

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## INDIA: FLOODS

21 April 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

### In Brief

**Appeal No. 16/2004; Operations Update no. 08; Period covered: 23 November 2004 to 31 March 2005; Appeal coverage: 67.7%;** ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

**Appeal/Request for Assistance history:** Launched on 27 July 2004 for CHF 2,982,000 (USD 2,352,706 or EUR 1,929,189) for 10 months to assist 250,000 beneficiaries which reduced to 200,000 beneficiaries due to lower coverage of the Appeal/Request for Assistance. *The operational period of the Appeal/Request for Assistance is hereby extended for 3 months, until 31 August 2005.*

**Outstanding needs :** CHF 963,887 (USD 760,477 or EUR 623,582)

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:** [India Annual Appeal 01.57/2004](#)

#### Operational Summary:

Following initial delays in distribution of relief items in Bihar and Assam, most of the food and non-food family packs and plastic sheeting have reached the targeted population. As reported earlier, the delays brought about a change in the vulnerability status of the affected population, which caused a revision of the original number of beneficiaries in Assam from 20,000 to 10,000 families. The emergency relief phase of the operation is therefore concluded.

As a result of the needs of the health clinics in Bihar being met through locally mobilized resources and the cancellation of the deployment of the mobile medical units in Assam, the health, hygiene and water sanitation component of the original request for assistance has been removed.

The second phase of the operation, involving disaster mitigation project objectives, has been initiated. It includes building of one flood platform with tube wells and latrines in Assam, as well as 30 raised tube wells in Bihar. However this is not progressing according to schedule. In order to complete this project, a three-month extension of the operation is deemed necessary.

Soon after the beginning of the operation, a participatory action learning (PAL) study was initiated by the Indian Red Cross and the Federation, with support of a number of partner national societies. The study was completed in December 2004. It contains an assessment of the effectiveness of earlier disaster preparedness and mitigation programmes in the affected region. In addition, it provides a set of recommendations for the improvement of local capacities for effective response in disasters.

By the end of the reporting period, around CHF 2,000,000 has been generated through this request for assistance (for details refer to the attached list of contributions). Further funding is sought for the replenishment of DP stocks used in Assam and Bihar.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

## Background

In July 2004, heavy monsoon rains caused extensive flooding in the northeastern states of Assam and Bihar in India. Over 30 million people were affected and infrastructure heavily damaged. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assessment indicated that 60 per cent of crops were destroyed equaling an area of 1.5 million hectares.

On 27 July, the IRCS and the Federation launched a request for assistance, seeking to help some 250,000 beneficiaries with food and non-food relief items. The operation includes a disaster mitigation component, aiming at improving local capacities to cope with this recurring disaster. In the course of the operation, the number was revised down to 200,000 people, due to revisited needs in Assam, following initial delays in the distribution of relief items and subsequent stabilization of the situation in that state.

With the distributions completed, the IRCS and the Federation are now focusing on the construction of a flood platform in Assam and additional tube-wells in Bihar.

## Operational developments

The relief distribution has been completed, as indicated in the table below :

Type of assistance	Target in Bihar (9 districts)	Distribution in Bihar	Target Assam (12 districts)	Distribution to date Assam
Non-food family packs	30,000	30,000	10,000	7,350*
Food family packs	30,000	30,000	n/a	n/a
Shelter	30,000	30,000	10,000	7,350 *

\* The remaining 2,650 have been kept as a DP stock at the Assam state branch.

As outlined in the previous updates, there was no need to utilize funds budgeted for the procurement of medical supplies for health clinics in Bihar. The state branch mobilized local resources, raised enough funds and received in-kind donations to meet these requirements. This involved the Bihar state branch raising CHF 171,485 in cash and mobilizing medicines worth CHF 75,000 from medical associations and pharmacies.

Furthermore, considerable delays in the deployment of six mobile medical units in Assam had forced the IRCS to reconsider their relevance at a later stage. Thanks to an improved health situation, this activity was cancelled altogether. Over 300,000 people received some form of health assistance from the various Red Cross district branches.

As a result of the needs of the clinics in Bihar being met through locally mobilized resources and the cancellation of the deployment of the mobile medical units in Assam, the health, hygiene and water sanitation component of the original request for assistance has been removed.

With the available funding, the Indian Red Cross has met the emergency needs of 37,350 families.

The national headquarters of the IRCS continues to liaise with state branches on all issues related to the operation, with focus shifting to the planning of the mitigation activities. However, the delays experienced to date in this phase means an extension of three months is necessary.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

**Operational Goal: to meet the urgent needs of the 40,000<sup>1</sup> worst affected families in Assam and Bihar for food, shelter, family packs and medical services, to ensure improved quality of water over a period of four months and to prepare to meet the longer-term needs through necessary capacity building and disaster mitigation initiatives over a further period of six months after the emergency phase.**

### Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items)

**Objective: 30,000 flood-affected families to receive supplementary food items and non-food family packs in Bihar over a period of one and a half months. A total of 10,000 flood-affected families to receive non-food family kits in Assam over a period of one and a half months and providing 40,000 flood-affected families with shelter material during the emergency phase. This would benefit approximately 200,000 persons in the 18 most affected districts of Assam and the nine most affected districts of Bihar.**

*This objective is a combination of the emergency relief objectives as originally outlined in the request for assistance and operations updates 1 – 5.*

### **Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)**

#### **Shelter for 40,000 families in states of Bihar (30,000) and Assam (10,000)**

A total of 37,250 families have received plastic sheeting. In Bihar, the distribution was completed. In Assam 7,350 sheets (5m x 4m) have been distributed and 2,650 are being maintained as disaster preparedness stock for further disaster response.

