



MONTENEGRO

2024-2025 IFRC network country plan

9 May 2024

Multi-Year Funding Requirement **CHF 13M**

In support of the Red Cross of Montenegro



23

National Society branches



189

National Society staff



910

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



10,000

Ongoing emergency operations



12,000

Climate and environment



60,000

Disasters and crises



10,000

Health and wellbeing



4,000

Migration and displacement



13,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multi-year focus

Longer term needs

- Early warning and disaster risk reduction
 - Climate change adaptation
- Health needs • Migration-related needs
 - Inclusion of vulnerable groups

Capacity development

- Sustainable resource mobilization and fundraising • Partnerships • Financial management • Branch development
- Communications • Planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

Key country data

Population **616,000**

INFORM Climate Risk Index **Low**

Human Development Index rank **49**

Population below poverty level **21.2%**

Funding requirements

2024

2025*

Total 9.6M CHF

Total 3.5M CHF

Through the IFRC

7.7M CHF

Through the IFRC

1.7M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

471,000 CHF

Through Participating National Societies

284,000 CHF

Host National Society

1.5M CHF

Host National Society

1.6M CHF

**Projected funding requirements*

IFRC Breakdown

6M CHF

Ongoing emergency operations

Longer term needs

1.7M CHF

Migration & displacement

Participating National Societies

Austrian Red Cross

Irish Red Cross Society*

Italian Red Cross

Swiss Red Cross

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

IFRC Appeal codes

Ongoing emergency response:

MGR65002

Longer-term needs:

MAAME002

Hazards



Floods



Drought



Extreme weather conditions



Forest fires



Earthquakes



Population movement

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Red Cross of Montenegro** was founded in 1875 in Cetinje as the first National Society in the Balkans. It was internationally recognized in November of the same year. After the restoration of the sovereignty of the state of Montenegro in 2006, the Red Cross of Montenegro renewed the status of an independent National Society in 2006. It was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 2007.

The Red Cross of Montenegro assists the state in implementing national strategies, including those for humanitarian response, social inclusion, disaster risk reduction, disability integration, elderly care, child protection, and others. The organization's position, authority, and obligations are regulated by the Law on the Red Cross of Montenegro and were proclaimed by the Parliament of Montenegro on April 18, 2006.

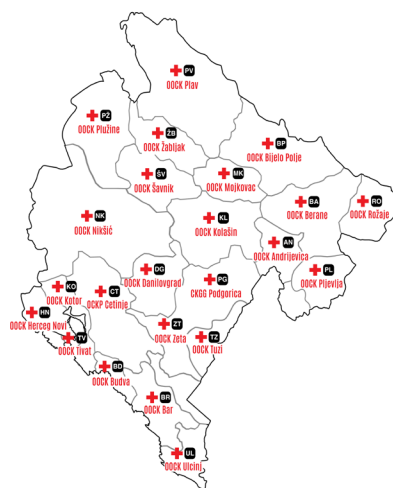
The Red Cross of Montenegro has special obligations in disseminating International Humanitarian Law, providing health services, and responding to mass disasters. The organization also focuses on global humanitarian problems, such as climate change and violence prevention. The Emblem of the Red Cross of Montenegro is protected by law.

The Red Cross of Montenegro operates through 23 organizational units, including local branches and city organizations. These units, as legal entities, work together to provide unique services across Montenegro. Members and volunteers, mostly young people, play a significant role in humanitarian activities. By 2022, the Red Cross of Montenegro reached more than 310,000 through its long-term services and development programmes and more than 64,000 people through its disaster response and early recovery programmes.

The National Society's development strategy 2023–2026 identifies five objectives:

- Strengthened organization at all levels for the implementation of legally defined tasks and other programme and activities within the mandate of the organization
- Developed sustainable financing system in the Red Cross of Montenegro
- Improved capacities for rescue and protection of lives and livelihoods in disasters and crises
- Improved service in preventive and health protection in Montenegro

Improved social service by supporting vulnerable groups and contributing to their inclusion



Map of the Red Cross of Montenegro branches and sub-branches

IFRC NETWORK ACTION

JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Montenegro is a part of Southeast Europe with an exit to the Adriatic Sea. It borders with Albania, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and covers an area of 13,812 square kilometers.

A meeting point of different cultural and religious influences, Montenegro has 72 per cent Orthodox Christians, 3.43 per cent Muslims, and 15.97 per cent Catholic. The current population of Montenegro is 616,000 based on projections of the latest United Nations data. The country's population has barely changed since the late 1980's. Population decline and ageing is negatively affecting the economic growth in Montenegro, as well as in other western Balkan countries.

