



2017 PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS
Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance

Conrad Sauvé
President & CEO
Canadian Red Cross

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Nearly half of all Canadians have personal experience with a disaster, and that number is only expected to increase as extreme weather events become more frequent and widespread. The spring flooding in the National Capital Region and the ongoing wildfires in central British Columbia remind us of the indiscriminate destruction wrought by disaster on the lives of individuals and families, property and productivity. These types of emergencies are more expensive than ever before, with Disaster Financial Assistance Agreements forecasted to reach \$902 million annually for weather related disasters alone, putting greater pressure on governments and humanitarian agencies to better predict, prepare for, and respond to weather-related emergencies and natural disasters.

The Canadian Red Cross (CRC) is often one of the first organizations to begin assisting people affected by a disaster, and as Minister Goodale said in his address to mark Emergency Management Week 2017, “no one rallies the general community more effectively than the Canadian Red Cross.” We are there to support Canadians in their moment of need and in the months and years that follow, to provide emergency provisions, shelter and financial assistance. We are there to rally Canadian society at large, using our trusted brand to drive donations. And we are there even when the cameras are not, responding to 3,135 emergencies in 2016 alone.

As the Prime Minister recently noted during his visit to fire affected communities in British Columbia:

“I have had the opportunity, before I was elected Prime Minister and since, to travel across the country in times of difficulty and times of distress. From Lac-Mégantic, to the High River floods, to Fort McMurray, to places where families have been battered by floods in the Prairies and Central Canada and always, every time the Red Cross is there. The Red Cross is there to support families, to help people through difficult times.”

While the trends clearly indicate a growing number of risks facing Canadians, research from the United Nations Development Program shows that with foresight and strategic investment, we can significantly enhance Canada’s current levels of readiness. The Canadian Red Cross is proposing an enhanced partnership with the Government of Canada broadly, and Public Safety Canada in particular, to reduce losses in both lives and livelihoods, support health and well-being following disasters, and increase understanding of the risks of disasters, in every dimension.

While a partnership between the Canadian Red Cross and the Government of Canada may not address the question of helping individuals and businesses in Canada become more productive, it does speak to protecting and recovering productivity, of individuals, families and entire communities, in the face of disaster. Additional education and training will greatly benefit our ability to maintain and expand our capabilities to serve communities “as a nimble, reliable and excellent “auxiliary” to governments in helping people in times of need” as Minister Goodale stated in his Emergency Management Week address, requires a predictable, stable commitment from the Government of Canada. Together, we can work to protect Canadian families and communities, mitigate the effects of a disaster on productivity and return these communities to their pre-event levels of productivity.

The Canadian Red Cross is uniquely placed to support whole of society approaches to emergency management as we intersect the public, private and voluntary sectors. Relationships across these three sectors are difficult to build in the immediate post-emergency environment and yet are integral to the efficiency and effectiveness of a response operation, as each of these sectors control essential resources. In a response, complexity stems from the need to coordinate both known and emerging resources in an effective and timely manner.

We understand the communities we serve: Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by natural disasters such as floods and forest fires. Natural emergencies, many of which are annual occurrences, create additional stress and trauma for communities and exacerbate existing social problems. As Tom Jackson said at a recent ceremony honouring leadership on Indigenous issues at Rideau Hall:

“We live in a real diverse country with a thousand colours. Now I work with the Red Cross, and the Red Cross reminds me of First Nation communities because if something goes wrong in your community, your province, your country, the world, all of that colour goes away and we become a family.”

This statement exemplifies the Canadian Red Cross’ spirit and our commitment to reaching everyone in their time of need – no community too small or too remote.

Technology is recognized as a key enabler to efficient emergency responses, enabling effective coordination. Yet a significant gap remains: during an emergency, there is no existing technology to present a comprehensive picture of the identities, locations and needs of the disaster-affected population, to virtually communicate with these people, or provide digitally-based rapid financial assistance. The opportunity to promote innovation through technology to better anticipate and meet the needs of disaster-affected people should be seized through this proposed partnership.

