



TIMOR-LESTE

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 1.2M**

Appeal number **MAATP001**

In support of the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society



13

National Society branches



139

National Society staff



794

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



7,000

Climate and environment



7,000

Disasters and crises



4,900

Health and wellbeing



1,800

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multiyear focus

Longer term needs

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

Capacity development

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

Key country data

Population **1.3M**

Long-term Climate Risk Index **174**

Human Development Index rank **140**

Population below poverty level **41.8%**

Hazards



Floods



Tropical cyclones



Drought



Earthquakes



Diseases



Population movement

Funding requirements

Total 1.2M CHF

Through the IFRC

912,000 CHF

Through Participating National Societies

278,000 CHF

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

33,000 CHF
Climate and environment

582,000 CHF
Disasters and crises

15,000 CHF
Health and wellbeing

19,000 CHF
Values, power and inclusion

261,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

Participating National Societies

American Red Cross*

Australian Red Cross

Indonesian Red Cross Society

Italian Red Cross

The Republic of Korea
National Red Cross

The Netherlands Red Cross

New Zealand Red Cross



NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

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

The National Society is currently present in 13 districts of Timor-Leste and uses a regionalization approach to strengthen its capacity to operate at branch level.

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

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

Over the last seven years, the Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme has become the National Society's signature approach to supporting remote communities with developing their resilience and reaching their development aspirations. This programme has enabled the National Society to

effectively use its limited human and financial resources to provide holistic support to remote communities that often fall outside of government services. This support provides people with the tools, resources and knowledge they need to address the multi-layered risks they face in health, livelihoods, environmental protection, food security, nutrition, water, sanitation and disaster management.

The programme has facilitated the integration of technical expertise from different sectoral teams within the National Society, including disaster management, health, youth and livelihoods, as well as the support of partners in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It has also provided a valuable avenue for donors and partners to coordinate their support to the National Society. The programme has made considerable contributions to strengthening the National Society's technical capacity.

Over the last two years, the National Society has consolidated itself and proven the value of its role as an auxiliary to the public authorities in disaster response. It has demonstrated its leadership and strength in the humanitarian sector as a main responder to the COVID-19 pandemic, dengue outbreaks and extensive flooding across the country. In this context, the National Society has also become cash ready – the commodity voucher that it recently piloted demonstrates its commitment to further develop and provide more effective and efficient response services, while maintaining the dignity of affected populations.

IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

Joint situational analysis

Timor-Leste gained independence in 2000, and the country has since made significant progress in key areas. It faces the challenges of retaining political unity, boosting economic growth, rebuilding public infrastructure (including roads, ports and airports, water and sanitation systems and government facilities) and institutional frameworks. The country remains fragile as it contends with the legacies of past conflict.

Eighty per cent of Timor-Leste's GDP is derived from oil reserves in the Timor Sea, which has made it possible to

spend on infrastructure and basic services, particularly roads and electricity. However, the economy urgently needs to diversify its income as the remaining oil fields are being depleted.

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

Despite steady progress, it is estimated that more than 40 per cent of the population live below the poverty line because of high unemployment. Between 2014 and

2018, employment in private sector businesses declined by 15 per cent, even as the working-age population grew by 11 per cent. Decreased state spending in 2017, 2018 and 2020 (due to political uncertainty), the associated failure to pass annual budgets and the COVID-19 pandemic all contributed to negative GDP growth. This trend is expected to continue.

COVID-19 cases increased in Timor-Leste at the beginning of 2021, and the country was severely affected by the pandemic throughout the year. This situation was exacerbated by the occurrence of Tropical Cyclone Seroja, which drove thousands of people into evacuation centres across the nation, making it difficult to maintain social distancing. This prompted the Government to seal its borders, erect a 'sanitary fence' around the city of Dili to prevent people from entering and leaving, and impose travel restrictions in provinces where cases were on the rise.

By mid-2021, there was a second wave of COVID-19, fuelled by the Delta variant. The Government struggled to prevent cases and there was an exponential increase in death rates as the health system was put under tremendous strain. Since the latter half of 2021, the Government has focused on immunizing as much of its population as possible to reduce the impact of the virus, but this has proved to be difficult due to widespread vaccine scepticism.

