



# SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

## 2024 IFRC network country plan

7 May 2024

Funding Requirement **CHF 1.2M**

### In support of the São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross



**5**

National Society branches



**43**

National Society staff



**340**

National Society volunteers

### People to be reached



**22,000**

Climate and environment



**22,000**

Disasters and crises



**22,000**

Health and wellbeing



**22,000**

Values, power and inclusion

### IFRC network multi-year focus

#### Longer term needs

- Disaster preparedness • Climate change adaptation • Health • Water, sanitation and hygiene • Social inclusion

#### Capacity development

- Communications • Resource mobilization
- Digital transformation • Risk management
  - Financial management

### Key country data

**Population** **227,000**

**INFORM Climate Risk Index** **Very low**

**Human Development Index rank** **138**

**Population below poverty level** **55.5%**

## Hazards



Floods



Storms



Landslides



Sea level rise



Diseases

## Funding requirements

**Total 1.2M** CHF

Through the IFRC



→ **532,000** CHF

Through Host National Society



**686,000** CHF

### IFRC Breakdown

#### Longer term needs

**77,000** CHF

Climate and environment

**192,000** CHF

Disasters and crises

**116,000** CHF

Health and wellbeing

**77,000** CHF

Values, power and inclusion

**70,000** CHF

Enabling local actors

## Participating National Societies

The Netherlands Red Cross\*

British Red Cross\*

Japanese Red Cross Society\*

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

## IFRC Appeal codes

Longer-term needs:

**MAAST002**

# NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross** was created by decree in 1976 and [admitted](#) to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1985. It has administrative and financial autonomy and is an auxiliary to public authorities for work in the social field, peacebuilding and the prevention of diseases and disasters. It is present throughout the country and has five regional committees in the districts of Água Grande, Caué, Lembá, Cantagalo and the Autonomous Region of Príncipe.

The São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross [Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#) confirms the National Society's commitment to pursue and develop humanitarian assistance based on five strategic areas:

**Institutional development:** Strengthening the National Society's technical and financial capacities and improving the quality of the services it provides to the population. It will particularly focus on digitalizing its work, and gradually improving its functional social protection system.

**Information and dissemination:** Improving the visibility of the National Society and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and disseminating the basic concepts of international humanitarian law.

**Health, social protection and women's protection:** Contributing to progressively and sustainably improving health conditions for vulnerable communities throughout São Tomé and Príncipe, while reducing domestic violence and empowering women.

**Relief and disasters:** Establishing a disaster response team and building its capacity to respond, and recruit and train new volunteers as emergency back-up.

**Youth and culture of peace:** Establishing and training youth structures in the districts of Água Grande, Lembá, Cantagalo, Caué and the Autonomous Region of Príncipe to carry out social and humanitarian activities within communities.

## IFRC NETWORK ACTION

### JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe is an island country of over [220,000 people](#), located in the Gulf of Guinea, off the west equatorial coast of Central Africa. It is made up of two archipelagos around the two main islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, which are about 140 kilometres apart and located about 250 kilometres and 225 kilometres respectively from the northwest coast of Gabon.

In 1977, two years after it gained independence, the country was divided into two provinces (São Tomé and Príncipe) and six districts. Since the adoption of the new constitution in 1990, the two provinces have been abolished and the districts remain as administrative sub-divisions. Since April 1995, the island of Príncipe has been an autonomous region, with only one district, namely, Pagué. The larger island of São Tomé is divided into [six districts](#), namely, Água Grande, Cantagalo, Caué, Lembá, Lobata and Mé-Zóchi. São Tomé and Príncipe is placed at 138 in the [UNDP Human Development Index](#), indicating a

level of development that exceeds the sub-Saharan African average. However, according to the [Gini Index](#), it is also one of the most unequal countries in the world. According to the [Human Development Report 2020](#), São Tomé and Príncipe had a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.537 in 2019, ranking it 133 out of 162 countries. Based on recent [World Bank estimates](#), about one-third of the population lives on less than US\$1.9 per day, while more than two-thirds of the population falls below the poverty line set at US\$3.2 per day.

