



The Albanian Red Cross conducting an Advance First Aid Team Simulation in Tirana. Photo credit: Albanian Red Cross

sEAP №: sEAP2025AL01	Operation №: MDRAL009	Total Budget CHF199,966	Readiness: CHF 66,079 Prepositioning: CHF 56,221 Early Action: CHF 77,665
People targeted: 17,000 people	sEAP approved: 24/06/2025	sEAP timeframe: 2 years	sEAP lead time: 5 days
Prioritized geographical areas: <i>Albania: cities of Tirana, Berat and Elbasan.</i>			

RISK ANALYSIS AND EARLY ACTION SELECTION

Prioritized hazard and its historical impact

The main risks / hazards as per the Albanian Government and its latest Risk Assessment Report from 2022 are triggered by floods, technological and biological events, forest fires, landslides and earthquakes. Several workshops with ministries and institutions confirmed that extreme heat is currently not an officially recognized direct threat.

However, latest research, publications, projections and recent summer temperatures alerted the global community - Southeastern Europe experienced 'strong heat stress', where the daily maximum feels-like temperature reached at least 32°C, for around two thirds of the summer period. Hence, summer 2024 was the warmest for Europe and for southeastern Europe on record (C3S Copernicus, Sep 2024).

All major stakeholders of the temporary Anticipatory Action Working Group (AAWG) including the Public Health Institute, the University of Medicine, the National Agency for Civil Protection (NACP), the Geoscience Institute ([IGEO](#)) and the Albanian Red Cross confirmed this trend and agreed to focus on extreme heat when it comes to anticipatory action as other identified hazards are not forecastable, have less negative impact or events triggered by intense precipitation are already quite well researched and acted on in Albania.

The Western Balkans are a hotspot in Europe in terms of climate and other natural hazards. On average, the Balkans are ranked as highly vulnerable in most of the critical dimensions of climate resilience. The differences in risk among the countries are due to a combination of climate factors, geographic features, population exposure, and socioeconomic factors as:

- the impacts of extreme heat on health and workers' productivity are expected to be high in the region,
- the urban heat island effect is a phenomenon across Western Balkan cities,
- the lack of green areas in cities in middle-income countries overlaps with higher concentrations. Poorer neighborhoods tend to experience more elevated heat exposure¹.

Natural hazards in **Albania** such as intense storms, floods, heatwaves and wildfires are becoming more frequent, unpredictable and severe due to projected climate change trends. More frequent, longer lasting, and intense heatwaves will also adversely affect the concentration and dispersion of air pollutants.

Projections show:

- Climate Projections (2041-2070): The number of hot days is expected to continue increasing, particularly summer days with warm nights (minimum temperature $\geq 20^{\circ}\text{C}$). This trend is expected to affect the Adriatic region significantly, including Albania (IFRC Strategy 2030).
- Extreme heat is growing concerns also for Albania, especially as climate change projections show significant increases in hot days. These temperature shifts have serious implications for both the environment and public health. In addition to hotter days, night temperatures are also projected to rise, reducing the natural cooling period that traditionally helps mitigate daytime heat. This increase in night temperatures contributes to the growing health risks, particularly during tropical nights—nights where temperatures remain above 20°C (Climate Risk Country Profile for Albania by World Bank)
- Projections for the climate in 2050 include further increases in temperature and heat waves, decreases in total precipitation, increases in frequency and duration of extreme events like floods and droughts, and rising sea levels (The Fourth National Communication of Albania on Climate Change to the UNFCCC, Sept 2022).

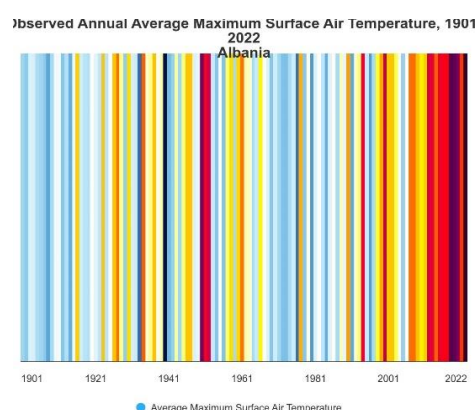
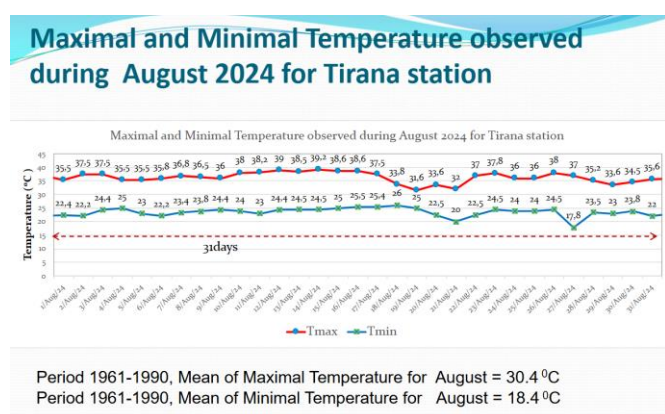
In the past extreme heat has been neglected as it exacerbates chronic conditions and other diseases, mental health and was therefore hard to quantify – this has changed. For instance, in Romania +20% emergency calls have been received last summer by the state ambulance service during a heatwave event and research on heat related mortality numbers shows a clear picture and even a clearer one on the fact that older people and women in general are affected

¹ World Bank, 2024, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents/reports/documentdetail/099092624072037260/p1792051b2af2c0e71a0df1eb3de24bc7c7>

most. In 2022, over 61,000 people and in 2023 over 47,000 deaths were caused by extreme heat in Europe.²³ The WHO estimates an average of 175,000 deaths per year due to extreme heat in average in Europe and Central Asia and a 30% increase in heat related mortality over past 20 years in Europe.⁴ The World bank expects an increase of heat related death of +5-10% by 2100 and the WHO declared the climate crisis and related extreme weather events as a public health emergency in July 2023⁵.