Montenegro faces a range of environmental challenges which include deforestation, air and water pollution, inadequate waste management, climate changes vulnerability, and coastal and marine degradation. Unsustainable logging, urbanization, and industrial activities contribute to deforestation, habitat loss, and air and water pollution, while inadequate waste management exacerbates these issues. Additionally, Montenegro's vulnerability to climate change impacts such as rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and changes in precipitation patterns poses risks to agriculture, water resources, and coastal ecosystems. Coastal erosion, habitat degradation, and marine pollution further threaten the country's Adriatic coast, impacting biodiversity and the tourism industry.

Montenegro is an upper-middle-income economy. The Montenegrin economy is still recovering from the

consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the economy to shrink by more than 15 per cent in 2020, reflecting the [economy's dependence on tourism](#). To increase the living standards and purchasing power in the country, the minimum wage has been raised and measures have been taken to eliminate "undocumented" work and reduce the number of unemployed.

The recent political crisis in Montenegro has intensified societal divisions, especially along religious and ethnic lines, posing challenges to economic reforms and anti-corruption efforts. Montenegro, aspiring to join the EU by 2025, faces economic vulnerability due to heavy dependence on external investments and tourism. This reliance, combined with extensive infrastructure investments and costly social programmes, strains fiscal sustainability.

ONGOING EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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

Emergency Operation	Ukraine and impacted countries crisis
Appeal number	MGR65002
Duration	28 February 2022 – 31 December 2025
People to be assisted	22.7 M (total); 10,000 (in Montenegro)
Funding requirement	Total: CHF 800 M (IFRC); CHF 2.7 billion (Federation-wide) Montenegro: CHF 6 M (IFRC); CHF 6 M (Federation-wide)
Link to Emergency Appeal	Revised Emergency Appeal
Operational Strategy	Operational Strategy Montenegro Response Plan
Last operation update	Operation Update No.9



The Red Cross of Montenegro continues supporting migrants from Ukraine with the distribution of essential household items, hygiene kits and school kits. (Photo: Red Cross of Montenegro)

Since the armed conflict in Ukraine began and escalated over time, the conflict has grown in complexity, producing multi-faceted and wide-reaching impacts. Humanitarian needs are particularly severe among those who remain at home in conflict prevalent areas and with internally displaced persons (IDPs). At the start of 2023, the number of IDPs within Ukraine was estimated at 5.4 million. The spread of hostilities in Ukraine has resulted in over 20.4 million movements out of Ukraine since the escalation of the armed conflict. Most of the displaced people from Ukraine have entered the immediate neighbouring countries, primarily Poland, Russia, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Moldova. Following the action of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) by the European Union (EU), 5 million displaced people from Ukraine have registered for temporary protection in EU countries.

According to official data from the Ministry of Interior, from the period of 24th February 2022 until 23rd January 2023, 91,547 displaced people from Ukraine entered Montenegro. Currently, there are 6,962 people from Ukraine in the country, which represents 1.12 per cent of the total population of Montenegro comprising 619,211 people. Since the beginning of the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, 7,861 people have applied for temporary protection in Montenegro.

Short description of the emergency operational strategy

A regional operational strategy and a revised emergency appeal were developed with the support of a harmonized revision of the 17 National Society Response Plans and the Ukrainian Red Cross Society [One Plan for 2023 – 2025](#).

Through this revised emergency appeal, the Red Cross of Montenegro is providing targeted assistance to about 10,000 people. The interventions consist of:

Health and care including water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)

Providing [community-based health services](#) to displaced people from Ukraine. Disseminating information accessing the public health system in Montenegro through [humanitarian service points \(HSPs\)](#) to displaced people. Providing [psychological first aid](#) through the helpline as well as through individual sessions to people who have been identified as the most marginalized and need more specialized support and through group sessions in collective [shelters](#). Delivering [first aid](#) training to volunteers and new staff as part of their onboarding.

Shelter, housing, and settlements

Providing winter assistance for clothing and footwear through [cash and voucher assistance \(CVA\)](#) once a year. Supporting the most marginalized people through unconditional CVA to cover their basic needs on monthly basis for a period of 18 months. Providing one-off multipurpose cash assistance to displaced people from Ukraine in case of further escalation or increases in arrivals.

Protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI)

Establishing new child friendly spaces to support children in line with Movement standards. Facilitating integration of children within local communities by organizing afterschool activities. Mapping services and disseminating information about referral pathways. Supporting integration and inclusion of displaced people from Ukraine through field trips and summer camps. Appointing a focal point for PGI within the National Society.

Community engagement and accountability (CEA)

Managing effective feedback mechanisms for the Ukraine response, including a helpline with Ukrainian-speaking operators, social media, and face-to-face channels. Setting up one central case management system for categorizing and tracking community feedback collected through different feedback mechanisms. Strengthening electronic needs assessment, registration and feedback system using Kobo toolbox through different links and QR codes.

