



# PANAMA

2024-2026 IFRC network country plan

7 May 2024

Multi-Year Funding Requirement **CHF 16M**

## In support of the Red Cross Society of Panama



Cruz Roja  
Panameña



**23**

National Society branches



**116**

National Society staff



**1,716**

National Society volunteers

## People to be reached



**1,000**

Climate and environment



**4,000**

Disasters and crises



**100,000**

Health and wellbeing



**200,000**

Migration and displacement



**2,000**

Values, power and inclusion

## IFRC network multi-year focus

### Emergency response

- Population movement

### Longer term needs

- Disaster risk management
- Climate change adaptation
- Violence prevention and protection
- Epidemic preparedness and response

### Capacity development

- Humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy
- Partnerships and resource mobilization
- Quality and upgraded management systems

## Key country data

Population	<b>4.4M</b>
INFORM Severity rating	<b>Low</b>
INFORM Climate Change Risk Index	<b>3.8</b>
Human Development Index rank	<b>61</b>
Population below poverty level	<b>21.5%</b>

IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras & Panama, based in Tegucigalpa, Honduras

# Funding requirements

2024

2025\*\*

2026\*\*

**Total 4.9M CHF**

**Total 5.3M CHF**

**Total 5.8M CHF**

Through the IFRC

→ **1.8M CHF**

Through Participating National Societies

→ **167,000 CHF**

Through Host National Society

**3M CHF**

Through the IFRC

→ **2M CHF**

Through Host National Society

**3.5M CHF**

Through the IFRC

→ **2.2M CHF**

Through Host National Society

**3.6M CHF**

\*\*Projected funding requirements

## IFRC Breakdown

### Longer term needs

**50,000 CHF**

Climate and environment

**177,000 CHF**

Disasters and crises

**34,000 CHF**

Health and wellbeing

**1M CHF**

Migration and displacement

**90,000 CHF**

Values, power and inclusion

**454,000 CHF**

Enabling local actors

## Participating National Societies

British Red Cross\*

Canadian Red Cross Society\*

Italian Red Cross

Japanese Red Cross Society\*

Netherlands Red Cross\*

Spanish Red Cross

Swedish Red Cross\*

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

## IFRC Appeal codes

Longer-term needs:

**MAAPA002**

## Hazards



Population movement



Hurricanes and Cyclones



Floods



Droughts



Disease outbreaks



Economic hardship

# NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Red Cross Society of Panama** has existed in Panama since 1917 and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1925. It is officially recognized by the government as an association of autonomous volunteers which acts in an auxiliary role to the public authorities.

The National Society supports the development of communities and is currently developing activities in the areas of relief, social welfare, training, outreach, community disaster preparedness, restoring family links, promoting voluntary blood donation, care for migrants, children's homes, and shelter for the elderly. Its services include pre-hospital care (basic rescue units), first aid training, and training in water safety and rescue.

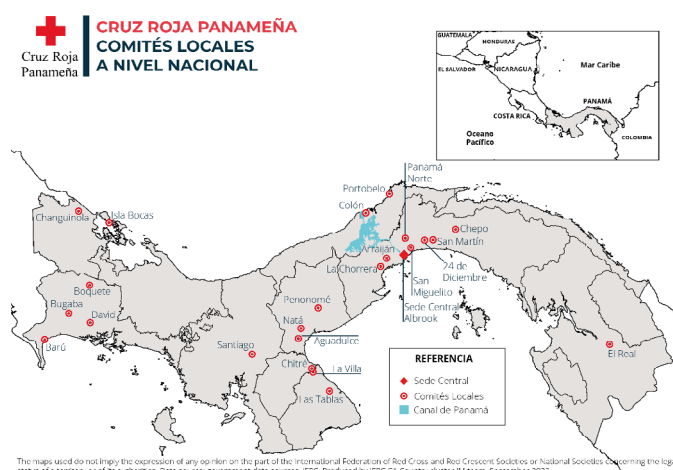
In recent years, the National Society established new institutional environments and procedures with the aim of promoting institutional development and growth and improving its organizational structure and operational functioning to enhance humanitarian action. The changes have enabled the implementation of joint and effective responses, which denote the participation and decision of all those involved.

