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Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) Mongolia: Severe Winter

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency Appeal n° MDRMN006	Glide n° CW-2017-000001
Date of issue: 10 February 2017	
Operation manager: Gwendolyn Pang Head of IFRC Country Cluster Support Team in Beijing	Point of contact: Bolormaa Nordov, Secretary General of Mongolian Red Cross Society
Operation start date: 2 January 2017	Expected timeframe: 10 months (to 2 November 2017)
Operation budget: CHF 655,512	DREF allocation: CHF 177,349
Total number of people affected: 157,000 ¹ people	Number of people to be assisted: 11,264 people (2,740 families)
Host National Society presence (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) has 33 mid-level and 703 primary level branches working in all provinces of Mongolia, it has 7,000 volunteers and 128,827 members including 75,000 junior and youth members. MRCS has six established regional disaster preparedness centres with 240 emergency response team members.	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation: The National Society works with International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in this operation as well as current Partner National Societies: Australian Red Cross, British Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross Society, Finnish Red Cross, and the Republic of Korea National Red Cross.	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), local governments, USAID, UN and its agencies, World Vision International, Save the Children, Caritas Czech, People in Need, G-Mobile, World Animal Protection Organization.	

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

Dzud (Mongolian term for a severe winter), which is a slow onset winter condition has now been affecting some 157,000 people (37,000 herder households) across 17 out of 21 provinces in Mongolia. A drought during the summer of 2016 has depleted herders' reserves of hay and fodder in the eastern and northern parts of the country putting at risk millions of livestock which are the only source of food, transport and income for almost half of the Mongolian population. Multipurpose unconditional cash grants to support life-saving basic needs, emergency agricultural inputs and first aid kits have been identified as priority needs by the Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other humanitarian actors.

On 20 December 2016 following the verbal request on 15 December 2016, the Deputy Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government of Mongolia requested humanitarian actors to provide assistance to the dzud affected herders in Mongolia. Afterwards, the government sent official letters to the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) and other humanitarian actors in country to request international assistance for the most vulnerable herder households who are experiencing extreme winter conditions.



Mongolian Red Cross Society assessment team visited Dzud affected herder's household in Selenge province, Jan, 2017.
Photo: MRCS

¹UNOCHA's Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (10 - 16 January 2017)

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has established a task force (from January to May) to coordinate the humanitarian actors' response to the harsh winter conditions. MRCS is one of the members of this task force amongst the humanitarian actors together with UN Mongolia.

The dzud of 2015-2016 was particularly harsh and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in support of MRCS launched an operation to support the affected communities. Currently, 127 soums (townships) in 17 aimags (provinces) and two Ulaanbaatar districts, which is around 35 per cent of the total number of soums² in country, are starting to experience hardship. The weather forecast predicts that temperatures in some areas could fall to between -40 and -50 degrees Celsius in early February. Continuous snowfall throughout January and expected snowfall in coming February and March will certainly exacerbate the adverse situation in which thousands of migrating herders can find themselves in weeks to come. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) estimates that it is 82 per cent prepared in terms of hay and fodder at aimag³ level, but they also estimate that the preparedness level in soums is less than 70 per cent due to the budgetary constraints at the local level.

Shortage of pasture leads to livestock loss and in some areas, as of 18 January, NEMA has reported already 25,831 livestock loss. Given the developing situation this figure is expected to grow exponentially in the coming months when a long harsh spring takes over the extremely cold winter. In spring time when animals give birth to young off springs and when the livestock is already exhausted throughout the winter, they are in high risk of death without adequate feed, shelter and veterinarian care which does not exist in remote areas of country.

Approximately 16,000 households (HHs) (ten per cent of total number of HH with livestock) with some seven (7) million livestock has to move to new pasture lands within their or neighbouring provinces that will create further pressure on the scarce local resources of grass, hay and fodder; this is locally named *otor*⁴ as households carry scaled down versions of traditional ger during *otor* for a simple transportation. Livestock is being affected by animal diseases and as a result, those areas are quarantined, prohibiting animals to move from those locations. Hay and fodder are widely available at the local markets, brought from other parts of Mongolia, but many vulnerable herders lack cash to buy it to salvage their livestock.

There are approximately 2,500 pregnant women, 26,000 children and 8,000 elderly people who are living in winter pastures and they are the most vulnerable groups that will be targeted to receive support⁵.

According to forecasts from the Mongolian Information and Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment, the heavy snowfalls and snowstorms are expected to continue through March. Average temperatures below -20-30 degrees Celsius during daytime and below -35 degrees during the night are still expected in the coming weeks. In the northern part of Mongolia, Uvs is one of the provinces targeted within this plan of action, that will experience temperatures of below -40 degrees Celsius and daytime temperatures below -35 degrees Celsius.

In December and January sharp and short increases of daytime temperatures formed a layer of hard ice which covers pastures in many areas which make it difficult for animals to scratch down to the grass. This leads to mild to severe injuries to livestock, deteriorating health and eventually leading to death in spring. The livestock death toll tends to increase significantly during spring months.

Last year in mid-winter, dzud disaster was slowly developing and the lowest temperatures were reported in January. However, the death toll of the livestock was very low, equal to 118,400 deaths. The livestock health started to weaken and the death toll was raised to 1,039,900 as of April and further increased to 1,236,700 in June. Therefore, in addition to extreme winter, long and harsh spring is the season when higher deaths of livestock are registered. The table below shows the livestock death toll of 2016 by months.

