



GUATEMALA

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 11.2M**

Appeal number **MAAGT003**

In support of the Guatemalan Red Cross



21

National Society branches



240

National Society staff



1,600

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



52,000

Ongoing
emergency
operations



1,000

Climate and
environment



20,000

Disasters
and crises



20,000

Health and
wellbeing



25,000

Migration and
displacement



1,000

Values, power
and inclusion

IFRC network multiyear focus

Emergency response

- population movement

Longer term needs

- disaster risk management
- climate change adaptation
- violence prevention and protection
- epidemic preparedness and response

Capacity development

- humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy
- partnerships and resource mobilization
- quality and upgraded management systems

Key country data

Population **17.1M**

INFORM Severity rating **High**

Long-term Climate Risk Index **16**

Human Development Index rank **135**

Population below poverty level **59.3%**

Hazards



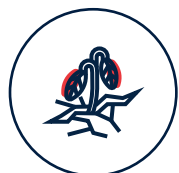
Population movement



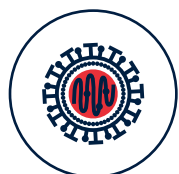
Hurricanes and cyclones



Floods



Drought



Disease outbreaks



Poverty

Funding requirements

Total 11.2M CHF

Through the IFRC



→ **2.4M** CHF

Through Participating National Societies



→ **2.8M** CHF

Host National Society



6M CHF

IFRC Breakdown

1.6 M CHF

Ongoing emergency operations

Longer term needs

45,000 CHF

Climate and environment

91,000 CHF

Disasters and crises

26,000 CHF

Health and wellbeing

131,000 CHF

Migration and displacement

75,000 CHF

Values, power and inclusion

362,000 CHF

Enabling local actors

Ongoing emergencies

MDR43008

Mexico and Central America
Migration Crisis
population movement

Participating National Societies

American Red Cross

British Red Cross*

Canadian Red Cross Society*

German Red Cross

Italian Red Cross*

Japanese Red Cross Society*

Netherlands Red Cross*

Spanish Red Cross

Swedish Red Cross*

Swiss Red Cross*



NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Guatemalan Red Cross** was established in 1923 and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) the same year. It is recognized as a voluntary, autonomous relief society and auxiliary to the authorities in its humanitarian activities. The National Society provides nationwide coverage, and has a permanent presence across 60 per cent of the country through its headquarters and 21 branches. It addresses humanitarian needs in the country through response operations during emergencies, disasters and crises, along with permanent health care services that served over 1,300,000 people between 2017 and 2020.

Since 2021, the Guatemalan Red Cross has been in the process of utilizing the IFRC benchmark tool

“Strengthening the auxiliary role through law and policies” to identify gaps in national, regional and local laws and policies, and propose recommendations for improvement. Currently the National Society is supporting the Guatemala National Coordination System for Disaster Reduction in implementing the national policy on comprehensive risk management.

Projects and programmes are developed within the framework of the Strategic Development Plan 2022–2025. Focus areas include disaster preparedness and response, climate change, community resilience with a focus on livelihoods and food production, health, migration and social inclusion.

IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

Joint situational analysis

Guatemala is a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural country, made up of four peoples: Maya, Garifuna, Xinca and Mestizo, who speak a total of 23 languages. The country is divided into 22 departments and 340 municipalities. It borders the Pacific Ocean to the West, shares land borders with El Salvador and Honduras to the south and southeast, has a short coastline on the Gulf of Honduras to the east, and then borders Belize to the east and north east. Its longest border is with Mexico to the north, spanning 871 km.

Guatemala is located in the tropics, has a relatively warm and temperate climate, and has elevations ranging between sea level to 4,000 metres. Climates range from near-desert conditions to rainforests, and the country is crossed by a large chain of 34 volcanos, four of which are active. The dry season occurs between November and April, however there can be rainfall throughout the year in some parts of the country due to trade winds from the Caribbean. An average of 1,000 to 2,000 mm of precipitation is received in southern and eastern Guatemala, but this is doubled in areas located nearer the Caribbean shoreline. Severe tropical storms can be experienced in September and October, accompanied by floods and wind damage.