Despite this, by January 2022, 83.4 per cent of eligible adults had received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 68.2 per cent had been fully vaccinated. Since then, vaccination rates have stalled, despite there being sufficient vaccines for all eligible adults. The partly vaccinated and fully vaccinated figures only rose marginally to 85.4 per cent and 73.4 per cent by the end of May 2022.

Even prior to the second wave, COVID-19 was having a profound impact on Timor-Leste, greatly undermining the economy and the ability of the Government to provide adequate services for its population. As early as April 2020, it was estimated that the country had lost 1.8 billion in revenue from the Petroleum Fund due to the declining US stock market. The country's economy is expected to contract by 5 per cent, and this will bring significant constraints to public spending on essential services.

Free and fair multi-party elections have been held regularly in Timor-Leste since 2001. No incidents of violence were recorded during the competitive national elections in 2017 and 2018, and there were fewer irregularities than in prior elections. The most recent presidential election was held in early 2022, with President José Manuel Ramos-Horta obtaining 64 per cent of the vote. The next parliamentary election is scheduled for 2023.

Strategic priorities

Climate and environment

Timor-Leste is home to tropical rainforests, mangroves, wetlands and important marine ecosystems which play a critical part in climate regulation, sequestration of carbon, and building the global adaptive capacity to climate change. Timor-Leste has established 24 protected areas to conserve and protect important ecosystems, and it is working to develop ecotourism in these areas.

Approximately 42 per cent of all sucos (villages) in Timor-Leste have a coastal border, so coastal resources are an important part of livelihoods in many communities. The country's diverse ecosystems are currently threatened by over-fishing, pollution and coral bleaching – and this is exacerbated by climate change. Crucial ecosystem functions, such as coastal zone protection against severe floods and storms, are diminishing as coral reefs and mangrove forests are depleted. This loss is mainly due to the harvesting of trees for timber and fuel, the establishment of brackish water fishponds, and

the extraction of salt from mangrove fringes. Many of the mangroves are used as dumping grounds for solid waste, which creates pollution issues in the long term.

The most pressing environmental problems in Timor-Leste include deforestation, land degradation, natural hazards vulnerability due to climate variability, poor water quality, water scarcity, waste management, and the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Land degradation is associated with unsustainable agricultural practices (the illegal logging of native food species, fire and over-grazing) but it threatens more than agricultural productivity and food security. Erosion is also likely to affect water resources; the loss of land to habitat, and degradation of coral reefs and coastal fisheries reduce biodiversity; and soil can be lost. Deforestation occurs with tree clearing, especially slash-and-burn cultivation, the harvesting of firewood, coffee growing and grazing, even on steep slopes. It is estimated that the forest cover in Timor-Leste was once

as high as 90 per cent, but it has been steadily declining since the 1970s, at a current rate of approximately 1.3 per cent per year.

Timor-Leste lacks national research that focuses specifically on the impact that climate change has on the country, and it has insufficient historical weather data to enable a thorough analysis and solid proof of climate change. However, research shows that El Niño-related extreme weather events have become more frequent and more intense over the last 20 years.

The Pacific-Australia Climate Change Science and Adaptation Planning Programme indicates that the sea level near Timor-Leste has risen by about 9mm every year since 1993. This is significantly higher than the global average of 2.8–3.6mm per year. This may be partly due to natural fluctuations caused by external factors such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation. Rising sea levels will expose coastal areas to more storms, tidal surges and strong winds – Dili in particular is vulnerable to coastal flooding, as it is situated only a few metres above sea level.

Due to global warming, it is expected that the temperature in Timor-Leste will increase dramatically over the next 20 years and beyond – with daytime temperatures above 35°C and tropical nights – and the country will need to adapt to heatwaves and warm spells.

Extreme rainfall events will also become more intense and frequent. Timor-Leste's steep slopes and short fast-flowing rivers, in combination with more intense rainfall events, may increase the risk of loss of life, injury and damage during flash floods and landslides.

Timor-Leste has demonstrated a commitment to address environmental and climate change issues and has fully engaged with international frameworks governing these issues. In 2021, the Government submitted its National Action Plan for Adaptation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The overall vision of this plan is to build a climate-resilient development trajectory for the country and its people, aligned with other policies and strategies relevant to Timor-Leste's adaptation response to climate change.

