

2021



CENTRAL AMERICA

IFRC COUNTRY CLUSTER

Appeal number
MAA43002

Funding requirement in Swiss francs
6 million



Countries

6



Volunteers

22,665

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

47 million

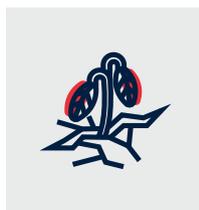
Vulnerability to disasters



Earthquakes



Migration



Drought



Natural disasters



COVID-19



Civil unrest

The Central American region is made up of six countries including Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama, with a total population of more than 47 million people and high levels of social exclusion and inequality. Historically, the region has been affected by natural disasters, global economic crises, and armed conflicts. In the last decade, there has been an increase in violence, migration, and socio-political crises resulting in demand for more transparent and democratic governments.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities. Most governments in the region declared a state of emergency and applied strict measures to prevent the virus spreading, which included periods of up to six months of movement restrictions and confinement. These measures strongly impacted the socio-economic and psychosocial conditions of the population and put the National Societies at financial risk. Some National Societies experienced a fluctuation in the volunteer base alongside an increase in humanitarian demands and operational challenges. There still remains potential for the deepening of the political, economic and social crisis caused by the complex regional context combined with the repercussions of COVID-19.



Nicaragua © Nigel Dickinson

ROLE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The **Guatemalan Red Cross** has 20 branches and 1,200 volunteers that implement key actions in disaster management, health in emergencies, water, sanitation and hygiene, disaster risk reduction, climate change, social inclusion, violence prevention and migration. It recently implemented an Organisational Development Improvement Plan and will conduct a review of progress in 2021 for a second phase of Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification.

The **Salvadorean Red Cross Society** has 63 branches and 2,207 volunteers. Its structure allows for the modernisation and innovation in the implementation of programmes. In particular, the social inclusion programme has been vital for raising awareness and preventing violence. The National Society implements important initiatives to safeguard the security and safety of its volunteers and strengthen its development, leadership, and sustainability.

The **Honduran Red Cross** has 52 branches and 9,815 volunteers and has taken steps to strengthen its leadership and expand its portfolio. It implements community-based programmes on social inclusion, violence prevention, community-based health and first aid, migration and disaster risk reduction.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross** has 32 branches and 1521 volunteers. It has been completing the IFRC's Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification and is improving financial systems and internal procedures to facilitate the implementation of humanitarian programmes. Its disaster risk reduction, disaster management, and health capacities provide an opportunity to strengthen services at the national level.

The **Costa Rican Red Cross** was the first National Society in the Americas to achieve an Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification. It has 121 branches and a volunteer base of more than 5544 people who support social inclusion, migration, disaster risk management, disaster management, psychosocial support, and climate change programmes. Its high-quality management structure provides opportunities to consolidate regional strategies and promote peer to peer support with other National Societies.

The **Red Cross Society of Panama** has 23 branches 666 volunteers. A new National Society Governing Board was elected in 2020. The National Society supports the Population Movement Regional Emergency appeal with water, sanitation, hygiene, and health actions focused on attending the humanitarian needs of migrants in the border province of Darien, and is working on a migration strategy to transition from an emergency to a programmatic approach. The National Society has also been involved in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATION AND MOVEMENT FOOTPRINT

Name of Partner National Society	Climate	Crises	Health	Migration	Inclusion	Engaged	Accountable	Trusted
American Red Cross	✓			✓				
German Red Cross	✓							✓
Italian Red Cross	✓		✓					
Norwegian Red Cross	✓		✓	✓				
Spanish Red Cross	✓		✓	✓				
Swedish Red Cross	✓			✓				
Swiss Red Cross	✓					✓		

Movement footprint

Central America receives financial and technical support from the Swedish Red Cross, the Swiss Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Italian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the American Red Cross, and the German Red Cross, as well as the ICRC and the IFRC.

The ICRC supports Central America's National Societies to design operational strategies for safer access, safety regulations and procedures. It also supports efforts to strengthen volunteers and staff capacities through training. The ICRC runs programmes to prevent violence, to assist migrants, to strengthen leadership in the region, and on statutory procedures and Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation agreements.