Migration and displacement

Ensuring provision of humanitarian services through already established HSPs in local National Society branches. Establishing new or mobile HSPs at key border crossings in case of increase in new arrivals. Providing information to asylum seekers, people applying for refugee status or seeking temporary protection on procedures, steps, rights through different channels. Supporting with documentation and counselling, and translation if needed.

The **British Red Cross** supports the Red Cross of Montenegro to facilitate the displaced people from Ukraine residing in Montenegro in obtaining visa and temporary protection in Great Britain. It implies organizing information sessions for the displaced people who intend to move to Great Britain as well as provision of direct support for online application for visa and communication with the British Red Cross when visa is approved.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Climate and environment

In its recent history, Montenegro has experienced significant disasters, floods, blizzards, forest fires and extreme weather events. The response to these disasters shows that the communities are not sufficiently familiar with the risks or with mitigation.

The country has a score of 2.2 on the [INFORM Climate Change Risk Index for 2022](#), indicating low level of vulnerability to climate change. While relatively less vulnerable than other areas, it is important to prioritize climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies to safeguard against potential future risks. This underscores the importance of continued monitoring, preparedness, and proactive measures to address climate-related threats and ensure the long-term resilience of Montenegro's communities and ecosystems.

Situated very close to the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas, Montenegro has a mediterranean climate with warm and somewhat dry summers and mild and rather humid winters. According to the [World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal](#), the Montenegrin climate has changed as a result of global climate change as well as variability. Studies indicate that Balkan countries are particularly sensitive to climate and precipitation change, with weather related events becoming more frequent and intense. The country has ratified and begun to implement all international conventions and protocols on climate change.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro's key objective is to ensure that the resilience of communities is reinforced by improving the level of knowledge and skills of the public about climate risks, prevention, and preparedness for disasters. Activities within the thematic area of climate and environment aim at increasing awareness among citizens on environmental protection, and how to guard against the risks and negative impacts of climate change on the environment.

Planned activities in 2024

- Reach 12,000 people through [disaster risk reduction public awareness and public education \(PAPE\)](#)
- Conduct 20 Red Cross environmental, or climate campaigns and other activities focused on behavior change, plastic reduction or clean-ups in response or recovery operations
- Reach 900 people with climate and environmental activities
- Conduct school-based [disaster risk reduction](#) education for teachers and students to engage them in peer-to-peer information sharing and public awareness campaigns in 20 communities/sites/schools
- Education activities including tests (to demonstrate knowledge and skills) and competitions (drawings, essays, and first aid skills)
- Install/introduce disaster risk information boards and other communication materials in targeted schools
- Translate, print and distribute PAPE disaster risk reduction key messages with actions to be taken before, during, and after disasters to communities
- Train 100 people including staff and volunteers in areas of disaster risk reduction

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** assists the Red Cross of Montenegro through ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing, in developing strategies and implementing programmes that address climate change and environmental challenges. It also helps with disaster preparedness and [early warning systems](#).

The **Austrian Red Cross** is supporting the Red Cross of Montenegro in disaster preparedness and response, home care and resource mobilization.



Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, visit [IFRC GO page Montenegro](#).

In Montenegro, over the last 13 years, nine disaster events have happened every year, damaging or destroying approximately 800 houses on average per year. The country has faced recurring floods in the past, most recently in September 2012 when heavy rains and storms affected the refugee camp Konik I in Montenegro, near the city of Podgorica. The floods damaged shelter facilities and personal belongings, worsening the condition of people residing in the refugee camps. In that same year, Montenegro faced extreme winter conditions, with heavy snowfall and freezing temperatures recorded in the central and northern part of the country. 1,500 families living in the villages surrounding those municipalities were completely cut off from the towns and the rest of the country.

In 2021, a national disaster risk assessment (NDRA) was created in accordance with EU risk assessment and mapping guidelines for [disaster management](#). The NDRA assesses key risks that could have significant human, economic, environmental, and political/social impacts as well as cross-border impacts. It includes scenarios for nine risks (including forest fires, climate change -weather phenomena, earthquake, floods, etc.) and eight multi-hazards. 94 experts from different institutions and organizations (ministries, governmental institutions, NGOs, and universities) were involved in the creation of the NDRA. The Red Cross of Montenegro participated in the working group in charge for assessing the climate change risk.