Preliminary findings from a [CADRI](#) assessment undertaken in 2022 suggest that, despite the commitment shown through the ratification of various global agreements, there is a lack of knowledge among government officials about the impacts of climate change. There is also a lack of understanding about what kind of policies and actions are needed to adapt, or how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Communication and coordination

channels across line ministries at the national level, with respect to climate change adaptation, are not clearly defined and formulated, and there are significant gaps in data and an absence of observation and monitoring networks. There is also a lack of specialized technical capacity for planning and implementation, and weak national-level monitoring and evaluation for progress on resilience building and adaptation to climate change.

Main actions and areas of support

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

Through its work with communities, the National Society has been at the forefront of supporting local communities with reducing their vulnerability to risk and building resilience. The National Society has been actively engaged in discussions regarding climate change adaptation policy, notably through the development of the National Action Plan of Adaptation of Timor-Leste. It plans to support the mid- and long-term priorities of the Government, identified in the National Action Plan for Adaptation, which is also in line with the National Society's Strategic Plan and capacities.

Under a Global Climate Fund project, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will build on work it has already implemented under its Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme, supporting communities to receive and act upon end-to-end early warning systems. The National Society's role will be to take the national system to the 'last mile'. With support from the Red Cross Red Crescent [Climate Centre](#), a feasibility study on forecast-based action is being undertaken. The National Society has expressed interest in working further on the development of systems and processes for forecast-based action, depending on the outcome of the feasibility study.



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With potential support from the the Republic of Korea National Red Cross and through the ongoing Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society plans to expand upon its existing youth programmes to promote youth-led climate action. It will focus on making young people champions of climate change issues, to raise awareness in their communities and support the implementation of activities that help communities adapt.

Under the Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme, the National Society will adopt the IFRC's Roadmap to Community Resilience through enhanced [Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment \(EVCA\)](#). The National Society seeks to understand the needs, capacities and priorities of communities through a gender and diversity approach. It will train volunteers at national and municipal level to become champions and train other National Society personnel, adapting the EVCA guidance to the Timor-Leste context. Under a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society and the Indonesian Red Cross Society in 2021, the National Society will benefit from peer-to-peer learning with the Indonesian Red Cross, collaborating on activities in cross-border areas including multi-hazard risk assessments in border communities. There are plans to use the ECVA in these cross-border activities.

Statistics

The sea level near Timor-Leste has risen by about 9mm each year since 1993.

Disasters and crises

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

National risk assessments and mapping conducted in Timor-Leste has identified floods, tropical cyclones, droughts, forest fires and earthquakes as the natural hazards that most commonly affect the country. Timor-Leste is prone to tropical cyclones and frequent flooding from seven river basins. Tropical storms can bring heavy rains and strong winds, damaging houses and other infrastructure. The risk of drought is increasing as the climate changes, and this threatens crops such as rice, maize and cassava, and food security in general. Timor-Leste is also exposed to seismic intensity, with the east side of the country being more exposed than the west side.

Under the Civil Protection Law, the role of the National Directorate of Disaster Risk Management is to develop and implement disaster risk management policies, strategies and programmes for disaster preparation, prevention, mitigation, emergency response, and post-disaster recovery and monitoring. The law has created better conditions for coordination, the harmonization of procedures and the definition of the competencies of each entity involved. This helps avoid overlaps or gaps, and brings coherence to the civil protection system.

The Government of Timor-Leste has also drafted a new Disaster Risk Management Policy. Its overall objective is to identify the areas of intervention in disaster risk

management that will contribute significantly to reducing human mortality and physical injury from future disasters, while reducing economic, social and environmental losses.

Main actions and areas of support

As Timor-Leste is highly vulnerable to natural hazards, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is strongly focused on its contribution to the development of disaster preparedness.

At the national level, it will continue to be an active participant in the national cluster system. In 2021, during the flood response and recovery efforts across the country, the National Society played an active role in the Shelter and Camp Management working group with other partners such as the International Organization for Migration. In 2023, it will explore its capacity to take on a coordinating role in this working group. This could include training on shelter coordination, administrative support, and support with the strategic direction of the working group.

One of the main aims of the National Society is that its disaster risk management policy (currently in draft form) is approved by the board. There are plans to develop a mechanism for internal leadership in emergencies, and to enhance the emergency management framework and standard operating procedures. To increase its operational capacity, the National Society plans to strengthen its emergency operations centre, focusing on building the capacity of branches to operate it. To implement this plan, it needs support with building its information management and reporting systems (such as the Kobo Toolbox).