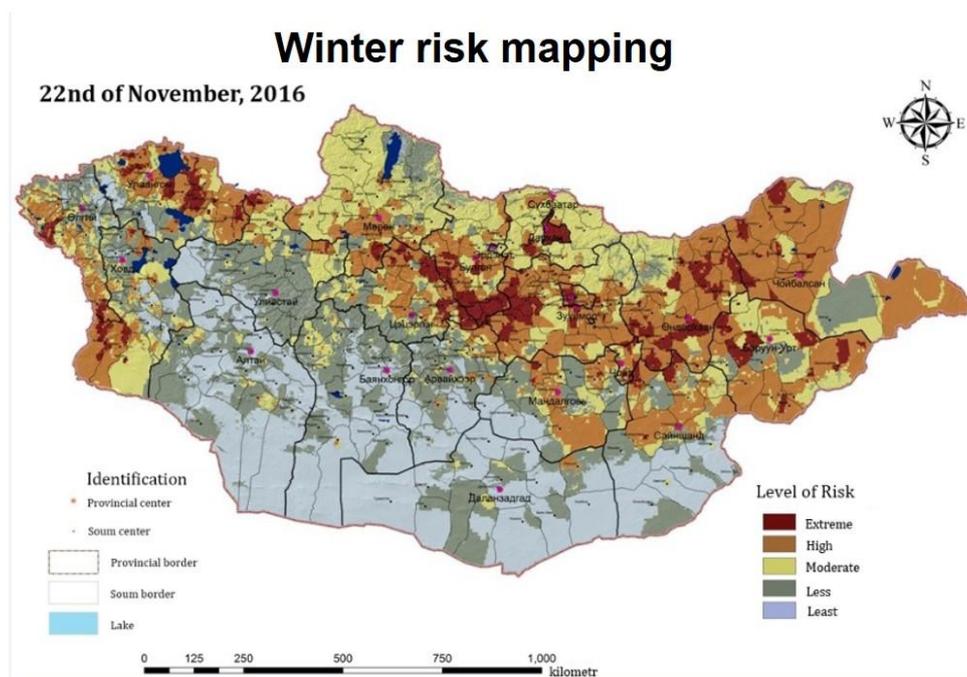
Month	Livestock death	Livestock death
January	118,400	25,000
February	391,900	n/a
March	830,500	n/a
April	1,039,900	n/a
May	1,167,600	n/a
June	1,236,700	n/a

² Soum is the second level administrative subdivision below the aimag (province). The smallest administrative unit is bagh.

³ Aimag is the official term for province in Mongolia.

⁴ Traditional mobility strategy developed by *Mongolian* herders to cope with their highly variable and uncertain environment

⁵ NEMA presentation on official figures of current winter by 19 January 2017 at the Humanitarian Country Team Meeting.



Winterization risk mapping was developed by the Information and Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment based on temperature, snowfall, past summer situation and projections for winter (refer to map above).

Many families, in order to prepare for the current winter, had to sell huge numbers of livestock on the market. This has resulted in oversupply of meat in the market, and a steep decline in prices of meat and other animal products. While the price of meat, one of the main sources of income for herders, has declined to the floor level, herders are in acute need of cash to be able to meet their priority needs including, but not limited to, food, basic household items, agriculture products and health care services. Because of the lack of financial resources to buy hay and fodder, herders are at high risk to lose their livestock at accelerating rates soon. The prospect of losing their livestock drives them to put even more livestock on the already severely saturated market, putting further downward pressure on prices. This combination of negative forces is resulting into a vicious cycle of serious shortage of cash that is critically needed for immediate household basic priority needs.

The Mongolian government welcomes cash support to herders, but has also reported an extreme shortage of ambulance vehicles and medical equipment to meet the needs for emergency transportation, and because of heavy snowfall and road blockages it has become extremely difficult to provide ambulance services in the northern and central parts of the country in a timely manner to save lives.

On 19 January 2017, the Mongolian HCT (Humanitarian Country Team) meeting was organized by the Deputy Prime Minister. Participants discussed the findings of assessments that were conducted in several provinces. The Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia has announced the allocation of MNT 3.5 billion (CHF 5.1 million) towards anticipated dzud response (last year's allocation was CHF 2.5 million). The bulk of funds will be used to purchase hay and fodder from the state reserves, which will be donated to herders or sold at a discounted price, the rest will be utilized to maintain roads and support public healthcare systems.

Local response efforts are led by provincial emergency commissions. Among other tasks, they make lists of expectant mothers, children under five years of age, elderly people and persons with disabilities, and provide transportation for expectant mothers to go to medical clinics.

Summary of the current response

Overview of Host National Society

Under the newly approved Law on the Legal Status of the MRCS passed by the Mongolian Parliament in late 2015 and approved by the president of the country in January 2016, the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) is an auxiliary to the government in humanitarian matters with a distinct recognized role in disasters and emergencies.

The MRCS is a member of the National Emergency Commission and is actively involved in the planning and design of the national response to the emerging crisis. MRCS is selected as a humanitarian actor to be included in the NEMA⁶ internal working group assigned by the Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia working closely with NEMA, other relevant ministries and governmental organizations to coordinate overall response efforts in the country. MRCS's response is being planned in close cooperation with NEMA and other HCT members.

