



TIMOR-LESTE

2024-2026 IFRC network country plan

6 May 2024

Multi-Year Funding Requirement **CHF 3M**

In support of the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society



13

National Society branches



134

National Society staff



792

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



7,000

Climate and environment



7,000

Disasters and crises



5,000

Health and wellbeing



31

Migration and displacement



2,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multi-year focus

Longer term needs

- Health, water, sanitation and hygiene
 - Disaster risk reduction
 - Climate change adaptation
- Protection, gender and inclusion

Capacity development

- Communications
- Humanitarian diplomacy
- Digital transformation
- Internal system strengthening
- Financial sustainability and resource mobilization

Key country data

Population	1.3M
INFORM Severity rating	Low
INFORM Climate Change Risk Index	Medium
Human Development Index rank	140
Population below poverty level	41.8%

Funding requirements

2024

2025**

2026**

Total 1.2M CHF

Total 0.9M CHF

Total 0.9M CHF

Through the IFRC

910,000 CHF

Through the IFRC

910,000 CHF

Through the IFRC

910,000 CHF

Through Participating National Societies

318,000 CHF

**Projected funding requirements

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

33,000 CHF

Climate & environment

582,000 CHF

Disasters and crises

15,000 CHF

Health and wellbeing

19,000 CHF

Values, power and inclusion

261,000 CHF

Enabling local actors

Participating National Societies

American Red Cross

Australian Red Cross

Finnish Red Cross*

Indonesian Red Cross Society

Italian Red Cross

New Zealand Red Cross

The Netherlands Red Cross

The Republic of Korea National Red Cross

*National Societies which have contributed only multilaterally through the IFRC in the first half of 2023.

IFRC Appeal codes

Longer-term needs:

MAATP001

Hazards



Floods



Tropical Cyclones



Drought



Earthquakes

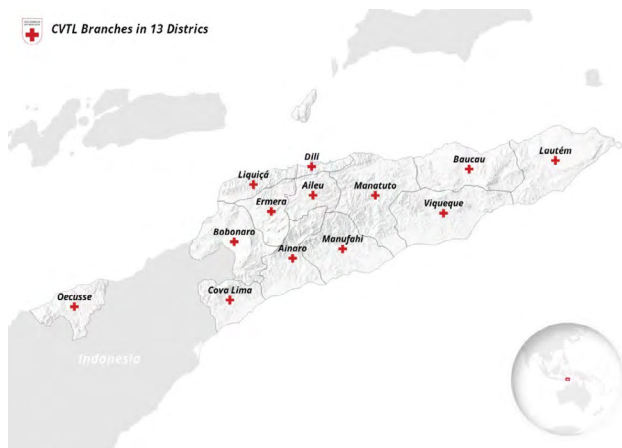


Diseases



Population movement

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE



Map of the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society branches

The **Timor-Leste Red Cross Society** was established in 2000 and legally recognized as an auxiliary to the public authorities of Timor-Leste in 2005. It was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in the same year. The National Society works closely with several ministries of the Government of Timor-Leste and national and sub-national departments.

The National Society is currently present in 13 municipalities of Timor-Leste and utilizes regionalization approach to continue strengthening their capacity to operate at branch level.

Over the past seven years, the Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction (ICBRR) programme has become Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's signature approach to support remote communities in developing their resilience and reaching their development aspirations. This program has enabled the National Society to effectively use its limited human and financial resources to provide a holistic support to remote communities that often fall outside the net of government services, to provide them with the tools, resources and knowledge needed to address the multi-layered risks in the areas of health, livelihoods, environmental protection, food security and nutrition, water and sanitation and disaster management.

The program has facilitated the integration of technical expertise from different sectoral teams within the National Society, including disaster management, health, youth and livelihoods, as well as the support of movement partners. It has also provided a valuable avenue for donors and partners to coordinate their support to the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society. This program provides considerable contributions to strengthening Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's personnel technical capacity.

During the past three years, Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has also consolidated and proven the value of its role as an auxiliary to the public authorities in responding to disasters in the country. It has consistently proven its leadership and strength in the humanitarian sector, by being one of key responders to COVID-19, dengue and extensive flooding across the country. It is in this context that Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has also made progress on becoming one of the National Societies in Asia Pacific that are 'cash ready', in line with the Manila Call for Action 8 on Cash and Voucher Assistance. The commodity voucher recently piloted by Timor-Leste Red Cross Society demonstrates its commitment to develop its capacities further to provide more effective and efficient response services as well as maintaining dignity for affected populations.

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's Strategic Plan (2020-2024) focuses on four main areas:

- Strengthening the resilience of communities and responding to the needs of the most vulnerable people
- Saving lives and supporting recovery from disasters and crises
- Promoting humanitarian values and a culture of peace
- Developing a strong, sustainable and accountable organization

In 2022, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society reached more than 7,000 people under its disaster response and early recovery programmes and more than 600,000 people through its long-term services and development programmes.

