

Final Report

Mongolia/East Asia: Sandstorm

DREF operation	Operation n° MDRMN014
Date of Issue: 30/09/2021	Glide number: ST-2021-000024-MNG
Operation start date: 19/03/2021	Operation end date: 30/06/2021
Host National Society: Mongolian Red Cross Society	Operation budget: CHF 335,835
Number of people affected: 1,536 households or 8,124 people	Number of people assisted: 4,218 people (1,116 men, 805 boys and 1,358 women, 939 girls)
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: The Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) is supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the IFRC country delegation in Mongolia	
Other partner organisations actively involved in the operation: National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Local government units (LGU), Social welfare offices, Local Emergency Management Agency (LEMA), Bank service.	

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster



Herders rescue their livestock buried in sand.(Photo: Dundgovi Red Cross)

A violent gust of wind swept across the country from 14 to 15 March 2021, where the wind speed reached 18-34 m/s (meter per second) in Uvurkhangai, Bulgan, and Umnugovi provinces, while the wind speed was at 22-40 m/s in Dundgovi province. The wind speed also reached 16-28 m/s in Govi-Altai, Bayankhongor, Arkhangai, Tuv, Khentii, Dornod, Sukhbaatar, and Dornogovi. Even though the warnings had been disseminated two days before the event by the National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring, many travelling and herding their livestock went missing. According to Government resolution no.286 of 2015, if wind speed reaches 18 m/s, it is considered a disaster, while if the wind speed exceeds 24 m/s, it is regarded as a catastrophic phenomenon.

Due to the wind, 590 people from 46 soum¹ of Arkhangai, Bulgan, Bayankhongor, Govi-Altai, Govisumber, Dundgovi, Uvurkhangai, Umnugovi, Zavkhan, Uvs, Tuv, Khuvsgul, and Khovd provinces

went missing on the night of 14 March. Following that, 519 people out of 590 were found, as stated by National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). By 1:00 PM on 15 March, 69 out of the missing 81 people were found, and efforts were made to find the remaining 12 people. Unfortunately, as stated by NEMA, ten people out of 12 missing were found killed by the wind. There was one casualty in Arkhangai province while the others were from Dundgovi province. Two people were later found and rescued in Sukhbaatar province.

As of 10:00 AM on 16 March, estimated damage and loss included ten casualties (one minor and nine adults), 1.6 million missing livestock, 69 severely damaged buildings including office buildings and houses, 587 fences, and 92 destroyed gers². The Deputy Prime Minister himself has expressed his condolences to the families who lost their members to the

¹ An administrative unit of Mongolia, below province.

² A traditional yurt or ger is a portable, round tent covered with skins or felt and used as a dwelling by several distinct nomadic groups in the steppes of Central Asia.

wind. He gave the provincial emergency commissions the task of protecting herders going on *otor*³ from potential violent wind and expressed his regret about such a tragic loss of lives, even when the prevention measures were disseminated.

The storm also damaged major infrastructures such as electricity poles and sub-stations. Due to the event, at 11:20 PM on 13 March, the 216th pillar of the C-458 overhead line, which supplies electricity from Russia to the western regions, collapsed and left Bayan-Ulgii, Uvs, Khovd provinces without electricity. A temporary supply connection was established at the hydropower plant in Khovd province to provide electricity to the mentioned provinces. The Western region's power transmission network staff tried to restore the pillar and fixed it by 15 March. Also, there was a temporary disruption to the 207th overhead line that supplied electricity to eastern provinces, including Khentii, Sukhbaatar, Dornogovi, Govisumber, which was repaired on 15 March.

Summary of response

Overview of Host National Society

The Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) is the largest humanitarian organization in Mongolia, with 34 midlevel branches across the country and over 100,000 volunteers. It's legally bound to serve the people of Mongolia by "Law on the Legal Status of the Mongolian Red Cross Society", and it bears an auxiliary role to the government to provide support in disaster risk management and other sectors. The service MRCS has to offer is mentioned in the revised version of "Disaster Protection Law". The MRCS is a member of the National Emergency Commission and is actively involved in the planning and designing of the national response to the emerging crisis. The MRCS has been providing humanitarian assistance to anticipate and respond to the needs of vulnerable communities for 80 years and has operated numerous dzud, flash flood operations, including DREF, Emergency Appeals, and Forecast based Action (FbA). It has rich experience in anticipating and responding to disasters. The MRCS offers a wide range of intervention types: cash-based intervention, livestock nutrition items, food and essential items, and psychosocial support.