The National Society's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 mainly involves:

- Recognizing and addressing weaknesses in institutional capacities, structures and services in an organized manner

- Reviewing and monitoring how actions are carried out in order to delegate sufficient authority to national, regional and local actors
- Integrating programmes and initiatives into daily actions so that efforts are not individualized, particularly the interests of donors and other partners
- Working under the principles of transparency and accountability at all levels

In 2021, the Red Cross Society of Panama reached more than 51,000 people through its long-term services and development programmes, and more than 623 people through its disaster response and early recovery programmes.



## IFRC NETWORK ACTION

### JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The Republic of Panama is located in the centre of the western hemisphere, bordering the Caribbean Sea to the north, the Republic of Colombia to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the south and the Republic of Costa Rica to the west. As an isthmus, Panama is the link between Central America and South America, with a nearly impenetrable jungle, the Darien Gap, between Panama and Colombia.

Approximately 75,517 square kilometres in size and with a population of 4.4 million people, it is politically divided into 10 provinces. The culture, customs and language of Panamanians are predominantly Caribbean Spanish. Ethnically, the majority of the population is Mestizo or a mixture of Spaniards, Chinese, Amerindians, and Africans. Spanish is the official and dominant language. There are seven indigenous peoples in Panama: Emberá, Wounaan, Ngöbe, Buglé, Kuna, Naso-Teribe and Bri-Bri, scattered across semi-autonomous territories.

The Panamanian economy is based on services, with a strong focus on banking, commerce, and tourism. Panama's economic growth in 2022 was 8.1 per cent, making it one

of the [fastest-growing countries in the world](#). The economy is projected to grow by 5.8 per cent in 2024. Prior to 2020, Panama maintained high but declining economic growth rates, which allowed the growth of the middle-class to 56.9 per cent in 2019.

In parallel, according to the United Nations Development Programme, the multidimensional [poverty rate among Panama's indigenous](#) population is 56.2 per cent, meaning that they are deprived in areas of education, health, housing, access

to water, sanitation, and assets. The multidimensional poverty rate for the non-indigenous population is 10.9 per cent.

Due to its geographical position, Panama continues to be both a destination and transit country for migrants. Irregular border crossings between Colombia and Panama through the Darien Gap continue to increase.

While Panama has experienced steady economic growth, it faces social and other issues problems such as poverty, inequality, corruption, crime, and climate change.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



### Climate and environment

Panama is a [highly vulnerable](#) country to climate change, due to its geographical location, tropical climate, and topography. It is susceptible to a variety of climate impacts such as flooding, droughts, and hurricanes. Climate change and extreme weather-related events become significant threats to health conditions, food security, access to safe water and environmental security of people, especially for the most vulnerable and remote communities with low response, coping and recovery capacities.

Being a country with an extensive river network and an extensive coastline, Panama is [prone to flooding](#). The country also falls in the path of Atlantic hurricanes, causing severe damage to population and infrastructure. In parallel, the increase in temperatures in recent years and the decrease in rainfall have affected the country's water resources, [leading to droughts](#) which negatively impacted agriculture, fishing, tourism, and trade from the Panama canal. The unprecedented droughts are also reducing the number of daily passages through the Panama Canal, [delaying traffic](#). Projections indicate that maximum and minimum temperatures will increase in the future, affecting health, agriculture, pest populations, and even photosynthesis.