The risk assessment categorizes various scenarios into different levels of risk to which the individuals in Montenegro are exposed to. This helps decision-makers and stakeholders in prioritizing preparedness, response, and mitigation efforts based on the assessed levels of risk for each scenario. The categories are:

- **Very high:** epidemics, nuclear incidents, maritime traffic incidents
- **High:** earthquakes, droughts, cold waves, fires, radiation accidents, air traffic incidents, sea traffic incidents
- **Moderate:** earthquakes, landslides, storms, severe weather events, droughts, cold waves, floods, fires, plant diseases, animal diseases, interruption in electricity supply, air, and rail traffic incidents
- **Low:** landslides, animal diseases, technical and technological incidents (such as Brezovik, HA Piva or TA Pljevlja incident), radiation incidents, interruption in electricity supply, railway and road traffic incidents, electronic communication network incidents

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro has defined a set of multi-year objectives to tackle disasters and crises in the country that include to:

- Increase human resources in [disaster preparedness and response](#) at national and local levels
- Better positioning and recognition at the national and international levels in rescue on organized ski slopes
- Approve membership in the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR)
- Strengthen the National Society human and material capacities
- Strengthen the capacities of the local communities who are most affected
- Prioritize people most vulnerable to disaster risks due to their social status, age, gender, or health condition
- Work with school children who are both vulnerable to disaster risks and capable of becoming [agents of change](#) by bringing knowledge and skills to their communities

Planned activities in 2024

- Procure and provide equipment (personal, protective, IT) for the disaster response teams, and necessary emergency stocks (reserves) annually
- Meet with relevant institutions and stakeholders to improve enforcement of protection and [law](#)
- Improve cooperation with relevant entities in the field of rescue on organized ski slopes through meetings with stakeholders
- Procure and provide the necessary equipment for strengthened human and material resources for rescue on organized ski slopes
- Conduct refresher training, exercises/drills, and education sessions for 100 people in the response teams in the local communities and at the national level
- Conduct training for strengthening human resources for rescue on organized ski slopes
- Conduct two trainings of 30 people for rescue on organized ski slopes

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC provides technical support to Red Cross of Montenegro in mainstreaming and integrating mental health

and psychosocial support ([MHPSS](#)) in disaster management trainings and interventions, including caring for staff and volunteers. [IFRC Reference Centres](#) and IFRC Hubs and Labs foster long-term support through collaboration and innovation. These platforms facilitate the exchange of ideas, experimentation with new technologies, contingency planning and the development of innovative approaches to address evolving challenges in [disaster management](#).

The **Austrian Red Cross** provides long-term support in developing joint projects, conducting simulations and drills,

and providing mentorship and peer-to-peer support to the National Society. This sustained collaboration helps build a resilient and efficient response system within the Red Cross of Montenegro.

The Austrian Red Cross also supports the National Society on disaster preparedness to strengthen the capacities as an integral part of the state system, e.g., through the '[X-STOCK](#)' project and supporting improved rescue and protection systems at ski slopes and in water rescue.



Health and wellbeing

Montenegro faces [health challenges](#) from communicable and non-communicable diseases, including mental health issues. Limited healthcare access in remote areas and discrepancies in services contribute to health disparities, accentuated among marginalized groups. Substance abuse adds to health concerns, requiring preventative measures. Non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and respiratory diseases are leading causes of morbidity and mortality in Montenegro. According to the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), NCDs account for approximately 91 per cent of all deaths in Montenegro in 2018. Lifestyle factors such as tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and alcohol consumption contribute to the prevalence of NCDs.

Montenegro has made progress in improving general health outcomes. According to the World Bank, [life expectancy at birth](#) in Montenegro was around 74 years in 2021, indicating improvements in overall health and wellbeing. Additionally, infant mortality rates and maternal mortality rates have declined in recent years, reflecting improvements in healthcare access and quality.

Montenegro's healthcare system faces challenges related to infrastructure, workforce capacity, and access to healthcare services, particularly in rural and remote areas. There are existing disparities in healthcare access and quality between urban and rural populations, affecting health outcomes and healthcare utilization rates.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro aims to address health challenges by promoting health, prevention, and equitable healthcare access, impacting around 9,000 citizens yearly through first aid activities. The National Society plans to mitigate risks of epidemics and raise awareness about preventive measures by:

- Leveraging a programmatic connection between medical institutions and refugees living with HIV/AIDS by organizing information sessions
- Holding focus group discussions and campaigns for refugees living with HIV/AIDS, as well as the domestic population
- Organizing regular meetings at the local, state, and international levels and cooperate actively with all relevant institutions

Planned activities in 2024

- Encourage voluntary blood donation in all municipalities through 20 annual action plans, train 15 voluntary blood donation motivators, and educate 2,000 young people and businesses
- Involve 50 companies, motivating 1,000 citizens for voluntary blood donation across 23 municipalities through awareness campaigns
- Engage 20-35 elementary students to encourage parents to donate blood and understand the process, with media campaigns and public awareness initiatives targeting 15,000 individuals
- Recognize blood donation contributions with annual awards and increase first aid awareness by training 1,500 people in schools, workplaces, and events
- Organize 6 lectures and demonstrative exercises reaching 1,500 individuals, with at least 2,000 introduced to first aid through promotional material
- Conduct 15 local first aid competitions, engaging 1,000 participants, and train 50 volunteers for medical assistance at events, including 25 becoming instructors and conducting 50 basic first aid trainings for 2,000 employees