Ever since the forecast was received from the meteorological agency, MRCS has been disseminating preventive information through its media channels and branches across the country. Branch disaster response teams in Dundgovi and Govi-Altai, Bayankhongor provinces gathered and worked on the site to collect timely information. The Red Cross branch managers in Arkhangai, Bulgan, Bayankhongor, Govi-Altai, Govisumber, Dundgovi, Uvurkhantai, Umnugovi, Zavkhan, Uvs, Tuv, Khuvsgul, Sukhbaatar, and Dornod provinces attended provincial emergency commission meetings.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

Through its Country Cluster Delegation for East Asia and Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur, the IFRC supported coordination of disaster response efforts of its secretariat in assisting the MRCS. The IFRC and its programmes and coordination office in Mongolia supported MRCS in implementing activities through technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation, and any required logistical and administrative support.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

Due to the event, the government passed an order to provincial emergency commissions to establish a database of herders as they are most vulnerable to natural hazards like severe storms.

Needs analysis and scenario planning



Completely destroyed ger in Dundgovi. (Photo: Dundgovi Red Cross)

A needs assessment was conducted by the relevant provincial emergency management agency teams and Red Cross branch disaster response teams via on-site visits on 15 and 16 March, and phone calls were made during the storm. The assessments indicated the priority need was shelter and HHI (household items) as families had lost their homes. Families mentioned the preference for cash assistance as the modality for families to repair or rebuild their gers (traditional houses) and other types of houses.

Households who had their gers and houses severely and partially destroyed were in great need to repair their house damage and replace the essential household items lost in the storm. According to the needs assessment, the roofs of the houses were usually ripped off by storms, which could be repaired with cash assistance. At the same time, the essential household assets could be bought as the local market system is functioning. As stated by the needs assessment, unconditional

cash assessment could be the optimal intervention modality to address the various needs of the households who had their houses and gers partially damaged. In the assessment, the unconditional multipurpose cash assistance was encouraged by the representatives of the affected population and relevant local authorities, including the local emergency management agency and the governor's office. Those who completely lost their houses were in desperate need of accommodation and basic needs such as food and essential household items. The immediate needs

³ Process where herders travel to different locations for better pasture for their herd.

of the households who lost their homes completely were met by providing gers, kitchen sets, mattresses, and blankets. Gers, kitchen sets, mattresses and blankets were procured and allocated as in-kind assistance to the affected population.

Risk Analysis

Since March to May were spring months when weather was unreliable as another storm could hit the country. By extensive collaboration with the Meteorology office, MRCS carefully monitored news on other storms that could affect the operation. Despite surging COVID-19 cases in Mongolia that reached over 100 locally transmitted cases per day, there was no regulation regarding the COVID-19 outbreak that interfered with operation activities, including procurement, transportation, and allocation of the items.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Proposed strategy

Operation strategy focused on the relief phase to meet the immediate needs of the disaster affected people. As identified in the joint needs assessment conducted by local emergency management and the Red Cross branch, the affected populations could be divided into two groups. The first group (150 households) lost their homes completely, while the second group (850 households) had severe damage to their homes and assets.

According to the observation and analysis from the needs assessment and feedback from the affected population, the groups who had their homes destroyed were left with nothing and stayed at relatives or neighbours' places. There was no known or planned accommodation by the government to provide for the affected population.