IFRC NETWORK ACTION

JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Timor-Leste gained independence in 2000, and the country has since made significant progress in key areas. It faces the challenges of retaining political unity, boosting economic growth, rebuilding public infrastructure (including roads, ports and airports, water and sanitation systems and government facilities) and institutional frameworks. The country remains fragile as it contends with the legacies of past conflict. 80 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is derived by the extraction of oil reserves from the Timor Sea, which has made it possible to spend on infrastructure and basic services, particularly in the areas of roads and electricity. However, the economy urgently needs to diversify since the remaining oil fields are being exhausted. Agriculture also has a significant economic influence. Not only does the industry employ more than 50 per cent of the workforce, but it is also regarded as being essential to future economic growth and food security.

Despite steady progress, more than 40 per cent of the population is estimated to live below the poverty line due to high unemployment. Between 2014 and 2018, employment by private sector businesses declined by 15 per cent, even as the working-age population grew by 11 per cent. Decreased state spending in 2017, 2018 and 2020 due to political uncertainty, the associated failure to pass annual budgets and the COVID-19

pandemic, all resulted in negative GDP growth. Agriculture also plays a significant role in Timor-Leste's economy. Not only does the industry employ more than 50 per cent of the country's workforce, but it is also considered essential to future economic growth and food security.

Although levels of employment in the country improved in 2021, they have not reached pre-pandemic levels and paid work is now more likely to be characterized as informal and insecure. Similarly, while income levels have been somewhat restored, they have not been restored to the same level, and coverage of social protection in the country remains low and does not fully reach poor and vulnerable groups. The COVID-19 pandemic made the condition worse and disrupted education services, resulting in 45 per cent of school children losing their learning session or school.

Free and fair multi-party elections have been held regularly in Timor-Leste since 2001. No incidents of violence were recorded during the competitive national elections in 2017 and 2018, and there were fewer irregularities than in prior elections. The most recent presidential election was held in early 2022, with President José Manuel Ramos-Horta obtaining 64 per cent of the vote. This was followed by the parliamentary election in May 2023. This new governance has stated that it is vital for the international community to continue supporting the country's efforts to become more resilient to multiple shocks and to deliver the National Strategic Development Plan that is focusing on the human capital development area.



Timor Leste Red Cross Society volunteers conducting clean ups to help control the spread of dengue in January 2022. (Photo: Timor Leste Red Cross Society)



Climate and environment

The geography of Timor-Leste is characterized by tropical rainforests, mangroves, wetlands, and important marine ecosystems. These ecosystems play a critical role in climate regulation, sequestration of carbon, and in building adaptive capacity to climate change.

Approximately 42 per cent of all sucos (villages) in Timor-Leste have a coastal border so coastal resources are an important part of the livelihoods of many communities. Timor-Leste's coastal waters comprise a rich variety of species and seascapes, but there is no existing comprehensive data on coastal habitats. The country is vulnerable to natural hazards and is at high risk of cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis and heavy rainfall, all exacerbated by limited and inadequate infrastructure and social welfare.

According to Timor-Leste's National Adaptation Plan, the most pressing environmental problems in the country include deforestation, land degradation, natural disaster vulnerability due to climate variability, poor water quality and water scarcity, waste management, and loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The rainfall pattern in Timor-Leste is strongly characterized by the impact of the Australian Monsoon. During the Australian Summer Monsoon (December to April), most of Timor-Leste experiences wet conditions. Meanwhile the dry season usually lasts for several months, from May to November. The climate is strongly affected by a few global climatic influences including the El Niño Southern Oscillation, the Indian Ocean Dipole, tropical cyclones and the Madden-Julian Oscillation, affecting the climate on intra-annual, interannual, and inter-decadal time scales.

Extreme rainfall events are expected to become more intense and frequent. The steep slopes and short fast-flowing rivers, in combination with more intense rainfall events, increases the risk of loss of life/injury and damages during flash floods and landslides. Despite high projection uncertainty, models suggest the wet season will become wetter, while rainfall during the dry season is likely to reduce.

Due to global warming, Timor-Leste will also experience a shift to an even hotter climate with hot days and nights becoming the norm. Heatwaves and warm spells will increase dramatically in the next 20 years and beyond. While people in Timor-Leste are used to its tropical climate, the drastic increase in days with temperatures above 35 per cent and tropical nights will require adaptive efforts.