The risk/negative impact of extreme heat/heat waves on humans in the Albanian context has been confirmed by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in Albania. Acknowledging that there is little data to confirm this in Albania as heat has not been officially pointed out as hazard as such yet, a case study has been conducted in 2017 and published in 2021 on excess deaths during periods of extreme heat. In the report⁶ a case study from Albania confirms that during two heat waves in 2017 an increase of deaths by 9-16% has been found and that more excess deaths can be expected in the future.

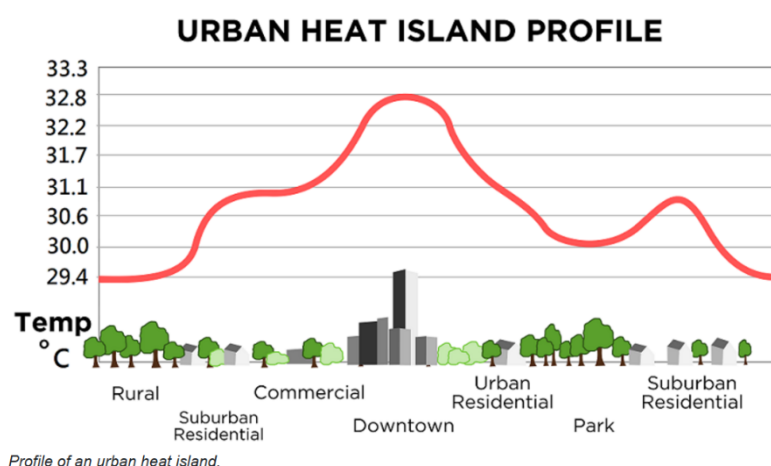
This issue has also been addressed in the National Adaptation Plan of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, which includes as its main goals the promotion of adaptation strategies for the health sector for extreme heat events. (Albania National Adaptation Plan 2023)



Left: IGEO, 4th AA workshop in Tirana 2024; Right: [Observed Annual Average Maximum Surface Air Temperature, 1901 - 2022. World Bank Climate Knowledge Portal, Albania Country Profile.](#)

Heatwave as selected risk for this sEAP

Besides a broad range of risks like safe water and food, changed ecology, failure in local agriculture and forced migration, extreme heat directly impacts mental and physical health.⁷ Furthermore, temperatures in cities tend to be higher than the surrounding countryside due to the prevalence of surfaces that retain heat and release it slowly - this is called the Urban Heat Island Effect⁸ (most felt during the night, when temperatures in urban areas can be up to 10°C



² Ballester J, 2026, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-023-02419-z>

³ Gallo E., 2024, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03186-1>

⁴ WHO, 2024, <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/01-08-2024-statement--heat-claims-more-than-175-000-lives-annually-in-the-who-european-region-with-numbers-set-to-soar>

⁵ <https://climate.copernicus.eu/esotc/2023/extreme-weather-and-human-health>

⁶ EASAC, 2021, Tackling the effects of climate change on health in the Mediterranean and surrounding regions https://easac.eu/fileadmin/PDF_s/reports_statements/Climate_Change_and_Health/Tackling_the_effects_of_climate_change_on_health_in_the_Mediterranean_and_surrounding_regions_-_final_27_Sept.pdf

⁷ Public Health Institute of Albania/University of Health, IPCC, WHO, 4th AA workshop Oct 2024

⁸ IFRC City Heatwave Guide for RC branches: <https://preparecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ENG-RCCC-Heatwave-Guide-2019-for-NS.pdf> and IFRC Heatwave Guide: <https://www.ifrc.org/document/heat-wave-guide-cities>

higher than in rural areas⁹). Therefore, the cities of Tirana, Elbasan and Berat have been selected – also based on their extreme weather and climate related similarities confirmed by the national meteorological and hydrological services / IGEO.

All selected risks below are exacerbated by the lack of information on how to prepare for and behave during heatwaves incl. services offered.

1) PHYSICAL HEALTH

Extreme heat exacerbates chronic conditions, including cardiovascular, respiratory and cerebrovascular diseases, mental health, and diabetes-related conditions.

Most vulnerable groups are socio-economic vulnerable people of the following groups: older people (65+), children 0-18 years of age, pregnant and lactating women, people with disabilities and chronic diseases, outdoor workers, Roma and Egyptian communities and athletes¹⁰. For extreme heat related excess-death rates and mortality rates please refer to above chapter. Those above-mentioned groups may be at heightened risk as they sometimes are unaware of the dangers of heatwaves or what kind of measures they should take, such as avoiding heat exposure at the peak hours, using ventilators or wearing proper clothes and being adequately hydrated.

One of the most immediate and severe health impacts of heatwaves is heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Intense heat can overwhelm the body's ability to regulate temperature, leading to potentially fatal conditions. Very vulnerable groups cannot perform needed shopping tasks (water, medicine, ...) or health checkups during extreme heat events.

