90%, heightening the risk of overflows, landslides, and river flooding, which affected hundreds of families.





Distribution of child PSS kits. Dec. 2024.
Source: RCSP



Key protection messages shared. Dec. 2024. Source: RCSP



Hygiene and safe water kit delivered. Jan. 2025. Source: RCSP

Scope and Scale

The intense rains caused by the low-pressure system wreaked havoc in several regions of the country. Overflowing rivers, landslides, and the collapse of trees and power poles were among the most significant impacts of these extreme weather conditions.

Between 2 and 4 November, multiple floods, landslides, and river overflows were reported across various provinces, including Bocas del Toro, Chiriquí, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, and Panamá Este, as well as the Ngäbe-Buglé indigenous region.

In Panamá Este, the most affected areas included the township of Las Garzas, where the overflow of the Pacora River impacted sectors such as San Diego and La Mireya. As of 4 November, 500 homes had been affected, and 130 people—including adults, children, and infants—had been evacuated to the shelter at Presidente Valdés School. In the community of Valle Próspero, in Chepo, approximately 40 homes were also damaged by the overflow of rivers and streams in areas such as Loma del Río and Las Margaritas. This situation directly affected hundreds of families, triggering a state of emergency in several vulnerable communities.

In Los Santos province, the overflow of the Tonosí River led to mass evacuations and left hundreds of people affected. The most impacted areas included Tonosí, El Chará, Pueblo Nuevo, Bebedero, and Puerto Piña, where authorities conducted rescues and transferred people to shelters established in the center of Tonosí and the district capital. As of 4 November, a total of 346 families had been affected in this province, where rescue operations and logistical support continued without interruption.

In Veraguas, at least eight communities remained without communication, and 45 homes were reported as affected, with significant infrastructure damage and loss of essential household items. The collapse of roads and infrastructure left these communities highly vulnerable and further complicated the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Authorities, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, worked to assist the affected population, prioritizing health and sanitation needs. A total of 19 shelters were activated across the country to accommodate displaced individuals. Of these, around 10 shelters were located in educational centers in the Ngäbe Buglé region, including: Boca de Remedios, Flor de Anís, Hato Chami, Escuela Bahai, Pueblo Nuevo, Kankintu, Chiriquí Mali, Bisira, and IPT Joaquina H. de Torrijos. In Veraguas, shelters were established in: CE.B. Zapotillo, Loma de Quebro School, Morrillo de Quebro School, and El Espino School. In Los Santos, temporary shelters were opened at Coronel Segundo Institute in Villarreal and IPT Tonosí. In Herrera, the shelters were set up at Hipólito Pérez Tello and La Gloriela Barría Schools. In Chiriquí, displaced families were sheltered at the Gualaca School, and in Bocas del Toro, at the 4 de Abril School. The shelter at Presidente Valdés School in Panamá Este was also made available for affected populations.

As of 4 November, the total number of people in shelters had exceeded 1,100, a figure expected to rise as damage assessments continued and evacuations were still being carried out.

SINAPROC and the provincial Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) had been mobilized to respond to the emergency, maintaining constant monitoring of river levels and soil saturation, and providing support for evacuations and rescue operations. The health situation remained critical, especially in Veraguas and Darién, where health facilities were partially inaccessible, hindering medical service delivery. In response, the Ministry of Health activated regional health operations centers and deployed teams for health monitoring and control. These teams distributed sanitation supplies such as chlorine and carried out the removal of dead animals to mitigate further public health risks.

Productive and service infrastructure also suffered damages. Bridges collapsed in areas of Bocas del Toro, Darién, and Veraguas, while electricity and water supply systems were damaged in multiple provinces, worsening the situation for affected communities. In rural areas of Herrera, Los Santos, and Veraguas, livestock and essential crops were lost, seriously impacting the livelihoods of rural families.

With continued rainfall forecasted for the following days, community vulnerability continued to rise, calling for a sustained humanitarian

response to mitigate the impact. Coordination between SINAPROC, the Ministry of Health, and other institutions remained crucial to manage the response and ensure basic needs were met.

As of 4 November, a total of 4 deaths, 3 missing persons, more than 1,100 people sheltered, and 779 homes affected were reported throughout the country. As a preventive measure, patriotic celebrations were suspended in the provinces of Chiriquí, Veraguas, Bocas del Toro, Herrera, and Los Santos. Beginning 5 November, these restrictions were expanded nationwide to ensure public safety. Additionally, by order of the Ministry of Education, and in coordination with SINAPROC, school classes were suspended nationwide as of the same date.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. National Civil Protection System of Panama	https://www.sinaproc.gob.pa/sinaproc-declara-alerta-roja-en-colon-cocle-y-la-comarca-guna-yala/

National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?	No
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IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The Regional Office for the Americas (ARO) and the IFRC Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) were located in Panama. The Red Cross Society of Panama coordinated actions through the Country Cluster Delegation in Central America, which was responsible for providing technical support and coordinating the emergency response in collaboration with the Health, Disasters, Climate and Crisis Unit (HDCC). The IFRC maintained communication with the Red Cross Society of Panama to request funds to respond to this emergency.
Participating National Societies	The Spanish Red Cross provided support in monitoring and developing inputs for the preparation of the DREF and other documents for partners.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