The country's National Adaptation Plan aggregates adaptation activities for the country, encompassing recent past and ongoing activities by different actor into a coherent national programme and identifies several priority activities in main sectors for further action, including under disaster risk management, agriculture, water and sanitation, health, coastal systems and marine resources, infrastructure and tourism.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is part of the IFRC's Global Climate Resilience Programme, which aims to foster an unprecedented scale-up in locally led climate-smart disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts to prevent and reduce climate-related disaster impacts and build community-level climate resilience. The programme aims to support 500 million people in 100 of the most climate-vulnerable countries, focusing on the least supported and marginalized communities. This holistic, multi-year programmatic approach consists of four operational pillars: (1) scaling up climate-smart disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action and preparedness; (2) reducing the public health impacts of climate change; (3) addressing climate displacement; and (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

Through their work with communities, Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has been at the forefront in supporting local communities to reduce their vulnerability to risk and build their resilience. Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has been actively engaged in discussion regarding Climate Change Adaptation policy, notably through the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) of Adaptation of Timor-Leste. For the year 2024 and beyond, Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will continue to develop clearer climate change strategy to align with Timor-Leste government roadmap on climate change, to establish climate resilient development trajectory for the country and its people in 2030.

Timor-Leste Red Cross Society aims to strengthen its capacity on early warning system and anticipatory actions. In 2022, the United National Environment Program (UNEP) launched a project focusing on the development of end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems in Timor-Leste with support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Under this five-year program UNEP, in partnership with national Government agencies, (including, the State Secretariat of the Environment, the national Meteorological agency and the State Secretariat for Civil Protection) and non-government actors (including FAO, RIMES, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre and Timor-Leste Red Cross Society), will implement activities to enhance early warning systems in the country.

Under the Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme, the National Society has adopted the IFRC's Roadmap to Community Resilience through enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (EVCA). Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has been supporting communities to analyse climate change related vulnerabilities. The ICBRR programme supports communities to strengthen their resilience by enhancing their knowledge about community disaster risks and implementing suitable mitigation and preparedness measures.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the National Society through technical expertise and by facilitating collaborative works. Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has not only adopted IFRC's risk assessment approach but has also capacitated their staff in the implementation of IFRC's enhanced vulnerability and capacity assessment (EVCA). This integration provides a more holistic perspective on changing climate conditions and their connection to community disaster risks. IFRC remains committed to continuing the support and further enhancing Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's capacity in their works towards community resilience through different projects.

With the continuation of the ICBRR programme, in the second semester of 2023, IFRC supported Timor-Leste Red Cross Society to develop its proposal to the Republic of Korea Government with support from the Republic of Korea National Red Cross. The next phase of ICBRR is projected to be of two-year programme for the period of 2024-2026. The approach will use nature-based solution intervention to build community climate resilience.

The **American Red Cross** supports the National Society in implementing CORTA project which is focused on climate change.

The **Republic of Korea National Red Cross** supports the National Society under the integrated community-based risk reduction programme for 2024.

Planned activities in 2024

- Develop clearer climate change strategy in alignment with Timor-Leste government roadmap on climate change
 - Enhance early warning system and anticipatory actions
 - Expand upon existing youth programs to promote youth-led climate action
 - Ensure that climate change is reflected in the National Society's strategic plan and operational plan
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based on the matter. With this law, conditions have been created for a better coordination and harmonization of procedures and the definition of the competencies of each entity, to avoid overlaps or gaps and to provide the Civil Protection System with coherence.

Droughts in Timor-Leste are primarily caused by irregular rainfall patterns, prolonged dry spells, and El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events. Climate change exacerbates the frequency and severity of droughts, affecting water availability, agricultural productivity, and food security. Limited access to irrigation infrastructure and reliance on rain-fed agriculture further exacerbate the impact of droughts on rural communities.

The Government of Timor-Leste has also drafted a new disaster risk management policy. The overall objective of the policy is to identify areas of intervention in disaster risk management that will contribute significantly to reducing human mortality and physical injury from future disasters, and reducing economic, social and environmental losses.



Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see [IFRC GO page Timor Leste](#).

Floods, tropical cyclones, droughts, forest fires and earthquakes are the most common natural hazards affecting the country. Timor-Leste is prone to frequent flooding from seven river basins as well as impacts from tropical cyclones. Tropical storms can bring heavy rains and strong winds, damaging houses, and other infrastructure. Drought risk is increasing with climate change and threatens crops such as rice, maize and cassava with clear linkages to food security in the country. In addition, Timor-Leste to some degree is exposed to seismic activity, with the west side of the country being less exposed than the east side.

Under the Civil Protection law, the role of the National Directorate of Disaster Risk Management is to develop and implement disaster risk management policies, strategies and programmes, namely for preparation, prevention and mitigation, emergency response and post-disaster recovery and monitoring, in conjunction with other competent entities

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

One of the key objectives of the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is to develop its Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy. The National Society also plans on developing an internal leadership structure in emergency response mechanism and to enhance their emergency management framework and standard operating procedures (SOP). To increase its operational capacity in the long run, Timor-Leste Red Cross Society plans to strengthen its emergency operations centre (EOC), focusing on building capacity of branches to operate the EOC and develop an EOC branch standard.