No	Province	# of households who received ger and NFI	# of households who received cash assistance
1	Uvurkhangai	15	50
2	Uvs	2	100
3	Tuv	15	100
4	Govi-Altai	10	100
5	Dundgovi	60	200
6	Dornod	10	50
7	Bayankhongor	10	100
8	Arkhangai	1	20
9	Bulgan	15	20
10	Dornogovi	-	20
11	Orkhon	-	20
12	Selenge	-	20
13	Khovd	-	20
14	Darkhan-Uul	-	30
15	Zavkhan	3	-
16	Ulaanbaatar	9	-
	Total	150	850

Relief distribution table

Province	Adult men	Adult women	Boys	Girls	0-6 Months	6 months- age of 5	5-17 age	18-59 age	60 and older
Uvurkhangai	73	88	53	61	25	34	56	129	32
Uvs	113	137	83	96	36	54	89	200	50
Tuv	128	156	93	108	40	60	101	228	57
Govi-Altai	122	150	89	103	38	58	96	217	54
Dundgovi	290	354	209	243	90	136	226	515	129
Dornod	67	82	48	56	21	31	53	119	30
Bayankhongor	123	150	88	103	38	57	96	218	55
Arkhangai	24	29	17	20	7	11	19	42	10
Bulgan	39	48	28	33	12	18	30	69	17
Dornogovi	22	27	16	19	7	9	12	38	12
Orkhon	22	27	16	19	9	11	17	42	8
Selenge	22	27	16	19	5	10	22	44	6
Khovd	22	27	16	19	7	9	17	36	14
Darkhan-Uul	34	41	24	28	10	16	26	60	15
Zavkhan	3	4	2	3	2	2	2	6	1
Ulaanbaatar	10	12	7	8	4	5	8	18	4
Total	1,114	1,359	805	938	351	521	870	1,980	494
Total asissted	4,216 people				4,216 people				

Sex, age and disability disaggregated data (SADD) table.

MRCS identified the needs of the households who had their homes destroyed. The most essential and timely necessity was accommodation, and MRCS concluded to provide gers to those who lost their homes completely (one ger per one family).

Essential household items, including kitchen sets (see detailed items list), mattresses and blankets, were greatly needed as the households who lost their homes were left with nothing but the clothes on their backs. MRCS provided the mentioned essential household items to meet their immediate needs through in-kind modality. The “In-kind modality” was through local procurement undertaken by the NS, with technical support and approval from CCD Beijing and IFRC’s



New gers are ready for distribution to the affected community. (Photo: Govi-Altai Red Cross)

Global Humanitarian Services and Supply Chain Management (GHS&SCM) Asia Pacific unit in Kuala Lumpur. The local procurement was especially relevant to the purchase of gers, which had a procurement value of more than CHF50,000 as per the previous budget allocated for this operation. It must be noted that unconditional multipurpose cash assistance was assigned to the households to recover their damages. Those who lost their gers could not buy them with the cash grant as the local market for gers was highly limited and usually transported from the city capital. Thus, MRCS procured the gers from Ulaanbaatar and transported them to the provinces. On the other hand, those who had their houses and gers damaged could repair the damage and replace the lost items with unconditional multipurpose cash grants as stated in the needs assessment.

The households whose homes were partially and severely damaged lost essential household items and food stored in the houses were also destroyed. Based on the feedback by the affected communities and analysis of the needs assessment team, unconditional multipurpose cash assistance could meet the various needs. These needs included repairing the house and purchasing food items since the markets functioned normally and common items could be bought locally. The cash transfer was made electronically through Khan bank, which has sufficient branches across the country. The Khan Bank is the contracted financial service provider that annually signs a contract with MRCS. Khan Bank has branches in rural areas, unlike other banks, which make the cash transfer feasible.

Each kitchen set includes:

- Cooking pot (7-litre capacity, stainless steel), one piece; cooking pot (5-litre capacity, stainless steel), one piece; frying pan (2.5-litre capacity), one piece
- Bowl (stainless steel, 1-litre capacity), five pieces
- Plate (stainless steel, 0.75-litre capacity), five pieces
- Teacup (stainless steel, 0.3-litre capacity), five pieces; spoon (stainless steel) 5 pieces
- Fork (stainless steel) 5 pieces
- Table knife (stainless steel) 5 pieces
- Kitchen knife (stainless steel) 1 piece
- Kitchen spoon (stainless steel, 35 ml) 1 piece
- Kitchen dipper (stainless steel, 100 ml) 1 piece
- Wooden spatula 1 piece
- Scouring pad (metal) 1 piece

