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

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are subject to major security threats originating in Afghanistan, including smuggling by militants, infiltration by extremists, direct Taliban and ISIS attacks, destabilising refugee flows, and indirect involvement in armed conflict. Other issues include civil unrest in some countries such as Kyrgyzstan, and also frequent small-scale violence in the border areas between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

More than 75 per cent of the Central Asia region is highly exposed to natural disasters, causing loss of life and housing, and damage to social and economic infrastructure. Expected climate change stressors include increases in temperature, extreme weather events, and glacial melt, while likely impacts include continued expansion of deserts and arid areas.

The countries of Central Asia are at different levels of economic development. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are upper middle-income countries, while Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are lower middle-income countries. Some countries in the region, such as Kazakhstan, have become donors and others still depend on international humanitarian aid. Kazakhstan is a country of transit and destination for migrant workers from Central Asia. Workers from Uzbekistan make up the most sizeable group of migrants in Kazakhstan. Tajikistan is more dependent than any other country in the world on remittances sent home by migrant workers working abroad: it is estimated that half of working-age Tajik males are employed abroad, mostly in Russia.

The region suffers from non-communicable diseases and growing communicable diseases epidemics, including HIV, drug-resistant tuberculosis and vaccine-preventable diseases. Access to safe water and adequate sanitation services is low, especially in rural areas. The communities face high levels of self-harm, suicide and substance abuse.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges that public health systems face in this region. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Many people have delayed receiving health services, leading to having potentially worse health outcomes in the long-term. This crisis is not only a health crisis, but a whole-of-society crisis. Children and students experienced months without education due to lockdowns. The lockdowns and other public health measures to curb movement have resulted in thousands of people losing their jobs and income sources. People working in the informal sector, especially women, were hit the hardest.

The pandemic is exacerbating existing vulnerabilities, such as high unemployment, poverty, and social inequality, and is likely to increase the risk of social unrest.
ROLE OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan’s priorities are:
• First Aid training
• Providing assistance to vulnerable children from families with lost income
• Providing social assistance to vulnerable populations in cooperation with the corporate sector
• The provision of services and humanitarian aid in emergency response.

The Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan’s priorities are:
• Health work
• Tuberculosis prevention
• Preparedness for disaster response
• Risk reduction
• Social assistance and support for vulnerable people

The Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan’s priorities are:
• Disaster risk reduction
• First Aid training
• Community-based health programmes
• Humanitarian aid for orphans and their family members through cash interventions
The IFRC plays an important role in coordinating and supporting National Societies in Central Asia including with information sharing and integration agreements with the Italian Red Cross in Kyrgyzstan and the German Red Cross in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In addition, the Swiss Red Cross provide bilateral support in Kyrgyzstan.

The main areas of partner National Societies support are fundraising, income generation projects and livelihood programming with a focus on border areas between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as youth and volunteering development.

In 2021, coordination will continue with the Italian Red Cross on youth engagement in Tajikistan and a women’s income generation project in Kyrgyzstan. The IFRC will continue coordinating volunteering development to ensure synergies among partner National Societies and it will also facilitate technical assistance on National Society membership issues. Cooperation with Swiss Red Cross on resource mobilisation and fundraising support to the Red Crescent Societies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will continue in 2021. There is also an opportunity to engage with the Red Cross Society of China, which provides bilateral support to a number of National Societies in Central Asia including Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan signed a one-year project agreement supporting 500 orphans and half-orphans in Tajikistan, with the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, and is supported by United Arab Emirates Red Crescent for another 600 orphans. These projects have potential for continuation.

With the IFRC strengthening its presence in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2020, there is potential to ensure further synergies with the ICRC in several programming areas such as first aid, and human resources management.
Central Asia is facing important challenges in coping with the adverse effects of climate change. Socio-economically disadvantaged indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, women, children and elderly are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as coping capacities and resources are typically low. One of the most significant effects of global warming in Central Asia is glacial melting, which is not only a main long-term source of the fresh water in the region, but also associated with formation of glacial lakes, outburst floods, mudflows and droughts.

The countries of Central Asia have a high degree of sensitivity to climate change and a low degree of adaptive capacity to the impacts of climate change, in particular, water-related disasters in the region, which have been recognised as one of the key threats.

Increases in temperature, extreme weather events, and the continued expansion of deserts and arid areas have the potential to negatively impact farming, water resources, health, biodiversity and energy production.

This will add pressure to already stressed and exploited natural resources, such as pastures, forests and wildlife. The exacerbated degradation of biodiversity, natural habitats, and ecosystems due to climate stressors increases vulnerability of impoverished and rural areas, which largely lack the financial or political capacity to overcome these growing challenges.