The National Society also plans to deliver training and capacity development initiatives, focusing on early action, logistics, water, sanitation and hygiene in emergencies, community engagement and accountability, and protection, gender and inclusion in emergencies, as well as monitoring and evaluation. The Australian Red Cross has shown an interest in supporting these activities.

Under the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's Memorandum of Understanding on cross-border cooperation with the Indonesian Red Cross Society, there will be a strong focus on peer-to-peer learning between the National Societies on preparedness for disaster response. The cornerstone of this cooperation will be building the capacity of branches in border areas.

The Timor-Leste Red Cross will also further develop its internal capacity to better respond to disaster events,

particularly in escalating climate-related disasters. It is currently expanding the capacity of its staff to be able to respond to the impacts of climate change such as increased flooding, particularly urban flooding.

The National Society introduced the use of cash and voucher assistance in 2022 as a way of delivering fast and effective disaster assistance. This included the delivery of training and voucher assistance under the COVID-19 operation. Strengthening these capacities further will continue to be a focus in 2023. Financial service providers – mostly banks that distribute cash to beneficiaries – are important partners in the implementation of cash and voucher assistance, and enable the effective and efficient distribution of assistance.

Health and wellbeing

The Government of Timor-Leste has continued to prioritize nutrition in its development agenda. There has been a sharp decrease in cases of malaria. Maternal and neonatal tetanus has been declared eliminated as a public health problem. However, other communicable diseases, including tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, malaria and dengue continue to pose public health challenges. Although leprosy has been eliminated at national level, it remains endemic in some municipalities. Lymphatic filariasis, soil-transmitted helminth infections and yaws also remain major public health challenges.

The Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey in 2020 showed that 47 per cent of Timorese children are stunted and chronically malnourished, while 50 per cent under the age of seven live below the poverty line. Malnutrition among women remains a serious concern. There is also a risk of preventable disease outbreaks, particularly measles, which may be exacerbated by chronic malnutrition and vitamin A deficiency.

Non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases are among the 10 leading causes of death in Timor-Leste. The country has one of the highest rates of tobacco use in the world – 42 per cent of adolescents aged 13–15 smoke, and 66 per cent of schoolchildren are exposed to tobacco smoke in their homes. There is a need to pay attention to the risk factors associated with unhealthy behaviours and climate change, because they are likely to lead to an increased risk of infectious and non-communicable diseases.

There is a lack of access to safe water in Timor-Leste, and open defecation remains one of the country's biggest health issues, especially in rural areas. Only 56.8 per cent of the total population have access to basic

sanitation services, while almost 24.5 per cent still lack access to basic safe water services. As a result, faecal-oral transmitted diseases are a significant factor in the high morbidity and mortality rates.

The IFRC undertook a study into the impacts of climate change on both health and livelihoods in Timor-Leste in April 2021. The results showed that a combination of increased droughts and extended and more intense wet seasons are likely to cause additional health impacts. Dengue fever is already a major public health concern in Timor-Leste, and there is a highly seasonal increase in cases. Most cases occur in the wettest and hottest months of the year (December–February, peaking in January), with hotspots around Dili (especially Comoro, Tirilolo, Bairo Pite and Manatuto).

It is expected that the number of extremely hot days and nights will increase by 2040, creating extremely uncomfortable conditions, especially for outdoor workers. Under high carbon emissions scenarios, the number of heat-related deaths among elderly people is expected to increase from none to 39 deaths per 100,000 by 2080. A number of studies also predict that mental health issues will increase – including anxiety, stress, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder – as a result of climate change and extreme weather events around the world. Climate change is likely to exacerbate the serious public health problems arising from the food and nutrition insecurity facing the country. Malnutrition is already the single greatest contributor to premature death and disability in Timor-Leste, which has the highest level of malnutrition among all the countries in the Asia Pacific region.

Climate change will also have a considerable adverse impact on the population's access to safe water. Changing rainfall patterns, the heightened risk of drought and water scarcity and more extreme rainfall events will affect water supplies by damaging water infrastructure and polluting surface-water sources. As floods and temperatures are likely to increase, this will create a heightened risk of water-borne disease transmission. Dehydration caused by severe diarrhoea is a major cause of mortality among young children and may become more challenging to treat as temperatures rise and water scarcity increases, especially where there is little or no sanitation.