- Hold three national volunteer trainings, educate 90 volunteers as educators, distribute 2,000 promotional materials, and provide 1,000 condoms
- Host 50 workshops targeting 1,500 people in educational institutions and youth clubs, and another 50 workshops for 1,500 migrants and asylum seekers to raise public awareness

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Red Cross of Montenegro's efforts in scaling up its MHPSS services and increasing ability to respond to emerging needs. This is achieved through provision of basic psychosocial support and by mainstreaming MHPSS in the key humanitarian activities while protecting and promoting the mental health and psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers. Participating National Societies, [reference centers](#)

and IFRC's specialized hubs and labs share best practices and provide mentorship, contributing to the organization's long-term health programmes.

The Red Cross of Montenegro also cooperates with relevant institutions including Institute for Public Health, Ministry of Health and NGOs involved in HIV activities. The National Society organizes meetings with relevant institutions at the national level and participates in regional and other gatherings. The Austrian Red Cross will support regional learning possibilities on first aid through commercial [first aid](#) courses or services for new target groups, for example, the advanced first aid project in Albania.

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Migration and displacement

Since its [independence in 2006](#), Montenegro has seen a rise in asylum seekers, with accommodation for 104 beds in the Spuz Asylum Centre and 60 beds in the Bozaj Center near the Albanian border, managed by the [Ministry of Interior](#). The [Law on International and Subsidiary Protection](#), effective since January 2018, introduced new terms for asylum seekers and refugees, causing challenges in healthcare access due to mismatches with health insurance laws. The right to work granted to asylum seekers after nine months faces practical hurdles between the Ministry of Interior and the Employment Agency. Efforts for local integration of those granted international protection need strengthening.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 led to an influx of refugees in Montenegro, requiring immediate humanitarian aid. For those who remain at home in conflict prevalent areas, situation remains particularly severe. In 2023, the number of internally displaced people was estimated to be more than five million people, with many seeking entries into neighbouring countries such as Poland, Russia, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Moldova.

In the broader Central and South-Eastern Europe (CSEE) cluster, humanitarian assistance for migrants is encountering politicization, affecting funding. Additionally, increased migration to northern and western Europe from CSEE countries and restrictions on migration flow to Europe present ongoing challenges.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro is part of the IFRC 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 across Africa, the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa. The programme aims to support 4.7 million people on the move and people in host communities annually through three operational pillars: (1) improving access to assistance and protection, including through humanitarian service points; (2) strengthening National Society capacities; and (3) local to global humanitarian diplomacy.

The National Society aims to respond effectively to a diverse range of evolving crises through training (including first aid and MHPSS) to support migrants and people fleeing Ukraine by:

- Opening [humanitarian service points \(HSPs\)](#) and equipping them with pre-positioned stocks and staff
- Capacity building of staff and volunteers in [community-based health and first aid \(CBHFA\)](#), [community engagement and accountability \(CEA\)](#), [psychosocial support \(MHPSS\)](#), and cultural mediation
- Supporting socially vulnerable groups by providing integration, health care, and psychosocial support services for migrants.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

Planned activities in 2024

- Access to the asylum system and health services for 4000 people in Montenegro and psychosocial support services to 3000 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees
- Provision of access to employment, education, and inclusion in host communities for 2000 people, and strengthening the resilience of 2000 people with health promotion
- Opening three new humanitarian service points, procuring 5000 parcels of livelihoods items as emergency stock
- Hiring 40 professional staff for provision of services to target groups (medical doctors, psychologists, social workers, teachers of Montenegrin language, coordinators)
- Exchange of lessons learned with other National Societies, as well as four coordination meetings with other stakeholders
- Support the social inclusion of 2000 migrants and displaced persons in 10 local branches
- Prepare four evidence-based advocacy reports for stakeholders on reception, access to services and social inclusion of migrants and displaced persons
- Provide MHPSS and other high-quality health and care services to 650 people
- Provide shelter and settlement solutions to 1500 people affected by crisis, providing cash assistance for 650 most marginalized people fleeing Ukraine
- Ensure the safety and well-being of 3000 individuals affected by, displaced, or fleeing the crisis in Ukraine by ensuring basic needs and safety, preventing violence, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, and exclusion

The **IFRC** provides guidance, technical expertise, and resources to assist the Red Cross of Montenegro in managing migration-related challenges effectively. It offers training programmes, shares best practices, and facilitates knowledge exchange to enhance the organization's capacity in responding to the needs of migrants and refugees. It facilitates coordination and collaboration among National Societies involved in migration activities and provides a platform for sharing information, resources, and best practices across borders.