According to [Global Forest Watch](#), between 2002 and 2023, Panama experienced a loss of 92.7 thousand hectares of primary forest and 508 thousand hectares of tree cover, resulting in an 8.9% reduction in tree cover since 2000. The loss of native trees, combined with rising temperatures, has led to an increase in forest fires in the country. Fires alone have caused a loss of 24.9 thousand hectares of tree cover, while all other factors have contributed to a loss of 458 thousand hectares since 2000.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross Society of Panama is part of the IFRC [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; (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

The National Society's strategic plan seeks to achieve environmental and sustainable practices in favour of climate change mitigation by 2025. To this end, the National Society seeks to:

- Take urgent action to adapt to growing and changing climate and environmental crises
- Develop projects in communities aimed at spreading awareness of climate change
- Promote the sustainable use of resources and care for the environment

### Planned activities in 2024

- Promote the conservation of natural resources and contribute to the [resilience of communities](#) towards the effects of climate change
- Promote reforestation

- Implement resilient infrastructure projects that promote sustainable agriculture
- Promote the adoption of sustainable practices in schools and communities
- Participate in beach and river clean-up campaigns

in communities and schools. Trained volunteers will work with students in schools to protect water resources and the environment. Volunteers trained in climate-smart livelihoods will support communities in engaging in income-generating activities that are adapted to the climate.

**The IFRC** will further support the National Society with the technical implementation of the guide on climate-smart operations and programmes and workshops. It will provide technical support for the development of 'green' sectoral interventions through pilot projects such as waste management in communities. The National Society will also be supported in developing digital content and campaigns to catalyze social conversations about addressing climate crises and their impact on livelihoods, communities, and ecosystems.

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The Red Cross Society of Panama is part of the global [Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#) (PPP) between the IFRC and the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). Through the ECHO PPP, the Red Cross Society of Panama will be supported in promoting good environmental practices



## Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see the [IFRC GO page, Panama](#)

According to its geographic position and geo-tectonic characteristics, the country is exposed to a variety of hydrometeorological and geophysical hazards. Panama is characterized by intense and long-lasting rainfall and is susceptible to [ENSO/El Niño-La Niña episodes](#). The recurrent impacts of weather and climate-related events present natural hazards including hurricanes, strong electrical discharges, floods, sea spills, droughts, and vegetation fires.

The [disasters and crises](#) generate damage and losses which cause crop failure, infrastructure damage, loss of livestock,

and reduced operations in the Panama Canal. In addition, such severe crises make it difficult to respond to emergencies and recover from all impacts.

Other geological, sudden-onset and high-impact events include volcanos, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Spills of hazardous substances also represent a risk. Panama ranks 14th among the countries most exposed to multiple hazards based on land area. The country has 15 per cent of its total area exposed and 12.5 per cent of its total population is vulnerable to two or more climate-related hazards. In addition, Panama ranks 35th among the countries with the highest percentage of the total population considered to be at [high mortality risk from multiple hazards](#).



*The Red Cross Society of Panama provides first aid, basic health care, and access to water to migrants crossing the Darien Gap who are often injured, dehydrated, with severe allergic reactions. (Photo: IFRC)*

## Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross Society of Panama will continue working to consolidate its auxiliary role in preparedness and response actions. This will be done mainly by strengthening institutional and national mechanisms, aligned with the results obtained through the IFRC [Preparedness for Effective Response \(PER\)](#) assessment and by developing and updating documents, tools and procedures for the effective management and control of disasters and crises.

The National Society will also focus on the following:

- Encourage communities to take action to increase their resilience towards multiple and evolving impacts and hazards
- Meet the needs of people affected by crises and disasters through [in-kind assistance](#) and support
- Provide [shelter assistance](#) to people affected by crises and disasters
- Ensure food security and livelihoods of people affected by crises and disasters
- Expand leadership in the field of [disaster law](#) and enhance the official recognition of its auxiliary role

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### Planned activities in 2024

- Raise [public awareness of risks](#) and promote prevention measures to reduce the risk of disasters and crises



## Health and wellbeing

Medical care in Panama is divided into two large systems run by the [Ministry of Health](#) and the [Social Security Fund](#) which function in parallel; both are administratively divided into 14 health regions. Around 90 per cent of the [population](#) has access to health services from at least one of these two public institutions. Panama has a national average of 29.2 physicians and nurses per 10,000 inhabitants; however, that ratio is less in rural areas and 'comarcas' (provinces).