In addition, Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will also develop internal capacity and resources to better respond to disaster events in Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is expanding capacity of its staff to be able to respond to changing environmental impacts like increases in flooding, and particularly urban flooding.

Planned activities in 2024

- Set up community feedback systems and participatory approaches for emergency responses
- Training on data skill, data collection, data analysis, visualization and effective reporting
- Carry out training on Emergency Need Assessment and EOC management
- Conduct training and mentoring on Shelter Cluster Coordination for CVTL personnel
- Continue active participation in the national cluster system at the national level

- Continue to take more active role in enhancing capacities of the municipal and village level disaster management structure through training and simulation facilitation
- Deliver training and capacity development initiatives, focusing on early action, logistics, water, sanitation and hygiene in emergencies
- Continue strengthening the use of [cash and voucher assistance](#) to enable effective and efficient distribution of assistance
- Develop and improve CVA-supported apps
- Carry out training on emergency needs assessment and emergency operations centre management

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** will support the National Society's efforts under the ICBRR and Chronic Crises programme and support the development of anticipatory action procedure and facilitate the emergency response training and simulation.

The **Australian Red Cross** supports the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in enhancing capacity in epidemic and pandemic preparedness and capacity building through the public health in emergencies training package.

The **Republic of Korea National Red Cross** supports the National Society under the integrated community-based risk reduction programme for 2024.

The **Netherlands Red Cross** supports the project implementation of Chronic Crises programme to enhance the National Society's capacity in managing cash and livelihood preparedness.



Health and wellbeing

Timor-Leste faces a double burden of disease. One is constituted by communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and dengue, which continue to pose public health challenges. The other is leprosy, which although has been eliminated at national level, remains endemic in some municipalities. Lymphatic filariasis (LF), soil transmitted helminth infections (STH) and yaws also remain major public health challenges.

Non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, are among the ten leading causes of death in the country. Timor-Leste is among the [top ten countries with highest tobacco use](#) prevalence rates in the world. The [Global Youth Tobacco Survey](#) results

show an overall tobacco use prevalence of 42 per cent adolescents aged 13–15 years and that 66 per cent of students were exposed to tobacco smoke in their homes.

An IFRC [study](#) undertaken in 2021 found that a combination of increased drought and an extended and more intense wet season are likely to bring about additional health impacts. Dengue fever is already a major public health concern in Timor-Leste, exhibiting a highly seasonal increase in cases. Mental health issues (anxiety, stress, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder) as a result of climate change and extreme weather events around the world have been identified in numerous studies. Climate change will also likely exacerbate the serious public health problems arising from food and

nutrition insecurity facing Timor-Leste. Malnutrition is already the single greatest contributor to premature death and disability in the country, and Timor-Leste has the [highest level of malnutrition](#) among the countries of the Asia Pacific Region.

Waterborne diseases already represent a high burden of mortality, especially amongst children. Changing conditions which favour parasitic and pathogenic growth (e.g., more extreme rainfall, increased temperatures) may increase the burden of diarrheal diseases (such as typhoid), and soil-transmitted helminths. Dehydration caused by severe diarrhea is a major cause of mortality among young children and may become more challenging to treat as temperatures and water scarcity increase, especially where sanitation remains absent.

Lack of access to safe water and open defecation remain among the issues especially in rural areas. Only 56.8 per cent of the total population in Timor-Leste have access to basic sanitation services, while almost 24.5 per cent of the population still lack access to basic safe water services. The World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) states that 45 per cent of deaths from diarrhoea are caused by unsafe drinking water, sanitation, and inadequate personal hygiene.

The Government of Timor-Leste has continued to prioritize nutrition in its development agenda. There has been a sharp decrease in the incidence of malaria, and leprosy has been declared eliminated as a public health problem along with maternal and neonatal tetanus.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

One of the priorities of the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is to improve community health and wellbeing through improved [water, sanitation and hygiene](#) facilities and access. The National Society also seeks to contribute to Timor-Leste Government's effort to eradicate malnutrition through social education and livelihood programs which targets women, youth groups and school-based programmes. The National Society partners with the Ministry of Health to support blood donation and aims to increase blood supply in Timor-Leste through continuously triggering social awareness for people to actively become blood donors.

To optimize its services in emergency operation, Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has committed to continue its capacity building on [first aid](#), ambulance services and [mental health and psychosocial services](#) to staff and volunteer. The National Society actively aligns its first aid priorities with the [Global First Aid Vision 2030](#), demonstrating a strong commitment to improving emergency response and community safety.