The **Italian Red Cross** collaborates with the Red Cross of Montenegro to aid migrants, refugees, and repatriated Montenegrin citizens along the Balkan Route. This support includes language lessons, goods distribution, vocational training, and social inclusion activities.

The Italian Red Cross supports the Red Cross of Montenegro in promoting employment opportunities and inclusion for Roma and Egyptian communities. They have initiated phases of the 'Roma Business Incubators' project in Konik, extending it to other municipalities. The project emphasizes small businesses, the 'business incubator' model, and strengthening youth clubs through diverse activities.

The **Swiss Red Cross** is supporting the Red Cross of Montenegro in the work with migrants and asylum seekers in Podgorica and Pljevlja through mobile teams since 2020.

The mobile units contribute to strengthening the resilience of vulnerable asylum seekers and migrants in Montenegro especially focusing on health issues and raising awareness on risks and prevention mechanisms for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), capacity building and cross border workshops. Other support includes the employment and integration of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, as well as procurement of medication and medical services, and organization of workshops on raising awareness on health issues.



Values, power and inclusion

Within Montenegro's population, an estimated 11 per cent (68,064) face obstacles in their daily activities due to long-term illness, disability, or old age, as per the 2011 Census. The country is also experiencing rapid aging, with projections indicating that by 2050, one in four residents will be over 65 years old. Older people, especially those in isolated rural areas, face vulnerabilities as younger generations seek opportunities in larger cities or abroad, leaving them with limited access to medical services due to the distance to health centres and poor village infrastructure.

Statistical data indicates that in Europe, approximately 10-12 million people of Roma and Egyptian origin, constitute the most vulnerable minority. Factors like economic struggles, limited education, unemployment, substandard housing, social exclusion, ethnic stereotypes, and specific lifestyles contribute to their heightened susceptibility to poverty and economic instability. Disparities in health, education, and development indicators are considerable between Roma children and their peers in the general population.

Legal [frameworks](#) provide protection for Roma and Egyptians, persons living with disabilities, people with chronic illnesses, and the elderly in Montenegro. While there are challenges in the implementation of inclusion efforts, there has been considerable progress in this field in the country. Addressing negative stereotypes and historic marginalization are among the major challenges.

Compared to EU-27, Montenegro recorded a lower Gender Equality index value by [12.4 index points](#). The UNDP (2021) estimated that 33 per cent of women in Montenegro have experienced sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) within their lifetime, and many survivors do not report SGBV as they do not have trust in institutions.

In Montenegro, despite existing legal frameworks, SGBV remains prevalent. The country signed the [Council of Europe Convention](#) on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) in 2011. However, SGBV is perceived as inadequately addressed by two-thirds of Montenegrins. Other protection concerns, including trafficking in persons, child protection, and safeguarding, are also prominent issues.

High inequality exacerbates poverty in Montenegro. For instance, the average income of the wealthiest one-fifth of Montenegrins is 7.4 times higher than that of the poorest one-fifth, surpassing the EU average. In 2020, the [at-risk-of-poverty rate](#) was 22.6 per cent, representing individuals whose disposable income falls below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. Those under 18 years old were most vulnerable (32.6 per cent), followed by individuals aged 18 to 24 (25.2 per cent). Conversely, individuals aged 65 and over had the lowest at-risk-of-poverty rate at 15.5 per cent.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro will promote humanitarian values as part of its education outreach. The National Society aims to work towards improving the position and inclusion of the population of Roma and Egyptians, people living with disabilities, and elderly people. This will take place in the form of:

- Training peer educators and directly working with children in schools
- Tackling various ways of preventing different forms of violence, including gender-based violence, promoting tolerance and intercultural understanding through six modules
- Evaluating the National Society's home help services annually, based on data collected in key areas including social protection, discrimination of older people and healthy aging
- Expanding its work on dissemination of knowledge about the Red Cross and [International Humanitarian Law](#)

- Training volunteers, employees, and management bodies to foster [Fundamental Principles](#), as well as sustainability and equality in every aspect of work with a special focus on [inclusion](#), participation, and diversity