The urgency of addressing heat stroke and heat exhaustion is underscored by their direct and critical nature, as highlighted by the IPCC and the WHO.

2) MENTAL HEALTH¹¹

Mental health is not immune to the effects of extreme heat. Mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and other psychological problems can be exacerbated by the discomfort and disruption caused by extreme temperatures. Vulnerable groups may experience heightened mental health challenges during these periods. During a heatwave, older people may avoid going outside or interacting with others, leading to increased isolation and limited social interactions. Social isolation is a major risk factor for mental health problems, including depression and anxiety.

These health risks underscore the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to mitigate the impacts of extreme temperatures. By understanding and addressing these risks, we can better protect vulnerable populations and improve public health outcomes in the face of a warming climate. This information is based on data and discussions from and with the Institute of Public Health in Albania during the four conducted AA workshops in 2023 and 2024.

3) STRESS ON LIVELIHOODS

Besides proofed negative impact of extreme heat to agricultural output and backyard farming activities a needs assessment conducted in summer 2024¹² in the three cities of Tirana, Elbasan and Berat has shown that most respondents must cover more expenses before and during extreme heat events. This mainly to cover higher costs for the procurement of additionally needed food and non-food items like bottled water, non-alcoholic drinks, ice packs, food, fans and other sun protective textiles as well as to cover the higher electricity costs. Socio-economic vulnerable people are hit hardest and often struggle to prepare for such events - mainly due to their limited financial resources.

4) LIMITED MOBILITY

⁹ EC/Copernicus: <https://climate.copernicus.eu/demonstrating-heat-stress-european-cities>

¹⁰ Albanian Red Cross Needs Assessment and Public Health Institute of Albania/University of Health, 4th AA workshop Oct 2024

¹¹ WHO - Heatwaves: WHO - Heat and Health: UN - Preventing harmful health effects of heatwaves, Albanian Institute of public health: Heatwaves and health risks

¹² 130 people of different vulnerable groups have been interviewed with a semi-structured questionnaire, Aug/Sep 2024

Extreme heat severely limits the ability of low-income individuals to perform essential activities:

Doctor consultations, shopping medicine and grocery: The risk of heat exhaustion or heatstroke can make it dangerous to leave cool homes forcing vulnerable people to rely on more expensive delivery services when it comes to medicine, food, non-food items and health services.

Work Attendance: For those who work outdoors or in non-air-conditioned environments, extreme heat can result in missed workdays and lost income (e.g. homeless recyclers), further exacerbating financial difficulties. Albania is the 8th most vulnerable state in terms of GDP loss due to heat stress amongst all European and Central European states and the most vulnerable to the loss of working hours based on projections for 2030 in Southern Europe¹³. Heatwaves are and will significantly affect daily activities, work productivity, and economic stability, especially for outdoor workers¹⁴. The World Bank has urged the Western Balkans, including Albania, to invest in climate adaptation to protect people and property from the escalating impacts of climate change.

Vulnerable Populations: Older people, children, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions are particularly at-risk during heatwaves. The Institute of Public Health in Albania provides data on mortality rates / excess deaths connected to heatwaves, highlighting the need for targeted interventions.

Early Actions

All actions described below are designed to address the needs identified through comprehensive assessments conducted with ARC branches during the summer 2024 as well as through secondary data and experience of professional stakeholders (e.g. Ministry of Health and Social Protection). The needs assessment has provided valuable insights and planning collaboratively with Albanian communities and Albanian Red Cross branches ensures that early actions are tailored to effectively support the most vulnerable best.

Early Actions to address health and economic risks during heatwaves:

1. Implement Early Warning Early Action Key Messages (Public Awareness Public Education)

The Albania Red Cross (ARC) will disseminate timely, standardized and accurate information about impending heatwaves through various channels and direct contact by Tirana, Berat and Elbasan branches to communities. Information shared at the right time, in an understandable format, by trusted sources, can be most effective. Those messages will be in Albanian language, cartoons, pictograms and microprograms for easy understanding for people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds. The messages will include preparedness aspects (beginning of and during lead time) as well as how to act during heatwaves (lead time days 4+5 and later). As a readiness activity ARC will use PAPE messages also for awareness workshops in schools in the pre summer season during May-June that children then can multiply their knowledge with family members before a heatwave approaches.

The impact of these early warning messages will be significant. They will enable individuals to take preventive measures, such as staying indoors during peak heat hours, staying hydrated, and seeking cooler environments. This can significantly reduce the incidence of heat-related illnesses or fatalities.

This activity will be also carried out in case of a reduced lead time.

2. The Albania Red Cross will reinforce the widely used (during Earthquake and COVID19 operations) toll-free “Green Line” to provide an easy-to-access-feedback and info tool before and during heatwaves. This phone helpline will serve both a) the public and b) direct beneficiaries.

INBOUND calls/services: Staffed by trained professionals, the Green Line¹⁵ will offer psychological support, warning messages, information and acts as a feedback collection tool for all who are calling. The public will be provided with early warning and preparedness info. For registered clients/most vulnerable the Green Line can be contacted to receive info on how to prepare and on available services incl referral to partners. Also, considering statistics from our Green Line in the past we have received at least 250 calls during emergencies.

¹³

ILO,

2019:

https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_711919.pdf

¹⁴ This information is based in document of USAID ALBANIA: Climate change risk profile

¹⁵ Operating hours of Green Line: 9:00- 18:00 / June-September. One HQ PSS staff and two volunteers trained for this service during the 5 days lead time plus during the heatwave duration.