The ICRC provided technical advice on the Safer Access Framework and Restoring Family Links (RFL), as well as on humanitarian advocacy and diplomacy, as part of the National Society's engagement with the national authorities.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	The National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC) declared a red alert in the provinces of Herrera, Los Santos, Veraguas, Chiriquí, Bocas del Toro, the Ngäbe-Buglé region, and Panamá Este due to the heavy rains and overflowing rivers. SINAPROC coordinated preventive evacuations and rescue operations in the affected areas, relocating people to temporary shelters. It also activated the provincial Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) to assess the damage and coordinate the humanitarian response. Throughout the emergency, SINAPROC conducted continuous monitoring of river levels and soil saturation to prevent further disasters.



	The Ministry of Health (MINSA) activated regional and provincial Health Emergency Operation Centers (CODES) in the most affected areas. Medical teams were deployed to provide care in shelters and impacted communities. The Ministry also distributed sanitation supplies—such as chlorine—for household disinfection and disease prevention. In coordination with veterinary personnel, MINSA supported the removal and relocation of dead animals to avoid additional health risks. The Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) provided social and psychological assistance to affected families sheltered in temporary accommodations. It also led the distribution of hygiene kits and food supplies to displaced individuals in coordination with other institutions. The Ministry of Public Works (MOP) carried out cleaning and rehabilitation work on roads affected by landslides and flooding. In parallel, it conducted damage assessments on critical infrastructure—such as bridges and roadways—with the goal of restoring connectivity as quickly as possible.
UN or other actors	The UNETE UN Emergency Technical Team was activated to provide close support to the authorities.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Preliminary assessments indicated that more than 1,000 homes had been partially affected by the floods, although official figures from government agencies were still pending. While the government had begun distributing mattresses, the basic needs of the affected population remained critical, as non-food items such as cleaning kits, kitchen sets, and repair materials were still required. Support for rapid clean-up and repair of damaged homes was also identified as a priority.



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

The need to provide cash assistance to affected and most vulnerable people was identified in order to help them cover their basic needs, as displaced individuals had suffered impacts at the household level, including total or partial damage to their homes, loss of household items, and disruption of livelihoods. Most of the families affected in rural areas were day laborers; therefore, their livelihoods were interrupted during the emergency.



Health

The National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC) was in charge of coordinating search and rescue operations in the affected areas, deploying specialized teams to ensure the location and assistance of people in danger. In parallel, the Red Cross Society of Panama intensified its efforts to provide emergency care to the victims, including first aid and pre-hospital transfers. The urgent need to provide psychological first aid was identified, stemming from the situation of people residing in shelters.

The floods created favorable conditions for the increase of vector-borne diseases, significantly affecting the geographical areas under red alert, without overlooking those diseases already present in the country, such as dengue, malaria, Zika, and chikungunya. The accumulation and contamination of water increased the risk of outbreaks of zoonotic diseases, such as leptospirosis, and added to the risk of dermal and fungal infections. In addition, the overflow of latrines and septic tanks contaminated drinking water sources, worsening the situation and increasing the spread of gastrointestinal diseases, such as diarrhea.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Wastewater treatment and drinking water production were seriously affected in several areas. The National Aqueduct and Sewer Institute (IDAA) in the provinces of Veraguas, Herrera, and Los Santos reported that the water production system had been severely impacted by the heavy rains. Several water treatment plants also ceased operations due to the situation.

In other communities, rural aqueducts managed by Local Water Boards were in place, particularly in areas without sewage systems. In these same rural communities, families used latrines, many of which were flooded and contaminated. Several wells in locations such as Ocu were also affected by the floods.

In some areas, IDAA water tankers were still unable to access communities due to damaged infrastructure or existing conditions, such as narrow paths and damaged unpaved tertiary roads.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

All people were affected by the crisis during the disaster situation. However, it was notable that women—particularly those heading single-parent households—and certain groups in vulnerable conditions, such as children and adolescents, persons with disabilities, and older adults, experienced differentiated impacts. Under normal conditions, several studies had already identified a 72.4% gender gap between men and women in Panama. This highlighted the need to integrate the Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) approach into the response to address the specific needs of these groups. At the community level, additional vulnerabilities related to access to support, participation in decision-making, and exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often emerged during emergencies. The need to establish safe spaces for children in the affected communities was also identified. The target population was defined based on surveys and assessments conducted by volunteers in the field.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Communities were severely affected by the emergency, especially during disasters such as floods. However, the lack of active participation and adequate feedback mechanisms prevented interventions from being truly inclusive. This gap disproportionately affected specific sectors, particularly the most vulnerable communities, which lacked effective channels to express their needs or receive appropriate information. Moreover, during the emergency, the absence of contextualized information on health risks—such as those resulting from flooding—had a greater impact on vulnerable groups, including children, older adults, and persons with disabilities. There was an urgent need to integrate community participation mechanisms into the response to ensure that all voices were heard and that critical information reached communities in a clear and accessible manner.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The Red Cross Society of Panama contributed to the national response to the floods and landslides that affected the provinces of Panamá, Los Santos, Herrera, Veraguas, Chiriquí, Bocas del Toro, and Darién, providing support to the emergency needs of 500 affected families (approximately 2,500 people) in the districts of Panamá, Ocu, and Tonosí over a period of four months.

