

OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (USAID/OFDA)

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA



USAID/OFDA staff in Dominica help transport replacement pipe for water system repairs in remote communities affected by Hurricane Maria. Photo by Ricardo Herrera, USAID/OFDA

USAID/OFDA Continues to Assist Hurricane-Affected Residents of Dominica

USAID/OFDA continues to assist communities in Dominica affected by Hurricane Maria, a powerful Category 5 hurricane that passed directly over the eastern Caribbean island. Hurricane Maria struck Dominica the night of September 18, resulting in catastrophic damage across the country. The storm caused 27 fatalities, damaged or destroyed more than 90 percent of the island’s buildings, along with various roads, bridges, potable water systems, and other vital public infrastructure, and affected the entire population of approximately 71,000 people.

A USAID/OFDA Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART)—previously deployed to the Caribbean to respond to Hurricane Irma—arrived in Dominica within days to assist with emergency response efforts. The DART teamed up with the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica (GoCD) and Joint Task Force-Leeward Islands (JTF-LI)—consisting of members of the U.S. Department of Defense’s Southern Command—to ensure the rapid aerial delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected communities, especially people living in areas cut off by the storm. JTF-LI supported the USAID-led relief efforts to hurricanes Irma and Maria from September 9 until the Caribbean Hurricanes DART officially demobilized on October 9.

By mid-October, the GoCD and humanitarian actors had reached 100 percent of the population in Dominica with some type of emergency assistance, according to the United Nations. Emergency repairs to water networks have restored access to safe drinking water for 55–60 percent of the population; however, specialized repairs and rehabilitation are

required. As of October 19, the GoCD and humanitarian organizations had distributed approximately 750 metric tons (MT) of emergency food assistance to meet the immediate needs of more than 60,000 people.

On October 18, USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) delivered 376 metric tons of food, including beans, rice, sardines, and oil, to the UN World Food Program at Roseau Port for further distribution to an estimated 30,000 people in 40 communities with limited access to food.

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DART members carry a box of USAID-provided plastic sheeting from a U.S. Army helicopter to a supply distribution point in Dominica. Photo courtesy of Capt. Jeremy Croft, U.S. Marine Corps

USAID/OFDA Helps Costa Rica Following Tropical Storm Nate

In early October, heavy rains associated with Tropical Storm Nate caused widespread flooding and landslides in Costa Rica. On October 5, as the storm approached, Costa Rican President Luis Guillermo Solís declared a national emergency and announced the closure of all public schools, universities, and non-essential government offices as a precautionary measure.

Heavy rainfall, hitting already-saturated earth from an exceptionally rainy September, caused multiple landslides in mountainous areas and resulted in widespread flooding and infrastructure damage. The storm resulted in at least 14 deaths, temporarily displaced approximately 8,300 individuals, left an estimated 485,000 people—nearly 10 percent of the nation's population—without access to potable water, and damaged infrastructure, according to the Government of Costa Rica (GoCR) National Commission for Risk Prevention and Disaster Response (CNE). The most affected regions are the country's northern plains, Central Valley, and Pacific slope.

On October 10, in response to the GoCR's request for assistance to respond to the storm, USAID/OFDA provided \$150,000 in humanitarian assistance to support private-sector air operations—managed by CNE—to deliver life-saving relief items and medical care to affected populations in isolated areas.

The CNE transported more than 82 MT of relief supplies through 140 airlifts, using helicopters it owns or leased with USAID/OFDA support as well as helicopters loaned by the Government of Panama. In total, USAID/OFDA supported nearly 73 hours of helicopter flight to affected areas.



Costa Rican authorities offload emergency supplies transported to affected areas with USAID/OFDA support. Photo courtesy of CNE



Building New Homes for Flood-Affected Families in Peru

With USAID/OFDA funding, NGO partners Save the Children (SC) and Plan International are helping trained beneficiaries repair damaged homes and build transitional shelters for more than 2,000 displaced households in La Libertad, Lambayeque, and Piura departments in northwestern Peru after severe flooding and landslides earlier this year. As of mid-October, SC had completed 31 shelter modules with another 96 under construction. Plan International expects to finish building 53 transitional shelters and repairing approximately 300 damaged houses by the end of October. Additionally, with USAID/OFDA support, NGO Water for People has rehabilitated 18 community drinking water systems and provided hygiene education to approximately 1,950 affected families. Photo courtesy of SC

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The GoCD is also working with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to restore markets and provide livelihoods opportunities, including lumber and charcoal production using fallen trees from Hurricane Maria.

To date, USAID/OFDA has contributed more than \$3 million to the Dominica hurricane response, including an initial \$200,000 to non-governmental organization (NGO) Samaritan's Purse and \$100,000 to the Dominica Red Cross Society to fund emergency relief commodities and logistics support. Additionally, the DART airlifted and distributed USAID/OFDA relief commodities valued at approximately \$246,000—including 560 rolls of plastic sheeting for temporary roofs and shelters for at least 3,700 families, 1,600 blankets, 4,800 water containers, and 1,000 hygiene kits—to affected populations in Dominica.

On October 17, USAID/OFDA announced an additional \$2.5 million in humanitarian response funding for Dominica, through a grant to Samaritan's Purse to address shelter and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs, including the procurement of water filtration units and related relief commodities, as well as hygiene promotion. The program aims to support emergency shelter assistance and resilience building activities among families in collective shelters and with host families. USAID/OFDA funds will also support the Dominica Water and Sewerage Company in the emergency rehabilitation of the island's main water supply systems.

The GoCD, UN agencies, and other humanitarian organizations continue to assess the food, security, and WASH needs of affected communities as part of a World Bank-coordinated post-disaster needs assessment.

As of October 27, a five-person USAID/OFDA transition team, including a USAID/OFDA regional advisor and four Caribbean-based disaster risk management specialists, remained on the ground in Dominica, overseeing early recovery activities in collaboration with GoCD officials and other humanitarian organizations.

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