OUTBOUND calls/services: The Green Line also proactively contacts all ARC clients to 1) share heat info and 2) to conduct remote heat checks. If indicated, ARC will deploy multifunctional teams to provide on-the-ground assistance offering services such as home visits include shopping assistance for the older and disabled people, basic health check-ups, first aid, psychological support and referral to public health services. Those teams will focus on vulnerable populations, including older people, people with chronic illnesses, and low-income families. During these visits, they will monitor health by checking vital signs, reminding individuals to use glucometers, medicines, and ensuring proper hydration. Immediate first aid will be provided if necessary, and in critical situations the teams will arrange (through ambulance service) the transportation to medical facilities. Home visits will offer personalized care to pre-registered clients. This proactive approach will help in the early detection and treatment of heat-related illnesses, significantly reducing health risks. By ensuring that vulnerable individuals receive the care and attention they need, the Albania Red Cross aims to enhance safety and overall well-being during heatwaves, helping individuals feel supported and secure.

This activity will be also carried out in case of a reduced lead time.

3. Multi-purpose cash for most vulnerable households

The ARC will provide 300 HHs with one-off multi-purpose unconditional financial support via bank cheques of an amount of ALL 20,000 (EUR 204/CHF 194¹⁶) in Tirana, Elbasan and Berat branches. Financial support will be provided to the most vulnerable people to be able to cope with the additional expenses incurring before and during heatwaves. Needs assessments¹⁷ are reflected in the transfer value and have shown that emergency cash assistance will be used to purchase cooling devices, pay for higher electricity bills (AC, fans, fridge), and buy more essential supplies like water and medicine. This financial support alleviates the short-term economic burden on low-income families and ensures that most relevant extraordinary health related expenses are covered. The transfer value also corresponds to the average pension in urban areas, the monthly subsistence minimum or 50% of the minimum salary in Albania.

Item	local currency	% of monthly expenses
cooling item (fan x 2)	10,000 ALL	
+50% Food, and non-alcoholic beverages	6,920 ALL	34.60%
+100% power, fuel, heating, AC	1,120 ALL	5.60%
+50% medical care	700 ALL	3.50%
+50% catering	1,060 ALL	5.30%
TOTAL / month / person	19,800 ALL	

Base: ALL 40,000 minimum salary/p/m

Source: Alb Statistics Agency

4. Community Heat Preparedness Points

Provide essential information on heat preparedness¹⁸ and available services¹⁹ before and during heatwaves to and for the most vulnerable population and distribute items such as water and isotonic drinks that helps individuals to stay cool and hydrated, reducing the risk of heat exhaustion and heatstroke at centrally located places in vulnerable community spots. Additionally, those locations (2xTirana, 2xBerat, 2xElbasan) are officially recognized referral points for the emergency medical services providing basic/advanced first aid and psychosocial first aid (PFA). Points with access to a shaded area and equipped with fans including water nebulizer are in operation to offer additional cool down options for vulnerable people²⁰.

Access to isotonic drinks and water, shaded spots, first aid, PFA support and fans can help to maintain electrolyte balance, proper physical and mental well-being and cool down the body. This will lead to improved access to emergency medical care and enhanced protection against heat-related health issues (directly and indirectly).

¹⁶ Oanda, 26 Jan 2025

¹⁷ Conducted in all 3 branches in summer 2024

¹⁸ Based on local material and <https://preparecenter.org/toolkit/heat/>

¹⁹ ARC services and other stakeholder services (e.g. cool spaces provided by the municipality)

²⁰ Cooling Center Guidelines will be used to plan the intervention accordingly: https://preparecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Community_Cooling_Centre_Manual.pdf

This activity will be also carried out in case of a reduced lead time.

5. Minimum standards in PGI and CEA are ensured

The Green Line will be the main communication tool during the lead time (and after) for collection and analysis of feedback and for potential referral to partners (e.g. state Emergency Medical Services) or to the senior management for sensitive feedback. Besides the Green Line ARC will use the Kobo tool to collect data and feedback in the lead time during the early action activities. Additionally, other communication channels are open (e.g. social media) and will be screened to ensure real time collection and analysis of data and to be able to (re)act in a swift and efficient way. All staff and volunteers active during the lead time and afterwards during the heatwave operation are trained in the minimum standards in CEA and PGI (refresher training / readiness).

The ARC started including PGI and CEA elements from the very beginning / in the planning process putting the community into the focus through community led needs assessments conducted in summer 2024 and including the three branches of Tirana, Elbasan and Berat from the beginning in 2023. Refresher training in PGI, CEA and Information Management (IM) conducted by ARC focal points and IFRC expert staff will ensure a solid skill base and ensure that minimum standards are applied. The Green Line and a refresher training in using Kobo toolbox and related IM tools will be major components to ensure inclusion, two-way-communication, proper monitoring skills and transparency. Lessons learnt from the recent community-led flood resilience project²¹ will be applied.

To ensure full transparency a monitoring plan will be prepared including post distribution monitoring activities (via Greenline and face to face) and a lesson learnt workshop will be conducted before the end of the project.