**ACTIVITIES**

- The IFRC will provide technical support to the National Societies through the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre to reduce loss of life and damage to livelihoods.
- The IFRC will address extreme-weather events, including heat and cold waves through forecast-based actions, in cooperation with the German Red Cross and other partner National Societies.
- The IFRC and the Tajikistan National Society will continue to work together to further the One Billion Coalition for integrated safety and health education initiative - inviting communities, civil society groups, the Government, academia, and businesses.
- The IFRC will integrate digital resources through ‘Maktab’ (School) Mobile application, including those related to climate and environmental crises.
- The IFRC will strengthen its work in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through investments in Forecast-based Financing and its work with communities to mitigate the negative impact of climate change.
- The IFRC will support the development of the Early Action Protocol for cold-waves and mudflows, to increase capacity of communities to address evolving impacts of climate change.
Countries in Central Asia are all prone to recurring and large-scale disasters such as earthquakes, mud- and landslides, avalanches, droughts and floods. The intensity and scale of emergencies in Central Asia are on the rise, and climate change is further increasing disaster risks. Central Asia is considered one of the most tectonically unstable areas in Eurasia, and as the density of the population is high in seismically active zones, even a minor earthquake could cause large numbers of deaths and injuries.

The Central Asia Resilience Strategy “Silk Road to Resilience” 2018–2022 aims to progressively and sustainably reinforce the resilience of communities across Central Asia. As part of the implementation of the strategy, two regional multi-country programmes on disaster risk reduction are being implemented by National Societies, initiated in 2018-2019, and will continue in 2021.

The IFRC’s disaster law programme in Central Asia will continue in 2021 in support of National Societies and governments to develop effective legal frameworks for disaster risk reduction and response. The programme has a special focus in the region on law and disaster preparedness and response, international disaster response laws, rules and principles, law and disaster risk reduction, and regulatory barriers to post-disaster shelter.

In recent years, the efforts of the National Societies and the IFRC’s financial and technical support to promote International disaster response laws, rules and principles have resulted in new laws being adopted in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. Revisions to legislation are pending in Kazakhstan. Regional organisations across Central Asia have responded positively to recommendations on the importance of legal preparedness for disasters, as have a growing number of global partners, including the United Nations, which now regularly draws on the IFRC for expert advice in these matters in Central Asia.

**ACTIVITIES**

- The IFRC will provide unconditional cash grants and vouchers to the most vulnerable affected groups of people to cover the costs of their basic needs
- The National Societies of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will develop the Early Action Protocol for heatwaves, cold-waves and mudflows, as part of the Forecast-based Financing programme, implemented by the German National Society and the IFRC.
- The National Society of Tajikistan will further promote the One Billion Coalition initiative through an integrated approach that links education and school safety activities related to safety, health and humanitarianism.
- The IFRC will provide immediate financial support as part of Disaster Relief Emergency Fund operations, enabling the National Societies to carry out their roles as first responders to crises and disasters.
- The IFRC will support the National Societies to undertake technical assistance projects in at least two countries, mostly focused on disaster preparedness and response, but also gradually phasing in other disaster law issues.
- The IFRC will work with intergovernmental organisations and regional organisations to strengthen the implementation of existing disaster law instruments and the potential development of new or revised instruments.
Non-communicable diseases are the leading cause of death in Central Asian countries. The mortality from these is generally higher than that in Europe. By eliminating shared risk factors such as tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol, the majority of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes and over a third of all cancer cases could be prevented. In addition, improved disease management can reduce morbidity, disability and death and contribute to better health outcomes.

The focus of the IFRC’s support will be placed on supporting Central Asian National Societies to play an active role in prevention and control, and to implement non-communicable disease prevention programmes in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, with a focus on cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases.

All countries in Central Asia have immunisation coverage of 95 per cent or more for three doses of diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis. However, some countries remain vulnerable to recurring outbreaks of measles and other vaccine preventable diseases. There is a growing mistrust of immunisation among parents and caregivers, resulting in occasional disease flare-ups. In Kyrgyzstan, there has been a worsening of the epidemiological measles situation. Kazakhstan has one of the lowest acceptance rates of a COVID-19 vaccine compared with the rest of the world. The Central Asian National Societies can play an effective social mobilisation role during immunisation campaigns in the communities.

Access to safe water and adequate sanitation remain a challenge for Central Asian countries. The use of septic tanks and sewer connections are limited in rural areas. Among the region’s countries, Tajikistan is the most heavily impacted by inadequate water and sanitation services. The IFRC will support the National Society in Tajikistan in resourcing and starting a water, sanitation and hygiene promotion project by joining it into the IFRC Global One Water, Sanitation and Hygiene initiative.