The public care provided by the Social Security Fund and the Ministry of Health is limited, since they often have to resort to buying external medicines, which are extremely expensive in the country. An area of priority is [maternal and child health](#) focusing on caring for women during pregnancy and childbirth, as well as children from birth to five years of age. The quality of care is an area of concern since only 65.7 per cent of pregnant women receive all the tests and vaccines recommended during pregnancy. A total of 26.1 per cent were

- Train volunteers and staff to respond effectively to disasters and crises
- Develop functional [early warning systems](#) in communities
- Develop sustainable food production systems and promote the conservation of natural resources
- Perform feasibility analyses

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

Through the [DG ECHO-IFRC PPP](#), the Red Cross Society of Panama will be supported in training local emergency committees and engaging them in the development of early warning systems. Key messages on flood preparedness will be delivered to at-risk communities in their local language. The National Society will continue to enhance its response capacity, supporting volunteers to become accredited in urban search and rescue, and preparing for hurricane season in line with the approved National Disaster Response Plan.

**The IFRC** will also assist the National Society with developing training on community resilience for National Society staff and volunteers. This will include adapting, contextualizing, and sharing information in local languages, and putting in place community feedback systems and participatory approaches to all operations. The National Society will also be supported in developing protocols for formulating contingency plans and the Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs).

assisted by doctors, and 73.9 per cent by traditional birth attendants in 2022.

[Non-communicable diseases](#) constitute the number one cause of death in Panama, primarily cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks, arterial hypertension, and strokes (26 per cent); cancer (14 per cent), chronic respiratory diseases (4 per cent), and diabetes (7 per cent).

Panama's ongoing struggle against climate change and disasters also increases the risk of [vector-borne diseases](#) and disruption to health services, as well as damage to infrastructure.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

In its role as an auxiliary to the public authorities, the Red Cross Society of Panama provides key support through pre-hospital services and first aid and has played an important and

active role in supporting the Ministry of Health. The National Society encourages voluntary blood donations through awareness-raising and collaboration with other entities. In its strategic plan, the National Society defines being able to provide health services to vulnerable people without distinction and discrimination.

In its pursuit of providing care, the National Society will:

- Maintain the health and dignity of communities in emergencies and disease outbreaks by providing access to appropriate health services
- Protect the health and wellbeing of communities, and improve access to sustainable, affordable, appropriate, and quality health services throughout life
- Ensure communities have greater access to affordable, appropriate, and environmentally sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene services, even during emergencies
- Improve water and sanitation services at [humanitarian service points](#), as part of an integrated approach for support to people on the move
- Leverage its auxiliary role to secure a position in relevant country-level public health strategy, advocacy and policy platforms and mechanisms

A comprehensive water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) plan is not currently in place at the national level. However, the migration programme conducts hygiene promotion management, safe water production, and sanitation activities in host communities and [humanitarian service points](#).

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## Planned activities in 2024

- Train people in [first aid](#), in case of emergencies
- Ensure ambulance services provide emergency medical care
- Provide healthcare for people in vulnerable situations, such as refugees, migrants, and victims of violence
- Provide services in health care, including maternal and child healthcare
- Facilitate education and awareness campaigns on health and wellbeing such as disease prevention, [mental health](#) promotion, and healthy lifestyles
- Create new, safe water production systems including for the population at risk and affected by disasters and crises
- Deliver hygiene supplies to people in vulnerable conditions
- Raise awareness of good practices in caring for the environment, in tandem with maintaining water resources and environmentally friendly sanitation

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## Longer-term support from the IFRC network

Through the [DG ECHO-IFRC PPP](#), the Red Cross Society of Panama will be supported by **the IFRC** and EU National Societies in further strengthening its capacity for epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response, in line with the recently developed national [health strategy](#). This support will include awareness-raising on vector control for the prevention of mosquito-borne illnesses in target communities, as well as early response to outbreaks, community surveillance, active case finding, and infection prevention and control. The IFRC will also assist the National Society with first aid training in schools and communities, including the formation of community first aid brigades.



