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

37 million

2019 Human Development Index Ranking

170

Vulnerabilities

Floods
Violent conflict
Drought
Earthquakes
COVID-19
Food insecurity

Afghanistan has been in a state of prolonged conflict for over 40 years. According to the Fragile State Index, Afghanistan is the ninth most fragile country in the world. With a population of more than 37 million people, more than a third of people are now in humanitarian need due to conflict, disaster and COVID-19.

The country is highly exposed and vulnerable to disasters, including floods, earthquakes, droughts, avalanches and landslides. Afghanistan ranks as fifth highest in the Inform Risk Index in terms of vulnerability. By 2030, drought will be a major threat to the country’s natural resources, of which most communities depend for their livelihoods.

It’s thought that thousands have died from COVID-19 in Afghanistan. A study commissioned by the Afghan Ministry of Public Health in August 2020 stated that 10 million people, or one third of the population, had been infected by the first wave in May/June. The crisis has also had a negative impact on the country’s economy – even prior to the pandemic, an estimated 93 per cent of people in Afghanistan were living on less than 2 Swiss francs per day.

Current migration and displacement in Afghanistan are driven by a mix of conflict, environmental and economic issues. Since 2014, more than 4.2 million Afghan people returned to the country, both voluntarily and forcibly, increasing pressure on an already limited infrastructure and services. 250,000 people a year are affected by natural hazards, which cause many to flee their homes, including some already displaced by conflict and violence.

There are an estimated 16.9 million food insecure people and an expected 18.4 million are projected to need humanitarian assistance in 2021.
The Afghan Red Crescent Society’s (ARCS) main activities and services include the provision of primary healthcare clinics and hospitals; distributing relief to those who need it; assessing and reducing the risks of disaster; and engaging with young people and communities. As an auxiliary to public authorities, and under law that recognises its independence and neutrality, the National Society has developed close working relationships with key ministries and agencies in the country.

The National Society provides access to healthcare services through a network of one district hospital, 46 fixed clinics, 22 health sub-centres and 45 mobile health teams covering all 34 provinces in the country. The mobile health teams also provide vaccination and primary healthcare packages in hard-to-reach and unsafe areas covering 31 provinces. In addition, the National Society has developed a network of community-based health and first aid volunteers. In 2019, the National Society reached 5.2 million people with vital healthcare services and programmes.

The Afghanistan National Society is an important national partner in the response to disasters and supports the country in its disaster preparedness, reaching 540,000 people in 2019. The National Society carries out response programmes in coordination with public authorities and, critically, across lines of conflict through its disaster response teams and vast network of volunteers.

The National Society manages five Marastoons (Afghan social welfare centres) whose main goal is to provide temporary asylum for widows, underprivileged families and people with disabilities. It has launched a women empowerment programme in Marastoons which aims to close inequality gaps for underprivileged women. In 2019, the Afghanistan National Society supported 1,000 people through Marastoons.

The National Society in Afghanistan’s strategic plans for 2021–2025 have an emphasis on improving people’s access to healthcare, immunisation, community health, managing risks of disaster, livelihoods and social welfare. It is also further prioritising migration and displacement, climate resilience and women empowerment as areas for development.
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been operating in Afghanistan with the IFRC since 1979. It focuses on providing healthcare services to help wounded and disabled people; visiting detainees to monitor their condition; improving access to safe water; promoting international humanitarian law; and supporting the Afghanistan National Society in achieving its strategic goals.

National Society partners also developed, together with the Afghanistan National Society and facilitated by IFRC, a partnership framework to establish rules for all Movement partners. The framework includes commitments that the Movement partners make to each other, including commitments the National Society in Afghanistan makes to its partners and the commitments it expects from each partner.

In addition, the Movement has implemented a Movement Cooperation Agreement through regular coordination meetings at leadership level, including strategic meetings to discuss and address critical issues around security and political dynamics and any operational challenges in Afghanistan.