The National Societies of Central America also coordinate their actions with and are supported by The National Coordination for Disaster Reduction of Guatemala (CONRED), The Permanent Contingency Commission of Honduras (COPECO), Civil Protection, the National System for the Prevention, Mitigation and Attention of Disasters (SINAPRED), Coordination Center for the Disaster Prevention in Central America and Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC), The National Emergency Commission (CNE), the National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC), the Humanitarian Mechanisms of Country Coordination (REDHUM), the Department of Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid of the European Commission (ECHO), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Fund of the United Nations for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) as well as with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), World Organization for Migration, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Oxfam, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Save The Children, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The National Societies also collaborate with the private sector, including companies such as AirBnB, Bayer, and Nestle, alongside telephone companies, banks, supermarkets chains, and more.



Guatemala © Guatemalan Red Cross

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

670,000

People to be reached

3,250



Central America is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. By 2050, approximately 200 million people per year could require international humanitarian aid as a result of climate-related disasters and the socioeconomic impact of climate change. The hazards most likely to trigger a major humanitarian response in the region are sudden onset hazards such as earthquakes, hurricanes and flash floods.

The IFRC is embarking on a ten year-long project to tackle five main challenges, the first of which is addressing the ever-growing Climate and Environmental Crises. The IFRC's Regional Office of the Americas and its National Societies have identified three main courses or pillars for action in order to fulfil the Strategy 2030 around climate-oriented actions: Increasing Knowledge and Advocacy, Generating Community Resilience, and undergoing an internal "Green Transformation".

🎯 TARGET 1

Communities and RCRC in Central America undertake urgent actions to adapt to the rising and evolving risks from the climate and environmental crises

🎯 TARGET 2

RCRC in the region is making a continuous and measurable contribution to improve environmental management and climate change mitigation.



41 million
people affected by floods since 2000

➡ ACTIVITIES

- Development of an integral understanding around climate-related threats and its impact on communities, create awareness on Climate Change and environmental issues throughout our network of volunteers, staff as well as the communities we serve.
- Capacity Building around Climate Smart-DRR, early warning and early action, climate change adaptation/mitigation, environmental-related programming, etc.
- Creating campaigns to promote innovation and mobilization at all levels, mobilizing the power of local community leaders and Youth.
- Creating innovative new partnerships centered around climate action and environment.
- Mainstreaming urgent climate action and risk management considerations in all programmatic areas.
- Support initiatives aimed at identifying, avoiding, reducing and mitigating the adverse environmental impacts resulting from humanitarian response and long-term programmes.



El Salvador © IFRC

EVOLVING CRISES AND DISASTERS

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

2,200,000



Central America is situated within the 'Ring of Fire', a path characterised by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes. A volcanic eruption could lead to significant destruction, temporary displacement, and loss of life. Central America is also one of the regions most exposed to climate events and its societies and ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change; storms impacting the region are becoming increasingly powerful and there is less time for recovery between events. The region is also repeatedly affected by drought, intense rains, cyclones and the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon.

Between June and August 2018, the Dry Corridor in Central America that affects El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua experienced longer and more severe than average dry conditions. Agricultural production witnessed a steep decline ranging from 50 - 75 per cent on average. As a result, more than 2.2 million people in these countries remain food insecure and over 1.4 million people are in need of food assistance. Migration has been a pressing concern during the last years in Central America. The threat level remains high for future humanitarian crises in any Central American country due to the unmet basic needs of the population, the high level of inequality, and the lack of trust in local authorities. There have also been various epidemiological humanitarian crises in the region, such as Dengue, Zika and COVID-19, but most National health systems are weak and easily overwhelmed.

The IFRC and the National Society have the capacity to engage with and support communities and local authorities to understand the complexity and nature of the threats in the region. Their mission is to improve the resilience of communities to adapt to evolving crises. In 2021, the IFRC in Central America will manage and systematise the reduction of multi-hazard risks and address the underlying drivers of vulnerability and displacement in all National Society programmes and operations. It will support the National Societies to scale up the capacities of community volunteers to improve preparedness for multi-hazards. This will include supporting risk assessments processes, developing community preparedness and contingency plans with high-risk communities, and anticipating and managing compounded risks from other disasters and crises.