Planned activities in 2024

- Improve control and surveillance of communicable disease, particularly TB, HIV/AIDS and Dengue
- Improve community health and wellbeing through improved WASH facilities and access including spring catchment, pipeline, and public tap stand
- Conduct water testing in collaboration with the local health laboratories
- Deliver hygiene message through relevant and appropriate channels
- Conduct training and coaching to the community maintenance team
- Provision of safe water including for personal hygiene and handwashing
- Carry out water tank and public latrine constructions and hygiene promotion
- Improve the National Society's capacity for first aid and psychosocial services for both community service first aid and commercial first aid

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** supports the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society to deliver evidence-based effective and appropriate health and hygiene promotion and disease prevention which has wide applicability for reducing overall vulnerability of communities. For sustainability under the 5-years plan, the IFRC will support the National Society in developing its national strategies for epidemic/pandemic preparedness and minimum standard of public health in emergency response.

Based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 operation, which addressed community gaps in early detection as well as initiating a fast response at community level, IFRC will also facilitate peer to peer learning on community-based surveillance (CBS) and epidemic control for volunteers (ECV) between PMI and Timor-Leste Red Cross Society.

The **Republic of Korea National Red Cross** will continue to support the Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme for 2024 under the community health sector assistance especially in WASH.

The **Netherlands Red Cross** is supporting the project implementation of Chronic Crises that gives capacity of Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in improving preparedness on health sector.



In Timor-Leste, the key drivers for outward labour migration are poverty and underemployment. This migration often occurs in the form of self-initiated irregular travel from rural areas to Dili and into Indonesia based on information from family, friends, neighbours and/or the community. However, Timor-Leste also has bilateral agreements with South Korea and Australia offering formal labour migration pathways, and there are also Timorese communities further afield, in the Philippines, the United Kingdom and Portugal.

While labour migration brings many benefits to the country and provides opportunities for better pay and stable income, for some, it can also mean exploitation. A [2021 US State Department report](#) on trafficking in Timor-Leste notes that poor economic conditions and limited educational opportunities create trafficking vulnerabilities for Timorese nationals and, in particular, for women and girls who are lured into trafficking through promises of stable employment and education opportunities in Dili or overseas in China, Indonesia and Malaysia, where their documents are taken, and they are forced into commercial sex-work or domestic service. Men may also be exploited in agriculture, construction and mining.

Timor-Leste also has a complex history of population displacement due to conflict following the [1999 referendum](#) and subsequent political upheaval in 2006. Resettlement programs were supported by both the Timor-Leste and Indonesian Governments, as well as several agencies, in the years that followed. While some returned to Timor-Leste, others chose to remain in Indonesia in border areas such as Atambua, Belu and Kupang. On both sides, issues around land tenure and livelihoods for those displaced and returning was contentious and there was a push to wrap up resettlement programs by 2010, leaving some displaced persons vulnerable and poor without access to land, adequate services and the means to earn livelihoods. Further resettlement programs were supported by various agencies in the years that followed but by 2014 most of this support had come to an end, while it was still estimated that there were still around 22,000 Internal Displaced Person (IDP)s that still did not have access to durable solutions.

Furthermore, Timor-Leste's vulnerability to climate change and a range of natural hazards makes the population vulnerable to temporary and long-term internal displacement. In the most recent case, the 2021 Tropical Cyclone Seroja caused temporary displacement of households across the country.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has always played a pivotal role in supporting displaced communities during emergencies. Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will continue to develop their response capacity to support communities that are temporarily displaced by disasters or other crises in the country to ensure that their immediate needs are met in a timely way.

While the National Society does not have a stand-alone programme on migration, it intends to develop a better understanding of the migration context in Timor-Leste. This would allow it to see whether there is potential for the National Society to support the Government and other stakeholders already working on migration issues. In line with this, the National Society is interested in undertaking an assessment exercise to provide a deeper analysis and recommendations on where it could provide support. It would also allow the National Society to understand what kind of investment would be required to have a greater involvement in supporting and protecting the needs and rights of migrants in Timor-Leste.

Planned activities in 2024

- Develop response capacity to support communities that are temporarily displaced by disasters
- Ensure timely redressal of immediate needs displaced communities
- Understand migration context within the country to see whether there is potential for the National Society to support Government and other stakeholders working on migration

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in emergency response as needed, including capacitating Timor-Leste Red Cross Society to provide shelter to IDPs and implement restoring family links (RFL) program. Although migration is not one of Timor-Leste Red Cross Society priority for 2024, IFRC will provide support in connecting the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society with partners or stakeholders that have interest in migration context and work collaboratively with the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society.



Values, power and inclusion

Timor-Leste has the youngest population in the Asia-Pacific Region, with a median age of 20.8. According to the [Timor-Leste demographic health survey](#) (TLDHS) conducted in 2016, 41 per cent of the population are under the age of 15, and 26 per cent are adolescents aged 10-19 while about 9 per cent of the population are over 60 years old. Literate women are 75 per cent and 82 per cent for men with only 34 per cent women employed and 70 per cent of men indicated that they were employed.