The ongoing DREF operation is providing emergency assistance to the most vulnerable groups of population to ensure that their immediate humanitarian needs are met through timely cash support ahead of the crisis. In coordination with NEMA and HCT, IFRC supported MRCS through the DREF operation in four provinces, assigned by NEMA: **Uvs, Zavkhan, Khuvsgul** and **Selenge**. This DREF funded response is now being extended in time and scale through the launching of this emergency appeal. USAID, through IFRC, has allocated USD 100,000 to respond to this crisis through regular country plan and budget. On the top of some 1,000 most vulnerable families assisted through the DREF operation, this appeal will support additional 1740 families in Uvs and Khovd province with the same timeframe, approaches and mechanisms as DREF operation. This emergency appeal is proposing to cover additional 1,740 most-affected herder households in seven provinces – Tuv, Uvurkhangai, Dornod, Khentii, Selenge, Orkhon and Darkhan. In total, 2,740 most affected vulnerable herder households of 10 provinces will be assisted through this Emergency Appeal (EA) excluding USAID.

Humanitarian organizations are working in a close coordination to avoid duplication of efforts.

MRCS is monitoring the situation closely through its network with 1,000 beneficiary households assisted through DREF and an additional 1,740 beneficiaries through the EA are now being registered to receive unconditional cash grants. This operation will be completed by the end of second week of March 2017. Cash will allow herders to purchase necessities such as flour and rice for cooking or hay and fodder for animals, fuel for transport and coal and firewood for heating. Based on the assessments and post distribution monitoring from last year's Emergency Appeal, local markets remain functional with all commodities, including animal feed, remaining widely available for selling. According to the beneficiary satisfaction survey of the 2016 emergency appeal, 89 per cent of the interviewees reported that the items they wanted to purchase was available on the local market.

The cash transfer programme will be implemented via Khan Bank, which is one of the biggest banks in Mongolia with more than 1,000 local branches and outlets throughout the country available at soum levels. Khan Bank is the only bank that has branches present in each soum in Mongolia. All cash transfer programmes of the humanitarian actors including the UN, Save the Children and People in Need, during the Dzud in 2016 were conducted through Khan Bank. MRCS has already signed an agreement with Khan bank for delivering the cash transfer programme in 2017. The contract is valid until 31 December 2017.

The MRCS National Disaster Response Team members (NDRT) have been activated to provide assistance to targeted communities. MRCS' response plan, modalities and mechanisms have been drafted with support of IFRC.

Assessments will be complemented by the Trilogy Emergence Relief Application (TERA) in cooperation with G-Mobile LLC. With the TERA, the mobile network subscribers can receive and send messages related to their needs to MRCS.

As MRCS and IFRC are concluding experiences from response to the Dzud last year, MRCS's capacity to respond has shown to be strengthened through development and adopting new response mechanisms such as cash-based interventions, building stronger partnerships and establishing strong ties with service providers, especially with Khan Bank of Mongolia.

Deteriorating winter conditions necessitate a scale-up of the ongoing DREF operation through an emergency appeal operation. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and recovery components have been integrated into the overall response operation. Small part of mobilized funds will also allow MRCS to replenish pre-positioned first-aid stocks already distributed to people affected by dzud. The MRCS has distributed 150 kitchen kits, 150 dignity kits, 40 food packages, 150 blankets, 150 mattresses, and 150 warm clothing products - in total 790 kits - in Khentii, Sukhbaatar and Dornod provinces.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) is the largest humanitarian organization in the country with a wide network of middle and primary level branches. The branches play a leading role in providing relief, health and welfare assistance to the most vulnerable groups in the Mongolian population. It aims to serve the most vulnerable through a volunteer-based network, providing key services to targeted populations while promoting the humanitarian values and volunteering. With 33 mid-level branches and 703 primary level branches working all over Mongolia, the MRCS network extends to communities nationwide.

⁶ National Emergency Management Agency

MRCS has a strong base of 310,000 supporters, 93,000 paying members, 2,400 special members, 7,000 volunteers, 75,000 children and youth members, and 605 member organizations. In addition, MRCS operates seven regional disaster preparedness centres across the country for relief kits and locally mobilized stocks storage at all provincial branches.

MRCS works in partnership with many government and non-government agencies. It works closely with a number of partner National Societies in various programmes, such as community-based disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction, relief and social care, community-based health and first aid, HIV prevention programmes and youth and organizational development. MRCS is currently implementing several disaster management programmes in partnership with the Australian, British and Finnish Red Cross Societies that focus on both household preparedness and risk reduction and institutional disaster response preparedness in both rural and urban contexts.

IFRC has a well-established country office in Mongolia. It comprises of a national programme coordinator, finance and administration manager and programme assistant, backed up technically and administratively by the country cluster support team (CCST) in Beijing. A regional disaster management and livelihoods coordinator is based in Beijing and is providing technical support to the operation. IFRC supports MRCS in the implementation of various projects such as National Society Development (NSD), Community Based DRR and Climate Change Adaption (CCA), which are funded by the Australian Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross Society and IFRC. In accordance with IFRC standard operation procedures (SOPs), the IFRC disaster and crises, prevention, response and recovery (DCPRR) team in the IFRC Asia Pacific regional office (APRO) coordinates the operation.

Movement coordination

Two information bulletins were published prior to the DREF operation. MRCS with IFRC support will produce beneficiary stories and cooperate with both local and international media to raise awareness among partners and the general public about the dzud situation in Mongolia. The Finnish Red Cross Field Communication Unit will be deployed to Mongolia in early February to produce a documentary video and stories in support of the operation's communication.

MRCS has established an operations coordination centre at its national headquarters to coordinate the response both internally and externally.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

NEMA is the main disaster response coordinator and responder in the country. The agency holds limited stocks of hay from the state reserves to be distributed based on government decision and priorities. NEMA also provides logistics support to government services (such as ambulances) and the police. It also supports the logistics of humanitarian organizations in the affected areas and the evacuation of severely affected herders from remote locations. As part of their response, Local Emergency Management Agencies (LEMAs) are responsible for clearing major roads and rescuing people in stranded vehicles.