🎯 TARGET 1

Communities take action to increase their resilience to evolving and multiple shocks and hazards

🎯 TARGET 2

At-risk communities share and receive actionable risk information and are supported to take active steps to reduce their vulnerability

➡️ ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will provide guidance and support for institutional preparedness through the Preparedness for Effective Response analysis
- The IFRC will support Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Risk Management capacity building initiatives in the region
- The National Societies will expand the preparedness for effective response at the branch level
- The National Societies will expand their leadership in the field of Disaster Law

GROWING GAPS IN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

540,000



Central America is facing serious health, social, economic, political and climate-related situations that have substantial mental health and psychosocial impacts on communities. A high rate of violence increases the levels of stress and fear. Natural disasters contribute to the loss of livelihoods, which pushes people to migrate in search of better living conditions. Migration often leads to a loss of the sense of belonging, which can increase feelings of sadness and hopelessness. The social exclusion suffered by vulnerable groups like the indigenous population interferes with their access to health services. The Central American region receives the lowest governmental mental health expenditure median annual per capita of just US\$1 in comparison with the US\$ 13.8 invested in the rest of the Americas.

The arrival of COVID-19 increased the risk of mental problems in the region due to the effects of social isolation measures, not being able to follow cultural grieving rituals, fear of contagion and death, an increase in unemployment, and the physical and emotional burden to which health workers have been subjected. With guidance from the IFRC, the National Societies implemented psychosocial support interventions at the community level focused on training the communities in Psychological First Aid, including in schools to promote the adoption of a culture of well-being and resilience from an early age. The National Societies also acted as advocates to guarantee crucial access to mental health services.

An unacceptable number of people in Central America still do not have access to clean water and basic sanitation, which fosters environments where common diseases thrive such as the current Dengue outbreak that has been affecting Central America since 2018. In the last 20 years, there has been significant progress made in water, sanitation and hygiene improvements across the region. However, disparities at the local, regional, and national levels have left many people without affordable, equitable and sustainable access to basic services.

The global response to COVID-19 has also exposed large gaps in water, sanitation and hygiene, especially good hygiene practices in households, schools, and healthcare facilities for the prevention of infectious diseases. Access to water, sanitation and hygiene services is essential for the effective infection prevention and control.

🎯 TARGET 1

Health and dignity of communities in emergencies are maintained with access to appropriate health services

🎯 TARGET 2

National Societies can adequately prepare for and respond to the health consequences of disasters and crises

🎯 TARGET 3

Communities have increased access to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services

🎯 TARGET 4

Communities at risk from pandemics and epidemics have increased access to affordable, appropriate and environmentally sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services

➡ ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will support the National Societies to update their water, sanitation and hygiene strategies
- The National Societies will regularly engage in relevant national public health advocacy platforms
- The IFRC will support the National Societies to meet the mental health and psychosocial support needs of communities, volunteers and staff
- The IFRC will support National Societies to adequately prepare for and respond to the health consequences of disasters and crisis, including epidemic and pandemics.

MIGRATION AND IDENTITY

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

1,480,000

People to be reached

18,000



Migration and displacement in Central America are constantly increasing and decreasing. Every six months the statistics of returns are different. Many migrants and refugees have travelled to North America, and many people have returned to their countries of origin.

Central America is currently recognized as the migratory corridor of transcontinental migrants, who enter America through the coastal areas of Colombia or Ecuador and travel through the Darien jungle in Panama, crossing the Central American countries, to Mexico and the United States. Although there is no exact number of migrants in transit from Panama to Mexico and the United States, it is known that this migratory corridor is full of risks that make migrants more vulnerable, as well as formal and informal barriers to accessing services.