Gender equality in Timor-Leste remains a pervasive challenge, with the deeply patriarchal Timorese society characterised by traditional gender roles and unequal power relations between women and men. In addition, Timor-Leste's history of conflict and violence has resulted in the normalisation of violence, particularly against women and children. A 2013 [study](#) conducted by the UNDP estimated that 30-50 per cent of Timorese women continued to suffer abuse from their partners at some point in their relationship. The Law on Domestic Violence protects against child abuse, yet this and other types of abuse and violence are common, and sexual abuse of children, including by family members, remains a serious concern.

Though Timor-Leste has been witnessing a burgeoning of its young population, it provides limited services and opportunities, especially for their participation in economic growth due to lack of industry and limited jobs. Timor-Leste's constitutions and laws guarantee gender equality in social, economic, and political opportunities. However, violence against women is prevalent, and women have more difficulty accessing economic resources.

Emergencies exacerbate existing gender inequalities, and the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), violence against children and trafficking in human beings often increase during and after emergencies. UN-Women and WHO [found](#) an increased violence against women and girls or any form of domestic violence during the state of COVID-19 emergency in Timor-Leste. Based on some agencies, vulnerable groups in Timor-Leste consist of women, children, disability, people living in remote or isolated areas, people who identified as LGBTQIA+, and non-Portuguese language speaker. Persons with disabilities experience challenges in accessing services because of lack of the understanding and poor awareness of service providers about social inclusion and how services can be adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities, including during crisis.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society aims to ensure [community engagement and accountability](#) and [protection, gender and inclusion](#) to make its programmes people-centred, inclusive, trusted and safe. The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will focus on strengthening youth clubs in municipality level as a medium to engage Timor-Leste youth in positive activities and to promote Red Cross Red Crescent principles to youth. Youth activities will include campaigns, knowledge sharing and spreading awareness on youth-related topics in Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste Red Cross Society aims to increase youth leadership by promoting more active involvement of youth in youth forums, both domestically and internationally.

Planned activities in 2024

- Mainstreaming PGI and CEA approach across all projects (DM, Health, Youth)
- Participate in the PGI working group of IFRC network and PSEA/PGI network in country
- Simplify the [minimum standard for PGI](#) in emergency response in Tetun Language
- Allocate funds to institutionalize community engagement and accountability
- Develop [youth and volunteer programme](#) aimed at attracting more youth and volunteer

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in developing the National Society's PGI policy, sensitization, and training. The IFRC will support the National Society's efforts in rolling out [PGI minimum standards](#) in their operations, provide standard operating procedures and policies in child protection, child safeguarding, and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. This training will be followed by a PGI assessment in 2024. Additionally, the IFRC will support the National Society in strengthening youth as agent of behavioural change ([YABC](#)) initiative in the country.

The **Australian Red Cross** provides technical and financial support to the National Society in its protection, gender and inclusion programming.

The **Netherlands Red Cross** provides support to the National Society in PGI assessment through the Chronic Crises project.

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is committed to institutional strengthening and carried out the self-assessment aspect of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process in 2014. This part of the process is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies as a whole in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities.

The National Society is also committed to the PER process and is at the action and accountability phase. The PER approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyze the strengths and gaps of its

preparedness and response mechanism, and ultimately take necessary action to improve it.

In line with the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's commitment to enhance the capacity of its branches, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society conducted a Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) of 13 branches in 2023. This exercise was aimed at capturing the achievements and gaps after the last BOCA in 2016.

In 2024, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will focus on: (1) advocacy to better position the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society at national and international levels; (2) partnerships through joint projects; (3) financial sustainability to support itself; and (4) thematic services that focus on health, disaster management and youth services.



Strategic and operational coordination

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

To maintain the existing partnerships and engage with new partners, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society plans to develop a good portfolio that highlights strengths, capacities, and services of the National Society aimed at accessing funding and support from the government, donor agencies, individual donors, private sector, and Movement partners. The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will map a government and donor strategy that aligns with the government's strategy.

Through collaborative networks, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society aims to improve its positioning in country and at the international level. The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society also aims to develop joint projects within technical networks in the country. This will increase the bargaining power of the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society and partners in accessing funding and support from the government and donor agencies.

To access sustainable partnerships and funding, the National Society plans to focus on developing joint projects with new and existing partners, including accessing Corporate Social Responsibilities to support Timor-Leste Red Cross Society services and improve staff and volunteer welfare.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in building a partnerships and strategic coordination with stakeholders. IFRC and three other National Societies of Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore will facilitate the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's engagement in peer-to-peer coordination and cooperation with those National Societies. For example, with Indonesian Red Cross, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will be assisted to continue collaboration in border areas.