Due to its geographical position, Panama is a [natural pathway for migratory flows](#). People from more than 45 countries cross its borders daily. People migrate in search of better economic opportunities or to flee violence and insecurity in their countries of origin. However, migrants are often vulnerable to poverty, exclusion, exploitation, discrimination, and violence in the host countries too.

Migrants use the [Darién jungle](#) as a passage to other countries. Darién represents a complex context in which population movement collides with indigenous communities living in vulnerability with little access to services. By the end of August 2022, over 100,00 migrants had entered through the Darién Gap, compared to 70,000 in the same period in 2021, reflecting an increase of 69 per cent.

The migration crisis worsened in [2023](#), with the first six months registering figures higher than the entirety of 2022. Agencies, institutions, and organizations are running out of sufficient resources to keep up with the migratory flow. The government also has a great challenge of controlling the flow as it generates tensions within the local community on a social and economic level.

The regulatory [framework for migration](#) in the country includes the National Legal Framework which includes Law No. 5 of 1977 which complies with the safeguard against the expulsion of refugees. The government and the human mobility group of the United Nations system have also joined forces to work in a more coordinated manner in response to the needs presented.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The National Society is part of the IFRC's three-year [Global Route-Based Migration Programme](#), which aims to improve the safety and dignity of people on the move along deadly and dangerous land and sea-based migration routes. The programme aims to support 4.7 million people annually across the world who are either on the move or living in host communities.

As a result of its auxiliary role and the close collaboration with the Ministry of Security through SENAFRONT, the Red Cross Society of Panama will:

- Ensure that migrants and displaced persons have access to [humanitarian service points](#) along migration routes, and durable solutions where appropriate
- Engage with migrants, displaced persons, and host communities to assess, understand, and respond to their priority needs more effectively

- Reduce the vulnerabilities of migrants through the provision of humanitarian services at temporary stations and host communities
- Promote the rights and dignity of migrants and protect them against violence and exploitation

### Planned activities in 2024

- Establish humanitarian service points providing basic humanitarian assistance such as safe information, first aid, hygiene supplies, water, medical, and psychosocial care to migrants and displaced people
- Provide migrants and displaced people with the awareness that they are entitled to protection against violence, discrimination, and exploitation
- Ensure migrants can contact their families
- Seek feedback from people on the move to improve services offered
- Improve and strengthen community water production systems
- Enable host communities to understand migrant perspectives, the causes of migration, and their rights
- Identify potential livelihoods among host communities

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

Through the [DG ECHO IFRC PPP](#), the Red Cross Society of Panama will be supported in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to the growing number of people on the move. **The IFRC** will support the National Society in tracking migration flows and actions. At least one [Community Engagement and Accountability \(CEA\)](#) feedback mechanism will be present in a [humanitarian service point](#). The National Society will also be provided with technical support in the preparation of information materials to be delivered to migrants and host communities. The material will be cognizant of language, culture and literacy needs.

The **Colombian Red Cross** and the **Costa Rican Red Cross** will work with the National Society on the ground to address migration and plan migratory scenarios.

The **Spanish Red Cross** has been collaborating with the Red Cross Society of Panama for more than 40 years. Currently, it is contributing to strengthening the National Society's management, coordination, and response capacity in the provision of humanitarian assistance to migrants in the Darién and Chiriquí region, in accordance with the National Migration Strategy.





## Values, power and inclusion

Four out of ten children in Panama do not have access to pre-school education, and three out of five do not have access to secondary school. A study by the Ministry of Labour and Labour Development and the International Labour Organization in [2017](#) concluded that 17.2 per cent of adolescents and young people in Panama were neither studying nor working.