In recent years, the Ministry of Health of Timor-Leste has strengthened the country's health system by increasing its capacity for planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. It has been important to develop national policies and standards, while further developing the capacity of human resources to deliver health services

to the population. The Government has formulated guidelines and norms for health logistics, in order to deliver quality essential medicines and technologies. It has also increased the capacity for inter-sectoral coordination, harmonization and the alignment of international cooperation and partnerships, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders. Continued efforts are needed to further strengthen human resources for health at the sub-national level, including hospital referral systems, quality health service delivery, improving health information systems, medicine forecasting and procurement, and coordination within the health system and inter-sectoral action for health.

Main actions and areas of support

With support from the IFRC and the Australian Red Cross, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will continue to improve the capacity of health staff, volunteers and community members to prepare and respond to epidemics and pandemics. The IFRC will support the implementation of the [Preparedness for Effective Response](#) (PER) process in the National Society, which will enable it to focus on epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response.

The lessons learnt from the COVID-19 operation addressed community gaps in early detection and initiated a fast response at the community level. The IFRC will facilitate peer-to-peer learning on community-based surveillance and epidemic control for volunteers between the Indonesian Red Cross and the Timor-Leste Red Cross. It will also support the review of the National Society's strategy on epidemic and pandemic preparedness.

The IFRC will give the National Society technical support with continuing to implement the Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme. Water, sanitation and hygiene is one of the main interventions that will be implemented in the two target municipalities of Ainaro and Manufahi. Activities will include the provision of safe water through the construction of improved water systems, training and capacity development for community water, sanitation and hygiene management teams, including stronger engagement with local authorities and the reduction of open defecation practices through the construction of household and public latrines. These activities will be accompanied by behaviour change approaches. The water, sanitation and hygiene intervention is part of the larger Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme, which seeks to develop community resilience in a holistic way, targeting livelihoods, risk reduction, community health and youth.

Further development of the National Society's community engagement and accountability approaches will support behaviour change communication through the development of feedback mechanisms to monitor the community perception of diseases, increase knowledge and encourage healthier and safer practices. In addition, community engagement and accountability activities will provide information to communities that can save lives, reduce risk, and mitigate misinformation and rumours regarding the disease.

Migration and displacement

The main drivers for outward labour migration are poverty and under-employment. Migration often occurs in the form of self-initiated irregular travel from rural areas to Dili and into Indonesia, based on information from family, friends, neighbours and communities. However, Timor-Leste also has bilateral agreements with South Korea and Australia, offering formal labour migration pathways, and there are also Timorese communities further afield in the Philippines, the UK and Portugal.

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

Timor-Leste also has a complex history of population displacement due to conflict following the 1999 referendum and the subsequent political upheaval in 2006. In the years that followed, resettlement programmes were supported by both the Timor-Leste and Indonesian Governments and several other agencies. By 2014, most of this support had come to an end, while it was estimated that there were still about 22,000 displaced persons who did not have access to durable solutions.

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

Main actions and areas of support

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has always played a pivotal role in supporting displaced communities during emergencies. The most recent example of this was during the floods in the first quarter of 2021, when it managed several evacuation centres and provided emergency relief to displaced households. The National Society will continue to develop its response capacity to support communities that are temporarily displaced by disasters or other crises in Timor-Leste, to ensure that their immediate needs are met in a timely way.

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

Values, power and inclusion

Timor-Leste has the youngest population in the Asia Pacific region, with a median age of 20.8. Twenty-two per cent of women and 19 per cent of men aged 15–49 have no education, and 75 per cent of women and 82 per cent of men are literate. Only 34 per cent of women and 70 per cent of men are employed (according to data from 2016). According to the 2015 census, youth and adolescent social issues are relatively high, and 20 per cent of the 15–24 age group were neither employed or in school. Only 23 per cent of young women and 26 per cent of young men had received information on reproductive health, and approximately seven per cent of young women aged 15–19 had started having babies. Twenty-nine per cent of females aged 15–49 had experienced physical violence within the 12 months preceding the survey. Fifteen per cent of the population aged five and over was reported to have some level of difficulty in at least one functional area.

Gender-inequitable social norms and restrictive gender roles persist, along with the continued preference for customary law instead of the formal justice system. Violence against women and girls, as well as violence against children, remains prevalent, and women have more difficulty accessing economic resources. Some

small-scale studies by UNICEF in 2020 suggested that many Timorese children are exposed to violence in the home, where they may also witness violence against their mothers, and violence at school. The Law on Domestic Violence offers some protection against child abuse, yet this and other types of abuse and violence are common. Sexual abuse of children, including by family members, remains a serious concern.