EARLY ACTION INTERVENTION

Overall objective of the intervention	The overall objective of the interventions is to protect the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable urban populations in Tirana, Berat, and Elbasan from the negative impacts of heat waves by enhancing institutional and community resilience and strengthening early action mechanisms.
Potential geographical high-risk areas that the simplified EAP would target	The cities of Tirana, Berat, and Elbasan have been selected as high-risk regions for this intervention mainly based on the following three components: exposure to extreme heat and impact, comparable temperature levels, and proven branch capacity. The cities meet the criteria of being most prone to heatwaves according to climate data, which shows that these areas experience nearly identical heat patterns and high temperatures during extreme heat events. Historical climatological data highlights their increased vulnerability, with sustained periods of high temperatures significantly influencing the health and well-being of their populations. These areas were prioritized due to their high population density, significant numbers of vulnerable groups such as older people, children, outdoor workers, and pregnant women, the increasing frequency and intensity of heatwaves and the general higher socio-economic vulnerabilities.

²¹ <https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/11/Flood-Resilience-in-Albania-Impact-brief.pdf>

Target groups and selection criteria	The preparatory workshops with the Ministry of health (Institute of Public Health) and an ARC baseline rapid assessment for Extreme Heat in summer 2024²² identified vulnerable populations at heightened risk due to extreme heat conditions and their priority needs. The target groups are defined/selected as follows: TARGET GROUPS FOR ACTIVITIES 1, 2 and 4²³ a) General (most vulnerable) public²⁴ b) Street / outdoor workers c) Target group of activity 3 below TARGET GROUPS FOR ACTIVITY 3²⁵: PRIMARY SELECTION CRITERIA Socio-economic vulnerable population in the cities of Tirana, Elbasan and Berat. SECONDARY SELECTION CRITERIA Older people with limited mobility and health care needs: this target group is already being serviced by the ARC and will benefit from heatwave early actions as well. The number of people will be increased from 80 existing client HHs to 150 HHs. The selection is being made in close collaboration with the municipal social services. Any other vulnerable household with one or more of the following HH members: pregnant women, multi-children, people living with disabilities.
Trigger statement	The Heatwave sEAP is triggered in Tirana, Elbasan, and Berat if, with a probability of 50% according to ECMWF, there are at least 3 consecutive days in Tirana where the expected maximum and minimum temperatures are both higher than the 95th percentile of the monthly historical maximum and minimum temperatures of the months of June-September, based on data from 2000 to 2024.

²² Conducted by the branches in Tirana, Elbasan and Berat

²³ 1=preparedness messages, 2=Greenline, 4=Community Heat Preparedness Points

²⁴ Some activities are being implemented via mass media channels; *community heat preparedness points* for example will be built up in spots where most vulnerable people are frequent visitors (e.g. marketplace, socio-economic disadvantaged parts of the city)

²⁵ Multi Purpose Cash Grants

Trigger threshold justification	Negative impact through heatwaves is evident and has been reported by several creditable sources like the World bank and the EU not only on global level but especially also for the Western Balkans and Albania. Excess deaths due to heatwaves have been reported on various levels (e.g. increase of 5-10% until 2100, World Bank). For Albania excess deaths have been recorded recently during two heatwaves in 2017 (9-16% excess deaths) by the University of Medicine / Public Health Institute. The temperature patterns of the three targeted cities were analyzed by the National Hydrometeorological Agency (IGEO). All three cities have identical temperature patterns, hence one trigger statement for Tirana can be used to enable also early actions in Elbasan and Berat. Currently there is no heat wave definition / trigger / alert level or heat index developed by state authorities in Albania. The development of such a tool was discussed with the IGEO, Public Health Institute and the NACP and requires more financial resources and will be developed for the next sEAP period and/or during the large scale AlbAdapt programme financed by the green climate fund from 2024-2030. The current trigger is based on climatological data from 2000-2024 retrieved and compiled by IGEO supported by Geosphere Austria. As a first step the 90th and 95th percentile was calculated for the max and min temperature for each of the four summer months in Tirana, Berat and Elbasan. Based on a return period of 1-2 years the 95th percentile max and min temperature was chosen. This trigger statement ensures that once activated in Tirana, it automatically applies to Berat and Elbasan, allowing early action activities to take place in all three cities The trigger is monitored by the IGEO and its status will be shared on daily basis directly with the ARC and the Civil Protection partners in the summer season (June-Sept). Background information on the development of the trigger statement is annexed to this report.
Next steps – For National Societies that intend to develop a full EAP (Optional)	NTR

PLANNED OPERATIONS



Multi-purpose Cash

Budget: CHF 64,779

Indicator: Number of people reached with multi-purpose cash in advance of a hazard **Target:** 825 people

Readiness activities:

1. Bank selection process
2. Cheque procurements
3. Establishing beneficiary list:
 - 3.1. Update existing lists of homecare beneficiaries in 3 branches Tirana, Berat and Elbasan and verify through HH visits
 - 3.2. Meeting with social welfare offices at municipality level for establishing the beneficiaries' lists of additional most vulnerable families and verify through HH visits.
4. Conduct 1 day refresher training for volunteers and staff on CVA specific aspects

Prepositioning activities:

1. Store preordered cheques in HQ secured cashbox.

Prioritized Early Actions:

1. Inform beneficiaries through Greenline calls or SMS on upcoming cheque distribution.
2. Distribute cheques via branches and through RC multifunctional teams to people with limited mobility.
3. Distribute cheques to pre-identified people (home care clients and most vulnerable families) with limited mobility.
4. Support in cashing of cheques by RC multifunctional teams.