By the end of the operation, a total of 2,500 people (approximately 500 families) were reached through the implemented actions.

Operation strategy rationale

The proposed strategy focused on addressing the basic needs of the most affected population and was based on information obtained through coordination with the Emergency Operations Center of the National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC).

The prioritized sectors included shelter, multipurpose cash assistance, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), community engagement and accountability (CEA), and protection, gender and inclusion (PGI). To avoid duplication of efforts, communities and needs were identified jointly in coordination with national and provincial emergency operations centers, as well as with municipal authorities.

Based on previous operations, a cash transfer program (CVA) was implemented to enable the affected population to decide which needs



to prioritize, ensuring dignity and relevance in the response. The transfer amount was calculated considering the bi-weekly wages of day laborers, which represented the majority of the affected population. This amount was confirmed through a feasibility study conducted during the first weeks of the operation.

The operation focused on rural and remote communities, where mobilization costs varied considerably. Additionally, non-food items were procured through the IFRC Regional Logistics Unit in Panama City, and all materials had to be transported to the areas of intervention.

It is worth noting that the Red Cross Society of Panama was part of the Programmatic Partnership (ECHO-PPP). Although the geographical areas targeted by this DREF operation differed from those covered under the PPP framework, the activities developed under the PPP contributed significantly to an effective, timely, relevant, and quality response. These contributions included: the strengthening of Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) of the National Society through its local branches; the creation of a network of focal points for CVA implementation in emergencies (with a pilot in the community of Loma de Quebro, affected by this emergency); the establishment of community brigades as first responders in areas vulnerable to extreme weather events; the reinforcement of coordination with regional, local (municipalities and community boards) and national authorities (SINAPROC, MINSA); and the capacity-building of volunteers and staff in cross-cutting approaches such as PGI and CEA.

Most of the capacity-strengthening actions under the PPP had been carried out in the communities of Cerro Punta (District of Tierras Altas, Chiriquí Province), Soloy (District of Besikó, Ngäbe-Buglé Region), and Loma de Quebro (District of Mariato, Veraguas Province).

Targeting Strategy

Who was targeted by this operation?

The Red Cross Society of Panama implemented its emergency response in the most affected communities in the following locations:

- Province of Panamá, district of Panamá (Panamá Este)
- Province of Los Santos, district of Tonosí
- Province of Herrera, district of Océ

The targeted population consisted of families affected by floods and landslides in these vulnerable areas. These families had been evacuated due to their location in high-risk zones where alerts had been issued. Some of them were staying in shelters, while others remained at home or with relatives or friends, although their houses had suffered partial or total damage—such as flooding, damaged roofs, or collapsed walls.

These locations were selected based on preliminary information provided by the National Emergency Operations Center (EOC) managed by SINAPROC, and cross-referenced with data collected by the branches of the National Society.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The Red Cross Society of Panama established the following criteria to select and prioritize the affected population, which could be adjusted based on the validation subsequently carried out at the community level:

- Families most affected by the floods, including those who suffered partial or total damage to their homes.
- The most vulnerable groups, including single-parent families, older adults, pregnant women, children under five years of age, and people with disabilities.
- Households that had not been reached by humanitarian assistance from State entities or other actors.



Total Assisted Population

Assisted Women	888	Rural	35%
Assisted Girls (under 18)	375	Urban	65%
Assisted Men	862	People with disabilities (estimated)	0%
Assisted Boys (under 18)	375		
Total Population Assisted	2,500		
Total Targeted Population	2,500		

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?	No
Does your National Society have whistleblower protection policy?	No
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
The collapse or flooding of roads and bridges hinders access to isolated communities, preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid and the evacuation of people at risk.	- Identify alternative routes with local authorities and Sinaproc. - Establish distribution points in areas close to isolated communities to reduce the need for long trips.
The continuation of intense rains increases the risk of flooding and landslides, which could compromise the safety of staff and volunteers on the ground.	- Constantly monitor weather conditions through official information sources and adjust field activities according to the situation. - Implement safety protocols for staff in the event of extreme weather conditions, including temporary suspension of activities if necessary. - Ensure adequate protective equipment (raincoats, boots) for personnel in the field.
Exposure to contaminated water, lack of sanitation, and overcrowding in shelters increase the risk of disease outbreaks that could affect both the population and responders.	- Distribute hygiene kits, bleach and other sanitation supplies, as well as personal protective equipment (rubber boots, gloves) ensuring that staff also have access to these resources. - Train staff in hygiene promotion practices and prevention of waterborne diseases.
High demand for food, clean water, and shelter may result in supply shortages and lead to delays in distribution to communities in need.	- Establish agreements with local and international suppliers to ensure a constant supply. - Prioritize distribution to the most affected areas and according to the evaluated needs.