Latin America and the Caribbean region are characterized by weak health and social protection systems with

expanding marginalized urban settlements that lack access to essential services. In 2020, inequality contributed to the highest rise in hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean among different regions of the world, with more than 30 per cent affected on average. The increase in severe food insecurity represented a setback of at least a decade. In Guatemala, 60 per cent of the population lives in poverty, and 47 per cent of children under the age of five suffer chronic malnutrition. Though the national economy depends heavily on agriculture (24 per cent of the GDP), 72 per cent of households engaged in agriculture live in poverty.

Guatemala is subject to multiple risks and hazards, including hurricanes, earthquakes, violence, environmental degradation, and epidemics such as dengue. Multiple events can often occur within the same timeframe and geographical location, thereby severely affecting communities and the general population. Hurricanes Eta and Iota that occurred in 2020 impacted the population of several departments, causing loss of human life, and affecting livelihoods, housing and health conditions.

Since the beginning of 2022, there has been a massive increase in the number of refugees, migrants and returnees in transit by land in a northerly direction through Central America. People on the move face multiple needs and in view of the complexity of transiting difficult routes, are exposed to assault, physical and sexual violence and other protection risks.

Ongoing emergency response

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

- Appeal number: [MDR43008](#) Mexico and Central America migration crisis
- Appeal launch date: 15 July 2022
- Appeal end date: 31 July 2023
- People affected: 500,000 people
- People to be assisted: 210,000 people

The increase in people on the move across Central America since early 2022 has been significant. Between January and May of 2022, there were 41,179 Guatemalan migrant returnees, mainly from the United States and Mexico. According to the Guatemalan Red Cross, during May 2022, an average of 160 people per day used the humanitarian service points along the border at El Corinto and Agua Caliente.

Migrants, refugees and returnees mostly move through irregular channels. Along the routes, many of them face barriers caused by administrative systems, suffer accidents and injuries, face extortion and sexual violence, and are separated from their families. Tragically, others die from disease or harsh environmental conditions and weather. The majority come from Cuba, Venezuela and Haiti. The situation is especially serious for the most vulnerable groups such as children, young people and women; indigenous communities; people living with disabilities; the LGBTI+ community and the elderly population.

As expressed by migrants themselves, in the information collected by the National Society, the main reasons for migrating include improving their incomes, escaping violence, reuniting with family members, and recovering from the impact of recurring disasters and extreme weather events. The devastating socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing political crises are also factors, and will continue to increase population movements and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.

People on the move require significant assistance, in particular those with health problems. This high demand for assistance can be hampered by the exhaustion of personnel or the limited availability of food, water, facilities and first aid supplies. The impact of migration on children is of increasing concern as they face the threat of drowning, physical violence, sexual violence,

human trafficking, exploitation and health risks, including mental health.

The Guatemalan Red Cross is able to identify the needs of people on the move due to its network of humanitarian service points and community engagement and accountability approach, combined with several years of working on migration flows. These needs range from protection and health care to accessing specific information that allows them to make informed decisions along the route and at their destination. The most vulnerable migrants need access to medical care, mental health support, basic humanitarian assistance, connectivity and legal information.

Short description of emergency operational strategy

In July 2022, the IFRC launched a CHF18 million Emergency Appeal aiming to increase the reach of the National Societies of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama, and to scale up assistance and protection for people along migratory routes throughout Central America, through more effective preparedness and response, and strengthened capacities and risk reduction. Out of the 210,000 people expected to be reached, 175,000 are migrants in transit, 25,000 are refugee returnees and 10,000 are people in host and origin communities.