Planned activities in 2024

- Provide humanitarian assistance to 8,000 Roma and Egyptians, psychosocial support to 2000 people, and health preventive workshops and check-ups for 75 women and girls
- Inform 280 Roma and Egyptian parents and children about school enrolment procedures with school kits and hygiene items for children enrolled in town schools
- Launch three youth club activities in Roma and Egyptian communities (media literacy, computer workshops, basics of foreign languages, and health preventive workshops)
- Support entrepreneurial and other employment activities for Roma and Egyptian adults
- Create a mobile team of 15 people (social workers, psychologists, personal assistants, volunteers) to support its inclusion activities
- Provide humanitarian support to 150 beneficiaries and assist their families in acquiring new skills that will make everyday life easier to improve their current situation
- Include people living with disabilities in educational, creative, and MHPSS workshops
- Support the targeted older population through home visits and mobile teams, and provide care to the target group through two fully functional centres in Bar and Bijelo Polje
- Distribute 10,000 leaflets and conduct three public campaigns for awareness of ageism and the human rights of older people. At least 20 meetings are planned to be held with local and national stakeholders
- Train 30 staff and volunteers as promoting humanitarian values (PHV) educators and conduct workshops for 50 individuals in local Red Cross branches. Educate 300 students on PHV basics through 15 workshops. Generate 500 printed materials and use various media to familiarize 1,000 people with humanitarian values. Adapt the PHV handbook for schools and online environments, printing 50 copies
- Run a national [protection, gender, and inclusion \(PGI\)](#) training for 30 staff and volunteers and organize nine local workshops in branches, each involving 50 staff and volunteers. Generate 300 promotional materials to educate 100 people about PGI, while promoting PGI through 15 media publications to reach over 1,000 individuals via social platforms

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC provides guidance, technical expertise, and resources to assist the Red Cross of Montenegro in implementing inclusive programmes that promote PGI. The Red Cross of Montenegro is an active member of the [Ukraine and Impacted Countries PGI network](#), and many staff members participated in the PGI introductory training in Budapest in April 2023. This collaboration enables the Red Cross of Montenegro to benefit from the expertise and resources available within the network, enhancing its capacity to address the diverse needs of vulnerable populations, ensure the protection of

human rights, and promote inclusivity in their programmes and services. Red Cross of Montenegro's PGI focal point works directly with the IFRC PGI team at the regional office to ensure PGI is mainstreamed throughout all programmes and approaches.

For over a decade, the Italian Red Cross has also supported the Red Cross of Montenegro in elderly care and social inclusion. From 2019 to 2022, it backed a cross-border version of the [Home Care project](#) involving the Red Cross of Montenegro and the Albanian Red Cross.

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Red Cross of Montenegro is committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process and is at the work-plan 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 ultimately take necessary action to improve it.

The IFRC network is committed to support the National Society in its development, according to its priorities.



Strategic and operational coordination

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The National Society will work to establish and maintain effective cooperation and coordination mechanisms with Movement partners present in the country and other partners. It will increase its engagement in government-led platforms to actively participate in achieving humanitarian and development goals (such as distribution of lottery proceeds). The National Society aims to enhance its participation in thematic regional or global events or networks and strengthen its auxiliary role to the public authorities.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC provides long-term support for strategic and operational coordination in the Red Cross of Montenegro and assists it in developing strategic plans and improving programme management. The IFRC promotes collaboration between the Red Cross of Montenegro and external partners, enhancing coordination structures and processes. Through the IFRC network, the Red Cross of Montenegro gains access to technical tools and resources, strengthening its effectiveness in delivering humanitarian assistance.

The **Italian Red Cross** is supporting a fundraising position within the Red Cross of Montenegro to implement the National Society's resource mobilization strategy.



National Society development

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The National Society development process has been led by the Red Cross of Montenegro as it is central to the National Society's ability to effectively respond to disasters and humanitarian crises.

Commitments include working towards facilitating access to resources through tax exemptions and specific legislation, including tax deductibility for donations from individuals and/or companies to the Red Cross of Montenegro. The National Society aims to work towards accessing government funds allocated for non-profit organizations. The Red Cross of Montenegro will utilize [National Society development funds](#) for its activities. The National Society aims at developing a strong branch network that delivers quality humanitarian services

through operational excellence and other targeted areas of assistance.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC provides technical and [financial support](#) to the National Society towards its development initiatives. The IFRC support consists of helping the National Society in developing organizational development priorities, developing a strong branch network that delivers quality humanitarian services through operational excellence, and other targeted areas of assistance required for the overall development of the National Society.

The **Austrian Red Cross** will support the National Society in volunteer management and retention by sharing national experience and developing projects.



Humanitarian diplomacy

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro will work on humanitarian diplomacy and public facing communications and advocacy activities, focusing on evidence-based products/materials to inform operational and strategic priorities. Furthermore, it will strengthen linkages between local-regional-global humanitarian diplomacy staff and connect with National Society hosted technical reference groups. Also, the Red Cross of Montenegro will form teams of humanitarian diplomacy and communications with an extended teams of experts jointly working on common fundraising objectives and challenges to bring about robust investment and fundraising opportunities.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the National Society in [humanitarian diplomacy](#) through technical and financial support to influence government initiatives. The National Societies in the Central and South-Eastern Europe (CSEE) cluster have identified a strong need for more advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy to influence government funding of civil society organizations. Emphasis will be placed on enabling the National Society to highlight its impacts and increase its visibility as the primary humanitarian service provider in the country.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro will continue to invest in creating an investment and support strategy through strengthened financial and programme management and accountability. It will achieve this through innovative business models and new financial mechanisms.