State reserves provided herders with 2,410 tons of hay at no cost, 1,700 tons of fodder at 50 per cent discounted price. A total of 36 vehicles were provided to 19 provincial health centers to assist prompt delivery of services to citizens. Animal medicines and nutritional products were provided for some provinces at a cost of 41.8 million tugrug (19,800 CHF). Four vehicles were provided to provincial Emergency Management Departments and Food and Agriculture Departments in key areas for provision of public services.

The UN Population Fund has donated 2,465 dignity kits, worth 160 million MNT (78,000 CHF) as winter assistance to 17 provinces.

IFRC is an active member of the Mongolian Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and leads the shelter cluster. The HCT holds regular meetings to coordinate response actions planned by its members.

Humanitarian NGOs planning to provide relief assistance in areas where they operate such as People in Need and Caritas Czech in Khentii, Dornod and Sukhbaatar provinces, World Vision International through its local branches in Zavkhan, Khuvsgul and Selenge provinces and Save the Children in Arkhangai, Dornod, Zavkhan, Bayan-Ulgii provinces. The UN will provide relief assistance to 36 soums of 12 provinces. The UN Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) approved to release USD 1.1 Million for 3,500 dzud affected vulnerable herder households. CERF will cover survival needs of affected vulnerable herders including cash grants, fodder, hygiene kits, which will to be delivered in February.

Even though the humanitarian actors have provincial level duplications, the soums they are covering are void from duplication. Beneficiary lists are being shared among the actors and cross checking is being made. There are other actors not mentioned here that have not yet decided on their intervention areas.

The World Animal Protection Organization (WAPO) and IFRC have a global partnership and through this partnership WAPO has supported IFRC/MRCS to conduct technical assessments for livestock needs. WAPO plans to distribute some relief through MRCS' networks to support livestock at risk. WAPO and IFRC have worked together in the previous operations to improve livestock management in emergencies and are engaged in long-term training and resource mobilization for NS activities in livestock management.

MRCS, supported by IFRC, has started its relief work ahead of the government appeal and CERF, with the DREF operation. It is the first among humanitarian actors to provide aid to people severely affected by the consequences of the dzud. It will continue this assistance and scale up through the launching of this EPoA and emergency appeal.

Needs analysis, beneficiary selection, risk assessment and scenario planning

Needs Analysis

Immediate household needs

A number of assessments have been conducted by MRCS independently and jointly with the NEMA, the deputy prime minister, PNS and other humanitarian actors. MRCS has conducted the following ones:

- Livelihood and DRR assessment with British Red Cross in June 2016
- Dzud rapid assessment in Dornod, Khovd provinces in December 2016
- Cash feasibility study in Tuv province, December 2015
- Cash feasibility study in Dornod, Khovd provinces, December 2016
- Dzud rapid assessment in Khentii and Sukhbaatar provinces in January 2016
- Dzud assessment at Selenge province in January 2016
- Numerous post distribution monitoring reports from Emergency Appeal 2016
- Beneficiary satisfaction survey from Emergency Appeal 2016

The *Dzud and DRR Assessments* conducted by the British Red Cross in Mongolia in June 2016 and findings from the other assessments emphasized that priority short term needs include financial support, technology and equipment for efficient hay collection, first aid training and kit for most herder households and noted that improving household level disaster risk reduction and preparedness will contribute in the longer term.

MRCS's assessments have confirmed that vulnerable herder families experience chronic cash shortages to meet their immediate needs. Financial support as a priority method has also been supported by findings of the *Dzud and DRR Assessments* conducted by the British Red Cross in Mongolia in June 2016. 89 per cent of interviewees of the beneficiary satisfaction survey developed from the post distribution monitoring of the Emergency Appeal 2016 reported that they prefer cash over in-kind and other types of assistance as it helps them meet their diverse needs. This has been repeated again in stakeholder interviews that unconditional cash grant is a timely and the most appropriate assistance in times of dzud and economic crisis. Cash allows beneficiaries to prioritize their immediate needs to be addressed. Findings from the cash transfer programming (CTP) feasibility studies have shown that the average herder household spent approximately CHF 30 - 40 for their daily basic food needs for two months excluding meat consumption in consideration that meat will be obtained from their livestock. Vulnerable herder families have insufficient cash to be able to meet their immediate needs and mitigate rapidly approaching crisis. The unconditional cash support of MNT 245,000 (approximately CHF 102) per family enables targeted families to utilize it based on their priorities. The amount of the cash grant has been determined by the government and agreed by all member organizations of the Humanitarian Country Team in Mongolia and it is based on the minimum wage rate in Mongolia. It is agreed among and standardized for HCT responders during this operation.

Cash transfer programming's feasibility study conducted in December 2015 is still relevant and applicable. MRCS has finalized its framework agreement with Khan Bank as a service provider. Cooperation with Khan Bank was efficient and smooth for the past operation; partners do not anticipate any difficulties to work with the bank for the re-occurring dzud. MRCS's primary and mid-level branches have also enhanced their technical capacity and knowledge on cash transfer programming. The cash transfer service agreement with Khan Bank includes a provision ensuring that cash grants in this operation will not be seized in attempt to recover loans previously issued to herders.

As part of this operation, beneficiaries will collect their first aid kits along with a first-aid manual for families in bank outlets when they receive the cash grants. They will also be provided with a short orientation on how to use the kits, and given psychosocial support (PSS) if needed, by MRCS volunteers.