The number of people trained in first aid needs to significantly increase to provide access to essential first aid to the most vulnerable people in the region and to respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**ACTIVITIES**

- The IFRC will support the Central Asian National Societies in advocating to their own governments for fair and equitable access to future COVID-19 vaccines through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility, with a special focus on the most vulnerable and at-risk groups.
- The IFRC will support the National Society in Tajikistan to train its volunteers in non-communicable disease detection, home based care, and support. It will support the National Society to raise awareness regarding prevention and control of selected non-communicable diseases and education for healthy lifestyle and importance of self-care, as well as supporting the National Societies in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan to design and fundraise for non-communicable prevention and control projects.
- The IFRC will support the National Societies to provide communities with improved access to safe water, with knowledge and best practice on treatment and reuse of wastewater and to improve sustainable community-based management of water and sanitation facilities.
- The IFRC will support the National Society in Tajikistan with community awareness of pandemics and epidemics risks.
- The IFRC will support the National Societies to integrate mental health and psychosocial actions in their disaster response, including IFRC Emergency Appeals and Disaster Relief Emergency Funds operations.
MIGRATION AND IDENTITY

Many people in Central Asia face challenges of unemployment and poverty, forcing them to migrate to other countries of the region to live and work. Most of these people work illegally and have therefore limited access to health services. Labour migrants, especially women, are exposed to forced labour, abuse and trafficking and are vulnerable to diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic's secondary impact and restrictions on cross border movement of people, many migrants from Central Asia have lost their jobs in their host countries and have been forced to return to their home countries, with no viable income or access to health services. Many migrants were unable to return to their home countries for months while the Central Asian countries had nationwide lockdowns. Those migrants who remain in their host countries experienced a sharp decline in the remittances they were able to send to their families in their home countries, compared with 2019 levels.

It is often the poorest and most vulnerable families that are most dependent on remittances from abroad and lower remittances are expected to push the poverty rate higher in Central Asian countries, especially in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. With the opening of borders and resumption of travels, interest in migrating abroad for work is returning in Tajikistan. After falling to about two per cent of households in May, interest in migrating abroad rose to seven per cent of households in August, nearly the same level as the same time in 2019. The share of households providing details of at least one member currently abroad fell to 32 per cent in August, in comparison to 41 per cent at the same time last year. Therefore, there is a need to support the returning families, as well as address the health and other needs of labour migrants who wish to migrate again to other countries.

National Societies in the region have a vast experience of working with migrant communities and are therefore the best placed actors to raise their awareness and advocate for them.

| 41% | households with at least one relative working abroad |
| 80% | people spending money received from abroad |
| 2%  | households in Tajikistan interested in migrating abroad for work |
ENABLER 1
ENGAGED WITH RENEWED INFLUENCE, INNOVATIVE AND DIGITALLY TRANSFORMED WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs
121,000

The COVID-19 response in 2020 put all five Central Asian National Societies at the forefront of their national responses to the pandemic. This provided them with the opportunity to renew and strengthen their engagement and influence with governments, international organisations, UN agencies, and international government aid agencies, as well as with national civil society organisations, and corporate partners.

With support from the IFRC, National Societies’ COVID-19 pandemic response work in risk communication and community engagement has increased their visibility, profile and influence on community behaviour related to COVID-19 and in advocating for vulnerable communities. The IFRC will provide additional support in 2021, and support the Central Asian National Societies in their digital transformation.

ACTIVITIES

• The IFRC will support the National Societies to build communications capacity.
• The IFRC will support the National Society in Kyrgyzstan to revise its human resources policies and procedures.
• The IFRC will support the National Society in Tajikistan with the retention of staff.
• The IFRC will support the National Societies to engage more closely with and involve affected people and communities in the planning and implementation of their work, supporting appropriate, tailored, grass roots problem solving and innovation.
• The IFRC and the National Societies will consult affected people and communities to ensure tools, services, materials and activities are inclusive, appropriate, relevant, effective and safe for the people they are intended to support.
ENABLER 3
TRUSTED BY COMMUNITIES, OWNED AND VALUED BY THE MEMBERSHIP WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs
457,000

ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will support the National Society in Tajikistan to conduct a fundraising market analysis and based on the results, it will adjust its financial sustainability strategy.
- The IFRC will work with the National Societies and affected communities to establish feedback mechanisms which can be used to report serious complaints.
- The IFRC will support the National Society in Tajikistan to review its volunteer development policy and youth engagement strategy and ensure their linkages with core programmes, including disaster risk reduction and health.
- The IFRC will organise a women's leadership meeting in follow-up to the resolution on Women and Leadership in Humanitarian Action, engaging National Societies of neighbouring countries including the Afghanistan National Society.
- The IFRC will work with the National Societies to provide training and awareness on the federation-wide commitments and minimum actions, and technical and practical support in integrating the commitments and actions organisationally and operationally.
- The IFRC community engagement and accountability team will feed into all programme plans, advocating for and emphasising the importance of genuinely participatory, community-based, co-production approaches, providing training and technical support to facilitate this where necessary, and helping design and establish appropriate communication channels and feedback mechanisms to support ongoing engagement, adaptation and improvement.
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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