	• Coordinate with other humanitarian actors to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize available resources.
Intense workload and adverse conditions can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion of staff and volunteers, affecting their performance and well-being.	• Implement staff relays to ensure each member has adequate rest periods. • Provide psychosocial support for staff and volunteers, including decompression sessions and access to counseling services. • Maintain constant monitoring of the team's health status, promoting open communication about well-being. • Manage an internal feedback mechanism, so that staff can provide recommendations within the operation.
Desperate communities and possible conflicts in the distribution of resources can generate incidents of insecurity that put the response team and affected population at risk.	• Collaborate with local authorities and security forces to guarantee security in distribution areas and shelters. • Train staff in personal security protocols and management of conflict. Additionally, implement feedback and communication mechanisms with communities to manage a participatory processes. • Plan and clearly communicate distributions to minimize tensions and avoid crowds.
Damaged telecommunications infrastructure limits communication between field teams and coordination bases, making management and timely response difficult.	• Use alternative communication devices (radios) in areas with limited coverage. • Establish checkpoints and periodic meetings to consolidate information and coordinate activities. • Develop a daily reporting system to keep all teams up to date.
Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation: During the implementation of the operation, the Red Cross Society of Panama did not identify any significant security or safety concerns affecting staff, volunteers, or assisted communities. Activities were carried out in a controlled environment with appropriate conditions to ensure the safety of response teams and the affected population. This favorable context allowed for the smooth execution of planned actions without the need for major adjustments to the established security protocols.	
Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?	No

Implementation



Shelter Housing And Settlements

Budget: CHF 83

Targeted Persons: 2,500

Assisted Persons: 0

Targeted Male: 619

Targeted Female: 631

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of families reached with blankets	500	250
# of blankets distributed	1,000	500

Narrative description of achievements

As a result of the rapid needs assessment conducted by the Red Cross Society of Panama in areas affected by flooding, a need was identified to support individuals who had suffered material losses to their homes or were temporarily sheltered in evacuation centers or staying with relatives or community contacts. In response, the distribution of blankets was planned as part of the non-food items (NFI) component under the Shelter sector.

A total of 1,000 blankets were procured, with the aim of providing two per household, in line with minimum humanitarian standards and the needs identified. However, the distribution process faced significant logistical constraints, primarily related to limited physical access to affected communities due to damaged road infrastructure and the lack of safe intermediate distribution points.

By the time logistical operations could resume, a large number of the initially displaced families had already returned to their homes, resulting in a shift in the needs profile. In response to this change in context, the National Society updated its needs mapping through a focused verification process to identify groups still requiring this support. As a result, 500 blankets were distributed to 250 families, reaching approximately 1,250 people.

The remaining 500 blankets were strategically stored in the National Society's central warehouse, ensuring their availability for future emergencies under the IFRC-DREF rapid response mechanism.

Lessons Learnt

- The dynamic adaptation of distribution strategies in response to changes in the operational context improves the relevance and efficiency of humanitarian assistance. The post-return update of needs allowed for prioritization of those still facing vulnerability, avoiding ineffective blanket distributions.
- Focused post-assessment verification processes are essential to maintaining the quality and targeting of interventions. The pre-distribution review of needs prevented duplication, minimized waste of supplies, and improved community perceptions of transparency.

Challenges

- Logistical constraints in transporting and distributing goods in areas with damaged infrastructure significantly affected the operational timeline. Impassable roads and the absence of safe alternative routes or distribution hubs delayed delivery.



Multi Purpose Cash

Budget: CHF 92,702

Targeted Persons: 2,500

Assisted Persons: 2,500

Targeted Male: 1,238

Targeted Female: 1,262

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of affected families that receive a cash transfer to address basic needs	500	500
% of satisfaction within targeted population	75	97

Narrative description of achievements

As part of its humanitarian response to the floods, the Red Cross Society of Panama designed and implemented an evidence-based Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) programme by conducting a feasibility study through a community census. This analysis enabled the identification of both the basic needs and the preferred payment modality of the affected population, determining that ATM withdrawal cards were the most accessible, secure, and culturally accepted option.

With the objective of strengthening and innovating CVA management, and with technical support from the IFRC, the National Society became the first in the region to implement the Yordex platform, which offered significant operational advantages in terms of activation,



fund management, and payment traceability. Through a single transfer, the programme reached 500 families (2,500 people) from selected communities in Los Santos, Panama, and Herrera, with a transfer amount of CHF 150 per family (approximately USD 200) to cover priority needs identified by each household.

The programme fully integrated Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) standards to ensure clarity in the selection criteria and timely information delivery to communities. Multiple feedback channels—a dedicated phone line, email address, and physical suggestion boxes—were activated to receive inquiries, complaints, and comments. Additionally, an informative leaflet was developed and distributed with clear instructions about the programme and available feedback mechanisms.

A training session was delivered to volunteers to standardize knowledge regarding CVA procedures, including selection criteria, complaints handling, and cash management safety protocols. During distribution, additional vulnerable families not captured in the initial census were identified and included in the programme following a community validation process led by local leaders.