Another risk in dzud conditions is frostbites, lack of timely medical service during domestic emergencies and accidents. As MRCS has been disseminating the message to the affected herders on how to prevent and treat frostbites, such messages can be reinforced to beneficiaries when they receive the cash and first aid kits from the bank.

Health

The threat posed to herders by potential dzud will produce its negative impact on the psychological condition, especially, among on children. Most families send their school-aged children to boarding schools at soum centres to study. Based on the assessment carried out by the Save the Children in mid-December 2016, psychosocial first aid support (PSSFA) is needed for school children from the potential dzud affected families. Through the 2015-16 emergency appeal MRCS and IFRC have established a partnership with Save the Children to deliver the PSSFA to school children from affected households and supported school social workers to continue this work throughout the year. Current PSSFA technical capacity of MRCS, built previously with support from Save the Children (STC), will allow to resume this aspect of the operation without or with minimum technical support from STC.

First Aid kits are required for herder households to meet their basic health care needs in case of any injuries caused by handling their livestock in harsh winter, and it will also prevent any future health issues related to any untreated injuries with proper first aid care. Due to lack of medical health care, affected people to be reached often suffer a longer time until they receive ambulance service which is one of the main shortage in government public service in affected areas. The Government of Mongolia addressed this issue as one of the priority areas and provided 36 vehicles to 19 provincial health centers up to date. However, there is still a challenge in the soum level to provide timely ambulance services to the needs. A majority of the herder households do keep basic medicine such as painkillers, medicine for blood pressure and antibiotics for commonly known sicknesses knowing that ambulance service will take time to respond to calls. In addition, due to lack of knowledge on first aid kit contents and its utilisation is not commonly used and disseminated widely across the herders.

In the long term, the trained herders will lay the foundation of community based DRR herder groups to meet the needs in the community with support from the MRCS.

Livelihoods

Because of the continuous economic depression which hit Mongolia since 2014, the country has hundreds of thousands unemployed people who now are unable to support their rural families through regular cash remittances. The economic difficulties faced by Mongolia and the oversupply of meat in the market make it impossible for poor herders to generate enough income to self-sustain.

The only practical and well-known way that herders can use to ensure the survival of their livestock in dzud conditions is to build sufficient hay stock and winter shelter for livestock during the summer. Droughts during last year's summer and overgrazing have made it problematic for many poor herders to make adequate preparations.

Based on the previous dzud operation's experience and outcomes from consultations with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Labour, World Vision International and Asian Development Bank, there is a continuous need to address the main risk factors related to impacts of dzud to reduce future implications. This plan of action will address the issue related to support to herders to prepare adequate hay, fodder in sufficient quantities to overcome future extreme winter situation. As the grass harvesters provided during last year through the Emergency Appeal was reported to be three times more efficient than the traditional scythe, 300 grass harvesters will be provided to vulnerable herders to ease their collection of sufficient hay during summer. This will contribute to preserving the livelihood of vulnerable herder households and make them more resilient to possible dzud disasters in the future.

Community preparedness and disaster risk reduction

Based on the vulnerability and capacity assessment in 2013, and Dzud and DRR assessment by the British Red Cross in 2016, the various methods mitigating the effects of dzud conditions have been recommended. This includes the creation of herders associations to collect hay and provide the necessary agricultural tools and machinery. The practicality of such measures largely depends on geographical location as not all areas are suitable for hay production.

Construction of winter shelters is an effective but expensive way of protecting the animals and its practicality depends much on the availability of inexpensive local construction materials. The negative environmental impact of constructing animal shelters also has to be taken into consideration.

Reducing the number of animals by destocking was highly recommended by the livelihood experts from the Red Cross Movement but considering current operational capacity of the MRCS, and winter situation of dzud affected areas and condition of other herder households, this option will be implemented with high cost and will require much more human resources from the operation and local government. Considering current local market price of livestock and raw materials, the de-stocking would have similar input with CTP but with higher operation cost and human resources. Therefore, this is not considered in this appeal.

Longer-term DRR in terms of mitigating future dzuds include: Crop production (vegetable); Sustainable pasture management; Supporting the development of herder groups and cooperatives; Re-stocking. Re-stocking was done by the MRCS, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Save the Children as recovery following the dzud responses. But the

outcomes were uncertain. There were no significant outcomes from the re-stocking programmes done by MRCS and Save the Children. Ministry of Food and Agriculture had negative recommendation on their re-stocking programme due to its contribution towards the inactiveness of herders in preparation for future dzuds. Instead, recommendation was to give full ownership to herders through their own active involvement in preparation for extreme winters. This includes business support such as training, financial and business literacy, small scale production units start up grants, market integration and links. These, to a greater extent, would require a much longer duration operation, flexible funding and specialized technical capacity, which MRCS currently lacks.

As part of preparedness for dzud disaster, prepositioning of First Aid kits are necessary as it will fill the gap between government public service to meet the needs of herders who are migrating looking for better pasture lands.

Shelter

No shelter needs have been identified for this response. The targeted population comprise semi migrant people carrying smaller compact traditional gers with themselves and able to cope with hard winters. Therefore, no shelter activities are proposed in this operation.

Beneficiary Selection

MRCS, in coordination with Ministry of Social Welfare and its local branches have identified around 2,740 vulnerable herder households across ten targeted provinces as the most in need of assistance. Ministry of Social Welfare maintains good, reliable and accurate information concerning the poorest and most vulnerable herder households (poverty stricken families, families with disabled persons, single headed families or those with multi-children, elderly people living alone, households with those in ill health) within their responsibilities area. Those will be targeted with the Red Cross's assistance.