The 2016 wildfires in Fort McMurray, the largest in both the province and Canadian Red Cross’ history, highlighted current gaps and vulnerabilities in Canada’s response capacity for catastrophic-level events. As the largest domestic operation in Canadian Red Cross history, it also highlighted the limits of our own capacity and the need to better adapt our work to meet the growing challenges in Canada’s changing risk landscape.

The work of the Canadian Red Cross, and its partnership with the Government of Canada, extends beyond the simple question of how to enable Canadians’ productivity, to address the fundamental issues of safety and security, loss and recovery in the face of a disaster.

PROPOSAL FOR PARTNERSHIP

A five-year, \$140 million joint investment is being proposed to further leverage the strengths of the Canadian Red Cross, and our network, as an integral part of the National Emergency Management Framework. This partnership will support and invest in four core areas; disaster response and catastrophic planning, Emergency Management Information Systems, community preparedness and public engagement and improved coordination.

1. DISASTER RESPONSE & CATASTROPHIC PLANNING; INCLUDING TRAINED DISASTER READY PERSONNEL.

- Double the number of trained disaster ready responders to 12,000, with a higher concentration in high risk areas, including 500 Indigenous community-based responders.
- Augment the Canadian Red Cross' capacity enabling the organization to provide 500,000 people with emergency response and recovery supports including 25,000 people with emergency shelter. This support includes consideration for people with disabilities, elderly and cultural requirements.
- Develop capacity to treat and distribute safe drinking water for up to 10,000 people during an emergency, including deployable capabilities to serve isolated communities.
- Pre-position equipment and stock in high-risk communities.

2. DIGITAL REGISTRATIONS & ASSISTANCE PLATFORM: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

Strengthen internal systems and stock to enable the organization to register and authenticate up to 500,000 emergency-affected people within the first seven days of the catastrophe, and provide them with financial digital assistance.

- Real-time needs analysis including mapping, demographic profiles of affected populations and generation of other decision-aids
- Two-way communication through e-mail, SMS, call centres and chat
- Surveys including identification of unmet needs, return to home plans, and service delivery feedback
- Direct assistance including electronic fund transfers
- Case Management commencing in the early recovery phase, including tele-casework for remote assistance where appropriate.

3. COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Development of community preparedness through engagement tools, training, and planning support, including substantial capacity-improvements in Indigenous communities.

- Enhancement of personal preparedness capacity including education and other disaster risk reduction initiatives. For example, when not engaged in a response, Red Cross volunteers support local preparedness and risk mitigation ensuring that Canadian individuals, families and entire communities are stronger, safer and more resilient when disaster strikes.
- Application of evidence based approaches to reducing the impacts to major threats at household level for vulnerable populations.

- Contributes to Understanding of Risk, in all its dimensions through strategic communications including social media and innovative tools as message delivery options.

4. SUPPORT TO PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONSE COORDINATION

Improved coordination with the Federal Government during times of emergency.

- Enable improved consistency in service delivery by designating the Red Cross with responsibility for Emergency Social Services in the revised Federal Emergency Response Plan
- Trained Red Cross personnel embedded at the Government Operations Centre will promote a whole-of-society approach to emergency response, ensuring that the GOC is able to capitalize on existing relationships with the Canadian public, private and voluntary sectors readiness and operational efficiency

A SHARED INVESTMENT:

	Government of Canada	Red Cross Fundraising	Total Joint Investment
Trained disaster ready volunteers and staff	55,000,000		90,000,000
Digital registration & assistance platform (EMIS)	5,000,000	3,000,000	8,000,000
Community preparedness & public engagement.	2,000,000	2,000,000	4,000,000
Support to Public Safety Response Coordination	500,000		500,000
Emergency Response Activities (Personal Disaster Response)		22,500,000	22,500,000
Standard Overhead Cost (12%)	7,500,000	7,500,000	15,000,000
Grant Total	70,000,000	70,000,000	140,000,000