São Tomé and Príncipe has made excellent progress in the education sector, particularly primary education, and is close to achieving a [primary completion rate of 97%](#). There is not yet the desired universal coverage of secondary education, although the authorities are committed to extending it across the country.

With a combination of equatorial and tropical climates, and high rainfall, the archipelago has a relatively secure food and forestry context. This contrasts with an unhealthy urban environment. As no cereal crops are grown on the islands, São Tomé and Príncipe is [heavily dependent on food imports and food availability is unpredictable](#). There are no deep-water

ports and bad weather makes landing on the country's short airstrip difficult. The country is exposed to natural hazards such as floods and landslides, which affect crop development, restrict access to roads, and destroy houses and property.

Following the [torrential rains and floods of late 2021 and early 2022](#), some people's livelihoods were destroyed, and bridges were wrecked or severely weakened. The floods also caused power outages and fuel shortages for several days. This disaster demonstrates the devastating impact that extreme weather

events, which are becoming increasingly unpredictable and severe, can have on the country.

Sao Tome and Principe has had a [multi-party, semi-presidential democratic system](#) since independence, and has been a model of democratic transition of power in Central Africa. The government is led by the Independent Democratic Action (ADI) party, which won the last elections in September 2022, taking 30 of the 55 seats in parliament.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



### Climate and environment

Like most Central African countries, São Tomé and Príncipe is vulnerable to hydro-meteorological hazards, which are exacerbated by climate change and compounded by environmental degradation. As well as facing increased risks of floods, landslides and storms, the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe are being increasingly affected by sea level rise, storm surges and coastal erosion.

Floods are a natural hazard in São Tomé and Príncipe and have a considerable impact on the country, [affecting more than 200 people each year](#). The people most at risk are concentrated on the main, most populous island of São Tomé, where the local

economy is highly vulnerable to flooding. The areas affected by floods each year produce about 0.8 per cent of the nation's GDP, corresponding to about US\$2.8 million per year.

The number of people affected is likely to increase considerably under future climatic conditions. The rainy season in São Tomé and Príncipe lasts nine months each year on average, from September to May, with floods mostly occurring in the north. [From December 2021 to May 2022, the country experienced its most significant flooding season in a decade](#). The most significantly affected areas were mainly in the districts of Lembá, Me-Zochi, Água Grande and Príncipe. These floods demonstrate the need to focus on reducing the current and future humanitarian impacts of climate and environmental crises.



Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross member conducting a training and awareness session against the spread of Dengue Fever at a school, in March 2023 (Photo: IFRC)

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

The Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross 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; and (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

In line with the IFRC [Pan-African initiative on Tree Planting and Care](#), and with support from the IFRC, the Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross will advocate with the authorities for reforestation through programmes such as One Pupil, One Tree.



## Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see [IFRC GO page São Tomé and Príncipe](#)

Changes in the climate in São Tomé and Príncipe have resulted in prolonged heavy rains and storms, leaving many parts of the country flooded.

Recent heavy rainfall has been causing river levels to rise similar to the levels in 2021. In less than 24 hours, rain distressed the capital and several other parts of the country, especially near streams and rivers. In [2021](#), a storm in the archipelago killed two people and at least six people in the community of Ponte Samu went missing. The Government declared a state of disaster due to the damage caused and appealed for international assistance.

Heavy rains hit the whole country again on [4 March 2022](#), causing another wave of flooding. These floods varied in severity in the northern and northwestern districts of Lembá, Me-Zochi and Água Grande. Already exposed by the

## Planned activities in 2024

- Install solar panels to harness renewable energy
- Create an [early warning](#) system in three pilot communities
- Develop contingency plans that consider climate change and its impact on target areas
- Undertake communication actions to bring about behaviour change regarding climate change, especially for people living in at-risk areas
- Build the capacity of [youth volunteers](#) to convey messages to the community about preventing and responding to climate change and related crises

## Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross by integrating climate risk management, including adaptation and mitigation, across all its programmes, operations, and advocacy. It will also support the National Society to adopt better environmental management approaches to address exposure and vulnerability. The National Society will also strengthen the Red Cross and Red Crescent [Green Response Framework](#) and strive to reduce its climate and environmental footprint, with the IFRC's assistance.