The Emergency Appeal focuses on:

- Integrated assistance: shelter, livelihoods and multi-purpose cash
- Health and care including water, sanitation and hygiene: mental health and psychosocial support, primary and pre-hospital health care and community health
- Protection and prevention: protection, gender and inclusion; community engagement and accountability; migration; environmental sustainability; risk reduction; and climate adaptation and recovery

Humanitarian service points are the cornerstone of this operation, existing to provide comprehensive and integrated assistance and protection services to migrants based on need. Humanitarian service points sit along migratory routes to provide a neutral, welcoming and safe environment for migrants to access essential services that might otherwise be inaccessible. Services include psychological first aid, drinking water,

hygiene supplies, primary health care, first aid, food and non-food distribution, support to restore family links, accurate information on service points along the route and, in some cases, legal advice. With the support of donors, the National Societies of Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama have been operating 20 humanitarian service points. With this Emergency Appeal, the aim is to increase the regional response capacity, with 30 more humanitarian service points in different locations, to achieve a total of 50.

The Guatemalan Red Cross recognizes and values all members of communities that access the humanitarian service points by incorporating community, engagement and accountability, as well as protection, gender and inclusion approaches into operations. This also creates opportunities to adapt services to accommodate diverse and evolving migration needs, and support

efforts to improve the quality of services based on feedback from service users.

The Mexico and Central American Migration Crisis Emergency Appeal was launched to urgently address the growing humanitarian needs of migrants, returnees and host communities in the region. This Emergency Appeal complements the Americas pillar of the IFRC [Global Route-Based Migration Programme](#), a multi-year programme that addresses the ongoing assistance and protection needs of people on the move, irrespective of their status.

Once the Emergency Appeal is completed, the operation and response activities of the National Society will continue in accordance with their three-year programmes and strategic plans. These plans include responding to the migration situation through a medium- and long-term approach, and facing a prolonged crisis.

Strategic priorities

Climate and environment

In recent decades, extreme events have increased and intensified due to the effects of climate change, some of them becoming chronic, and having trans-boundary effects such as the drought of the Central American Dry Corridor. Intense hurricane seasons place the region among the most challenged by extreme hydro-meteorological events, as highlighted in 2020 by the death and devastation caused by Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. These unprecedented hurricanes affected more than eight million people in Central America. In Guatemala, recent intense rainfall events brought landslides, floods and flash floods to rural and urban areas.

The year 2020 was among the warmest in Guatemala over the past 40 years. Predictions forecast that Guatemala will face an increase in average temperature between three and six degrees Celsius, and a decrease in precipitation of 10 to 30 per cent before the end of this century. This could result in significant environmental, social and economic consequences.

The intensification of these extreme climate events is having a severe impact on the country, including water shortages, agricultural losses, displacement and compromised health and safety. Above all, climate change is affecting the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, reducing crop yields and food production, leading to worsening food insecurity in many areas, and

exacerbating the effects of economic shocks, COVID-19 restrictions, violence and political instability.

Guatemala's natural resources are being depleted, with the loss of 50 per cent of forest areas in the last 65 years, and generalized contamination of lakes and other sources of water.

Main actions and areas of support

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

The National Society leads locally owned actions to support communities and authorities in their efforts to adapt to climate change and build resilience to extreme weather events.

The IFRC network will support the National Society to:

- Develop environmental policies and climate change adaptation strategies, based on evidence, and through mapping and risk scenarios
- Conduct climate-related capacity building to enable better planning and forecast-based financing
- Define operational guidelines and internal procedures to reduce the environmental impact of IFRC operations, and improve dissemination to staff and volunteers, with emphasis on Red Cross Youth
- Develop information and dissemination actions on climate change and its impacts, oriented within the organization involving staff and volunteers, with emphasis on Red Cross youth
- Develop communication, education and information strategies on climate change and its impacts, targeting community behavioural transformation and aimed at informing local policy-making
- Promote community-led climate-smart solutions and plans that address challenges, improve behaviours and promote mitigation and adaptation strategies for climate change
- Access technical support for climate-smart livelihoods, especially those based on food production and agriculture

Disasters and crises

According to the 2021 Global Risk Index, Guatemala ranks 10th among countries most at-risk of disaster. This is due to its geographical, bioceanic and tectonic position with 34 volcanoes, four of which are active, and multiple geological faults. According to the Risk Management Index of April 2017, 70 per cent of the entire country faces high vulnerability to disasters and crises, and more than half of the municipalities are at very high and high risk, due to their low capacity. In 2021, the National Coordination System for Disaster Reduction reported 1,524 incidents throughout the country, including road accidents, landslides, tree falls, hailstorms, structural collapses, social conflicts, environmental contamination, landslides, mudflows, strong winds, structural cracks, subsidence, landfill fires, structural fires, forest fires, non-forest fires, floods and freezing temperatures.