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

	<p>Shelter People reached: 150 households / 625 people Male: 269 (174 male adults and 95 boys) Female: 356 (232 female adults and 124 girls)</p>		
Indicators:	Target	Actual	
Number of households supported with shelter and essential household items to meet their immediate needs. (Target: 150 households / 600 people)	150 households / 600 people	150 households / 625 people	
Narrative description of achievements			

Up to 150 households received gers and the required essential household items, including kitchen sets, blankets, and mattresses, to meet their immediate needs identified in the needs assessment. A total of 120 beneficiaries were engaged in the monitoring surveys via mobile and in-person visits to monitor the successful implementation of the program. The beneficiaries had their gers destroyed by the storm and stayed at relatives' homes and dormitories, potentially threatening their safety and dignity. With the allocation of gers, they could carry on their everyday life routines and recover from the damage. Since they were all ger-dwellers, it was analysed that they would adapt without further problems. A total of 34 beneficiaries who received gers were engaged in the survey, and 99% of the beneficiary stated that the ger met their immediate and essential needs at the time, and 1% noted that they could cook in clean conditions.

The "in-kind modality" was through local procurement undertaken by the NS, with technical support and approval from CCD Beijing and GHS&SCM-AP unit in Kuala Lumpur, especially on the purchase of the gers, which had a procurement value of more than CHF50,000 as per the previous budget allocated for this operation.

Challenges

Some families needed assistance in building the gers as it usually took two to three adults to bring up the ger. Red Cross branches identified those families and mobilized branch volunteers to help them erect the gers.

Lessons Learned

According to the surveys taken from the beneficiaries, most of the affected households are nomadic ger-dwellers. It's analysed that ger-dwellers are more prone to sandstorms, floods, and other natural disasters. Even though we should find a built-back-better solution from a shelter point of view, for the community members who are constantly on the move with their livestock throughout the year, it is not easy to replace traditional gers with a more permanent option. MRCS team will further study cost-effective ways to strengthen the resilience of gers.



Livelihoods and basic needs

People reached: 850 households / 3593 people

Male: 1,652 (942 male adults and 710 boys)

Female: 1,941 (1126 female adults and 815 girls)

Indicators:

	Target	Actual
Number of households have cash in hand to meet their immediate needs (Target: 850 households / 3,400 people)	850 households/ 3,400 people	850 households/ 3,593 people

Narrative description of achievements

The households with their homes and assets severely damaged were assisted with unconditional cash grants to meet their immediate needs. It was identified in the needs analysis that the affected households could repair and replace their damaged assets and homes. Most families who had their gers and houses damaged by the storm either had lost household assets or had their house or ger damaged, including roof, walls, fences etc. Since the market was operational, beneficiaries could purchase the needed tools and materials or assets themselves. Cash distribution was made electronically, and volunteers contacted recipients to get correct information when there was a mismatch. The volunteers were oriented in cash transfer programming, and common issues emerged in the cash transfer. A total of 120 beneficiaries were surveyed via mobile and in-person visits, and beneficiaries stated that food, fuel, livestock, hay and fodder, medicine, construction materials, fence materials were bought with the cash aid. It could be concluded that the cash assistance was able to cover various needs of the beneficiaries. Over 98% of the beneficiaries stated that the cash amount was sufficient to cover their needs.

Challenges

The beneficiaries had no specific suggestion or complaint about the cash transfer. The time-consuming mismatch process during the bank transfer has been a long-lasting issue with the operations. Currently, MRCS is studying potential and better mechanisms suggested by the cash feasibility study in 2021.

Lessons Learned

MRCS learned that the mismatched bank transfers problem since 2016 remained a challenge this year. Currently, MRCS is applying to a corporate gateway financial service which will allow the National Society to validate the data themselves. Mismatching seems to be unavoidable, but the service should save time used for exchanging emails and waiting. The MRCS IT officer is now developing a web receiver to receive and deliver data to the bank server. During the lessons learnt workshop, it was highlighted that hazard monitoring and the regional information-sharing mechanism should be strengthened.