Support provided to the National Society in Afghanistan:

- **Norwegian Red Cross** supports health clinics and mobile health teams which help people living in hard-to-reach areas.
- **Canadian Red Cross** plays a critical role in developing the Afghanistan National Society’s ability to deal with disasters.
- **Finnish Red Cross** supports the National Society to develop community-based health programmes for vulnerable and remote people.
- **Japanese Red Cross** is contributing to the empowerment of youth volunteers in health activities and supports communities to build resilience to climate change.
- **Turkish Red Crescent Society** supports the Afghanistan National Society in offering livelihood support to communities affected by emergencies, and projects to generate income for displaced people and migrants returning to Afghanistan.
- **Danish Red Cross** supports youth engagement through psychosocial support and life-skills training, to promote the importance of psychosocial well-being in Afghan communities.
- **Kuwait Red Crescent Society** supports the treatment of children with congenital heart defects and provides seasonal Ramadan food aid. It also launched the women empowerment programme with the IFRC to improve the socioeconomic situation of underprivileged women.
- **China Red Cross** supports the treatment of children with congenital heart defects.
- **Italian Red Cross** supported youth engagement in health.
The climate in Afghanistan is changing faster than the global average. Since 1950, Afghanistan’s mean annual temperature has increased by 1.8 degrees centigrade and the area covered by glaciers has shrunk by 13.4 per cent since 1990.

Flooding is the most frequently occurring natural hazard affecting around 100,000 people every year. In March 2019 alone, 40,000 people were displaced by heavy rains and floods.

Drought is a major threat to Afghanistan’s natural resources and communities’ livelihoods and is likely to be a normal occurrence by 2030. 275,000 people (52,000 more than the number uprooted by conflict) were displaced by drought in 2018, which was described as 'the worst in a lifetime'.

Landslides and avalanches have killed hundreds of people on the highway during the last few decades and more than 2 million people are threatened by water shortages.

Vulnerable people, such as children and the elderly will face health risk from heatwaves in urban areas, while other health risks posed by climate change include worsened air quality and longer timeframes for infectious diseases to spread.

Recognising climate action as a strategic priority, the IFRC will support the National Society by calling for more integrated knowledge, skills and intervention to help vulnerable people in Afghanistan. The IFRC will support the National Society to make decisions and planning that are based on anticipated risk. These plans will ensure that the National Society’s short-term humanitarian initiatives, such as providing relief assistance and helping communities to recover after disaster, meet the immediate needs of affected people, reduce their vulnerability at the same time, and ultimately strengthen their resilience.

**TARGET 1**
Reach 200,000 people through climate-focused operations and programmes.

**TARGET 2**
Help 50,000 people through awareness-raising activities on environmental sustainability and reducing the impact of climate change.
Afghanistan has suffered from violent conflict for more than four decades. From 2001 to 2019 more than 100,000 people were killed or injured by the conflict. People’s survival and well-being is threatened by ongoing conflict that is inflicting high levels of civilian casualties and life-altering traumatic injuries.

Hunger and malnutrition remain at dangerously high levels with 14.28 million people in crisis or emergency food insecurity. 3.7 million children cannot attend school and millions of displaced families lack permanent shelters. Conflict has resulted in people resorting to negative coping mechanisms, such as early or forced marriages and child labour.

In 2021, the IFRC will support the National Society in critical development areas, which include reviewing its contingency plans, strengthening its capacity to prepare for and respond to evolving disasters and building partnerships in early warning early action. The early warning early action project turns identified hazard warnings into anticipatory actions to reduce the impact of disaster.

The IFRC will also support the National Society to communicate with youths and volunteers on disaster risk awareness, by integrating the messaging in education in schools and communities, and focusing on improving the resilience of the most exposed communities. This is in line with the IFRC’s Strategy 2030, Movement resolutions and the Manila Call for Action, which pulls together objectives developed and agreed to by National Societies in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions.

**TARGET 1**
Support 50,000 people with risk and resilience measures in 2021.

**TARGET 2**
Help 500,000 people in 2021 through support services, in-kind, cash and voucher assistance

**TARGET 3**
In 2021, 10% of financial support assistance to vulnerable people with cash.
The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every facet of life for people in Afghanistan, exacerbating the already complex existing humanitarian and development needs. High internal displacement, overcrowded housing and low numbers of immune system-boosting vaccinations have contributed to the already struggling healthcare system and poor water, sanitation and hygiene programmes.

One study estimated that one-third of all people in the country may have been infected with COVID-19 and almost 10 per cent of cases were among healthcare staff. It’s likely that this data only represents a fraction of the reality due to the limited testing capacity.