Health & Care

Budget: CHF 9,170

Indicator: Number of people reached with health and care interventions in advance of a heat wave **Target:** 1,500

Readiness activities:

1. Set up a Red Cross green line on heatwave (toll-free phone number) for the public.
2. Training of volunteers and one staff that will operate the green line specialized in PFA/PSS.
3. Develop heatwave FAQs (Frequently asked questions) for calls from the public.
4. Develop heatwave preparedness/behavior/information/referral guide and questionnaire for proactive 'Heat Remote Check Calls' for 300 vulnerable registered HHs (home care clients and most vulnerable families).

Prepositioning activities:

5. Establishing mechanism and tool for heatwave case management for tracking and tracing for 300 most vulnerable people.

1. Pre-Equip multifunctional teams with sim card credits
2. Refurnish advanced first aid kits in 3 branches.
3. Prepare modality of transport for staff and volunteers (bicycles, maintenance of red cross cars, procure tickets for public transport)

Prioritized Early Actions:

1. Provide PSS/PFA phone support through the green line (toll-free) before and during the heatwave (public and RC clients) and support referral and notify state ambulance as needed.
2. Actively call 300 pre-identified most vulnerable HHs (home care clients and most vulnerable families) and perform 'Heat Remote Check Calls' via RC Greenline.
3. Deployment of RC multifunctional teams to home care clients and most vulnerable families as indicated and needed.
4. RC multifunctional teams to provide Basic health checks, basic and advanced first aid and refer to state ambulance service if needed.



Education

Budget: CHF 0

Indicator: Number of people reached with education interventions in advance of a hazard

Target: 300 students/pupils

Readiness activities:

1. Kick-off meeting with principals of schools to introduce the project
2. Introduce heatwave safety education in schools to promote awareness among children and their families in June before school's end and before peak temperatures arrive.

Prepositioning activities:

N/A

Prioritized Early Actions:

N/A



Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery

Budget: CHF 32,376

Indicator: Number of people reached with risk reduction and/or climate adaptation interventions in advance of a hazard

Target: 15,000

Readiness activities:

1. Coordinate with municipal authorities to identify and allocate appropriate locations for community heat preparedness points (Tirana, Elbasan, Berat).

Prepositioning activities:

2. Develop clear roles and responsibilities for volunteers during activation of community heat preparedness points.
3. Kick-off meeting with state ambulance services and municipal stakeholders to establish clear procedures and exchange of contact information for quick referrals before and during heatwave operations.

1. Procure 6 tents, 2 in each city (heat/UV-resistant, suitable for outdoor use)
2. Purchase misting/nebulizing fans (fans with water spray/mist function for cooling).
3. Secure power supply equipment through municipalities services
4. Design and procurement of various roll ups (RC signs, preparedness messages)
5. Preposition bottled water and isotonic drinks at storage facilities
6. Procure warehouse refrigerators
7. Produce/Purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) like t-shirts, hats, gloves and sunglasses for volunteers involved

Prioritized Early Actions:

1. Setting up tents with misting fans at designated locations (Tirana, Elbasan, Berat).
2. Deploy teams of volunteers trained in PFA/PSS/AFA
3. Distribute 15.000 bottled water and isotonic drinks to individuals passing through heat points.
4. Conduct basic health checkups (vital signs monitoring, heat-related symptoms).
5. Actively engage visitors with educational messages about staying safe during heatwaves.
6. Use feedback tools to gather real-time data about 1) service provided and 2) other community needs.
7. Monitor and document the number of visitors served, supplies distributed, and referrals made.



Community Engagement and Accountability

People targeted

Budget: CHF 10,650

6 volunteers/staff per branch = $6 \times 3 = 18$
6 people from HQ
TOTAL: 24 people

Indicator:

Number of people reached with community engagement and accountability interventions in advance of a hazard

Target: 24 people

Readiness activities:

1. Analyze and integrate the findings from the needs assessments conducted by branches in Tirana, Elbasan, and Berat to design interventions (done).
2. Select culturally appropriate and community-specific awareness materials supported by ARC PGI, CEA and Communication focal points
3. Prepare files with early key actionable targeted messages addressing identified vulnerabilities supported by ARC PGI, CEA and Communication focal points.

Prepositioning activities:

4. 4 days training in CEA for volunteers in active listening, respectful communication, and gathering and addressing community feedback (incl KoBo collect) and PGI to raise awareness, build skills and change behavior conducted by IFRC experts and ARC focal points (3 days CEA, communication and PGI & PFA basics + 1 day IM)
5. Engage local leaders and influencers to strengthen trust and widen the reach of key messages.
6. Review and refine "Sensitive Feedback Procedures" and "General Feedback Procedures"
7. Produce awareness video for multiple social media channels to be published during the lead time – lead ARC communication focal point

1. Preprint and store heatwave safety flyers, banners, cartoons, games and other materials at branches in Tirana, Elbasan, and Berat for quick distribution.

Prioritized Early Actions:

N/A

ENABLING APPROACHES



Secretariat services

Budget: CHF 15,656

Indicator:

Number of staff engaged in the maintenance and activation of the early action

Target: 5 staff
(2 IFRC, 2 Austrian Red Cross, 1 Geosphere)

Readiness activities:

1. Participate in annual meetings, and facilitate lessons learned.
2. Conduct visits to Tirana, as well as Berat and Elbasan to conduct monitoring and evaluation activities and provide technical support if needed.
3. Accompany readiness activities and facilitate reporting.