According to the National Coordination System for Disaster Reduction, more than one third of Guatemala's 340 municipalities are prone to flooding and landslides due to rainfall. In 2020, Hurricanes Eta and Iota struck most of the country with heavy rains that caused

flooding and dozens of catastrophic landslides and mudflows. In 2021, the rainy season affected 1.5 million people, including over 12,000 people evacuated, nearly 5,000 houses damaged, hundreds of roads and bridges damaged or destroyed, and 36 deaths.

Man-made hazards include widespread violence perpetrated by non-state armed groups, social unrest, and political and economic crises. These are further aggravated by the high impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health conditions in the region. This has led to a worsening of living and welfare conditions and a deepening of the migration and displacement crisis in the region, as well as protection problems.

In Guatemala, the economic impact of the pandemic and the 2020 hurricanes exacerbated the pre-existing food insecurity crisis nation-wide, especially affecting vulnerable families in the Dry Corridor and impoverished families in the central-western highlands, specifically indigenous populations. According to Food Security Assessments and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, there has been a steady increase in food insecurity since 2014 among the most vulnerable populations, from 600,000 people in 2013 to 3.5 million people in 2021.

Guatemala has a National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction, which is adapted from the 2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. However, capacities for improving preparedness, response, recovery, coping and resilience are not sufficiently developed at community, local and national levels. Regional coordination mechanisms have not reached an adequate level of operational capacity to address these high levels of vulnerability.

Main actions and areas of support

In compliance with its auxiliary role, the Guatemalan Red Cross is part of the National Coordination System for Disaster Reduction (CONRED) and has an active role in implementing disaster risk management activities in the areas of resilience, preparedness, response, and recovery from disasters. With the IFRC's technical support and under the Volcan de Fuego Response Operation, in 2019, the Guatemalan Red Cross assisted the authorities in reviewing their Disaster Risk Reduction policy framework. This resulted in the inclusion of recommendations set forth in the IFRC Disaster Risk Reduction Law Checklist.

The Guatemalan Red Cross has implemented cash and voucher assistance as a tool to reach families most affected by disasters and crises, and vulnerable

migrants and displaced people. This allows the user to make financial decisions for themselves and their families with dignity. The National Society develops skills and knowledge among its staff and volunteers, coordinates with humanitarian actors in the existing cash working group, and carries out needs assessments and feasibility analyses.

Through the implementation of the IFRC Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process, the Guatemalan Red Cross has increased its positioning as a relevant actor in the national Disaster Response Management system, developed a self-assessment, established clear priorities and developed a plan of action aimed at enhancing its response capacities. The main areas identified for improvement were human resource management and capacity building, legal and regulatory frameworks, institutional risk management, physical safety and protection of staff and volunteers, and the standardization of processes. The National Society has a dashboard monitoring its preparedness and response mechanisms, which facilitates tracking of progress.

The IFRC network will work to build the National Society's capacities to adapt to increasingly complex humanitarian environments, and to develop preparedness and readiness to respond to shocks by strengthening community resilience. This includes early warning, early action and anticipation to mitigate risks from multiple hazards that affect the livelihoods, homes and living conditions of vulnerable communities and the most disadvantaged people. The IFRC will promote ethical and people-led approaches such as cash and livelihood transfer programmes, and support the shift to response models that promote localized and regional action.