#### **Food and non-food items to be distributed in Bihar**

The distribution of 30,000 non-food and 30,000 food family packs has been completed in Bihar. The food pack consists of 20 kg of beaten rice, 5 kg of pulses and 2 kg of jaggery (sugar cane product). The non-food pack contains a kitchen set (20 pieces), a bucket, a dhoti (men's clothing), a saree (women's clothing), a cotton blanket, a towel, a bed sheet, two mosquito nets (single bed), six candles, two match boxes and two high-density polythene (HDPE) bag for packing.

#### **Non-food items to be distributed in Assam**

Due to a marked improvement in the situation in Assam (due in part to the passage of time due to delays in distribution), the number of beneficiaries was revised down to 10,000 families instead of the previously planned 20,000. Some district branches found it difficult to revise the beneficiary lists and exclude some families from them. Consequently, towards the end of the distribution, 2,650 family packs were not collected by the district/*taluka* branches. These are being maintained at the branch in Assam as disaster preparedness stock. The table below shows the distribution breakdown for Assam:

<i>Name of district</i>	<i>Date of distribution</i>	<i>Number of packs distributed</i>
Kamrup	27/09/04	100
	01/10/04	100
	27/10/04	250
	06/12/04	200
Dhubri	13/10/04	400
	27-31/10/04	400

<sup>1</sup> Reduced from 50,000 due to the reduction of 10,000 families in the Assam distribution plan.

	27-31/10/04	200
Karimganj	06-07/10/04	500
Hailakandi	08/10/04	250
Barpeta	17-18/10/04	500
Nalbari	13-26/10/04	500
Goalpara	13-19/10/04	500
Lakhimpur	26/10/04	500
Darrang	12-13/10/04	500
Sivasagar	03/10/04	200
Dhemaji	13, 29, 30/10/04	700
Goalghat	04/10/04	350
Dibrugarh	27/10/04	300
Saraideo	30/10/04	200
Majuli	30/10/04	350
Nagaon	09-11/12/04	350
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,350</b>

The intention was to procure additional 10,000 non-food packs, which represent a difference between the original and revised target numbers, and use them as a disaster preparedness stock. However, insufficient funding has prevented the build-up of that stock.

The family packs distributed in Assam consist of: a kitchen set (20 pieces), a bucket, a dhoti (men's clothing), a saree (women's clothing), a cotton blanket, a towel, a bed sheet and two mosquito nets (single bed).

### **Impact**

The relief items distributed to the affected population correctly reflected their emergency needs.

### **Constraints**

Numerous delays in the earlier phases of the operation led to postponements of planned distributions. Efforts were made by the national society and the Federation to mitigate the effects of these delays; needs were closely monitored and target figures revised accordingly. In addition to external constraints (such as supply problems, truck driver strikes and security issues) there are internal capacity issues which need to be addressed. These are reflected in the findings and recommendations from the PAL exercise summarized later in this report.

Funding constraints have prevented the IRCS from building up a disaster preparedness stock of non-food family packs, and to fully replenish the regional disaster preparedness stock at Kolkata. So far, only 5,000 packs have been replenished.

### **Disaster mitigation and capacity building**

With the emergency phase of the operation over, work has begun on obtaining the necessary approvals from the local authorities to start up the mitigation projects. There have been initial operational delays and these objectives will not be able to be met within the original time frame (which was by the end of May). This has necessitated the extension of the operation by another three months to the end of August.

**Objective 1: One flood platform with five raised tube wells and five raised latrines to be constructed at a selected site in a flood-prone area of Assam over a period of six months after the emergency phase.**

### **Progress and achievements**

A flood platform will be constructed on a secure site above the flood water level with overhead shelter for humans and cattle, with five hand-tube wells and five toilet blocks. Land has been allotted on which the Assam state branch will construct the raised platform.

**Constraints**

A detailed proposal for the construction of the flood platform has yet to be submitted by the state branch to the national headquarters. This is being followed up.

**Objective 2: Thirty raised tube wells to be constructed in the most-affected districts of Bihar.****Progress and achievements**

The Bihar state branch has commenced identification of suitable sites for the construction of tube wells. Raised tube wells will be built on secure sites above the flood water level to provide safe drinking water for the community. A detailed proposal with a budget breakdown is awaiting approval of the IRCS headquarters.

**Impact**

It is expected that the raised tube wells will help provide safe drinking water during floods and benefit the community all year around as a source of clean drinking water.

