

# KENYA RED CROSS



## Emergency Operations Centre

### Case Study

## Summary

<b>National Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kenya Red Cross</li></ul>
<b>EOC Level(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Emergency Operations Centres – HQ Nairobi</li></ul>
<b>Year Established</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2007 – Upgraded from 2009</li></ul>
<b>Administrative Coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The National EOC supports the whole country, 47 Counties, in 8 Regions. But with 13 EOCs established in 13 counties.</li></ul>
<b>EOC Type</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All the 13 EOCs are fixed EOCs with a dedicated building.</li></ul>
<b>EOC Modality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The EOCs operate permanently as they are established in county level response buildings.</li></ul>
<b>Supporting NSs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most of the EOCs are supported by different programs and projects which are supported by different movement partners.</li></ul>
<b>EOC Specific Staff / Volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are staff and volunteers attached to each EOC. At national level, there are 2 staff (National EOC Coordinator and EOC assistant), there are EOC volunteers assigned specifically to the EOC.</li></ul>
<b>Governance Line</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The EOC team directly reports to the Emergency preparedness manager, The DMOPs HOD and also supports other departments.</li></ul>
<b>Connection with Authorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The KRCS EOCs work closely with other government EOCs as well as partners who have the EOCs. These help in interoperability strengthening, especially at local level.</li></ul>

## 1. Context and Characteristics

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) launched its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in 2007 to address gaps in emergency coordination exposed by post-election violence and expanded its role in 2009 due to increased disasters. The EOC now manages both rapid and slow-onset emergencies, focusing on response, preparedness, early warning, and risk reduction with digital tools for real-time coordination. Although these advancements have enhanced operations, Kenya's growing disaster challenges highlight the need for further investment in infrastructure, staffing, technology, and decentralised systems to ensure an effective, future-proof EOC.



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## 2. Core Functional Areas

### a. Strategic

Strategic decisions at the KRCS National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) are guided by the National EOC Coordinator, Emergency Preparedness & Response Manager, and the Head of Disaster Management Operations, with senior leadership involved as needed for major incidents. This structure ensures swift decision-making, resource prioritisation, and accountability in emergencies.

The NEOC holds coordination and strategy meetings as often as required by events—daily during crises, monthly or as needed otherwise. It also provides real-time analysis, forecasts, Situation Reports, and operational insights to inform leadership and partners. Despite stronger large-scale response capabilities, growing disaster frequency and complexity demand further investment in leadership capacity, technical staff, analytics, and dedicated decision-support systems.

### b. Operations

Operational coordination at the KRCS Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is managed by the Disaster Management Department, guided by the EOC Coordinator and the Emergency Preparedness & Response Manager, with strategic oversight provided by the Head of Disaster Management Operations (DMOPs). Upon notification of an incident, the EOC initiates a preliminary assessment and determines activation in accordance with established thresholds—including severity, geographical scope, and anticipated impact. The formal

declaration of an emergency is authorised by the Head of Department and senior management, with activation levels tailored to the scale of the event, ranging from partial to full engagement. While the National EOC operates continuously on a 24-hour basis and thus remains active, the other thirteen EOCs nationwide are gradually deactivated as conditions stabilise and operations shift toward recovery and routine monitoring, following comprehensive review and handover procedures.

The EOC serves as a central hub for coordination, facilitating communication between headquarters, branches, volunteers, and field response teams. Information is relayed from communities via situation reports, incident logs, and digital reporting platforms, and disseminates back through operational directives, technical guidance, and resource mobilisation efforts. This bidirectional flow enables effective coordination of deployments, monitoring of response activities, and alignment with governmental and humanitarian partners in real time.

Although this framework has established KRCS as a trusted and proficient coordination centre—frequently engaged to support or advise other National Societies—a need remains for continued advancement. Strengthening branch-level EOCs, anchored by the National EOC as the principal coordination centre, will promote decentralised decision-making and facilitate more rapid local responses. Developing the EOC into an autonomous, professional entity supported by dedicated personnel, sustainable funding, enhanced digital infrastructure, and well-defined authority will be critical for KRCS to address Kenya’s evolving risk landscape and to maintain robust regional support for other National Societies.