Panama also suffers high rates of violence. Although there has been some reduction in crimes affecting life and property, organized crime, and gangs, including human trafficking organizations and other non-state armed groups, are still a major concern for many people. As of 2019, Panama saw [17.2 homicides a year](#) per 100,000 population. Most people killed were between the ages of 15-29. While the country has national action plans addressing different types of violence, the regulation of handguns is yet to be brought into legislation.

Panama ranks 58th in the [gender gap index](#) which measures inequality in participation in the economy and the skilled labour market, in politics, in access to education and life expectancy. Panama experiences violence in all its manifestations such as domestic violence, homicides, and sexual violence. The most vulnerable groups in Panama include people of African descent, indigenous people, the LGBTQ+ community, and people with disabilities.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Promote and support safe, equitable, and continuous [access to quality education](#) for all, especially children affected by disasters, crises, or displacement
- Provide safe and inclusive support, ensuring the dignity, access, participation, and safety of people of all identities
- Empower vulnerable and crisis-affected individuals and communities to influence decisions affecting them
- Develop programmes and activities that promote the values of the Red Cross Society of Panama in the community
- Contribute to the dissemination and application of the [Fundamental Principles](#) and humanitarian values, with a particular focus on the knowledge, skills, and behaviour of [young people](#)

### Planned activities in 2024

- Promote a culture of peace and non-violence through education and awareness-raising programmes
- Promote educational brigades in communities as agents of change

- Assist vulnerable children, the elderly, and vulnerable populations through key messages in their native languages
- Train staff and volunteers on integrating Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approaches into programming

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The Red Cross Society of Panama is increasing its capacity for Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) through the [DG ECHO-IFRC PPP](#). As such, trained staff and volunteers are integrating CEA into their programmes and identifying the appropriate channels to disseminate key messages and receive feedback. This will include strengthening community feedback systems so as to better monitor and act on community perceptions, concerns, rumours, and misinformation on various issues, including disease.

As part of the [DG ECHO-IFRC PPP](#) framework, **the IFRC** will provide technical support to the National Society in the implementation of the training of [Youth as Agents of Behaviour Change](#). It will also assist the Red Cross Society of Panama in training [Protection, Gender, and Inclusion \(PGI\)](#) staff and volunteers on approaches to community engagement and community accountability. It will ensure that all feedback data collected is disaggregated by age and gender.

**The IFRC** will support the National Society through mechanisms such as the [Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(IFRC-DREF\)](#) and Emergency Appeals. These will continue to be drawn on as needed for the National Society to respond to disasters and crises. In 2023, IFRC launched an [IFRC-DREF to provide humanitarian aid during protests and demonstrations](#) which broke out in the rejection of a mining contract by the Panamanian population. The DREF allocation of CHF 172,500 in October 2023 supported the National Society in assisting 3500 people affected by the nationwide demonstrations, protests, and closures.

The **Italian Red Cross** is supporting the Red Cross Society of Panama's efforts to promote a culture of non-violence and peace through educational brigades. Safe spaces are created for children, adolescents, teachers and parents to discuss themes and issues such as the culture of peace, conflict resolution, gender, inter-religious dialogue, and self-esteem. First aid training, health and hygiene promotion awareness, and environmental education are also provided.

## ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Red Cross Society of Panama is committed to pursuing its institutional strengthening and has carried out the self-assessment part of the IFRC's [Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification \(OCAC\)](#) process in 2016 and 2020. The self-assessment part of the OCAC 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 Red Cross Society of Panama is also committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process and is in the action and accountability phase. The PER approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyse the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism, and take necessary action to improve it.