The **New Zealand Red Cross** supports the National Society in fundraising skill development.



National Society development

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

In 2024, the National Society will focus on identifying the needs and vision of its next strategic plan while reviewing the current strategic plan's progress and achievement. During the transition, Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will prioritize some aspects of National Society development including branch development, financial sustainability, leadership, internal systems, volunteering and youth.

In developing its branches, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is focusing on strengthening fundraising, dissemination and communication, members and volunteer management, PMER, and financial management.

The National Society seeks to maximize its recruitment and management systems by using digital platform/system to record and manage members and volunteers.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** supports the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society to access grants or awards related to National Society development programming such as National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA), IFRC [Capacity Building Fund](#), and the [Empress Shoken Fund](#). The IFRC also supports reviewing the National Society proposal for such grants and supports the implementation of all approved programming.

The **American Red Cross** and the **Italian Red Cross** support the National Society in carrying out a Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment ([BOCA](#)) review and the evaluation of the implementation of the National Society development project. Based on the results and recommendations, the National Society will be assisted to develop a plan which will also contribute to the development of its strategic plan.

The **Australian Red Cross** is supporting the National Society in finance development and core costs.

The **New Zealand Red Cross** supports the National Society in developing its capacity through technical and advisory support on leadership and governance, volunteer management, and branch development.



Humanitarian diplomacy

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society seeks to develop and identify a clear strategy, prioritizing sectors and formulating key messages to better engage with the Government and other humanitarian partners in the country. It will develop a profile which highlights strengths, capacities, and services of the National Society as a marketing tool to access funding and support from the Government, donor agencies, and other stakeholders. It aims to improve its position in the country and at the international level.

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society prioritizes its visibility by improving dissemination and communication, including at

branch level. The National Society plans to improve public communications which will include increased dissemination on seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement that will be integrated into programme implementation.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** supports the National Society to ensure that it provides timely and relevant communication materials. It works with the National Society in building capacity to support advocacy and communication work. The IFRC will also facilitate the co-creation of key messages on communications and/or humanitarian diplomacy issues.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is committed to practicing safeguarding, staff safety and security, staff development and gender diversity and inclusion principles. All staff, members, and volunteers at both national and branch level are equipped with the knowledge and capacity to integrate PGI and CEA in daily services and programme operations. The National Society also plans to conduct PGI assessments and training -of-trainers.

A roadmap on planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting improvement will be developed as a priority in 2023–2024. In addition, digital engagement will provide additional support to these initiatives. To support financial sustainability, National Society accountability and other development priorities, the National Society will update its current National Society development log frame so that all support from partners is aligned to its development priorities. One of the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's main goals is to digitally link its branches with its headquarters in order to promote decentralization. This digital engagement will assist the National Society in rapid information exchange and field reporting. Digitalization is also

supported by increasing Internet access at both headquarters and branch offices.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in enhancing its capacity and integrating PGI principles in all National Society operations, as well with implementing CEA practices. The IFRC support also consists of reducing bottlenecks in providing financial reports and lengthy procurement processes, strengthening the National Society's planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) capacity, particularly reporting, through consistent and regular PMER coaching. The IFRC also facilitates opportunities for the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society to improve capacity by updating information on surge deployments, training, and PMER sessions with a regional or global context.

The IFRC is also assisting the National Society with digital training. It will support the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society to create innovations related to leadership, experimentation and partnerships, including local innovation.

The **Australian Red Cross** is supporting the National Society in PMER, IT and data management.



*The National Society volunteers conducting providing family kits, baby kits and mosquito repellent families affected by February 2022 rains.
(Photo: Timor Leste Red Cross Society)*

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC established a delegation in Timor-Leste on the basis of a legal status agreement with the Government of Timor-Leste dated in 2007. Since 2015, the office has been part of the IFRC Indonesia and Timor-Leste Country Cluster Delegation. The IFRC is supporting the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in mapping its organizational needs and in developing a decentralization road map.

The IFRC will continue to support the National Society in strengthening its organizational and response capacities to fulfil its humanitarian mandates, especially in disaster management. This includes collaboration with the Australian Red Cross on the establishment of the National Society's Emergency Operation Centre, and cash and voucher assistance; health; water, sanitation and hygiene; livelihoods and youth, in which [community engagement and accountability](#), as well as

[protection, gender and inclusion](#) (PGI), will be mainstreamed. The IFRC is facilitating peer to peer support between Timor-Leste Red Cross Society and Indonesian Red Cross for the cross-border initiatives, learning exchanges and training implementation between the two sister National Societies in the field of disaster management, health, and national society development.