Strengthen National Society

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# Of volunteers trained and involved in the operation.	130	130

Beneficiaries receive the aid within 6 weeks after the beginning of the operation.	Yes	Yes
4,000 people reached on humanitarian issues through the operation	4,000	4,218
# of lessons learned workshop conducted (Target: 1)	1	1
Narrative description of achievements		
<p>Overall, 130 volunteers were mobilised from respective midlevel branches and engaged in the operation. Volunteers carried out needs and damage assessment, beneficiary registration and validation, distribution, collecting feedback and complaints, and monitoring. The volunteers were all trained in refresher training and insured with international insurance. MRCS effectively ensured the Movement's visibility during the operation (including certificates with the aid and providing emblem and visibility session during the refresher training) and mobilised branch disaster response team volunteers in the aid distribution, data collection, and the other required tasks.</p> <p>The aid was delivered to the hands of the beneficiaries within six weeks after the operation start date, and the operation reached 4,218 people directly. The gers and NFIs were procured from HQ and transported to the local branches. Local branches coordinated distribution with local authorities, while Red Cross branches brought aid to the travelling nomad beneficiaries in person. Each person assisted received the certificate, which clearly explained and identified the aid contents and mechanism to deliver feedback and complaints. HHIs were boxed with IFRC and MRCS emblems which ensured visibility. When certain provinces organized their distributions, local authorities attended, including the governor of the province and other relevant local authorities, strengthening the acceptance and advocacy of the Red Cross at the local level.</p> <p>The lessons learnt workshop was organised from 21 to 23 July with the engagement of 23 midlevel branches. Twenty-three people included midlevel branch secretaries and two representatives from local authorities participated. Additionally, MRCS program staff and volunteers were engaged. The list of recommendations to improve further operations was developed and is currently being sent for review by the branch secretaries. The highlight of the recommendation includes the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a mechanism for regular monitoring of disasters, catastrophes and their risks depending on local and seasonal conditions. Develop a document that clearly defines the steps for regularly sharing risk information within the region and with the headquarters and use it for regular activities. 2. Be accustomed to using approved templates and forms to collect, compile, and analyze disaster and disaster data in a timely manner. 3. Intensify fundraising activities and develop regular plans to improve the branch's disaster response capacity and resources within the State, Red Cross, private sector, and public cooperation framework. 4. Long-term planning of activities is required to improve the warehouse management of the branches and study the possibility of raising the necessary resources. 		
Challenges		
<p>During the monitoring, it was identified that some beneficiaries did not know how to send their complaints and suggestions to MRCS, even though certificates containing the hotline number were allocated along with the aid.</p> <p>A total of 120 beneficiaries were engaged in the monitoring via mobile and in-person visits. Over 98% of the beneficiaries stated that cash assistance was sufficient, and there was a need for cash at the moment. Thus it could be concluded that cash was an appropriate type of intervention and successfully met the needs of the affected population. Cash distribution was made electronically, and volunteers contacted beneficiaries to get their correct information when there was a mismatch. The volunteers were oriented in cash transfer programming, and common issues emerged in the cash transfer.</p> <p>Time-consuming beneficiary data mismatching with the bank server data was problematic again. The topic was raised during the lessons learnt workshop, and branch secretaries were provided with the results from the cash feasibility assessment, which gave two options. The first one was to use a corporate gateway system to enable checking mismatches in the beneficiary data without bank involvement, reducing the time spent exchanging emails. The second would require legal changes, entrance to the state financial system and integration of financial procedures between Red Cross and State and thus identified as not actionable. The MRCS IT officer is currently building a web system, enabling the check of beneficiary data mismatch using the corporate gateway.</p>		
Lessons Learned		
<p>It was suggested that the community engagement and accountability sector needed improvement during the operation. Especially as the cash beneficiaries were unaware of the hotline mechanism. It was concluded that a more effective way to give the beneficiaries more accessibility to communicate needs should be sought. For example, airing the MRCS operation information on Malchin TV (the TV channel where rural dwellers and herders watch mostly) and advertise the hotline number.</p>		

D. Financial Report

Of the CHF 335,835 allocated by the DREF, CHF 331,287 was expended with a closing balance of CHF 4,548. The financial report is available at the end of this report.