While the implementation was successful, logistical delays were encountered at the start of the programme, due to the time required to receive the physical cards and open a national bank account, a key requirement from the provider. Nonetheless, the National Society maintained continuous and transparent communication with the selected recipients, regularly updating them on the status of the process.

To assess programme impact, a satisfaction survey was conducted with a representative sample of 10% of the total assisted population (2,500 people). 97% of respondents reported satisfaction, noting that the cash assistance allowed them to replace lost items (beds, clothing, utensils), purchase food and medicine, or cover other urgent expenses. The remaining 3% expressed partial satisfaction, indicating that while the assistance was helpful, it was insufficient to fully meet their needs.

To ensure dignity and accessibility during distributions, the National Society implemented logistical support measures such as providing snacks or lunch for those attending early sessions or traveling long distances, transport to withdrawal points, and sufficient time to make purchases before organized returns to their communities.

Lessons Learnt

- The adoption of modern digital platforms like Yordex improves efficiency, traceability, and control of the CVA programme, reducing administrative time and increasing financial transparency.
- Community validation of additional cases not included in the initial census enhanced programme equity and strengthened community trust, demonstrating the importance of maintaining flexible inclusion mechanisms during implementation.
- The use of printed materials and accessible feedback channels significantly supported beneficiary understanding of the programme, reduced potential tensions, and ensured clear communication with recipients.

Challenges

- Logistical delays in the delivery of cards and the opening of a national bank account with the new provider caused initial implementation setbacks. This highlighted the need to initiate contractual processes in parallel with the feasibility study to minimize delays.
- Physical access and mobility challenges for individuals in remote areas emphasized the importance of integrating complementary logistical components—such as food provision, transport, and waiting areas—into operational distribution plans in future CVA responses.



Budget: CHF 15,447
Targeted Persons: 1,000
Assisted Persons: 1,800
Targeted Male: 891
Targeted Female: 909

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
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# of people reached through health promotion campaigns in affected areas (including vector control issues and psychosocial support)	1,000	1,200
# of PSS kits delivered to children	350	350
# of PSS kits delivered to adults	150	150
# of people assisted in affected areas who receive first aid, psychosocial support and health promotion services within the first two weeks of the intervention	100	100

Narrative description of achievements

The Red Cross Society of Panama maintained active technical coordination with the Ministry of Health (MINSa) through periodic meetings to update the health situation analysis in the provinces of Los Santos, Panama, and Herrera. This collaboration allowed for alignment of interventions with emerging needs and the national health system priorities.

During the acute phase of the emergency, the National Society provided first aid services in affected communities and temporary shelters, delivering direct care to 100 individuals. This action enabled timely response to minor injuries, prevented complications, and reinforced the operational presence of the Red Cross on the ground.

Subsequently, a specific needs assessment in mental health and psychosocial support (PSS) was carried out, guiding the design and implementation of a tailored strategy for different age groups. Within this framework, 350 child-focused PSS kits were distributed—150 acquired through this IFRC-DREF and 200 remaining from DREF MDRPA017. The kits, composed of recreational and educational materials (e.g., coloring books, crayons, puzzles), reached 350 children from the most affected communities.

In parallel, 150 adult PSS kits were procured and distributed, including relaxation and recreational materials (e.g., coloring books, crayons, board games). Additionally, three group psychosocial support sessions were conducted, reaching 150 adults. These sessions were facilitated by trained volunteers and adapted to the emotional needs identified in the field.

Community validation of key health and PSS messages was also completed. The messages were subsequently printed and used during community outreach campaigns, ensuring cultural and contextual relevance. These materials supported awareness on self-care practices, vector control, and emotional well-being post-emergency. Through these campaigns, approximately 1,200 people were reached directly—exceeding the initial target due to emerging needs identified during implementation.

As part of institutional strengthening efforts, technical refresher sessions were held for volunteers on community health topics, with an emphasis on vector control and psychological first aid, reaching a total of 100 participants. Additionally, first aid kits were distributed to four community committees that lacked them. These kits were drawn from the National Society pre-positioned stock, with replenishment managed through the IFRC Regional Logistics Unit (RLU).

Lessons Learnt

- The age-differentiated approach to psychosocial support enabled a more relevant and effective response by tailoring both content and delivery methods to the specific emotional needs of children and adults.
- Community validation of health and psychosocial support (PSS) messages increased the acceptance and ownership of health promotion activities, strengthening their educational impact and reducing cultural or comprehension barriers.
- The timely provision of first aid and the technical refresher training for volunteers enhanced local operational capacity, improving immediate response and contributing to community resilience.

Challenges

- Difficulties in systematically addressing mental health needs across all affected communities due to limited resources for a broader intervention and the geographic dispersion of the prioritized population.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Budget: CHF 44,829



Targeted Persons: 1,500

Assisted Persons: 1,500

Targeted Male: 743

Targeted Female: 757

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people reached through family hygiene kits (1 per family; 5 people per family)	1,500	1,500
# of people reached through cleaning kits (1 per family, 5 people per family)	1,500	1,500
# of jerrycans distributed (2 per family)	600	600

Narrative description of achievements

The Red Cross Society of Panama conducted a comprehensive, multisectoral WASH technical assessment in the areas affected and prioritized under this IFRC-DREF operation (Los Santos, Panama, and Herrera), including temporary shelters. The objective was to accurately identify the most urgent needs, enabling a clear prioritization of interventions and ensuring that all actions were relevant, high-quality, and evidence-based.