### Strategic and operational coordination

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#### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Strengthen its institutional capacity to respond to emergencies, crises, and disasters
- Develop operational capabilities, logistics, human talent, equipment acquisition, and infrastructure improvements
- Increase cooperation and coordination with external partners to address the main challenges faced by communities
- Ensure effective coordination of hosting clusters with partners as well as other various entities including local actors

#### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will assist the Red Cross Society of Panama by ensuring participation in inter-agency platforms, such as the humanitarian country team, thematic groups, and working groups, especially in the context of migration. It will also ensure that all partners adhere to a National Society framework for joint planning and prioritization, both in short-term crises and in longer-term planning. The planning will be built in a way that takes advantage of the capacity of the different partners, emphasizing complementarity in the face of competition and facilitating co-creation and innovation.



### National Society development

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#### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Improve its capacity to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people
- Improving the capacity of its volunteers to respond to emergencies
- Prioritize the development of youth volunteerism and action as critical catalysts for behaviour change and local action

#### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will promote and facilitate the Organization Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process and support the revision of the Statutes of the Red Cross Society of Panama. The IFRC will also utilize the services of the Inter-American Centre for the Development of Volunteers to strengthen volunteerism.



## Humanitarian diplomacy

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### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Maintain the promotion of International Humanitarian Law and the principles and values of the Movement
- Carry out humanitarian diplomacy workshop with volunteers from local branches, field management staff, and headquarters staff
- Update the Red Cross law in Panama, which was approved in 1917

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will aid the National Society with the implementation of regional commitments and global. It will also organize training in humanitarian diplomacy and auxiliary roles, including a workshop, with the participation of Central American National Societies. The IFRC aims to develop content and key messages tailored to specific audiences communicated through the most effective channels.



## Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

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### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Improve transparency, financial, and operational accessibility
- Implement a risk management system and internal controls to ensure the integrity and efficiency of operations
- Improve information management by implementing systems that allow the collection, storage, and analysis of data

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will also organize training and/or mentoring sessions on results-based management for National Society staff. Other support to be provided includes: (1) conducting a fraud prevention workshop; (2) financing support for digital transformation and public relations staff; (3) supporting the establishment of a fraud prevention policy; and (4) a robust volunteer database.

The IFRC will also promote the development of strategies aimed at strengthening the financial sustainability of the National Society that will allow the National Society to continue expanding and sustaining the process of transformation and growth.

## THE IFRC NETWORK

### The IFRC

The IFRC supports the Red Cross Society of Panama through its Central America Country Cluster Delegation, based in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and the IFRC Americas regional office, based in Panama.

IFRC's support focuses on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development, and humanitarian diplomacy. It also supports the strengthening of accountability as a cross-cutting theme.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the Red Cross Society of Panama through a series of Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF-IFRC) operations and Emergency Appeals in relation to various hazards such as floods (MDRPA017) and civil unrest (MDRPA018) with allocations of CHF 155,985 and CHF 172,535 targeting 1,500 and 3,500 people affected, respectively.

## 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.

The Red Cross Society of Panama is also part of the global [Pilot Programmatic Partnership \(PPP\)](#) between the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) and the IFRC. In this connection, the Red Cross Society of Panama is undertaking the following main interventions: promoting good environmental practices in communities and schools; climate-smart livelihoods; early warning, early action for communities at risk; epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response; and humanitarian assistance and protection to people on the move; community engagement and accountability. The National Society will also enhance its coordination with National Societies in Central America which are located along the migratory route, and as such, it will contribute to the Regional Information Management and Visualization System for people on the move in Central America.

This partnership meets the realities of extended crises with longer-term predictable funding, facilitating actions and processes with the potential for greater, longer-term impact.

It leverages the IFRC's global network and unique access to people and communities, and it helps to fulfil the ambitions of the European Union as the world's biggest international donor for humanitarian assistance.

The Red Cross Society of Panama, along with other National Societies in Central America, also receives support from the [IFRC Reference Centre for Institutional Disaster Preparedness \(CREPD\)](#) hosted by the Salvadorean Red Cross and supported by IFRC. Communication and coordination channels across the region are available for the exchange of information on operational activities and different contextual analyses, with meetings held on a regular basis. The centre assists National Societies in strengthening their disaster preparedness capacities through the development of methodologies, tools and harmonization processes, complemented by the expertise and best practices of National Societies.