The IFRC network will support the Guatemalan Red Cross to:

- Share knowledge and develop assessment and needs analysis tools, including digitalization efforts, to produce evidence-based preparedness and response planning
- Use preparedness for effective response to better prepare for the increasing frequency of disasters and crises
- Access technical support in cash and voucher assistance preparedness, and promote the integration of organizational tools, systems, procedures and learning opportunities
- Provide training and learning opportunities to set up community engagement and accountability strategies mainstreamed in all actions

- Improve anticipatory and early action planning and implementation, in order to react in a timely manner to the possible impact of catastrophic events
- Strengthen local preparedness and response capacities, and promote proper coordination with local civil protection structures and with national systems
- Integrate an early recovery and community resilience approach from the start of emergency response actions, which will in turn promote linkage with longer-term actions
- Develop content and media coverage that will catalyse social conversations about the IFRC's role in responding to, and enabling recovery from, hurricanes in Central America
- Collaborate with state agencies in order to coordinate their responses to disasters and crises
- Implement strategies to advocate for international disaster response laws

Under the [Pilot Programmatic Partnership \(PPP\)](#) between the IFRC and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), with implementation support from European Union National Societies and the IFRC, the Guatemalan Red Cross adopted an integrated multi-hazard, multi-sectoral approach to complement and strengthen community-driven early warning and early actions systems, reinforcing its auxiliary role to the government. This increases the scope of forecast-based action systems at the local level, which has been an initiative of the National Society, with the support of the IFRC. Activities include multi-risk contingency planning and stock pre-positioning, implementing innovative approaches to data and information management and helping support the development of integrated legal frameworks for disaster risk management that are climate smart and adequately address national preparedness, response and recovery. It also includes vulnerability and capacity analysis workshops in communities at risk of hydrometeorological events, preparing or updating risk maps and risk assessments and installing Early Warning Systems. Other activities may be considered, such as generation of visual and cartographic tools with the use of specialized drones, support for local coordination for disaster reduction groups, or development of a disaster risk management app.

The approach aims to consolidate the National Society's priority lines of action, increasing the number of communities linked to the national coordination system for

disaster reduction. The process of standardizing local disaster risk management approaches will continue, in order to support scaling to other communities. The highly vulnerable communities of San Marcos and Mazatenango are prioritized, as the Guatemalan Red Cross has logistics capacity and a local presence.

Activities to improve the environmental sustainability of the National Society's activities include promoting Green Response principles for logistics and the supply chain. The Nexus Environment Assessment (NEAT+) tool may be used to screen humanitarian projects for potential environmental risks, and Guatemalan Red Cross policies and procedures may be reviewed and updated to include environmental sustainability.

During the inception phase, the National Society performed studies and preparatory actions related to cash and voucher assistance, in order to implement scalable, timely and accountable cash response, where appropriate. Cash and voucher assistance will be integrated as a key modality, to ensure that responses are people-centred, high quality and high impact. The Guatemalan Red Cross will use increasingly digital methods for secure data management and accountability and will continue to exchange experiences with other organisations and monitor efficiency.

Health and wellbeing

Guatemala's geography and social conditions leave the population vulnerable to vector-borne diseases. Since 2003, nearly 140,000 cases of Dengue have been reported, Chikungunya was introduced in 2013 and the Zika virus appeared in 2015. Many rural and indigenous communities do not have access to clean water, or have sparse access to any water. Many do not have adequate basic sanitation services in their homes. To date, the country does not have updated data on an increase in the coverage of these services, and many systems continue to decline.

The country suffered the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a series of weaknesses were exposed in the epidemiological surveillance and health system during the COVID-19 pandemic. Systems were unable to provide adequate access to sexual and reproductive health services. During the pandemic, family planning services decreased by 58 per cent, those seeking prenatal care decreased by 14 per cent, institutional delivery care by 11 per cent, and adolescent pregnancies jumped by 61 per cent. Health conditions not directly related to COVID-19 deteriorated, as public systems were overwhelmed by the pandemic. Multiple factors, such as schools being closed for over a year, family incomes being severely

impacted, and spikes in gender-based violence caused mental health to decline for many.