December 2021 floods, Lembá and Me-Zochi districts were heavily affected. Lembá was more vulnerable due to its socio-economic situation. The most significant damage in the second wave of floods was recorded in the capital, Neves.

In [May 2022](#), the Autonomous Region of Príncipe further experienced heavy rainfall that caused severe damage. According to a situation assessment carried out by the National Society and the Government, a significant number of houses were flooded, and furniture and appliances were damaged. Several plots of farmland collapsed, and the flow of water damaged several roads.

Many communities were left with inaccessible roads due to rock erosion, including Bela Vista, Abade and Aeroporto in Picão via Telelé, with a total of 10 landslides or rockslides, and two homes partially destroyed. Petrol stations were unable to function, and the floods affected the municipalities of Santo António, Lenta Pia, São Mateus, Porto Real and Santo António II, with a total of 61 homes and 350 families affected.

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

In the coming years, the National Society will focus on developing an early warning plan, a contingency plan and simulation exercises in evacuation and assistance. Advocacy with the National Council for Disaster Preparedness (CONPREC), the national body responsible for civil protection and disaster reduction, will also be crucial. This is in line with the [IFRC's Pan-African Red Ready initiative](#).

The National Society will explore integrated interventions that support basic needs, prevent asset depletion and protect livelihoods, in line with the IFRC's Pan-African Zero Hunger initiative.

The Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross will establish a permanent disaster response team, along with more trained volunteers to provide backup in case of emergency. It will also develop an early warning plan, a contingency plan and simulation exercises in evacuation and assistance.

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### Planned activities in 2024

- Develop and revise its multi-risk contingency plan, followed by simulation exercises in three targeted pilot communities
- Purchase and pre-position pre-identified kits and equipment in three pilot areas identified as being at risk

- Create a national network of first responders across the country and set up rescue teams in all structures
- Prepare a mapping of urban risk areas across the country
- Carry out small-scale water pipeline works and install drainage mechanisms
- Support target communities to put emergency plans in place, developed in collaboration with local Government, authorities, and communities
- Train staff and volunteers in [vulnerability and capacity assessments](#)
- Conduct a [Preparedness for Effective Response](#) process and develop an action plan to improve preparedness and response capacity for disasters and crises

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross with effective use of technology to anticipate risks and provide proactive [early action](#) and [predictive financing](#). It will assist with the capacity building to efficiently coordinate across its regional and global networks to ensure response to increasing humanitarian demands and optimizing locally led humanitarian action. It will also promote ethical, people-led approaches such as [cash and voucher assistance](#), [livelihoods](#), and response models that are localized and regional.



## Health and wellbeing

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The heavy rains of late 2021 and early 2022 resulted in a sharp increase in the number of malaria cases in Sao Tome and Principe. Given its tropical climate and the presence of factors conducive to dengue transmission, such as social and environmental conditions, São Tomé and Príncipe faces a heightened risk of dengue fever. The country reported its first dengue epidemic to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) in May 2022. By October 2022, 980 cases of dengue fever had been reported across all seven districts.

Additionally, the health and well-being of people in São Tomé and Príncipe was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the last decade, the country has made considerable progress in reducing maternal and infant mortality and malnutrition, and in improving maternal health. The progress in maternal and infant mortality is largely due to an increase in skilled birth attendance. [Life expectancy](#) at birth is 64 years. Significant progress has also been made in the fight against

malaria – with record low incidence – and in reducing the prevalence of [HIV/AIDS](#), which is now below 1.5 per cent.

All these events have increased the workload in hospitals, resulting in added pressure on already overloaded hospitals, and have negative impacts on the health and welfare of the population.

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

The São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross has a long history of providing primary health care to vulnerable people. The National Society will continue to support vulnerable communities to prevent malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Its work includes providing information and sensitizing the parents and guardians of children under five years of age to the risks, among others.