Though Timor-Leste has been witnessing a burgeoning of its young population, it provides limited services and opportunities, especially for their participation in economic growth, due to a lack of industry and jobs. Timor-Leste's constitutions and laws guarantee gender equality in social, economic and political opportunities.

Emergencies exacerbate existing gender inequalities, and the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence, violence against children and trafficking in human beings often increases during and after emergencies. People living with disabilities experience particular challenges in accessing services because of a lack of understanding and poor awareness of service providers about social inclusion and how services can be adapted, including during crises.

Main actions and areas of support

Community engagement and accountability, and protection, gender and inclusion, aim to ensure that the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's programmes and responses are people-centred, inclusive, trusted and

safe. There are community engagement and accountability approaches and tools to ensure community voices are heard and used for programme adaptation, while protection, gender and inclusion approaches ensure that the National Society's work does no harm and no one is left behind or unsafe.

The National Society, with support from the Australian Red Cross, has developed its protection, gender and inclusion work plan, which includes the development of its protection, gender and inclusion policy, sensitization and training. The National Society and the IFRC plan to roll out protection, gender and inclusion minimum standards in emergencies, provide standard operating procedures and policies in child protection, child safeguarding, and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment with the strong commitment of National Society management, staff and volunteers. This will tackle issues in protection, gender and inclusion and provide better services for the marginalized groups in Timor-Leste. Working closely with other agencies in Timor-Leste, the National Society will actively participate in the working group to strengthen the protection, gender and inclusion approach in disaster management.

The IFRC will support the National Society to have a strong capacity in community engagement and accountability by providing technical support and capacity building to National Society staff and volunteers for community engagement and implementation in emergency response and programmes.

Enabling local actors

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is committed to institutional strengthening and carried out the self-assessment aspect of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process in 2014. This part of the process is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies as a whole in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities. The National Society is also committed to the PER process, and is at the action and accountability phase. The PER approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyze the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism, and ultimately take necessary action to improve it.

The National Society has focused its efforts on the development of a financial system, logistics, fundraising, volunteer management, monitoring and reporting,

and partnerships, which contribute to the delivery of its services and operations following its development framework established in 2018. In the past two years, in line with its Strategic Plan, the National Society has concentrated on decentralizing branches, which entails empowering the capability and increasing resources at branches, while also enhancing branch capacity for financial sustainability, logistics and reporting.

The IFRC network supports the National Society in its development, in alignment with its priorities.

Engaged

The National Society's capacity in communications still needs to be improved, including increasing the number of staff conducting a wider range of communications work. While the communications team can tackle pressing issues to ensure support for other technical units, it

does not have the capacity to conduct more strategic actions such as developing a communications strategy to monitor or evaluate the influence that the National Society brings to the Timor-Leste community. More resources and investment are needed for the National Society to further enhance its communications strategy and capacity, not only to amplify the activities that the National Society carries out but also to continue improving organizational visibility, influence and the values the National Society wants to bring to Timor-Leste.

Despite the relatively wide array of partnerships and engagements, the National Society still needs further support to map additional potential partnerships based on priority sectors, monitoring partnerships, and how to use its position to achieve more strategic positioning in Timor-Leste's humanitarian sector. The intention is to improve the influence and impact, as well as effectively advocate the values that the National Society wants to bring to the population, Government and partners through a better humanitarian diplomacy strategy.

Main actions and areas of support

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is currently in discussions about developing and identifying a clearer strategy, prioritizing sectors and formulating key messages to better engage with the Government and other humanitarian partners in the country. The National Society is already part of various working networks both in-country and regionally, with notable regional networks including the youth volunteer network, National Society development, climate change, health and disaster management related networks (which are essential for knowledge sharing), capacity building, and technical collaborations with partners.

The National Society is expected to broaden this participation and join more strategic networks in the future, with the support of the IFRC. The IFRC has recently improved its partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Networks (ASEAN) in the Southeast Asia region. ASEAN has shown flexibility for the National Society's involvement (aside from other National Societies in the region) on several occasions, although Timor-Leste itself is not yet a Member State. In the future, this may serve as an opportunity for the National Society to take part in more strategic ASEAN regional initiatives.