Based on the findings of the assessment, 300 family hygiene kits were distributed, reaching approximately 1,500 people. Of these, 100 kits were financed through the IFRC-DREF, while the remaining 200 were funded by another donor. To optimize the use of available resources, the distribution was supplemented with remaining items from the 2,000 hygiene kits procured under the MDRPA018 operation. These included soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes, deodorant, sanitary pads, and toilet paper, ensuring a comprehensive response to the identified hygiene needs.

The response was further reinforced by the distribution of 300 cleaning kits (containing broom, mop, bleach, detergent, among others), specifically designed for urban dwellings or structures made of durable materials. Drawing from lessons learned in past emergencies, these kits were not distributed to homes made of mud construction, where their use had proven ineffective. This intervention reached 300 families, or approximately 1,500 people.

To improve access to safe water, 600 jerrycans (10L capacity, two per family) were distributed, reached an estimated 3,000 people. In addition, bottled water was provided to 250 families (around 1,250 people) in the communities of Veraguas and Los Santos, where potable water systems had collapsed. The emergency had resulted in the loss of submersible pumps and the structural failure of water storage facilities. In response, 5,000-liter reserve water tanks were installed in the communities of Cerro Tijera (Veraguas) and El Cacao (Los Santos), including the replacement of the submersible pumps. These measures not only addressed the immediate emergency needs but also significantly strengthened local water infrastructure and community resilience to future climate-related events.

During the distribution activities, educational sessions were held to promote proper hygiene practices, safe use of the distributed items, and correct water handling. The sessions emphasized the prevention of waterborne diseases and safe storage techniques, contributing to longer-term community health outcomes.

In direct response to a request from the community, the National Society also coordinated and carried out a community clean-up campaign in Tonosí (Los Santos province), reinforcing community engagement and strengthening trust between the population and the National Society.

Lessons Learnt

- The implementation of a multisectoral WASH assessment prior to the response allowed the interventions to be contextualized, targeted, and aligned with the actual needs of the affected communities. This approach prevented the inappropriate distribution of supplies—such as cleaning kits to homes made of mud construction—thus optimizing resources and increasing community acceptance. This experience underscores the importance of institutionalizing rapid technical assessments at the initial phase of any emergency response, as a foundation for more accurate and evidence-based decision-making.
- The installation of 5,000-liter water tanks with pumps in communities lacking functional water systems addressed an urgent need while significantly enhancing local capacity to cope with future supply disruptions. Although part of an emergency response, this type of



structural intervention produces sustainable impacts and should be strategically considered in future operations—especially in areas with recurrent emergencies or high vulnerability to climate risks.

Challenges

• While reserve tanks were successfully installed in two high-priority communities, other equally affected areas could not be covered due to budgetary constraints and pre-existing infrastructure limitations. This challenge highlights the need to integrate an assessment of existing capacity during the initial evaluation phase and to consider scalable or modular water storage solutions that can be rapidly deployed during emergency operations affecting multiple communities.

Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 4,080
Targeted Persons: 100
Assisted Persons: 100
Targeted Male: 57
Targeted Female: 43

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers trained in PGI	100	100

Narrative description of achievements

As part of its comprehensive response to the floods in Panama, the Red Cross Society of Panama systematically incorporated Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) criteria from the initial stage of the needs assessment. The Minimum Standards for PGI in Emergencies were applied as a cross-cutting framework to guide risk analysis, prioritize vulnerable groups, and tailor interventions according to the specific characteristics of each community.

A technical child protection risk assessment was carried out in particular, considering the levels of exposure and interaction of children and adolescents during distribution activities, community engagement sessions, and use of communal spaces. This allowed for the anticipation and mitigation of risks related to neglect, exclusion, or exposure to harm, and ensured that intervention protocols were adapted to the social and cultural dynamics of the targeted areas.

In addition, three in-person training sessions were conducted for volunteers and operational staff, focusing on the Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy. These sessions included case studies and scenario-based exercises to strengthen understanding and practical application of the policy in emergency contexts. The training reached 100 individuals, promoting a culture of integrity, accountability, and ethical vigilance throughout the operation.

Based on field observations and in line with a people-centered approach, a child-friendly space was established in the community of Tijera, providing a safe, structured, and appropriate environment for children during operational activities. Additionally, specific activities were carried out for adults—particularly female caregivers—with the objective of promoting their inclusion in distribution dynamics and facilitating the delivery of key messages on health, hygiene, and self-care, using culturally mediated and participatory methods.

Lessons Learnt

• Incorporating specific protection analysis tools from the onset of the operation enabled the identification of at-risk groups and allowed the implementation strategy to be adapted accordingly, preventing unintended harm and promoting dignity.

• The practical training sessions raised operational awareness and encouraged adherence to the policy, reducing the risk of misconduct and enhancing community trust in the humanitarian response led by the Red Cross Society of Panama.