The development of new tools to improve financial stability through project operations and asset mobilization, and

the establishment of an efficient, sustainable system for mobilizing funds at national and local levels will improve financial accountability.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the National Society to ensure that its work is being carried out as planned, and it also ensures adherence with the established material and financial standards of the IFRC. This support includes enabling the National Societies to meet the criteria of various donors.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC provides support to the Red Cross of Montenegro through its country cluster delegation located in Sarajevo, as well as from its regional office for Europe, based in Budapest, Hungary. The IFRC support to the National Society centres on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development, and humanitarian diplomacy, including in strengthening its auxiliary role. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme. The IFRC provides technical guidance in many sectors, for example during the Covid-19 pandemic,

the influx of refugees from Ukraine, work with migrants, and capacity development on [MHPSS](#).

With the support of IFRC, the Red Cross of Montenegro has been implementing activities through projects that are focused on [route-based migration](#). The Red Cross of Montenegro has a mobile team in the transit camp in Bozaj, which provides medical services, transport, translation, and humanitarian assistance to migrants. Three [humanitarian service points](#) have been established with the support of IFRC.



Volunteers of the Red Cross of Montenegro conduct regular first aid simulations and training. (Photo: Red Cross of Montenegro)

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 following National Societies are supporting the Red Cross of Montenegro:

The **Austrian Red Cross** is supporting the Red Cross of Montenegro in disaster preparedness and response, home care and resource mobilization. An EU funded project related to home care ended in April 2023, and resource mobilization support ended in July 2023.

To strengthen the Red Cross of Montenegro in its programmes and services for older people, the Austrian Red Cross is committed to further use its domestic competencies in health and social services and to provide technical expertise within ongoing and planned joint programmes (e.g., through the ongoing projects '[Innovative Community Care Centers](#)', and [CONEX Balkan](#)).

The Austrian Red Cross will continue to support the Red Cross of Montenegro in further positioning the National Society as a service provider and offer support through the [REDpreneur](#) programme and follow-up.

In coordination with the IFRC, the Austrian Red Cross will seek to support the Red Cross of Montenegro in the implementation of the [PER](#) action plan through the ENSURE project, as well as continue to support cash preparedness (currently covered through the project COVID-19 Response and Resilience Building).

The **Italian Red Cross** established its Regional Delegation in Podgorica within the Red Cross of Montenegro headquarters in 2015 to lead humanitarian and international cooperation activities, focusing particularly on the Balkans in Europe. The long-standing partnership between the National Societies predates the opening of the Italian Red Cross delegation in Podgorica. Its primary support to the Red Cross of Montenegro encompasses health, social, and migration sectors, along with assistance in organizational development, resource mobilization, monitoring, and coordination.

The **Swiss Red Cross** has been supporting the Red Cross of Montenegro in the work with migrants and asylum seekers in Podgorica and Pljevlja through mobile teams since 2020.

Participating National Society Support

National Society name	Funding Requirement	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling local actors
Austrian Red Cross	192,000			●			●
Italian Red Cross	75,000			●		●	
Swiss Red Cross	204,000				●		

Total Funding requirement

471,000

Movement coordination

The Red Cross of Montenegro works closely alongside the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and participating National Societies. It organizes quarterly International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement coordination meetings and an annual partners meeting. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation ([SMCC](#)) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

The Red Cross of Montenegro enjoys good cooperation with the regional delegation of the ICRC located in Belgrade, Serbia. A Partnership Framework Agreement defines cooperation in capacity building and joint operations in Montenegro. The cooperation is related to the promotion of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) such as training of staff and volunteers, organization of round tables with relevant stakeholders, support in the [Safer Access](#) Framework approach, and restoring family links (RFL) activities.

Coordination with other actors

In line with its mission, the Red Cross of Montenegro is committed to developing and expanding its cooperation with other international humanitarian organizations. The National Society of Montenegro cooperates with the diplomatic-consular sector in Montenegro, as well as with many international organizations including the EU delegation, the UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, IOM, WHO, the USAID and a variety of international networks.

Additionally, the Red Cross of Montenegro is a member of the 'Neighbours Help First' network that gathers Southeast

European National Societies (SENS), IFRC and ICRC. Through this network of National Societies sharing a common background and facing similar challenges, there has been strong regional cooperation in many areas, especially in connection with emergency response.

Since 2008, the Red Cross of Montenegro has been a full member of [International Life Saving Federation](#) and the only organization in the country that is licensed to conduct courses for lifeguards on water.



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 of Montenegro, 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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