Despite significant improvements during the past 10 years, Afghanistan’s maternal and child mortality remains among the highest in the region. 63 per cent of deaths among children under five years of age are caused by infectious diseases such as sepsis/meningitis, pneumonia, diarrhoea, and other infections. On top of this, only 51 per cent of women have access to antenatal care, and the number of visits for antenatal services has decreased due to the fear of contracting COVID-19.

The IFRC will support the Afghanistan National Society to improve people’s access to healthcare services, tackle the high maternal and child mortality rates, and address severe malnutrition in children and new mothers. The IFRC will also support the National Society to work in partnership with communities and other organisations to prepare, prevent and respond to outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics at a local level.

**TARGET 1**
Immunise 100,000 children (under five) and women in 2021.

**TARGET 2**
Train 36,000 people in first aid in 2021 within vulnerable communities or through commercial first aid.

**TARGET 3**
Reach 2,500 students in 25 schools in 2021 through water and sanitation programmes, with a focus on at-risk communities and hard-to-reach areas.
MIGRATION AND IDENTITY

Current migration and displacement in Afghanistan are driven by a mix of conflict, environmental and economic issues such as chronic poverty, and a lack of investment in rural communities and agriculture.

Since 2014, more than 4.2 million migrants returned from abroad to Afghanistan, increasing pressure on the already limited health services. Afghan people returning from Iran are particularly vulnerable, with at least half of them having been arrested, detained and deported with few or no possessions, and arriving in critical need of humanitarian assistance. People on the move in Afghanistan face severe protection risks including abuse by smugglers, detention and crime.

80 per cent of displaced households reported active conflict or violence to be the ‘final push’ that made them move. Many people were forced to flee their homes due to disasters brought on by natural hazards. 371,000 people were displaced by Afghanistan’s worst drought in decades in 2018. Around 1.2 million people were thought to be displaced at the end of 2019 as a result of disasters.

As part of its strategic planning process, the National Society has recognised migration and displacement as a priority, calling for more knowledge, skills and methods of intervention for aid. The IFC will support the National Society to prioritise the needs of internally displaced people across its emergency interventions. In addition, the British Red Cross will support the National Society to lead a research and analysis project on current and emerging trends and associated risks of migration.

In 2021, the National Society will support 200,000 migrants, displaced people and host community members.

305,070 undocumented people returned to Afghanistan from Iran (95%) or Pakistan (5%) between 1 January and 24 August 2019
It’s estimated that **12.9 million people in Afghanistan will need some form of humanitarian protection** in 2021. Children comprise 56 per cent of people in need, due to exposure to persistent violence and denial of education and healthcare.

Women across Afghanistan continue to be subject to **high rates of violence** related to their gender, and few are given paid employment opportunities. Afghanistan has been named the **second worst place in the world to be a woman** due to restrictions on their involvement in society outside the home. Young girls are seen to have economic potential as part of a **marriage transaction** – while the biggest issues facing young people are lack of employment opportunities and education. A combination of unravelling security, increasing poverty and no means of earning a living have all contributed to a growing loss of confidence in the future.

As part of its strategic planning, the IFRC has recognised youth and volunteer engagement, education and women empowerment as important development areas for the National Society.

In line with the National Society's strategic planning aimed at fostering a **culture of peace** across the country, the IFRC will support the National Society to design a **flagship programme** that combines youth engagement, sport and social cohesion with a focus on communities with internally displaced people or returnee migrants. The IFRC will also support the National Society to provide safer access for students to attend schools, ensuring the inclusion of all groups, with a focus on marginalised children.
ENABLER 1
ENGAGED WITH RENEWED INFLUENCE, INNOVATIVE AND DIGITALLY TRANSFORMED WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

700,000

The IFRC will support the National Society in Afghanistan to strengthen its engagement to work collectively on the key challenges facing communities with partners within and outside the network.

The IFRC will support the National Society to enhance services to protect people in Afghanistan against the main vulnerabilities affecting the country: conflict, climate change, migration and displacement. It will support the National Society to develop programmes that go beyond emergency response to a crisis and look into fostering practical approaches that enhance the resilience of communities and promote a culture of peace.

The National Society is an auxiliary to public authorities in Afghanistan, and the IFRC will offer support to continue developing and leveraging connections with key ministries and public agencies to address health- and disaster-related issues.