The combination of Covid-19, social exclusion, violence, and climate-related disasters poses new humanitarian challenges. The hurricanes Eta and Iota for example, destroyed livelihoods across a region that was already facing an economic crisis and where the income of thousands of families had already been severely depleted due to the pandemic, violence and lack of access to rights. People have been forced to sell their animals and properties, eat less food, and abandon their hometowns to find new ways of generating income. Migrants and displaced persons face protection risks, such as a lack of access to humanitarian assistance, comprehensive health care, and education. They also face difficulties integrating into new communities and have limited access to decent work and adequate housing. In addition, a lack of access to temporary shelters on migration routes increases their vulnerabilities.

● TARGET 1

Migrants and displaced persons have access to humanitarian assistance and protection at key points along migratory routes

● TARGET 2

National Societies are able to engage with migrants, displaced persons and host communities to more effectively assess, understand and respond to their priority needs

➔ ACTIVITIES

- Improve the protection and assistance of migrants and displaced persons to reduce vulnerabilities
- Reduce stigma and discrimination against migrants by raising public awareness
- Exercise humanitarian diplomacy to ensure full respect for the rights of migrants
- Establish mechanisms to facilitate a Movement coordination approach at the regional and country levels
- Expand assistance and protection services for migrants along routes in the Northern Triangle of Central America
- Enhance information and data collection to improve understanding of migratory flows and humanitarian needs
- Create safe referral mechanisms in the Northern Triangle of Central America
- Expand assistance and protection services for migrants along routes with an emphasis on the Northern Triangle of Central America
- Create safe referral mechanisms, particularly in the Northern Triangle of Central America



Nicaragua © IFRC / Nigel Dickinson

VALUES, POWER, AND INCLUSION

Funding requirement in Swiss francs
150,000

People to be reached
4,500



Today, inclusion and participation with a focus on diversity is a fundamental aspect of providing adequate and relevant humanitarian assistance. Central America has four of the countries with the highest rates of violence and the lowest rates of social inclusion. Violence is one of the greatest triggers of unemployment, displacement, exclusion, and migration in these countries.

The work of the National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities and in promoting sustainability and equality and the fundamental humanitarian principles, must be encouraged with clear Protection, Gender and Inclusion strategies at the national level.

The IFRC will support National Societies to identify short- and medium-term inclusion plans according to their particular contexts, in order to work appropriately with vulnerable and marginalized communities such as indigenous populations, people with disabilities, and displaced or migrant populations. The support of the IFRC as well as other actors of the Movement is essential for the National Societies to meet the proposed outcomes.

🎯 TARGET 1

Disaster and emergency management plans and activities include measures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence

🎯 TARGET 2

National Societies and the IFRC Secretariat adopt a comprehensive Protection, Gender and Inclusion approach across operations and programmes



5th

Honduras' position among the most violent countries in the Americas



23.6

homicide rate per 100,000 national average in 2018

➡ ACTIVITIES

- Contribute to a positive change in communities through a wider understanding, ownership and concrete application of humanitarian values and fundamental principles
- Scale up technical and financial support for youth-led education and action
- Adopt a comprehensive Protection, Gender and Inclusion approach across operations and programmes
- Develop and implement Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change initiatives, workshops, and projects across the region
- Promote and support equitable access to quality education for all children affected by disaster, crisis or displacement
- Assess, analyse and respond to education-related humanitarian needs in disasters, crises and displacement
- Expand programmes and services aimed at facilitating the integration of groups that are marginalised or discriminated against
- Promote and support the systematic application of agreed minimum standards for protection, gender and inclusion in emergencies



Guatemala © Guatemalan Red Cross

ENABLER 1

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

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

100,000

The IFRC will ensure that the Central America National Societies are respected and recognised as neutral, impartial humanitarian actors effectively positioned to promote principles, values, policies and legislation in support of humanitarian action, and mobilise support for the needs and aspirations of vulnerable communities.

To be able to meet the objectives under the five strategic priorities, the National Societies will rapidly modernise, make effective use of their voices and programmes, and upgrade their ways of working to match the new realities. Support will be needed for them to innovate, to embrace and fully deploy digital technologies, and build their auxiliary role to become their authorities' partner of choice. There needs to be a stronger emphasis on working better together as a network and with others.