Beneficiary registration will be done by MRCS and will be facilitated by a network of local government social workers. MRCS will establish both local and national hotlines to collect information from stakeholders. The TERA platform will complement the beneficiary communication aspect of the operation if and when required.

Risk Assessment

Mongolia is a relatively calm and peaceful country and there are no significant security risks related to dzud operation.

Khan bank, as one of the largest financial institutions in Mongolia has a good network of outlets to serve the clientele and strong internal control mechanisms to prevent diversion of funds. Several arrests recently made by the Mongolian graft agency at the grass-root, local and national levels, with some officials holding ministerial posts, shall send a strong signal to all-levels of the government about the strong determination to curb the corruption.

MRCS/IFRC will be regularly monitoring the operation both remotely and through field visits, as well as conduct internal audits.

Cross Cutting Issues

When planning the emergency operation, gender issues have been taken into particular consideration to meet minimum standards. Mongolian culture and social structure have few special implications with regards to gender issues and any related concerns will be addressed during implementation of the appeal.

MRCS staff and volunteers will be instructed to give their special attention to cross cutting issues such as the needs of the women, elderly, marginalized groups, people with disabilities and children that will be taken into account for the selection of the most vulnerable beneficiaries.

MRCS/IFRC will be constantly monitoring the operation to ensure that these issues are properly addressed. As previously was not included in past emergency appeal operation, First Aid training will be taken into consideration during the recovery phase of the operation through awareness raising among the targeted beneficiaries and sharing First Aid skills in harsh winter situation.

MRCS volunteers and staff will be instructed to properly document any cases of domestic violence and refer these to the local authorities.

B. Operational strategy and plan

MRCS has established an operational coordination center at its headquarters. The MRCS coordination center is led by head of DM and supported by other departments.

This emergency plan of action has been developed by MRCS supported by IFRC in consultation with government and international responders.

MRCS/IFRC will strengthen the longer-term recovery component of the operation. This will be done through approaches aimed at assisting MRCS to reduce herders' vulnerability to future dzuds through optimized hay and fodder collection and preservation.

Through this operation, MRCS will further strengthen its capacity in disaster management, especially at the local and branch levels. MRCS staff and volunteers will receive refresher trainings in PSS. This operation will allow MRCS to learn and adopt long term economic development approaches in support of vulnerable herders.

MRCS/IFRC will further sensitize and train Red Cross staff and volunteers who are participating in the operation on the principles and rules of RCRC for Humanitarian Assistance, Code of Conduct, SHPERE standards and other relevant policies and guidelines.

Overall objective

The overall objective of the operation is to ensure that 2,740 vulnerable families (11,264 people) have been supported in an effective, efficient and appropriate way, ahead of a potential dzud disaster to reduce its devastating impact and mitigate negative consequences.

Proposed strategy

The operation consists of closely integrated sectors aiming to provide:

1. **Cash-transfer component** will include cash assistance to some 2,740 families (11,264 people) from the most vulnerable groups of herder community.
2. **Health:** Psychosocial support, in cooperation with Save the Children, will be provided to 2,000 children at boarding schools and living in school dormitories away from their herder parents. Basic First Aid kits along with its manuals will be provided to dzud affected 1,000 herder households. First Aid (FA) training will be provided to 600 regional herder representatives. Representatives will be providing basic FA training further to their representing communities with demonstrations so that training any herder will be able to grasp the importance of knowing FA and be able to deliver FA to whom needed. These communities in the future will form herders communities in disaster risk reduction to serve their areas with facilitation and guidance from the MRCS.
2. **Community preparedness and disaster risk reduction**, including preparedness against snow storms, high winds and extreme winter situation. Portable grass harvesters distributed to MRCS branches will be rented to herder teams for hay collection in exchange of some hay. The portable grass harvesters are the property of the mid-level branches. It will be rented out to beneficiaries and will be returned upon completion of usage. The grass harvester will then be rented again to another beneficiary herder. This process will allow the mid-level branches to reach multiple people with grass harvesters available. Also. MRCS beneficiaries will receive basic first aid training from the MRCS. 380 First Aid kits will be prepositioned at the MRCS warehouse.
3. **MRCS institutional preparedness and disaster response capacity.** The emergency operation will further strengthen the capacity of the MRCS by providing PSS and disaster response trainings for its branch volunteers.

Four key aspects have been factored into the strategy for this operation:

- **Movement-wide approach:** MRCS is responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the disaster response operation. IFRC is the primary operational partner of MRCS.
- **Cash transfers:** It has been determined that one of the best response approach is through unconditional cash grants to empower the affected herders, preserve their dignity and allow them to prioritize their diverse needs on their own. The Government of Mongolia approved this intervention and set up a cash grant value harmonised across all the humanitarian actors in country (UN agencies, NGOs, MRCS, etc.).
- **Integrated programming and resilience-building:** Cash grants will fulfil the needs of the affected people and thereby contribute to their resilience.
- **Lessons learned from the previous operation:** MRCS has gained valuable experience from the 2015-16 dzud operation, which was taken into consideration when planning this operation. In this operation, the local working groups comprising local authorities, LEMA, MRCS and members of the community will be set-up to ensure that only those who meet the selection criteria are assisted in an accountable and transparent manner.