The major donors and partners of the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as DG ECHO, Blizzard Entertainment, Mondelez International Foundation, Fortive Corporation and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the Mongolian Red Cross Society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

Contact information

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [DREF Operation EPoA](#)

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

In the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS)

- **Secretary General:** Bolormaa Nordov, bolormaa.n@redcross.mn, 976-99119353
- **Operational coordination:** Munguntuya Sharavnyambuu, Head of Climate and Disaster management department, Munguntuya.sh@redcross.mn, 976-99311909

In the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation (CCD) for East Asia

- **Gwendolyn Pang**, head of CCD; email: gwendolyn.pang@ifrc.org

In IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO)

- Alexander Matheou, regional director; email: alexander.matheou@ifrc.org
- Gwendolyn Pang, deputy regional director; email: gwendolyn.pang@ifrc.org
- Jessica Letch, acting Head of Disaster, Climate and Crisis Unit, email: jessical.letch@ifrc.org
- Alka Kapoor Sharma, head of Global Humanitarian Services and Supply Chain Management – Asia Pacific; email: alka.kapoorsharma@ifrc.org
- Yuki Masuda, operations coordinator; email: OpsCoord.EastAsia@ifrc.org
- Siokkun Jang, logistics manager, email: siokkun.jang@ifrc.org
- Antony Balmain, Communications Manager; email: antony.balmain@ifrc.org
- Fadzli Saari, PMER manager a.i.; email: fadzli.saari@ifrc.org

In IFRC Geneva

- Christina Duschl, senior officer, operations coordination; email: christina.duschl@ifrc.org
- Eszter Matyeka, senior officer, DREF; email: eszter.matyeka@ifrc.org
- Karla Morizzo, senior officer, DREF; email: karla.morizzo@ifrc.org

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.

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strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims: good, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.

1. Enable healthy and safe living.
2. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021	Operation	MDRMN014
Budget Timeframe	2021	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Prepared on 29/Sep/2021

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRMN014 - Mongolia - Sandstorm

Operating Timeframe: 19 Mar 2021 to 30 Jun 2021

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	335,835
DREF Allocations	335,835
Expenditure	-331,287
Closing Balance	4,548

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction	287,907		287,907
AOF2 - Shelter		213,401	-213,401
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs		74,702	-74,702
AOF4 - Health			0
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene			0
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion			0
AOF7 - Migration			0
Area of focus Total	287,907	288,103	-196
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	47,929	34,863	13,065
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management		859	-859
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners		7,461	-7,461
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC			0
Strategy for implementation Total	47,929	43,184	4,745
Grand Total	335,835	331,287	4,548

DREF Operation

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2021	Operation	MDRMN014
Budget Timeframe	2021	Budget	APPROVED

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

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MDRMN014 - Mongolia - Sandstorm

Operating Timeframe: 19 Mar 2021 to 30 Jun 2021

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	263,250	270,519	-7,269
Shelter - Relief	175,000	180,103	-5,103
Utensils & Tools	20,250	20,274	-24
Cash Disbursement	68,000	70,143	-2,143
Logistics, Transport & Storage	15,000	8,164	6,836
Distribution & Monitoring	15,000	8,164	6,836
Personnel	5,795	2,757	3,038
National Staff	3,000		3,000
Volunteers	2,795	2,757	38
Workshops & Training	7,500	7,005	495
Workshops & Training	7,500	7,005	495
General Expenditure	23,793	22,621	1,173
Information & Public Relations	2,000	2,058	-58
Communications	3,500	3,392	108
Financial Charges	85		85
Other General Expenses	18,208	17,170	1,038
Indirect Costs	20,497	20,219	278
Programme & Services Support Recover	20,497	20,219	278
Grand Total	335,835	331,287	4,549