The IFRC will also support the National Society to further develop targeting decision and policy makers as part of humanitarian diplomacy, so that actions are taken with respect for fundamental humanitarian principles and in the interest of vulnerable people in Afghanistan.

The IFRC will provide the National Society with advisory and technical support to better anticipate and adapt to complex challenges affecting people in need. The Afghanistan National Society and its partners will be encouraged to share good practice through peer-to-peer support initiatives.

Digital transformation will form one of the key pillars and goals in the Afghanistan National Society’s new 2021–2025 strategic plan. The IFRC will support the National Society to improve its IT systems and security, launch a new web site and develop a platform of resources for volunteers.

ACTIVITIES

• Engage the National Society’s 34 local branches, 7 regional offices, HQ, staff, youth and volunteers in a digital transformation process

• Support the implementation of the National Society Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and a new partnership framework.

• Develop case studies on issues such as immunisation, climate change, migration/displacement and women empowerment to support humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy efforts.
ENABLER 2
ACCOUNTABLE WITH AN AGILE MANAGEMENT AND A RENEWED FINANCING MODEL WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs
200,000

The IFRC will support the National Society in Afghanistan to increase its financial resources so that it can reach more people in need and support the communities it works with as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The IFRC will also support the National Society to improve its business processes and to demonstrate individual and collective accountability. The National Society will continue implementing a management framework that fosters cross-team collaboration, helping processes to be more efficient and to develop quality assurance measures.

The IFRC will support the National Society to run mandatory training sessions and ensure that all staff have access and make effective use of web-based system support available to help staff and volunteers understand the risks of fraud and corruption, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.

The IFRC will support the Afghanistan National Society to expand its reach, with a focus on diversifying its income streams to ensure it is financially secure and sustainable. It will also support the National Society to develop relationships with international donor partners as additional means of funding. The IFRC will encourage a shift from a donor-recipient relationship with donors – in which funding is too often the entry point – towards a partnership model.

The IFRC will support the National Society to access funding or small grant opportunities and to participate in global fundraising campaigns.

ACTIVITIES

- Develop the talent of staff at all levels by providing learning and professional development opportunities.
- Ensure financial resources are safeguarded and managed effectively, efficiently and transparently by submitting annual externally-audited financial statement.
- Develop an effective management framework with transparent and inclusive processes.
ENABLER 3
TRUSTED BY COMMUNITIES, OWNED AND VALUED BY THE MEMBERSHIP WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs
310,000

The IFRC will support the National Society in Afghanistan to continue to be recognised as the partner of choice concerning emergency response and health services, with the benefit of having access to and acceptance within conflict-affected areas and communities.

Strengthening the National Society’s legal base remains one of the top priorities, so the IFRC will support the National Society to solidify itself as an independent auxiliary to public authorities.

The National Society will adopt its strategic plan 2021–2025 with a view to more actively contributing to the development of a ‘culture of peace’. The IFRC will support the National Society to focus on the creation of community health and livelihood interventions, especially for communities exposed to climate risks, displaced people and returnees, and underprivileged women.

The IFRC will support the Afghanistan National Society to strengthen accountability systems with communities, public authorities and partners and widen trust with partners. The IFRC will also support the National Society to develop and roll out internal policies and frameworks to help staff and volunteers continue with their work with vulnerable people in Afghanistan.

Youth and volunteers are and will remain the backbone of the National Society. In addition to strengthening a youth and volunteer management platform, the IFRC will support the National Society to extend support to enable young people and volunteers’ greater involvement in co-designing strategies to recognise and promote their role in community behavioural change. The IFRC will also support the National Society to foster a more diverse leadership with a focus on further integration of youth and volunteers.

ACTIVITIES

- Install a solar energy system in regional offices and branches to ensure connectivity to power.
- Organise a nationwide youth and volunteer summit in Kabul.
- Support at least 60 psychosocial support training for youth and volunteers.
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.

Contact Information

Necephor Mghendi
Head, Country Delegation, Afghanistan
T +93 700 274 881
necephor.mghendi@ifrc.org

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society
Afsar-i-Selow, Qargha Road
(Afghan Red Crescent Society) ARCS Compound
P.O. Box 3039
Kabul, Afghanistan