Cash transfer component

MRCS gained strong experience in cash transfer programme during the past dzud operation of 2015-16 and a risk assessment based on previous dzud operations in 2010 has been carried out. Additionally, the operation will be closely monitored and supported by the IFRC. The recent cash transfer programme feasibility study conducted by the NDRT in late 2016 had same findings as it was done in late 2015 by IFRC CCST Beijing assessment team. In addition, from the findings of MRCS and British Red Cross joint assessment on Livelihoods and DRR Dzud it has been prioritized that Financial support for vulnerable households to be able to:

- a. Cover basic household needs such as food, clothing and boots, ger “winterization”
- b. Prepare adequately for next winter: fuel and transport costs for going on otor so livestock gains enough fat and strength to sustain the next winter, repair winter shelter, buy winter animal feed stocks (hay, fodder, desert plants and natran)
- c. Enable the repayment of formal and informal loan repayments including food bought on credit
- d. Cover educational fees, stationary and travel costs to school. Educational costs are particularly high for university students
- e. Health expenditure, as elderly people and people with chronic diseases, have reported not being able to seek medical attention or stopped buying medicines

Leaving CTP in unconditional terms gives the opportunity for affected herders to spend the cash grant in their most needed priorities as identified by Red Cross. The amount of the cash grant has been determined by the government and agreed by all member organizations of the Humanitarian Country Team in Mongolia and it is based on the minimum monthly wage rate (MNT 245,000 equal to USD 102) established in Mongolia for 2017. This also reflects the average amount spent on food by herder families It is agreed among and standardized for HCT responders during this operation. Some 2,740 herder households will be reached through Khan Bank cash transfers.

Operational support services

Human resources

MRCS has mobilized 47 local volunteers and 13 NDRTs in support of the operation. MRCS will recruit staff in support of the operation at both national HQ and branch levels. Five MRCS staff members at headquarters will support the operation.

The operation will mobilize a surge capacity delegate from one of the partner National Societies for a combined period of 3-5 months, depending on the operational needs, to oversee and provide technical support, specifically within aspects of planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER).

A regional disaster response team (RDRT) member will be deployed to support the cash transfer component of the operation in February 2017.

The IFRC country-cluster support team (CCST) in Beijing and AP regional office in Kuala Lumpur will provide a wide range of technical, administrative and logistical support to the operation.

Logistics and supply chain

Logistics activities aim to effectively manage the supply chain, including, procurement, fleet and transport to distribution sites in accordance with the operation’s requirements and aligned to IFRC’s logistics standards, processes and procedures. The transportation cost of the grass harvesters will be borne by MRCS, however, NEMA still supports in logistics of distributing FA kits and supplemental feed to dzud affected herder households through provision of manpower and trucks. Distribution of portable grass harvesters will be handled jointly by MRCS/IFRC, with MRCS mid-level branches in coordination role.

Procurement of first aid kits and grass harvesters will be done in Mongolia by MRCS with support from IFRC CCST in Beijing.

Information technologies (IT)

The cost of communication will be low and consist of mobile phone and mobile internet usage. Mobile cellular networks operate normally in the targeted areas. The MRCS’s 13 NDRT have portable radios and Iridium satellite phones as a backup emergency communication means.

Beneficiary communication

MRCS has an access to a two-way SMS communication with almost 600,000 G-mobile subscribers through TERA. TERA is free of charge for both the Red Cross and the G-Mobile subscribers who receive or send messages.

MRCS will also be using traditional beneficiary communication methods such as face-to-face communication, leaflets and bill boards.

Communications

With support from the regional communications unit in Kuala Lumpur, the MRCS's communications officers will support the development of stories, articles and documentary films. Partner National Societies will be provided with information on the response through Newswire operation updates. MRCS will also develop beneficiary stories, documentaries and articles to be published locally. The Finnish Red Cross Field Communication Unit will be deployed to Mongolia in early February to produce a documentary video and stories in support of the operation's communication. IFRC will collaborate with international media to cover MRCS and IFRC activities in the field.

Security

Security management is a vital element of the operation to ensure security of personnel, assets and programmes. The MRCS's operational coordination centre will ensure that volunteers and staff follow security rules when working in affected areas. MRCS will continuously monitor the security environment and respond to changes in the threat and risk situation, if any, by implementing adequate security risk reduction measures. This includes measures related to safety-related threats and risks, e.g. road traffic accidents, fire safety, and health and weather-related concerns. All MRCS personnel are encouraged to complete the respective IFRC Stay Safe courses; Stay Safe Personal Security, Stay Safe Security Management and Volunteer Stay Safe.

IFRC is a member of various inter-agency groups including the HCT and Mongolia International NGO forum, which allows monitoring any changes in the security situation. MRCS, with its wide network of branches and volunteers will be aware of any possible security threats and/or volatile situation.

Planning, monitoring, evaluation, & reporting (PMER)

NDRT members will continuously monitor the implementation of the emergency operation. MRCS with IFRC support had provided team members with refresher training on PMER in December 2016. MRCS headquarters will receive weekly updates from operating branches. Weekly/monthly update formats will be developed and introduced to responding branches.

Regular monthly updates on the operation will be developed and shared during the emergency phase. A special telephone line will be established at MRCS headquarters. The telephone number will be communicated to beneficiaries through TERA. All bagh⁷ leaders will be notified through TERA. The bagh leaders will then reach the beneficiary households without cellular network or cell phones through word of mouth. Similarly, messages to provide information on the distribution and cash disbursements, post distribution monitoring and a beneficiary satisfaction review will be conducted through TERA and through household visits. A beneficiary satisfaction survey will be carried out during the operation and a final evaluation will be carried shortly before the end of the operation. Reporting on the operation will be carried out in accordance with the IFRC minimum reporting standards. A final report will be available 90 days after the end of the operation.

Administration and Finance

MRCS has a well-established finance and administration team consisting of six specialists.