Conditions worsened in the aftermath of Hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020. In 2021, preliminary data from the Ministry of Health showed a national maternal death rate of 105 per 100,000 live births. However, seven of the 22 departments across the country (Santa Rosa, Huehuetenango, El Progreso, Izabal, Peten, Chiquimula, and Alta Verapaz) had above average rates, those being the departments most affected by the hurricanes. With the recurrence of emergencies and disasters, in the context of already-stressed systems, mental health continues to be a priority issue.

Main actions and areas of support

The Guatemalan Red Cross seeks to prepare for and respond to epidemics and pandemics through community networks and volunteers as the first line of response. As an auxiliary to the public authorities, it seeks to strengthen surveillance, early detection and early response to disease outbreaks and other health risks, promoting participatory community analysis, community and municipal plans, training of community teams, community surveillance, epidemic control for community volunteers, and community first aid, among other actions. The National Society collaborates closely with the Ministry of Health in response to outbreaks of Dengue, Chikungunya and the Zika virus, conducting house fumigation days as part of integrated management for the prevention and control of vector-borne diseases, and promoting behavioural changes at personal, family and community levels. It implements activities to communicate risks, operates ambulance services and provides training for first responders in mental health and psychosocial support. It also supports the Ministry of Health with prevention and control of COVID-19 through public health and social measures, support to increase access to vaccines and support in maintaining essential health services. The IFRC supported the Guatemalan Red Cross in the development and implementation of its response plan for COVID-19, pre-hospital care protocols in a COVID-19 context and strengthening ambulance services.

The Guatemalan Red Cross strengthens community health and resilience through water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects to control diarrhoeal diseases, including during disaster response. Activities include increasing access to clean water, promoting the proper disposal of excreta, grey matter and solid waste. The Guatemalan Red Cross, in normal times and in emergencies, seeks to implement actions to improve access

to water with the necessary quality; the proper disposal of excreta, grey water and solid waste; installing drinking water treatment plants; training community members in mass production modules; providing home treatment kits; distributing containers for transport and storage; harvesting rainwater; installing mobile baths, and delivering hygiene and cleaning kits. The National Society also constructs or rehabilitates latrines, biodigesters, sewage drains, compost bins and water systems. It carries out hygiene promotion using the Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) methodology, among others.

The National Society carries out food security and nutrition initiatives, promoting food delivery, breastfeeding, nutritional sweeps, height monitoring, life planning and sexual and reproductive health. It supports community health brigades, counselling groups and community emergency plans.

The main focus of the IFRC network is aimed at improving, promoting and increasing access to health services and disease prevention at community level, with comprehensive community health programmes directed towards the most vulnerable and remote populations. Efforts have been channelled into increasing capacity for health services in general, and the improvement of coordination with public health systems.

The IFRC network will support the Guatemalan Red Cross to:

- Develop its capacities, in terms of knowledge and health information management for evidence-based strategies, staff and volunteer training, and organizational development
- Develop its position on relevant health policy-making spaces, and its role as an auxiliary to the Ministry of Health
- Improve the social, institutional and financial viability and sustainability of its health programmes and departments, including blood donor recruitment plans, and improve dissemination of service information
- Strengthen community-based health programmes to improve access to affordable, quality, needs-appropriate and comprehensive health services, including improved referral pathways

- Strengthen community-based health programmes to promote disease prevention and care, through information, education and risk communication strategies and through the provision of care services including water, sanitation and hygiene, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, food and nutrition, mental health and psychosocial support services, and protection, gender and inclusion
- Develop emergency health preparedness, response and recovery actions to ensure timely access to health care services during emergencies
- Increase its capacities to prepare and respond to epidemics, including the setting up of community-based epidemiological surveillance systems, in coordination with health systems, and the development of standard operating procedures
- Develop and standardize its mental health and psychosocial support services