The IFRC will continue its support to the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in providing assistance to communities in various disasters throughout the country. This is done by supporting the National Society to access IFRC emergency response mechanisms such as the disaster response emergency fund ([DREF](#)), and [Emergency Appeals](#), as well as exchanging disaster information updates through the available platforms, such as the [IFRC GO](#) platform.

IFRC membership coordination

IFRC membership coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs; agreeing on common priorities; jointly developing common strategies to address issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance and space; mobilizing funding and other resources; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring progress. This also means ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need, incorporate clarity of humanitarian action, links with development assistance, and efforts to reinforce National Societies in their respective countries, including through their auxiliary role.

Several National Societies will continue supporting the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's programmes and operations over the long term. Among the key partners are:

The **American Red Cross** will continue their collaboration with the IFRC in supporting nine National Societies, including Timor-Leste Red Cross Society, through the implementation of the Red Ready project. This project helps the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society to develop its next National Society development and strategic plan. IFRC maintains the provision of technical support to Timor-Leste Red Cross Society to achieve the project objectives, which is for the National Society to strengthen its national level capacities to achieve measurable institutional capacity development advances

primarily against the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification ([OCAC](#)) and Preparedness for Effective Response ([PER](#)) benchmarks.

The **Australian Red Cross** supports the National Society development including finance, planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting; IT and data management; support for core costs; disaster preparedness and response; protection, gender and inclusion; and the continuation of the cross-border initiatives between the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society and the Indonesian Red Cross. The Australian Red Cross has also continued to strengthen the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's capacity in epidemic and pandemic preparedness, and capacity building through the public health in emergencies training package.

The **Italian Red Cross** supports National Society development work focusing on youth, volunteers, fundraising, governance, and branch development, channelling funds through the IFRC.

The **Republic of Korea National Red Cross** supports the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society with integrated community-based risk reduction, including youth-led climate action.

The **Netherlands Red Cross** provides support for the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in cash and voucher capacity as part of the Cash and Voucher assistance readiness, to leverage

the ability of the National Society to deliver appropriate, accountable and timely cash and voucher assistance. This is aligned with the IFRC’s commissioned cash roadmap for enhancing cash preparedness in National Societies. The Netherlands Red Cross also funds a preparedness project and supports the National Society in enhancing its response to emergency situations.

The **New Zealand Red Cross** supports the National Society in developing its capacity through technical and advisory support on fundraising skill development, leadership and governance, human resources management, volunteer management and branch development. It will work collaboratively with the IFRC to support the Timor-Leste Red Cross in strengthening its financial management.

Participating National Society Support

National Society name	Funding Requirement	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling local actors
American Red Cross		●	●				●
Australian Red Cross	318,000		●	●		●	●
Indonesian Red Cross Society			●				
Italian Red Cross						●	●
Korean Red Cross		●	●	●		●	●
Netherlands Red Cross		●	●	●		●	
New Zealand Red Cross		●					

Total Funding requirement

318,000

Movement coordination

The National Society has identified Movement coordination as a priority. Movement partner meetings are held twice a year with the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society, the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and participating National Societies to monitor and adjust plans and strategies to ensure their successful implementation. Movement partners contributing to the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society’s priorities will continue offering support in a coordinated and collaborative manner across different sectors. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation ([SMCC](#)) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

In Timor-Leste, the [ICRC](#) is developing the capability of the authorities to identify people who died during the 1975-1999 conflict, and to react to large-scale emergencies. It promotes international humanitarian law within the armed forces and police, and trains the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society in community engagement, [restoring family links](#), and the management of dead bodies during emergencies. ICRC support in the country is covered by its regional delegation in Indonesia.

Coordination with other actors

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has a strong relationship with the Government as an auxiliary. It works closely with the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, and national and sub-national departments including the State Secretariat of Civil Protection, State Secretariat of the Environment, and the National Disaster Risk Management Directorate. The National Society has built partnerships with in-country organizations; including Oxfam for its disaster management programme; the Partnership for Human Development for its health programme; the Korea International

Cooperation Agency for its health programme; the Child Fund for its youth programme; and the Catholic Relief Service for its nutrition programme. Since 2018, the National Society, with support from IFRC, has also been receiving support from the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance to strengthen their national society development capacity towards response readiness, through the Red Ready project.

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society participates regularly in the UN-led Humanitarian Country Team meetings, as well as working with local and international humanitarian organizations.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 15 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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\) data](#)
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)
- [Evaluations database](#)

This plan reflects the priorities of the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society, the IFRC and National Societies providing international support, for 2024 and subsequent years. It is aligned with [IFRC Strategy 2030](#), representing the collective ambitions of IFRC membership, and is the result of a joint planning process and will serve for joint monitoring and reporting. It will be revised on an annual basis to adjust priorities and funding requirements to the needs in-country.

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