Challenges

- Although the PGI approach was successfully integrated, it became evident that additional technical PGI profiles were needed from the outset to guide the contextualization of actions and provide more systematic support to the operational team.
- The establishment of child-friendly spaces required improvised logistical adaptations due to the lack of suitable infrastructure, which in turn limited the scale of this activity. This highlights the need to pre-position standardized kits and minimum guidance to enable the rapid setup of such spaces in future responses.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 6,009

Targeted Persons: 100

Assisted Persons: 100

Targeted Male: 57

Targeted Female: 43

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# staff and volunteers who have been trained on CEA and Code of Conduct	100	100
% of community members, including vulnerable and at-risk groups, who know how to give feedback on the operation	50	85
# of community meetings and outreaches to share and discuss evaluation results with communities	5	5

Narrative description of achievements

As part of its response to the floods that affected various regions of the country, the Red Cross Society of Panama implemented a structured Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approach from the outset of the operation, recognizing the central role of communities in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance.

A rapid community context analysis was carried out to understand local governance structures, existing capacities, power dynamics, and key socio-cultural behaviors and values. This process facilitated the identification of affected and vulnerable groups, while also generating valuable inputs to adapt communication strategies and operational implementation. As part of this effort, five meetings were held with local authorities and community representatives, reinforcing strategic alliances essential for operational acceptance and coordination in the targeted areas.

Based on the analysis, the existing community feedback channels managed by the National Society—such as WhatsApp, email, and QR codes—were reinforced and promoted, prioritizing those most frequently used by the affected population. These tools enabled communities to share their concerns, suggestions, and experiences directly, thereby improving the adaptability and responsiveness of the operation.

In parallel, an internal capacity-building process on CEA was launched through five training sessions for volunteers and active staff involved in the response. These sessions emphasized the cross-cutting nature of the CEA approach and its practical application in emergency operations, with a particular focus on cash and voucher assistance (CVA) programs. A total of 100 people were trained, strengthening their competencies to implement a more transparent, participatory, and people-centered intervention.

During the distribution phase, a perception survey was conducted with a representative sample of 10% of the total assisted population (2,500 people) to assess understanding of the selection criteria, methods of assistance delivery, and awareness of available feedback mechanisms. A total of 85% of respondents reported clearly understanding the established channels, with WhatsApp being the most recognized—exceeding initial expectations due to sustained outreach conducted before and during distributions. Meanwhile, 13% were aware they could provide feedback but did not know how, and 2% reported being entirely unaware of these mechanisms. These findings informed adjustments to key messages, redesign of outreach materials, and strengthening of two-way communication with communities.



Lessons Learnt

- The rapid analysis of the socio-community context should be a core component of the initial phase of any operation. This tool enabled the early identification of exclusion dynamics, trust structures, and preferred communication channels, facilitating a more adapted and legitimate response.
- Feedback channels must be diversified and tailored to the technological and cultural capacities of the communities. The combination of WhatsApp, email, and QR codes functioned complementarily; however, the results also highlighted the need to strengthen direct, in-person guidance on how to access and use these tools.
- Integrating the CEA approach into the design of the CVA program enhances transparency and improves community perceptions of fairness. Training operational staff on how to explain selection criteria and collect feedback increased community trust, reduced misunderstandings, and reinforced the community-centered nature of the response.

Challenges

- The persistent gap in operational knowledge of the feedback mechanism was evidenced by 15% of surveyed individuals who, although included in the distribution activities, did not fully understand how to access or use the available channels. This highlighted the need to strengthen community communication strategies that are more inclusive and culturally adapted, particularly in contexts where digital access or literacy levels may limit effective participation.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 5,429

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Targeted Male: 0

Targeted Female: 0

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of CVA rapid response personnel deployed for 2 months	1	1

Narrative description of achievements

As part of the technical support strategy embedded in this IFRC-DREF operation, the deployment of a Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) officer through the IFRC SURGE mechanism played a pivotal role in strengthening the operational and institutional capacities of the Red Cross Society of Panama. The officer's deployment lasted for two months and provided targeted technical guidance to support the design and launch of a CVA programme aligned with the operational context and the evolving needs of the affected population.

During the deployment, the CVA officer led a comprehensive feasibility study that assessed the logistical, economic, and security conditions in the intervention area. This study provided the necessary technical evidence to validate the appropriateness and viability of cash as a modality for assistance delivery. In parallel, the officer designed a detailed distribution work plan, which, despite delays caused by the vendor late delivery of distribution cards and the officer demobilization, was successfully handed over and implemented under the leadership of the operation's field coordinator.

Complementing this technical accompaniment, a monitoring field visit was conducted by the IFRC Central America Country Cluster Delegation. The mission involved the Disaster Risk Management Coordinator, the Senior PMER Officer, the Health Assistant, and the CEA Officer. This multidisciplinary visit served to support the National Society operational team and facilitated a strategic reflection on both enabling factors and bottlenecks encountered during implementation. The mission also contributed to identifying practical alternatives to ensure quality, relevance, and accountability in the final stages of the response.