Domestically, the National Society participates in Timor-Leste's National Disaster Working Group, the National Health Working Group and other government working groups. In addition, the National Society has established partnerships with other in-country

stakeholders such as universities, mass media, youth organizations and the private sector.

The National Society is committed to strengthening its digital transformation efforts. It has started the Digital Engagement Capability initiative which enables it to participate in global and regional online events and influence the regional agenda, with support from the New Zealand Red Cross and the IFRC through the [Capacity Building Fund](#). The IFRC will continue supporting the National Society in further assessing and developing its digital engagement plan to enable the National Society's virtual engagement and maintain the standard digital infrastructure. One of the National Society's main goals is to digitally link its 13 branches with its headquarters in order to promote decentralization. This digital engagement will assist the National Society in rapid information exchange and field reporting.

Accountable

The National Society acknowledges that it needs to improve its capacity in better planning, monitoring and reporting as part of its accountability to its stakeholders. There has been planning, monitoring and reporting capacity building and plans, including the logical framework (logframe) over the last two years, but there needs to be an institutional approach rather than one that is project-based.

Main actions and areas of support

In ensuring trust and accountability, the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society is taking recommendations from recent lessons learned and operations that timely and quality reporting is crucial to sustainable partnerships and support from donors. Failing to increase relevant capacity may result in a negative impact on the organizational credibility and trust to receive more funding.

A roadmap on planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting improvement will be developed as a priority in 2023–2024. In addition, digital engagement will provide additional support to these initiatives. To support financial sustainability, National Society accountability and other development priorities, the National Society will update its current National Society Development logframe so that all support from different partners is aligned to its development priorities.

The IFRC and the Australian Red Cross will continue supporting the National Society with further strengthening its planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting capacity, particularly its reporting capacity, through training and coaching.

The Australian Red Cross, with other partners, has also offered its intention to contribute funding and possible technical support for financial development in 2023.

The IFRC will provide support to the Timor-Leste Red Cross to access any grant or awards related to National Society development programmes such as from the National Society Investment Alliance, the Capacity Building Fund and the Empress Shôken Fund.

Trusted

The National Society has limited financial resources at its headquarters and particularly at branch level, which in turn hampers a sustainable branch operation and services performance. With the National Society's emphasis on decentralization, the headquarters is increasing its income-generating initiatives to sustain itself and supporting branches, but the branches are also required to sustain themselves to run their programming, increase the capacity of the staff and volunteers, and manage their activities with their own resources.

Main actions and areas of support

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society will emphasize financial sustainability, taking recommendations from the Financial Sustainability Monitoring Dashboard initiative. This is not only focused on improving the fundraising or

resource mobilization capacity to generate income, but also improving the financial management and system capacity to manage the resources received and ensure accountability. Under the finance development, the National Society will improve its finance staff and structure, reporting capacity and finance system.

The IFRC is supporting the National Society's decentralization plan. The IFRC will provide technical support to the National Society in mapping the organization's needs and developing the decentralization roadmap. The IFRC supports the National Society in its governance and management matters, as well as supporting Movement partners coordination, at the request of the National Society.

The Australian Red Cross is supporting the National Society with resource mobilization, including the development of its resource mobilization strategy in 2021. It continued its support in 2022 with the development of its resource mobilization plan and identification of 11 revenue-generating models and funding for a resource mobilization consultant in the second half of the year. This will continue until early 2023. The Australian Red Cross is committed to continue the funding support and is also available to provide technical support if required (through external partnerships).

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC support to the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society centres on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development and humanitarian diplomacy. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme. The IFRC will continue its support to the National Society in assisting communities during disasters in Timor-Leste. This is done by supporting the National Society to access emergency response mechanisms such as the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeals, as well as exchanging disaster information updates through the available platforms, including the GO Platform.

In 2022, the National Society carried out a dengue outbreak [operation](#) with support from the IFRC's DREF. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IFRC, through its global Appeal, has supported the National

Society in its COVID-19 response. While the IFRC's financial support to the National Society's COVID-19 operation will be closed down by the end of 2022, the IFRC will provide technical support for the COVID-19 programme in 2023.