The National Society will continue to contribute to the progressive and sustainable improvement of health conditions for vulnerable communities throughout the country as well as to strengthen its capacities in water, sanitation and hygiene.

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### Planned activities in 2024

- Provide healthcare to the most vulnerable older people, including basic monthly subsistence payments to 150 abandoned older people and hot meals for seniors in daycare centres
- Rehabilitate the National Society's care infrastructure
- Establish a system of functional and fully equipped mobile clinics to be deployed in case of emergency or disaster, one in São Tomé and one in Príncipe
- Organize First Aid services at all levels and provide all the necessary basic supplies for first aid
- Establish a community-based epidemic and pandemic alert system
- Train volunteers in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), primary health care and epidemic control, to progressively reduce communicable diseases

- Raise awareness and promote positive behavioural changes in hygiene and the prevention of diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis
- Establish and manage psychosocial support centres in targeted neighbourhoods
- Participate in coordination bodies for epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will assist the Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross in expanding its community-based health and first aid, and water, sanitation, and hygiene initiatives. It will support the National Society in investing in epidemic and pandemic preparedness, local actors, networks, and volunteers as frontline responders, and early risk detectors. The IFRC will also support the National Society to strengthen its mental health and psychosocial support services, particularly for vulnerable communities affected by climate change, conflict, disasters, and other risks.



## Migration and displacement

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Sao Tome and Príncipe receives migration flows mainly from Cape Verde, Angola, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Portugal. Emigrants from São Tomé and Príncipe, instead, are about 20% of the population, and their main destinations are also Portugal, Angola, Gabon, Cape Verde, and Equatorial Guinea.

The country also grapples with internal migration, particularly from rural regions to urban centres. Addressing this necessitates investment in food security and rural development. The phenomenon of rural exodus is a significant challenge for Sao Tome and Príncipe, driven by the rural population's pursuit of better living conditions amid extreme poverty. The migration to urban areas not only affects rural

regions but also poses problems for urban areas. About 80,000 people displaced from rural areas flock to cities daily, often facing unemployment. Urgent action is required to reverse this trend of internal migration.

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

The São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross does not carry out activities specifically targeting vulnerable migrants and displaced people. Instead, it addresses their needs through its primary programmes reflected in the other strategic priorities of this plan.



## Values, power and inclusion

São Tomé and Príncipe experiences inequality and the social exclusion of marginalized groups. There is a need for further investment in initiatives, including those that support socio-cultural integration, advocacy, and awareness-raising through networks for civil society, women, and young people. Pensions and social protection schemes in the country still do not meet the basic needs of the active population, particularly in terms of pensions for retired people and older workers. This situation has led to an alarming poverty rate among older people.

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

Despite financial constraints, the National Society works to meet the resulting shortfalls, including food, home care, rehabilitating and constructing housing for older people, and holding funerals. It will also:

- Focus on institutionalizing the protection, gender and inclusion approach across all operations.
- Adopt a policy on gender and diversity, and follow it up with training, establishment of a reporting and data collection system, and the implementation of pilot projects on the prevention of gender-based violence
- Ensure that its services are accessible to everyone, especially people from marginalized groups, without discrimination
- Strengthen the representation of young people in decision-making
- Encourage and promote a culture of peace, civic education, humanitarian aid, and aid to the most vulnerable, especially among the youth

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### Planned activities in 2024

- Train National Society staff and governance members in protection, gender and inclusion
- Include sexual and gender-based violence prevention messages in its outreach work
- Integrate communications, participation and feedback mechanisms into the National Society's programmes and operations
- Establish partnerships with youth associations and neighbourhood groups to promote the sustainability of the National Society youth structures
- Develop a community engagement and accountability strategy and a standard operating procedure for the management of the community feedback mechanism
- Build the capacity and reinforce the appropriation of management staff, personnel, and volunteers on community engagement and accountability

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross to expand its humanitarian education programmes focusing on humanitarian values, as well as improving access for people whose education has been disrupted by war, disaster, or displacement. It will also assist with initiatives that promote inclusion, participation, and diversity in opportunities, representation, and decision-making, both within the organisations of our network as well as in society at large. The IFRC will further assist the National Society in expanding its work to be more intersectional, paying attention to the many different dimensions that make up people's identities.

## ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross is committed to institutional strengthening and investing in its development. The National Society carried out the self-assessment part of the IFRC Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification

(OCAC) process in 2018. 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.





## Strategic and operational coordination

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

- Engage with existing partners and secure new partnerships
- Develop a strategy for mobilizing resources

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will support the National Society in training employees, managers and volunteers on resource mobilization techniques. It will assist the Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross in finding partners to equip its health centre, advocate with traditional partners to support the search for new partners for the National Society and promote more regional and sub-regional communications and cooperation between National Societies.



## National Society development

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

- Strengthen its role as an auxiliary to the public authorities
- Work on procurement of computers, printers, tables and chairs for local branches
- Develop an official website

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will provide the local branches of the Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross with desktop computers, printers, tables, and chairs. It will also develop a website for the National Society and provide resources for its operationalization.



## Humanitarian diplomacy

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

- Improve the visibility of its activities
- Formulate a humanitarian diplomacy (HD) policy
- Increase the people reached to at least 10% of the total number of people in need of humanitarian support in the country

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will support the Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross in formulating a humanitarian diplomacy (HD) policy. It will ensure effective visibility, communication, and representation of the Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross with all key embassies and support it to become a trusted partner of choice for local humanitarian action with the capacity to act in the global network.



## Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

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

- Roll out a robust community engagement and accountability system
- Implement a monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that results and outputs are achieved as planned and that data is disaggregated by gender and age group as far as possible
- Develop and implement a human resources policy
- Train staff in financial management and database management

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers take online training on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the National Society in instituting and rolling out a robust community engagement and accountability system to the public to gather feedback and respond to issues raised by Red Cross operations in the country. The IFRC will support the National Society in defining and implementing its permanent and other human resources policies. It will also assist in the development of a risk management plan and a monitoring mechanism.

## THE IFRC NETWORK

### The IFRC

The IFRC supports the São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross through its country cluster delegation in Yaoundé, Cameroon, which also covers Cameroon, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea. IFRC support to these National Societies centres on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development, humanitarian diplomacy, and strengthening their auxiliary roles.

In 2022, the IFRC supported the National Society through IFRC DREF allocations for operations relating to floods, landslides,

and a disease outbreak. This was the first time the National Society utilized DREF funds and the IFRC provided the required support for the operations.

The IFRC also supported the National Society's COVID-19 response through its Global Emergency Appeal. As part of these operations, and through ongoing collaboration, the IFRC provides technical support to the National Society in a wide range of areas.



Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross volunteers distributing baskets of essential food items to elderly community member, in April 2021 (Photo: STPRC)

## IFRC membership coordination

The IFRC membership coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations, and needs. It agrees on common priorities and jointly develops common strategies to address issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance, and space. It also mobilizes funding and other resources, clarifying consistent public messaging, and monitoring progress. This includes 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 Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross is part of four [IFRC Pan-African initiatives](#) focusing on Tree Planting and Care, Zero Hunger, Red Ready and National Society Development. These initiatives are reflected in the relevant sections of this plan. Participating National Societies provide support through the IFRC.

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## Movement coordination

The Sao Tome and Principe Red Cross 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** provides support to the São Tomé and the Príncipe Red Cross from its Yaounde delegation. The ICRC's Yaoundé delegation promotes international humanitarian law, helps people displaced by violence, restores family links, visits detainees, and fosters the development of the region's National Societies.

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## Coordination with other actors

In line with its auxiliary role, the São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross collaborates closely with the authorities in the country. The National Society is a member of the National Council for Disaster Prevention and Response, with which it works in the field of disaster risk management. It also collaborates with the Ministry of Health, (on malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis) the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and other stakeholders.

Activities will include providing information and sensitizing parents and guardians of children under five years of age to risks, among others.

As a small island nation, São Tomé and Príncipe has very few opportunities to work with international or national companies and organizations, although it does currently have a partnership with Companhia Santomense de Telecomunicações.



**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 São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross, 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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