🎯 TARGET 1

All National Societies implement the Volunteering Development Framework as the key element to manage and develop volunteering across the organization

➡️ ACTIVITIES

- Strengthen engagement with partners within and outside the network to work collectively on the key challenges facing communities, volunteering, and youth development
- Inform representatives of humanitarian and development agencies and relevant ministries about the role and activities of National Societies and the IFRC network
- Increase investment, partnerships and collaboration focussed on research, development and learning
- Strengthen the Volunteering Network by supporting peer-to-peer exchanges and fluid communication among the National Societies
- Build the leadership in key areas of humanitarian and development policy, and influence decisions and outcomes in intergovernmental forums
- Create Volunteering Labs to adapt, create, experiment and test new initiatives on volunteering that respond to humanitarian needs of the National Societies in the region
- Strengthen protection, security, evaluation and motivation of volunteers at all levels



Costa Rica © IFRC

ENABLER 2

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

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

140,000

The IFRC will work in a unified way to effectively implement governance decisions, to support the National Societies, and to ensure that the Movement delivers efficiently on its promises. The IFRC will safeguard sufficient quality assurance, while achieving greater ownership and responsibility from the leadership to ensure high standards of integrity and accountability.

The IFRC has set a commitment to strengthen internal and National Society capacities to integrate gender, diversity, inclusion, community engagement and accountability approaches throughout programme planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting cycles.

The IFRC will continue to expand its provision of resources to the National Societies for investment in National Society Development, through mechanisms such as the National Society Investment Alliance, the Capacity Building Fund, the Empress Shôken Fund, and other innovative approaches to funding National Society Development. The IFRC will also ensure quality and timely delivery in line with commitments to donors on implementation and reporting to donors, for funds channelled through the IFRC, with clear distribution of roles and responsibilities.

ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will develop a new financing architecture to increase financial resources for the benefit of the National Societies
- The IFRC will promote the development of partnerships with stakeholders and partners for the benefit of National Society programming
- The IFRC will implement a plan to strengthen the planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting capacities of the National Societies' staff and volunteers in the region
- The IFRC will establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that allow adequate follow-up to each of the interventions



Panama © IFRC

ENABLER 3

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

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

680,000

The IFRC will support the National Societies in their development to become the trusted partners of choice for local humanitarian action with the capabilities to act in the global network. In terms of resource mobilization, the IFRC will focus its efforts on contributing to the improvement of National Societies' capacities to design and implement resource mobilization strategies and promote diversification of income sources. The IFRC will support the National Societies to improve their financial sustainability and explore other investments. The IFRC will also conduct actions to strengthen accountability and system development capacities as well as ensure a strong vision and mandate.

The IFRC will support the National Societies in Central America in their Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification processes, provide technical support to develop their Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse framework, build a plan for institutional risk management, and design a protocol for responding to crises caused by institutional risk management.

The IFRC will enable coordination with Movement partners and allies on the coverage, scope and thematic priority areas in the strategic plan to determine how their support could add value to the National Society's development efforts. Likewise, activities will be aligned with the IFRC's Global Agenda, setting out the broad goals to meet its mission. Technical support to different areas in the IFRC to integrate volunteering and youth development across programmes, activities and projects in the region will be provided.

🎯 TARGET 1

Emergency appeals and country plans are created based on the host National Societies' strategies and plans

🎯 TARGET 2

Youth, volunteers and young community-based drivers of change contribute to decision-making, innovation and strengthening the domestic network

➡️ ACTIVITIES

- Empower people and communities, vulnerable to and affected by crises to influence decisions affecting them and to trust the National Societies to serve their best interest
- Integrate the seven Movement commitments for community engagement and accountability
- Ensure strong coordination mechanisms are in place to preserve resources, eliminate duplication, and enhance efficiencies for greater impact
- Enhance coordination between the IFRC Network members based on an overarching strategy, practical tools and regional/country coordination positions
- Foster a more diverse leadership embodied in increased volunteer and youth involvement, gender parity and equitable geographic representation
- Understand and reflect the needs of young people from all backgrounds in National Societies' strategic and operational plans and programme delivery



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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