Lessons Learnt

- The early arrival of the CVA officer enabled the National Society to adopt a well-informed, evidence-based approach to cash programming, while building internal capacity in CVA design, planning, and implementation.



- The multidisciplinary visit by IFRC technical staff promoted cross-functional dialogue, allowed for real-time problem-solving, and helped align implementation strategies with institutional standards and community feedback.

Challenges

- No challenges identified.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 46,675

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

Targeted Male: 57

Targeted Female: 43

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers with visibility kits	100	100
# of staff hired for the operation	3	3

Narrative description of achievements

The Red Cross Society of Panama made significant progress in strengthening its institutional and operational capacities through strategic measures aimed at enhancing safety, technical coordination, and the visibility of its humanitarian action.

As part of its volunteer protection approach, the National Society procured and distributed visibility kits (caps and t-shirts with the emblem) for the 100 volunteers and active personnel involved in operational activities. This provision, alongside the supply of food and hydration items, helped ensure minimum standards of well-being and safety in the field, while also facilitating the identification of personnel by communities and authorities—particularly in politically or socially sensitive contexts.

To reinforce technical implementation capacity, three key positions were contracted: a Field Coordinator, a Finance Specialist, and a Logistics Specialist. These profiles played a pivotal role in the coordination and execution of the operation. Their involvement improved the supply chain, ensured sound budget implementation, and enabled effective inter-institutional coordination with local authorities—guaranteeing efficiency, traceability, and transparency throughout the distribution process. Notably, due to the delayed hiring at the start of the operation, the salaries for the additional month of the no-cost extension were covered using the existing budget.

To further enhance institutional visibility during distributions and prevent misinterpretation of activities, additional materials were produced with the National Society's emblem (e.g., stickers for kits and information on feedback mechanisms).

Within the framework of operational safety culture, the planning and delivery of a field security workshop was completed for all 100 volunteers and technical personnel. This initiative aimed to provide practical tools for risk management in the field, in alignment with Movement standards. Although delays were encountered in procuring personal protective equipment (PPE)—such as rubber boots—due to slow supplier quotation processes, active measures were taken to address and resolve these issues.

Finally, a lessons learned workshop was held at the close of the operation, which enabled the identification of key elements to replicate in future responses, as well as areas for improvement and consolidation. The event also served to recognize institutional strengthening achievements by the National Society, particularly in relation to its auxiliary role to public authorities and its growing operational capacity in emergency contexts.

Lessons Learnt

- The incorporation of specialized personnel in field operations, finance, and logistics strengthened internal processes, improved external coordination, and ensured the technical and financial compliance of the operation.
- The proper use of the emblem and basic identification gear reinforced the perception of neutrality and legitimacy of the actions,



particularly in sensitive contexts.

- Lessons learned workshops not only generate operational feedback but also strengthen institutional cohesion. These spaces help identify good practices, reinforce volunteer engagement and ownership, and highlight progress in the auxiliary role of the National Society.

Challenges

- Delays in the procurement processes for personal protective equipment (PPE) by external suppliers partially impacted the timeline for equipping volunteers. This highlighted the need to strengthen predefined quotation mechanisms and maintain validated supplier lists.



Financial Report

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRPA020 - Panama - Flood

Operating Timeframe: 12 nov 2024 to 31 mar 2025

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2024/11-2025/6	Operation	MDRPA020
Budget Timeframe	2024/11-2025/3	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 24/Jul/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	249.979
DREF Response Pillar	249.979
Expenditure	-220.750
Closing Balance	29.229

II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items	7.233	83	7.150
PO02 - Livelihoods			0
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash	87.653	92.702	-5.049
PO04 - Health	19.253	15.447	3.806
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	41.435	44.829	-3.394
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	6.000	4.080	1.920
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	15.257	5.497	9.760
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	11.600	6.009	5.591
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	188.432	168.647	19.785
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	15.500	5.429	10.071
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	46.047	46.675	-628
Enabling Approaches Total	61.547	52.103	9.443
Grand Total	249.979	220.750	29.229

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

Please explain variances (if any)

A total of CHF 249,979 was allocated from the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) for the implementation of this operation. By the end of the operation, total expenditures amounted to CHF 220,750. The unspent balance of CHF 29,229 will be returned to the DREF.

The main variations between the planned budget and actual expenditures were primarily due to efficiencies achieved in the procurement processes. Local sourcing of supplies, combined with centralized procurement through IFRC's Regional Logistics Unit (RLU), enabled optimization of timelines, ensured quality standards, and significantly reduced projected costs without compromising the quality or scope of the planned interventions. Additionally, strategic adjustments to certain materials and activities allowed for a more efficient use



of available resources. Moreover, the joint implementation of the monitoring visit by the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for Central America resulted in additional logistical savings.

Ultimately, 500 blankets were not distributed during the operation due to logistical delays related to access constraints and the evolving needs on the ground. These items have been properly stored in suitable conditions at the National Society Central Warehouse and are available for exclusive use in future operations under the IFRC-DREF mechanism, in accordance with established stock management and rapid response procedures.



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[Click here for reference](#)