Prepositioning activities:

1. Support prepositioning activities (including procurement processes), if required.

Prioritized Early Actions:

1. Support activation of the sEAP when the trigger is reached.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 55,817

Indicator:

Number of staff and volunteers engaged in early action

Target: 107 persons
(4 HQ staff + 3 branch staff + 100 volunteers)

Readiness activities:

1. Kick-off meeting with HQ staff and staff/volunteers from the three branches (Tirana, Elbasan, Berat), IFRC, Geosphere Austria, Civil Protection (NACP), Public Health Institute and AutRC to align roles and responsibilities for heatwave response.
2. Extended in-depth kick-off meetings in all 3 branches
3. Salary contribution for staff (sEAP lead, PSS focal point, IM expert, communications focal point)

Prepositioning activities:

N/A

Prioritized Early Actions:

1. Staff and volunteer costs for monitoring during activation, communication/awareness-raising activities, and post-distribution monitoring (PDM) as well as a lessons learned workshop.

**Partnership and Coordination**

Budget: CHF 11,519

Indicator:

Monitoring Product designed and tested

Target: 1

Readiness activities:

1. Collaboration and knowledge-sharing visit with the Hellenic Red Cross to exchange best practices and lessons learned on heatwave preparedness and strategies.
2. Preparing and signing a MoU with the HydroMet services of Albania (IGEO) on the following agreed products/services:
 - 2.1. prepare systems to use the ECMWF 10-15 days forecast for monitoring purposes
 - 2.2. prepare a heatwave warning forecasting product based on the trigger including an (semi) automated mail generation and delivery to the ARC
 - 2.3. test all above and refine forecasting products to be ready as of May 2026 for the season from June-Sept (4 months)
3. Conduct yearly meetings with the IGEO, Public Health Institute, NACP and municipalities to introduce the sEAP, to exchange learnings and to adapt procedures and tools.

Prepositioning activities:

N/A

Prioritized Early Actions:

N/A

CONDITIONS TO DELIVER THE EARLY ACTION

Experience and/or capacity to implement the early actions	The Albanian Red Cross (ARC) was founded on 4 October 1921 and is the largest and oldest humanitarian organization in Albania. In 1923, the ARC was officially recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and has been a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) since then. The ARC is an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field throughout the country. It has shown its capacity in organizing humanitarian aid operations during crises and disasters, helping a significant number of affected people. Through its developing programs, the ARC provides social and health assistance to communities in need, contributing to reducing vulnerability. It is also involved in conveying the concerns and interests of vulnerable people to decision-making authorities. To reach communities at risk, the ARC has expanded its network of volunteers, increasing transparency, strengthening accountability, and working on extending sustainable partnerships. The ARC collaborates with partners to improve the effectiveness of service delivery. The organization has 38 branches and around 2,000 active volunteers. In the past two years, Albania has experienced recurring extreme heatwaves, significantly affecting the health and well-being of its population, particularly vulnerable groups such as older adults, pregnant women, children, and people with chronic illnesses or disabilities. In response, the ARC implemented and coordinated impactful interventions to mitigate the negative impact of these events. ARC responded in the last two years as follows: • In July 2023, a severe heatwave impacted major cities, including Berat, Tirana, Elbasan, Shkodër, Kuçovë, and Fier. The ARC mobilized volunteer teams in each of these locations to respond effectively. Each team, composed of 3 volunteers trained in first aid, was equipped with Red Cross uniforms, first aid kits, and educational materials. They operated in high-traffic areas during peak heat hours (12:00–14:00) to provide life-saving assistance. The activities included distribution of drinking water to vulnerable groups, including older adults, children, individuals with disabilities, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Establishment of support stations, where volunteers offered information on heat protection measures and first aid services. Fundraising initiative, through mini donation kiosks under the slogan “Donate for a bottle of water for people in need”, fostering community involvement. This campaign, run from July 19 to July 23, 2023, resulted in the distribution of 9,000 bottles of water. • In August 2024, another intense heatwave struck Albania, with temperatures exceeding 40°C in several cities. The ARC launched a similar response in Berat, Tirana, Elbasan, and Shkodër, prioritizing
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	high-risk populations. Volunteer teams of 3–4 members, trained and equipped for emergency situations, operated in designated urban areas identified as heat hotspots. Key actions also included distribution of drinking water during peak heat hours (12:00–15:00) to reduce the risk of dehydration and heat-related illnesses, awareness-raising activities, with volunteers sharing educational materials and broadcasting preventive health messages via social media, coordination with local partners, ensuring the efficient delivery and distribution of 7,500 bottles of water. The Albanian Red Cross branches involved for this sEAP in Tirana, Berat, and Elbasan have shown strong capabilities in supporting vulnerable populations during extreme heat events (“response”). The Tirana branch, with 300 active volunteers, also offers extensive community outreach, including services at schools for around 7,000 clients and relief distribution for 1,300 vulnerable families during the year. Additionally, they provide first aid for institutions and stadiums, promote blood donation, and support home care for older people and children in need. The Berat branch, with 70 active volunteers, conducts home visits to older people, cooperates with municipalities, and raises awareness for tourists during summer. They provide first aid, promote blood donation, and support home care and daily centers for older people. They also integrate vulnerable women into the labor market and offer community services at schools. The Elbasan branch, supported by 120 active volunteers, runs small campaigns, distributes flyers and water, and provides first aid and mobile teams during extreme heat. They offer community services at schools and health promotion at schools and universities. Their general services include first aid for institutions and stadiums, promoting blood donation, and supporting home care and daily centers for older people. These branches work closely with various stakeholders, including hospitals, universities, police, and private companies, to enhance their support for vulnerable populations. Additional Points: 1) ARC and experience in Cash and Voucher Assistance The ARC distributed by far more than EUR 3.7m in the past to most vulnerable people (e.g. 2015 Floods, 2019 EQ, COVID19). The ARC has solid SOPs in place and a long-standing partnership with the Raiffeisen bank on cheque distributions. The ARC was in the past supported by the IFRC Budapest, IFRC CCD in Sarajevo and the Austrian Red Cross to develop and improve CVA and CEA systems. 2) The Albanian Red Cross is able to pre-finance the early action budget in case the trigger is reached to guarantee an implementation of all early actions within the lead time.
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners, Governmental /	The development of the sEAP in Albania involved a collaborative, multi-phase approach involving key stakeholders such as the Albanian Red Cross, Austrian Red Cross, IFRC, IFRC Climate Center, Albanian Institute of Geoscience (IGEO),