**Constraints**

Due to change in leadership at the headquarters, the proposal submitted has gone through a lengthy endorsement process, and is still waiting for the final approval.

**Objective 3: Disaster response capacity of IRCS in flood-prone to be further improved through lessons learned and documentation.****Progress and Achievements**

Capacity building of the IRCS state branches of Assam and Bihar is addressed through the annual disaster management programme for India. Still, this operation is being used as a useful tool to establish strengths and weaknesses of ongoing capacity building activities, as well as opportunities for their improvement.

The PAL study was carried out with the aim to assess the impact of previous disaster preparedness activities on the coping and response capacity of the population, and to provide key recommendations for more effective programmes in the future. The key lessons learned can be summarized as follow:

- Investment in disaster response systems and procedures, dissemination and training lead to more efficient response;
- District branches have limited resources and require proper support and priority planning;
- Tangible community mitigation activities, such as the construction of raised platforms and tube wells, enhance community's coping skills and encourage their participation;
- Community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) projects require close follow-up in order to have long-term impact on the community;
- Integrated programmes (disaster management, health and organizational development) can increase capacity at all levels and guarantee better service delivery; and
- Coordination with the government, other agencies and local communities can increase disaster response capacities.

A series of specific recommendations were presented. Some of them are:

- Establish early warning systems in state branches;
- Refine disaster response mechanisms (beneficiary selection criteria, appropriate relief assistance, warehousing procedures, etc.);
- Develop a CBDP programme guide for branches;
- Seek further funding to strengthen the current CBDP programme in Assam;
- Initiate CBDP programmes in Bihar;
- Develop a comprehensive volunteer recruitment, management and training strategy; and
- Identify priorities for external cooperation, and improve communication and cooperation between the IRCS headquarters, state and district branches.

### **Impact**

The PAL study has helped to review the impact of investments made so far in the sphere of disaster preparedness and mitigation.

### **Constraints**

No constraints were noted.

### **Federation coordination**

The IRCS and the Federation's delegation continued to maintain close cooperation with other agencies involved in the floods operation in Assam and Bihar. At the sectoral meeting held on 16 February 2005, partner national societies were briefed on the progress of the relief distributions and plans for the implementation of the remaining components of the programme.

### **National society capacity building**

Throughout the operation, the Federation continued supporting the IRCS capacity building at national and state branch level. Existing local and national resources have been fully utilized, especially the National Disaster Response Team (NDRT), which was deployed for this operation, but also youth and volunteers at state level. The NDRT team leader was nominated by IRCS to facilitate the formation of NDRT in Sri Lanka, upon the request of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society.

As elaborated above, the participatory action learning exercise is expected to significantly contribute to the strengthening of local capacities for disaster preparedness and response in the future, building on experiences so far.

### **Communications and advocacy**

Efforts have continued to increase IRCS visibility at distribution sites, with targeted communities, and nationally through local media mobilization.

IRCS maintains active role in the SPHERE inter-agency cooperation in India.

**[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)**

# India - floods

ANNEX 1

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE No. 16/2004

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

26/04/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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### CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->	2,982,000					TOTAL COVERAGE 67.7%
AMERICAN - GOVT/USAID	150,000	USD	189,675	23.08.04		PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES, TRANSPORTATION
AUSTRIAN - RC	35,000	EUR	53,935	30.07.04		
BELGIAN - RC	220,000	EUR	339,020	03.09.04		NON-FOOD ITEMS (7000 FAMILY PACKS), FIELD ADMINISTRATION COSTS
BRITISH - RC	25,000	GBP	57,150	29.07.04		RELIEF NEEDS (75%), OPERATION NEEDS (25%)
BRITISH - RC	24,510	GBP	56,030	23.08.04		RELIEF NEEDS (75%), OPERATION NEEDS (25%)
CANADIAN - RC	25,000	CAD	23,450	03.08.04		
CANADIAN - GOVT/CIDA/IHA	250,000	CAD	234,500	03.08.04		
CHINA - HONG KONG RC BRANCH	132,376	HKD	21,418	30.07.04		PROCUREMENT OF FOOD ITEMS F/1500 FAMILIES FOR 1.5MONTHS
DANISH - GOVT	334,992	INR	9,313	28.10.04		
FINNISH - RC	200,000	EUR	305,800	10.08.04		
IRISH - RC	60,086	EUR	93,284	04.10.04		
IRISH - GOVT	75,000	EUR	114,675	28.07.04		
JAPANESE - RC	114,700	USD	145,035	06.08.04		
MONACO - RC	3,000	EUR	4,658	12.10.04		
PRIVATE DONORS			6,338	16.09.04		
PRIVATE DONORS			5,656	20.01.05		
SPANISH - RC	30,000	EUR	45,870	11.08.04		
SWEDISH GOVT/RC	1,000,000	SEK	167,500	28.07.04		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH			1,873,307	CHF		62.8%

### KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
DANISH - GOVT		5,205,256	INR	144,706	28.10.04	4'150 FAMILY PACKS, TRANSPORT/INSURANCE
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				144,706	CHF	4.9%

### ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	