The following participating National Societies are supporting the Red Cross Society of Panama:

The **Italian Red Cross** is supporting the Red Cross Society of Panama's efforts to promote a culture of non-violence and peace through educational brigades.

The **Spanish Red Cross** has been collaborating with the Red Cross Society of Panama for more than 40 years. Currently, it is contributing to strengthening the National Society's management, coordination, and response capacity in the provision of humanitarian assistance to migrants in the Darién and Chiriquí region, in accordance with the National Migration Strategy. In this way, the Spanish Red Cross contributes to the strengthening of the Red Cross Society of Panama as a key local actor for the localization of aid with funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).



More than 1,000 people per day crossed the Darién Gap between January and April 2023. The Red Cross Society of Panama provides information, internet connection, and referrals to specialized institutions. (Photo: IFRC)

## Participating National Society Support

National Society name	Funding Requirement	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling local actors
Italian Red Cross	35,000					●	
Spanish Red Cross	132,000	●	●	●	●	●	

Total Funding requirement

**167,000**

## Movement coordination

The Red Cross Society of Panama ensures regular exchanges with the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and participating National Societies, for the alignment of support and action between Movement partners. In times of emergencies, closer coordination is organized. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

[The ICRC](#) in Panama works to ensure that people with the highest risk and vulnerability factors are protected and assisted and that their fundamental rights and dignity are respected. The ICRC has been present in Panama since 1989. In 2010, a headquarters agreement was signed between the Government of Panama and the ICRC, establishing a permanent presence and strengthening its exclusively humanitarian activities in the country.

## Coordination with other actors

The Red Cross Society of Panama works in close collaboration with local and national authorities and other humanitarian organizations for a coordinated response. It is a member of the national civil protection system, takes part in the National Operations Centre during emergencies, and coordinates with its network of branches in response to emergencies. Local and departmental government authorities are actively involved in all operations undertaken by the National Society to ensure it complements and works in alignment with public policies and response plans in emergencies.

The Red Cross Society of Panama also coordinates the DG ECHO-IFRC PPP actions in several coordination platforms, including the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform (R4V) and the human mobility group, protection subgroup, and WASH group. The National Society coordinates with the UNFPA and IOM to provide safe space for women at the temporary migrant reception centres. Disaster risk management actions are coordinated with the Panama National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC).

The National Society plays a key role as an auxiliary to the public health system in the areas of primary health, outreach to vulnerable communities and pre-hospital care. During operations related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Society coordinated with the Ministry of Health to implement and follow up on prevention measures. The emergency operation centres that were leading the response – along with government departments, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) – were assisted by the IFRC in making recommendations to ensure an appropriate response and coordinate actions. The National Society held regular technical coordination meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Health, WHO and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) at the national level.

The situation of migrants and displaced people in the region has become an increasingly challenging priority for government authorities and the organizations that make up the Humanitarian Country Team. The cross-border phenomenon of migration and displacement requires coordination both

within and between countries to maintain the humanitarian chain of assistance that delivers urgent protection services to migrants, people in transit, returnees and displaced persons. The National Society regularly coordinates with the state, including the National Civil Protection System, National Border Service (SENAFRONT), National Migration Service, National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family Affairs, and the Ministry of Health. The state leads a large part of the humanitarian response through SENAFRONT. The Red Cross Society of Panama also holds weekly inter-agency coordination meetings with humanitarian actors in Darien and Chiriqui, such as the United Nations's International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

and other humanitarian organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Doctors of the World and Save the Children.

The IFRC participates in national and regional coordination spaces with external partners, to stay informed about the humanitarian context and contribute to the IFRC network's perspective and work. The IFRC also provides support to the National Society for better partnerships with international, regional, and national organizations, such as the Gorgas Institute, Médecins Sans Frontières, the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC), and other humanitarian actors.



**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 Red Cross Society of Panama, 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 the 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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