other agencies consulted/involved on this simplified EAP	Albanian Ministry of Health, and the Albanian National Civil Protection Agency (NCAP) from the beginning. It started in summer 2023 with a Rapid Feasibility Check (4-7 July 2023) workshop in Tirana. The aim of the feasibility check supported by the AutRC, included several meetings with the Albanian Red Cross, senior management and Disaster Management (DM) team, IGEO, GTZ and NACP was to brainstorm on relevant hazards and risks in the Albanian context (based on secondary data analysis) and to assess the mandates and capacities that are in place to check if a sEAP development is feasible. This kick-off event was key and based on its findings, several additional meetings and workshops followed in Albania supported by the Austrian Red Cross, which are outlined in detail below: 1. First Workshop (5 October 2023): A workshop was organized with the NCAP, IGEO, Institute of Public Health (ISHP, Ministry of Health), Red Cross of Albania, and Red Cross of Austria. The workshop focused on discussing the timeline, administrative aspects, and technical issues related to the EAP's development. 2. Health & Heat Related Risks Discussions (27 June 2024): A meeting with Dr. Alban Ylli, Head of the NCD and Health Sector at the Ministry of Health, and the IGEO was held to discuss health-related risks and IGEO's role in 1) developing the trigger mechanism for the sEAP, 2) supporting on analyzing negative past impact of extreme heat and 3) available forecasting and monitoring products. 3. Second Workshop (28-29 June 2024): This workshop involved representatives from IGEO, ISHP, the Ministry of Health, the Red Cross of Albania, Red Cross Austria, and local branches of Tirana, Berat, and Elbasan. The session focused on introducing the sEAP to the branches and included discussions on extreme heat, vulnerable groups, and early action activities. 4. Co-creating locally led solution activity: During summer 2024 the 3 targeted branches conducted a Baseline Rapid Needs Assessment on needs before and during extreme heat events. The results were discussed in the October workshop below and guided the design of the sEAP and its early actions. 130 interviews were conducted, and a variety of mostly vulnerable population was included. 5. Third Workshop (21-24 October 2024): The workshop focused on finalizing the trigger statement and early action activities, with input from IGEO, the Geosphere Austria, the Ministry of Health, and local branches from Tirana, Berat, and Elbasan. 6. Fourth Workshop (25-27 Nov 2024): Final discussions with external stakeholders (IGEO on forecasting product) and internal experts (e.g. CVA, PSS) conducted and final draft sEAP document and budget drafted. Throughout the entire process, the Austrian Red Cross remained in constant contact with the Albanian Red Cross, facilitating several online sessions to
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	ensure continuous collaboration and knowledge exchange. Additionally, Geosphere Austria provided technical expertise, particularly in defining the triggers for the sEAP and sharing knowledge on ECMWF forecasting products. Online updates were consistently shared with partners (IFRC DREF team) to ensure alignment and progress. The IFRC GVA based Alert Hub Initiative team – active in Albania as well - was actively involved into the sEAP development process and vice versa. Final discussions on the forecasting and monitoring product delivered by the IGEO to ARC as of June 2025 were held on Monday December 2. It was agreed (with the director of the IGEO) that the IGEO prepares the ECMWF 15 days forecasting product in a way that a 10-day forecast could be delivered in a semi-automated way as of June 2025 to the ARC. This includes several IM related tasks and the testing and fine tuning of weather forecasting data which resulted in a one-off service offer of EUR 10,816.
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BUDGET

 Early Action Protocol Summary EAPcode - Albanian Red Cross Heatwave				
<u>Operating Budget</u>	Readiness	Pre-Pos Stock	Early Action	TOTAL
Planned Operations	4,601	43,441	68,932	116,974
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0	0	0	0
Livelihoods	0	0	0	0
Multi-purpose Cash	639	0	64,140	64,779
Health	767	6,486	1,917	9,170
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	0	0	0	0
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	0	0	0	0
Education	0	0	0	0
Migration	0	0	0	0
Risk Red., Climate Adapt. and Recovery	0	29,501	2,876	32,376
Community Engagement and Accountability	3,195	7,455	0	10,650
Environmental Sustainability	0	0	0	0
Enabling Approaches	61,478	12,780	8,733	82,991
Coordination and Partnerships	11,519	0	0	11,519
Secretariat Services	15,656	0	0	15,656
National Society Strengthening	34,304	12,780	8,733	55,817
TOTAL BUDGET	66,079	56,221	77,665	199,966
<i>all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)</i>				

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