### **c. Information Management**

KRCS EOCs use both digital and traditional tools to gather, analyse, and share real-time information. Field teams and branches rely on Kobo Toolbox for quick assessments and incident reporting, while Excel and standard templates help verify and organise data. This information is circulated through dashboards and visual platforms like Power BI, as well as via operational channels including WhatsApp, email, and phone calls, which allow for fast alerts, coordination, and field updates.

This system has helped the EOC deliver timely Situation Reports (SitReps), maps, trend analyses, and operational updates that guide strategic decisions, resource planning, deployment strategies, and performance tracking. Yet the global environment is evolving rapidly, with more frequent and complex crises, technological advancements, and higher expectations for instant, high-quality data. To keep up and improve support for national and regional operations, KRCS needs to upgrade its systems further. This means investing in advanced information management platforms, better interoperability, stronger data security, automation, and broader digital infrastructure, as well as ongoing training for staff and volunteers in modern tools. These improvements will boost response capabilities in

Kenya and equip KRCS to better assist and mentor other National Societies dealing with similar issues.

### **3. Infrastructure and Equipment**

The KRCS National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) supports 24/7 emergency coordination using dedicated facilities, real-time communications, incident management systems, GIS platforms, and backup power and internet sources. It can operate remotely through decentralised digital platforms, with 13 additional EOCs providing local support nationwide. Despite this infrastructure, growing and complex crises demand more advanced systems, including enhanced space, modern tools, improved data and geospatial capabilities, and stronger partnerships for epidemic surveillance and multi-hazard mapping. KRCS aims to secure resources for a robust, stand-alone centre with better communications and data processing to strengthen national response and regional collaboration.

### **4. Integration with Government and Partners**

The KRCS EOC serves as a central hub for coordination between the Society, government, humanitarian partners, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It provides real-time data to support decision-making and shares information with branch and partner EOCs, aligning efforts with national disaster management agencies and frameworks. The EOC collaborates with OCHA, UN agencies, NGOs, IFRC, ICRC, and partner societies through formal agreements and working groups. As emergencies grow more complex, integrating KRCS systems with other regional and thematic EOCs—especially in health, climate, and early warning—is increasingly important. Enhancing interoperability and information exchange will improve alerts and readiness for Kenya and neighbouring National Societies.

### **5. Lessons Learned and Adaptation**

#### **Achievements**

- Evolved into a reliable national coordination platform, enabling faster activation and improved decision-making.
- Enhanced real-time information management through digital dashboards, geospatial mapping, and standardised Situation Reports (SitReps).
- Established branch-level EOCs, improving operational oversight and situational awareness.
- Expanded the EOC's remit to include slow-onset and complex emergencies, demonstrating adaptability.

- Significant investments in surge capacity, staff development, partnerships, updated SOPs, and digital technologies have improved speed, data integrity, and accountability.
- Commitment to innovation and a people-focused approach, aligning with auxiliary responsibilities to government and the wider humanitarian sector.

## Challenges

- Increasing emergency demands are outpacing current systems and resources.
- Ongoing challenges with sustainable staffing, modern infrastructure, and specialist technical expertise.
- Heavy reliance on volunteers and mounting operational pressures.
- Escalating data requirements and limited system compatibility with other EOCs.
- Need for dedicated roles (e.g., Emergency Preparedness Manager) and increased investment in state-of-the-art infrastructure for real-time information exchange and remote collaboration.

## Adaptations

- The EOC has demonstrated adaptability by expanding its role to address both rapid-onset and prolonged, complex emergencies.
- Investing in surge capacity, digital tools, and partnerships has been key to improving response speed and accountability.
- Comprehensive training in information management, geospatial analysis, emergency coordination, and risk assessment is essential for professionalising EOC operations and ensuring excellence.
- Strategic, forward-thinking investment from donors is required to shift from reactive to predictive, multi-hazard readiness, enabling more coordinated and dignified support for vulnerable communities.
- By embracing innovation and ongoing learning, KRCS EOC is positioned to become a centre of excellence, supporting the growth of other National Societies across Africa.