



PREPAREDNESS FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

ENSURING THE SAFETY OF VOLUNTEERS: PREPAREDNESS FOR PROCUREMENT OF PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Spanish Red Cross

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Investing in disaster preparedness is worth it - both in terms of human lives saved and economic returns. In this story we learn how the Spanish Red Cross' preparedness in logistics ensured they were able to provide essential personal protective equipment for its volunteers during COVID-19 response.

We need protective equipment now!

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected Europe, including Spain. The rapid global spread of the pandemic led to an enormous increase in the need for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for both health workers and the general population as a means of containing infections. The limited global production of PPE was concentrated in a small number of countries (mainly China). The Spanish Red Cross, based on their preparedness to deal with emergencies, **opted for new solutions to increase the agility of the PPE supply chain, trying to minimize both the supply time and cost.**

PPE multi-channel supply strategy

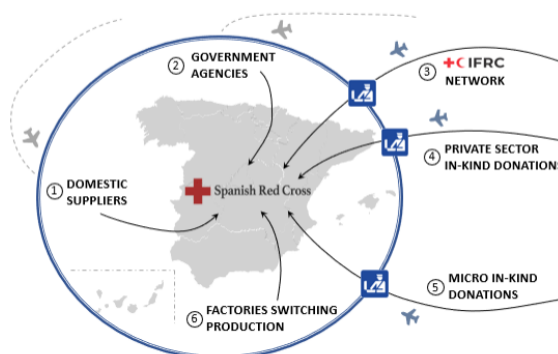
How has the Spanish Red Cross dealt with this situation? First, by **reaching out to the Red Cross Society of China for technical support** in obtaining a list of reliable suppliers and second, **by establishing collaboration with companies based in Spain that had previous knowledge, presence, a network of contacts and experience operating in China**, as well as a logistics system to transport material to Europe.

It is important to highlight that the Spanish RC preparedness mechanisms include pre-agreements with suppliers, government agencies, access to IFRC's mutual support network and agreements for in-kind donations with private companies (although until now never for PPE).

Following IFRC preparedness guidelines, the Spanish RC quickly updated and shared with donors and suppliers shipping goods from abroad, the document "shipping instructions" in order to provide guidance on the required documents necessary for importing these vital supplies.

It was a win-win partnership, maximizing the efficiency of the resources provided by each party, by combining the strength of the private sector in supply and logistics, together with the import tax exemption granted to the Spanish RC and the internal PPE distribution across the country. **This strategy undoubtedly contributed for a better response of the National Society to the pandemic at the most critical moments.**

MULTI-CHANNEL SUPPLY STRATEGY



PREPAREDNESS AREA & COMPONENT RELATED

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT



Logistics, Procurement and Supply Chain

KEY STATS



PPE supply for more than 48,000 volunteers, ensuring the business continuity of essential programmes and intensifying their activities with people most at risk.



An average of **one million pieces of PPE per month** managed by the headquarter between March and May 2020.

Keys to success



- **Excellent relations** with national, regional and local authorities have greatly influenced the success of the response.
- **Coordination and centralisation of procurement** within a National Society is essential for the regular supply of PPE to its branches.
- **Establishing pre-agreements** with different national/local government agencies facilitated the supply process during the response to the pandemic.
- **Accountability** towards donors, volunteers, staff and beneficiaries requires comprehensive goods tracking, transparency and visibility.
- **Contingency plans of any National Society**, should include a scenario/section about how to request, receive and manage external assistance in exceptional cases (from other IFRC members, from other actors at the national level or from other international actors).



In Spain, help comes on two wheels: Spanish Red Cross volunteers are riding the streets of Valencia distributing masks to the community and teaching people how to use them properly.

- ↘ **For more information:**
- Case Study: Increasing the supply chain agility for PPE during COVID-19 response. [Document](#)
 - Spanish Red Cross: www.cruzroja.es
 - National Society Preparedness: www.ifrc.org/disaster-preparedness

This success story was developed with support from: