

2021



BHUTAN

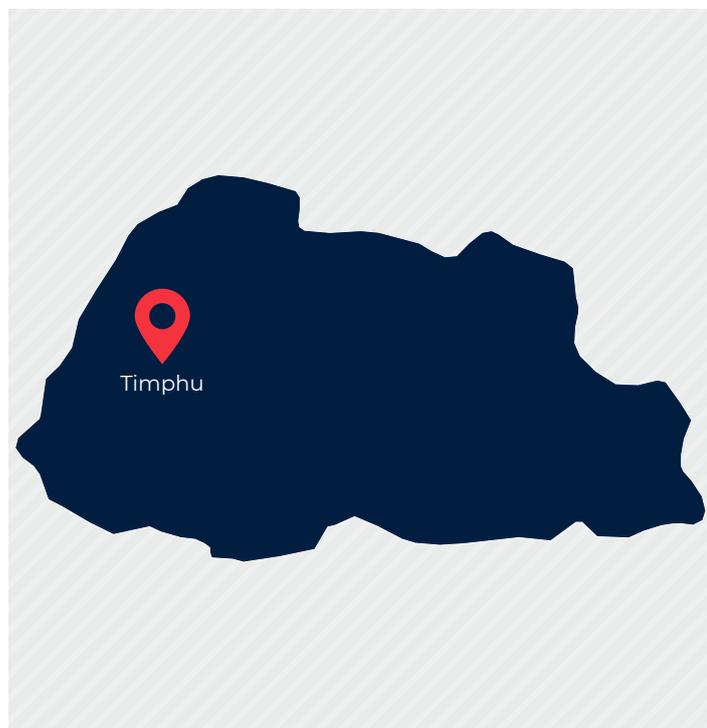
IFRC COUNTRY OFFICE

Appeal number

MAABT001

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

500,000



National
Society
Branches

30



National
Society
Staff

24



People
to be
reached

700,000

This document details the IFRC's support in areas agreed upon with the relevant National Society. The IFRC seeks resources to carry out this country/cluster plan listed here as funding requirements.



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

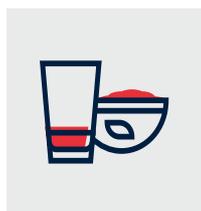
Population

771,000

2019 Human Development Index Ranking

129

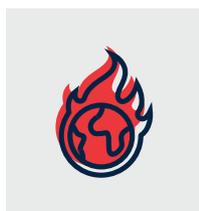
Vulnerability to disasters



Food scarcity



Water insecurity



Climate change



Landslides



Earthquakes

Bhutan is a small, mountainous country between the People's Republic of China and India. Despite limited connectivity to global markets, Bhutan has transformed itself from being a pastoral and agricultural economy into a rapidly growing low middle-income country by managing its natural resources and unlocking its hydropower potential.

With a vision that reaches far beyond the economic values of development, the Fourth King introduced the philosophy of Gross National Happiness as the guiding principle of the government, which coincides with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both aim at sustainable and equitable socio-economic development, environmental conservation, and good governance.

The past 10 years have seen advancements in human development in Bhutan with progress in infrastructure, health and education services, and the country's governance. Income poverty reduced from 23.2 per cent in 2007 to 8.2 per cent in 2017, while extreme poverty fell from 5.9 to 1.6 per cent. Despite progress, the United Nation's World Happiness Report 2019 revealed that Bhutan, currently ranking 95 out of 156 countries, is facing multiple development challenges.

Bhutan is also vulnerable to seismic activity, the consequences of climate change and environmental natural hazards.

Bhutan's economy relies on the production and export of hydropower. As Bhutan transitions into the status of a Middle-Income Country by 2023, the country will have to diversify its economy. Stimulating Cottage and Small Industries may enhance domestic production, reduce employment and inequality, and promote innovation, entrepreneurial skills and inclusive growth.

With Bhutan's transition to democracy civil society organizations have become more visible but civic engagement and participation is still weak. Their innovative and creative contributions are increasingly recognized, largely for their work on social protection, access to basic services, income and livelihood opportunities. Voluntary services are an important driver of civic engagement in Bhutan. Civil society and non-profit organizations will become important actors to deepen democracy in Bhutan if they engage in policy dialogue and advocate for the needs and concerns of citizens.



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ROLE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY



Established

2017

The Bhutan Red Cross Society (BRCS) is striving to become a network of members and volunteers in communities that will provide social inclusion, health and disaster risk management services as auxiliary to the Government of Bhutan.

The Health Emergency Management Committee has given the Bhutan National Society the lead responsibility in caring for the deceased following disasters. The National Society has trained 854 volunteers in this area across all its 30 branches.

The Bhutan National Society is finalising its Strategy 2030, which focuses on disaster and climate resilience, youth, health, private sector development, gender and civic engagement.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Society and its volunteers have worked tirelessly to support national response operations. The National Society also supports the Government with personal protective equipment (PPE) kits and provides PPE to volunteers when they're on duty.



MEMBERSHIP COORDINATION AND MOVEMENT FOOTPRINT

Movement coordination

Name of Partner National Society	Climate	Crises	Health	Migration	Inclusion	Engaged	Accountable	Trusted
Finnish Red Cross		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Swiss Red Cross	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
ICRC			✓		✓			

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the ICRC and the Bhutan National Society work together to develop the National Society's foundation structure, systems and capacities. The Movement supports the National Society to recruit members and volunteers, establish branch networks, a formal status and leadership development. There is also close technical collaboration on first aid, community resilience, communication, disaster response, and the National Society's development.

The National Society coordinates with the Ministries, UN agencies and civil society organisations while planning and delivering humanitarian services. It is a member of the Development Partners Group along with the United Nations, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and other international NGOs in Bhutan.

The ICRC supports the National Society to strengthen its capacity for caring for deceased people following disasters and first aid, health in emergencies and the promotion of international humanitarian law.

The IFRC supports the National Society in its COVID-19 response including with healthcare, risk communications, community engagement, health and hygiene promotion, and help to vulnerable groups and volunteers. The ICRC and Swiss Red Cross support the National Society to obtain PPE materials and develop its volunteers.



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CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

50,000

People to be reached

800



As a result of climate change, the frequency and intensity of climate and weather hazards are expected to increase in Bhutan. The country is already vulnerable to several types of natural hazards, including floods, landslides, earthquakes, glacial lake outburst, and droughts. Heavy seasonal monsoon rains and glacial melt are the most common cause of flooding and landslides. Over 70 per cent of settlements, most infrastructure and fertile agricultural land are located along the main drainage basins, placing them at high risk of flooding.

The melting glaciers and decreasing ice reserves in the Himalayas are threatening water supplies. Pollution from vehicles, tourism and mega hydropower dams further compound the crises. The resulting glacier lake outburst floods and unpredictable monsoons are having a negative effect on agricultural production.

The country is also at a high risk of earthquakes due to its proximity to the seismically active Himalayan belt.

To improve climate resilience and reduce the communities' risks, Bhutan pursues a robust disaster risk management approach. The high-priority status of disaster risk management is reflected in a supporting architecture of legislation, frameworks, and rules and regulations. The challenge for Bhutan lies in implementation capacity at the local level.

The National Society, with IFRC support, will build local people's knowledge of climate-related risks and of how to restore the country's natural resources, land and water management, vegetation, and green technology activities. It will also communicate with local authorities to integrate climate risks into development planning. The National Society will work closely with the Bhutan Met Department to disseminate impact-based forecasts to the public.

The IFRC and the National Society will integrate and anticipate the short and long-term impacts of the climate and environmental crises in their programmes and operations, to support the most at-risk communities.

ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will support the National Society to develop community contingency plans.
- The IFRC will build staff capacity, and the National Society will build volunteer capacity, to manage and restore Bhutan's natural resources.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to plan community activities to address the evolving impacts of climate change.
- Support the National Society to increase the government's and partners' ambitions relating to climate action.



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EVOLVING CRISES AND DISASTERS

Funding requirement in Swiss francs
60,000

People to be reached
900



Humanitarian crises and disasters are predicted to become more common, complex, concentrated, dynamic, and costly. The IFRC is committed to strengthening the ability of people in Bhutan to cope with new and evolving crises and disasters, reduce their risks and recover from the primary and secondary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The National Society will strengthen its disaster response intervention by building local capacities, improving its standard operating procedures and ensuring prepositioned stocks of essential resources equipment for humanitarian assistance to respond quickly in emergencies. It will also ensure that staff and volunteers are trained in disaster management so they can be deployed when required, and emergency responses are better coordinated. The National Society will strive to be the lead agency in the country for emergency operations in coordination with government agencies responding to disasters.

To increase resilience to evolving and multiple shocks and hazards, at-risk communities prone to flash floods, landslides and earthquake will receive early warning. The National Society will support them to take active steps to reduce their vulnerability and exposure to hazards.

The IFRC will scale up cash- and voucher-based assistance so that people who are affected by disasters receive timely and need-based in-kind support if markets and services are not available. The National Society will undertake needs assessments to identify people most in need and their preferences when planning a response.

The National Society will enhance its coordination and collaboration with critical stakeholders, including national and sub-national bodies, civil society, and research institutions.

The National Society will also advocate for effective and protective disaster-related laws, policies and regulations and work in close collaboration with authorities during and after a disaster. It will also scale up its disaster law research and advocacy leadership to make communities safer, facilitate humanitarian assistance and improve the protection and inclusion of the most vulnerable when faced with a crisis.



18

Major earthquakes affecting Bhutan in the past 120 years



7,300

People left without shelter after earthquake in 2009

ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will support the National Society to reduce local vulnerability to disaster and increase preparedness for early action, response and recovery.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to build community resilience through programmes on school safety and sensitising on hygiene promotion.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to invest in locally led action as the most effective and efficient way to save lives.

GROWING GAPS IN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

190,000

People to be reached

840,000



Bhutan has made impressive progress in improving people's health and wellbeing, resulting in an overall life expectancy of 71 years for women and 70 for men. Yet, changes in lifestyle and dietary habits are fueling the rise of non-communicable diseases. 34 per cent of the Bhutan population is overweight, contributing to 69 per cent of deaths due to hypertension, cardiovascular conditions, cancer, and diabetes. Increased efforts in community-based health promotion and surveillance will be needed to prevent and mitigate these epidemiological trends.

Healthcare facilities have limited WASH services, with 40 per cent of the district hospitals having severe water shortage. Only 63 per cent of people in Bhutan have access to basic sanitation.

One in every five schools lacks water for functional toilets and washing with soap. Nearly one-third of schools have no separate toilets for girls. Most monastic schools and nunneries in Bhutan lack basic WASH facilities and water heating systems. These shortfalls severely affect children's well-being, physical and mental development, while they also bear gender-related repercussions. The poor sanitation facilities and consequent inadequate personal hygiene lead to skin infections, worm infestations and diarrhoea. Today, around 34 per cent of monasteries lack proper sanitation and approximately 65 per cent do not have a water supply.

Urban areas and districts bordering India in the south of Bhutan are affected with high risks of local transmissions of COVID-19. Despite limited resources, the Government is doing its best to control and minimise transmissions by sealing all borders and quarantining Bhutanese people entering the country. The COVID-19 outbreak and international lockdown, have badly affected tourism and related sectors such as hotels and restaurants. As there are only a few testing centres and one laboratory centre, further demands in the need for testing will strain the system and lead to serious delays. Health services, staff, and first responders also have limited access to medical resources and PPE, which is increasing the risk of infection.

The Bhutan National Society's taxi volunteers have taken the lead in contact tracing. They have distributed 10,000 passenger logbooks to taxi drivers to record the details of passengers. This will support the Government to distribute COVID-19 vaccines in the coming years. The IFRC will also support the National Society to expand its COVID-19 preparation, reach, quality and activities, including training volunteers, staff and the general public.



65%

Monasteries
that lack
water
supplies



63%

People
with access
to basic
sanitation
services



40%

District
hospitals with
severe water
shortages

➔ ACTIVITIES

- Develop WASH strategy
- Implement medical outreach and train staff and volunteers in first aid and emergency response
- Strengthen and improve existing Community Units
- Distribute non-food item (NFI) and dignity kits to vulnerable communities

VALUES, POWER, AND INCLUSION

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

80,000

People to be reached

50,000



In its five-year plan 2019-2023, the government of Bhutan defined gender equality a priority objective to reach the goal of a “Just Society”. While female-headed households are common in some rural regions of Bhutan, there are still significant gender inequalities. Women’s representation in decision-making roles in parliament and civil service is low and women are held back by ingrained views about their role in family and society. The high adolescent fertility rate for example, is an obstacle to women’s access to vocational and tertiary education. Unemployment rates have been higher among women than men for over a decade, particularly in urban areas, and women dominate agricultural jobs where earnings are low. There is also tolerance for domestic violence, with a recent survey showing that nearly a quarter of all women have suffered emotional, physical, or sexual violence from husbands and partners.

Bhutan has a GNH-based (‘Educating for Gross National Happiness’) policy, which has seen the monastic education system change to a modern system. The policy aims to protect and preserve the cultural integrity of Bhutan. Studies show that Bhutan successfully provides equitable and quality education, while its green school initiatives should positively impact environmental sustainability.

The National Society promotes and supports a more inclusive, equitable and cohesive society where all people are socially included, experience compassion and diversity is celebrated by promoting positive humanitarian values.

The Bhutan National Society will contribute to positive community change through a broader understanding, ownership and application of humanitarian values and fundamental principles by young people. It will develop innovative methodologies, tools and technologies to support the scale-up of youth programmes and initiate new strategic partnerships for collaboration on humanitarian education with education authorities.

The National Society will adopt a comprehensive Protection, Gender and Inclusion approach across operations and programmes, and encourage participation in emergency operations. It will adapt programmes to meet the specific needs of vulnerable and marginalised people and their inclusion in decision making.

The National Society will apply a community engagement and accountability approach to procedures, ensuring communities can provide feedback, express their needs or make complaints. This approach maximises the National Society’s relationship with the community to help them speak out about the issues that affect them and influence decision and policymakers to implement positive changes.

🎯 TARGET

Women will make up 40% of people in emergency response, first aid training, community-level training, and the beneficiary of disaster assistance.

➡️ ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will support the National Society to develop a flagship programme focusing on young people to scale up humanitarian education.
- The National Society will strengthen youth engagement activities.
- The National Society will assess the specific needs of people who have disabilities.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to implement a new Gender and Diversity policy to ensure its leadership, staff and volunteers are more gender-balanced and that its programmes are inclusive, rights-based, built on people’s needs and priorities.



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ENABLER 1

ENGAGED WITH RENEWED INFLUENCE, INNOVATIVE AND DIGITALLY TRANSFORMED WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

80,000

The National Society and the IFRC will strengthen their engagement with partners within and outside the network to address the priority challenges facing communities in Bhutan. To achieve this, the IFRC will support country-level planning processes to ensure all partnering bodies align with the National Society's goals.

The IFRC will strengthen its cooperation with regional and global reference centres, including hubs and labs to capture evidence and share knowledge and lessons learned across the network. The IFRC will also support the National Society to substantially widen its involvement and leadership of civil society and other coalitions at national and local levels.

The IFRC will support the National Society with communications and public advocacy resources and advice to increase its impact, public trust and understanding of its role and activities. It will support the National Society to build its leadership in the central areas of humanitarian and development policy.

To be first to market with communications regarding disasters and crises, including pandemics, the IFRC will support the National Society to develop relationships with media editors and journalists. It will also invest in audio/visual content gathering for media and social media to tell stories of the National Society's humanitarian work.

Where requested, the IFRC will support the Bhutan National Society in negotiations to strengthen the recognition of its auxiliary role, in its positioning and in raising its voice more consistently in humanitarian and development settings.

The IFRC and the National Society will implement foundational IT digital systems to run efficiently and ensure accountability. These systems will ensure the National Society staff and volunteers are 'data ready' for operational decision making.

The IFRC will ensure a data-sharing model that allows the IFRC, ICRC and National Societies to safely exchange information and share peer-to-peer approaches for information and communications for humanitarian services. It will adopt data protection best practices and information security measures in ongoing and new operations.

ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will provide training and peer support to the National Society in influencing skills, data literacy and strategy development.
- The IFRC will provide simple and affordable tools and advice to the National Society to ensure that programmes and communications focus on public behaviour change.
- The IFRC will take steps to bridge the digital divide and improve data use and protection.



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ENABLER 2

ACCOUNTABLE WITH AN AGILE MANAGEMENT AND A RENEWED FINANCING MODEL WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

50,000

The IFRC will support the Bhutan National Society to deliver its humanitarian work to affected communities as effectively and efficiently as possible.

To achieve this, the IFRC will develop the National Society's staff and volunteers' talent at all levels. It will maintain a strong gender, diversity and inclusion culture so that the National Society can reach all vulnerable people effectively and in a non-discriminatory and equitable way. This will be in place both at the institutional level and in the way the National Society carries out humanitarian operations. The IFRC will also ensure there are mechanisms in place to monitor and improve this culture.

The IFRC will develop a practical management framework with transparent and inclusive processes understood by all stakeholders. It will also ensure that financial resources are safeguarded and managed effectively, efficiently and transparently. This includes specific activities such as drafting a finance manual and providing systems that can generate reports quickly and accurately.

The IFRC will ensure organisational risk is managed across its global network, addressing risk management culture at all levels, with a clear link to accountability and quality assurance. It will also develop and implement a strategy and a plan of action to reduce the risk of fraud and corruption, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. It will ensure that its policy database is relevant and up to date.

The IFRC will ensure that its web-based systems are accessible at all levels. It will implement a new web-based system that supports globally integrated processes for finance, reporting, HR, logistics, partnership and resource development, and all of its humanitarian programmes.

Finally, the IFRC will establish a method to measure the global network capacity and effectiveness in responding to disasters.



ENABLER 3

TRUSTED BY COMMUNITIES, OWNED AND VALUED BY THE MEMBERSHIP WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

51,000

The IFRC will support the National Society in its development to become the trusted partner of choice for local humanitarian action with the capabilities to act in the global network. To achieve this, the National Society will assess its development needs and revise its legal base (including amending statutes). The National Society will then review its strategic and development plans to address its services' sustainability better, ensure its branch network is healthy, and that the volunteer base is diverse.

The National Society will improve its financial sustainability by investing in accountability and systems development; securing new and additional resources; and its vision and mandate. It will also develop and adopt guidelines, tools, and mechanisms to prevent, manage and address integrity and reputational risks.

Bhutan has one of the world's youngest populations, with 60 per cent below the age of 25 years. Innovative approaches will be required to ensure they are self-reliant on food and can strengthen food, cyber, and home security.

The IFRC will support the National Society to prioritise volunteering development and youth action as critical catalysts of behavioural change and local action. The National Society will review its Volunteering Policy with support from the IFRC to confirm it is aligned with the Strategy 2030 and the new Global Volunteering Policy. This will help to engage youth and volunteers to contribute to decision making and innovation. It will also strengthen mechanisms to protect volunteers, promote psychosocial well-being and provide greater support to people killed or injured in the line of duty, and their families.

ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will support the National Society to engage with young community-based drivers of change by inviting them to contribute to the design and delivery of programmes.
- The IFRC will promote, co-create and implement shared leadership initiatives such as reference centres and knowledge hubs.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to actively participate in the initiatives of the South Asia Youth Network.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with **192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and around **14 million volunteers**. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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