IFRC has a finance and administration manager based in Mongolia. IFRC teams at Asia Pacific regional office and CCST in Beijing have the capacity to provide a range of support services to the operations, including finance, administration and logistics. Technical support related to cash transfer programming will be provided by IFRC through RDRT and IFRC technical staff.

⁷ Smallest administrative primary level unit in Mongolia

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

Food security, nutrition and livelihoods

Needs analysis: Based on the NDRT assessments, herder families are in desperate need of cash. Because of the current market situation and also because of frequent snowstorms, vulnerable herders are food insecurity, lack of heating fuel to cope with freezing temperatures and a high risk of significant livestock losses. Vulnerable herders have very limited cash and with horses as their only means of transportation they are not able to reach nearest market to buy food, warm clothes, hay for their livestock or coal and firewood to heat their gers.

Population to be assisted: 2,740 families in 10 provinces will be assisted through provision unconditional cash grants.

Outcome 1 : Immediate food and other priority needs of the targeted families are met.												
Output 1.1 : Target population of 2,740 households in 10 provinces are provided with unconditional cash transfers for meeting priority needs												
Activities planned	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Remark
Identification of soums in 10 provinces across the country		■										
Beneficiary registration and cash form preparation		■	■	■								
Distribution of unconditional cash grants (MNT 245,000/ CHF 100) through bank transfer			■									
Post distribution monitoring and reporting				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	

Health

Needs analysis: Based on the assessment carried out by the Save the Children in mid-January 2017, the psychosocial first aid support (PSS/FA) is needed for school children who are from the dzud affected families.

Population to be assisted: Approximately 2,000 school-going children will be supported with PSS/FA through partnership with Save the Children. In addition, 1,000 herder households will receive first aid kits and three regional herders trainings for 600 regional herder representatives.

Outcome 2: The immediate and medium-term risks to the health of affected populations are reduced.												
Output 2.1: Provision of First Aid kits to affected herder households.												
Activities planned	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Remark
Identification of soums in 4 provinces across the country		■										In cooperation with local governments
Beneficiary selection and registration		■	■									
Orientation and mobilization of volunteers at soum levels for FA training for herders			■	■								
Local procurement of first aid kits			■	■								To be carried out centrally in Ulaanbaatar

Quality programming / Areas common to all sectors

Outcome 4: Continuous and detailed assessment and analysis is used to inform the design and implementation of the operation												
Output 4.1: Needs assessments are conducted and response plans updated according to findings												
Activities planned	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Remark
Mobilize MRCS staff and volunteers for assessments		■										in four targeted provinces
Mobilize/deploy regional tools to support MRCS in conducting assessments and implementation of activities		■										
Develop detailed response plans with activities that will meet identified beneficiary needs		■										
CTP component's implementation		■	■	■	■	■						
Continued information collection from local branches		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Monitoring visits by joint teams of MRCS headquarters and IFRC			■					■			■	
Beneficiary satisfaction survey					■						■	
Internal final evaluation												1-2 months after completion of activities

Budget

EMERGENCY APPEAL

10/02/2017

MDRMN006 Mongolia : Severe Winter

Budget Group	Appeal Budget CHF
Medical & First Aid	57,500
Cash Disbursements	279,708
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	354,333
Other Machinery & Equipment	52,500
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	52,500
Distribution & Monitoring	18,670
Transport & Vehicle Costs	10,700
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	29,370
International Staff	44,000
National Staff	14,271
National Society Staff	28,250
Volunteers	5,686
Total PERSONNEL	92,207
Workshops & Training	44,250
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	44,250
Travel	8,500
Information & Public Relations	7,000
Office Costs	4,750
Communications	4,832
Financial Charges	1,303
Shared Office and Services Costs	16,459
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	42,844
Programme and Services Support Recovery	40,008
Total INDIRECT COSTS	40,008
NET EMERGENCY APPEAL NEEDS	655,512

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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

- Peter Ophoff, head of PMER; email: peter.ophoff@ifrc.org



Click here

1. Emergency Appeal budget **above**
2. Click **here** to return to the title page

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. 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.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote social inclusion
and a culture of
non-violence and peace.

ANNEX 1: ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS TABLE

ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS	LIST IF SPECIFIC AFFECTED SECTORS OR STATE 'ALL'	Likelihood	Impact	CAN CONTROL; MITIGATE / INFLUENCE; OR ONLY FACTOR-IN
<p>1. Misunderstanding on beneficiary selection among herders in affected areas: Internal migrants may have impact on the beneficiary selection process at soum level and influence local social care workers and local emergency management agency staff with their requests for humanitarian assistance.</p>		L	L	<p>MRCS's beneficiary selection criteria for affected people will create mutual understanding of who are the Red Cross beneficiaries in the affected areas.</p>
<p>2. Red Cross visibility and cooperation with local authorities: Low visibility and lack of understanding about red cross and its operation can be misunderstood by local authorities as majority of them are newly elected and may take actions might hamper the operation.</p>		M	M	<p>Increased visibility and awareness raising on Mongolian Red Cross Society and its relief efforts to assist affected herder people will reduce any miscommunication within local authorities and communities. Therefore, well planned public engagement activities will prevent any misunderstanding to rise.</p>
<p>Access to herder families is significantly complicated.</p>		M	L	<p>Heavy snowfall and snowstorms block roads in the affected areas and limit access to vulnerable herders. Logistics support from LEMA and utilization of local trucks and drivers will increase access to herder families. Local drivers know the roads better than drivers from the city and LEMA will clear roads if snow is preventing the transportation of relief goods.</p>