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

Participating National Society Support - Bilateral

Name of Partner NS	Funding Requirements	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Engaged	Accountable	Trusted
Australian Red Cross	CHF 0.09M	●	●			●	●		●
Indonesian Red Cross Society			●	●					
Italian Red Cross		●							●
Korean Red Cross	CHF 0.14M			●					
Netherlands Red Cross			●						
New Zealand Red Cross	CHF 0.04M			●			●		

Total

0.28M

IFRC membership coordination

IFRC coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs; agreeing common priorities; co-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 to support people in need incorporate the clarity of humanitarian action, development assistance, and the reinforcement of the National Society's auxiliary role.

The IFRC facilitates peer-to-peer support between the Timor-Leste Red Cross and the **Indonesian Red Cross Society** for cross-border initiatives, learning exchanges and training implementation between the two National Societies in the field of disaster management, health and National Society development. The Indonesian Red Cross has provided support for training in risk communication and community engagement and accountability. This will continue to be supported technically and remotely.

The IFRC and the **American Red Cross** continue their collaboration in supporting nine National Societies in the Asia Pacific region, including the Timor-Leste Red Cross, through the implementation of the Red Ready

project Phase II, which runs until 2023. The IFRC will maintain technical support to the National Society to achieve the project's objectives:

- Strengthen its national level capacities
- Achieve measurable institutional capacity development advances, primarily against the OCAC and PER benchmarks
- Become better able to respond to local disasters (Red Cross Ready / Red Ready)

Several National Societies will continue supporting the Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's programmes and operations over the long term. Among the key partners are the **Australian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Republic of Korea National Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross** and **New Zealand Red Cross**.

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

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

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

The Netherland Red Cross provides support for the Timor-Leste Red Cross in the area of cash and voucher capacity as part of the Cash and Voucher Assistance Readiness Project, to leverage the ability of the National Society to deliver appropriate, accountable and timely cash and voucher assistance. This is aligned with the

IFRC's commissioned cash roadmap for enhancing cash preparedness in National Societies.

During the past three years, the **New Zealand Red Cross** has supported the National Society in developing its capacity through technical and advisory support on fundraising skill development, leadership and governance, human resources management, volunteer management and branch development. The IFRC will work collaboratively with the New Zealand Red Cross to support the Timor-Leste Red in strengthening its financial management. Currently, the New Zealand Red Cross is reviewing its support strategy but has confirmed that it will continue integrated community-based risk reduction support until 2023.

Movement coordination

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

Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

The ICRC is working together with the National Society in disseminating information about international humanitarian law and supporting it in further strengthening its capacity and services in the areas of restoring family links, management of the dead, improving safer access for humanitarian actions, communication and vaccination activities.

Coordination with other actors

The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society has a strong relationship with the Government as an auxiliary. It works closely with the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, and national and sub-national departments including the State Secretariat of Civil Protection, State Secretariat of the Environment and the National Disaster Risk Management Directorate.

The National Society has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretary of State for Civil Protection, outlining its cooperation on disaster response and preparedness. In addition, the National Society is a member of the national task force responding to COVID-19. It has strong relationships with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, cooperating closely with both departments on emergency response and the development of remote communities through

the Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme at the municipal level. The National Society has received funding support from the Government of Timor-Leste for youth programmes, organization development, branch development, health, disaster management programmes and operational support.

The National Society participates regularly in the United Nations country team, as well as working with local and international humanitarian organizations.

The National Society has built partnerships with in-country organizations; including Oxfam for its disaster management programme; the Partnership for Human Development for its health programme; the Korea International Cooperation Agency for its health programme; the Child Fund for its youth programme; and the Catholic Relief Service for its nutrition programme.

Since 2018, the National Society, with facilitation from the IFRC, has also been receiving support from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance to strengthen its National Society development capacity for response readiness, through the Red Ready project, until 2023.

In 2022, the United Nations Environment Programme launched a project focusing on the development of end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems in Timor-Leste with support from the Green Climate Fund. The United Nations Environment Programme will implement activities to enhance early warning systems under the five-year project. This will be done in partnership with national government agencies, including the State Secretariat of the Environment, the National

Meteorological Agency and the State Secretariat for Civil Protection. Non-government actors – including the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES) and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre – will implement activities that enhance early warning systems. The National Society will receive funding to build on work it has already implemented under the Integrated Community-Based Risk Reduction Programme, supporting communities to receive and act upon the end-to-end early warning system. The Timor-Leste Red Cross Society's role will be to take the national system to 'the last mile'.

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](#)



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with **192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and around **14 million volunteers**. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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