Under the Pilot Programmatic Partnership, the Guatemalan Red Cross has developed social campaigns for disease prevention, delivered family and menstrual hygiene items and began forming a psychosocial support unit. The National Society will invest in preparedness and response for epidemics and pandemics through community networks and volunteers as community responders, as they are well placed for surveillance, and for detecting and responding to disease outbreaks and other health risks. In line with DG ECHO's health and WASH policies, improving humanitarian response tools will enhance preparedness to respond to epidemics at the community and national levels. During the roll-out phase, the main focus of activities will be to reinforce the capacity of local organizations. Communities and organizations will participate in Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments, establish contingency plans, carry out prevention measures and be prepared to respond better to outbreaks and epidemics. Messages will be reinforced through local radio spots. New technologies, like drones, will be used for community mapping and outbreak monitoring.

These activities will occur at the same time as the Guatemalan Red Cross is strengthening relations with the health authorities, through material support and a diagnosis of epidemiological surveillance needs. The National Society will also be strengthened through training personnel and volunteers, establishing a logistics system and prepositioning humanitarian supplies.



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Migration and displacement

Since the beginning of 2022, there has been a massive increase in the number of refugees, migrants and returnees in transit by land, northwards through Central America, compared with previous years (more information in “Ongoing emergency response” section).

Guatemala’s strategic location produces special conditions of vulnerability for migrants and displaced persons, being a country of origin, transit and destination. According to the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#), there were 242,000 internally displaced people as of the end of 2022, while according to the [Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), the number of Guatemalan returnees had increased from 19,000 people from January to May 2021 to 41,000 in the first five months of 2022. Within these migration flows, unaccompanied children and adolescents stand out.

As of 2018, caravans of migrant populations have appeared, whose emerging needs consist of first aid and pre-hospital care, provision of essential primary health services, psychosocial support, safe referral services for refugee/asylum applications, food, orientation on risks in migratory routes, and communication with family members. There are specific information needs on risks, weather-related problems, disease prevention (with an emphasis on COVID-19), available services, etc. The risks to which they are exposed are dominated by situations of violence, which cause important humanitarian needs.

Main actions and areas of support

The National Society has eight Humanitarian Service Points distributed along the migratory route, which provide direct assistance and protection to people on the move (migrants, displaced and other vulnerable groups in mobility situations), restoring family links and offering health services (pre-hospital care, psychosocial support and referrals). The Guatemalan Red Cross is a recognized leader in the migration discussion, due to its positioning along migratory routes and border areas, and network of services offered in its auxiliary role to the public authorities.

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

In line with the IFRC 2021-2024 Americas Migration Plan of Action, the IFRC has been supporting the Guatemalan Red Cross in enhancing capacities to understand the dynamics of human mobility, promote scenario

planning and deliver appropriate and differentiated humanitarian services through Humanitarian Service Points. With financial support of the Spanish Red Cross and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, a migration strategy and plan are being developed that will facilitate prompt care and protection of migrants and displaced populations at the local level.

The IFRC network will support the Guatemalan Red Cross to:

- Roll out its migration strategy, fostering regional coordination to address the cross-border migration phenomena in Central America
- Build its capacities by developing tools and training, and providing technical support, including the development and proper maintenance of national and regional information management systems for migratory flows
- Establish and expand the range of services available at humanitarian services points in key locations along migratory routes, to support migrants' access to comprehensive needs-appropriate assistance
- Ensure that assistance and protection services are provided and promoted through engagement with local and national authorities, host communities and affected people, as well as with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), other organizations and donors
- Use of discrimination-free culturally appropriate information that builds on the National Society's assistance and protection services, promotes voluntary access to comprehensive services, and ensures migrants receive proper information on their legal rights
- Access global, regional and local analysis on current and emerging trends, anticipating population movement when possible, in order to support the National Society's information-based programming
- Conduct humanitarian diplomacy with national and international actors regarding migration and host community interventions, based on evidence

Under the Pilot Programmatic Partnership, contact with transit communities and returned minors has been intensified and Humanitarian Service Points reinforced, carrying out health care activities and raising awareness about access to humanitarian assistance. During roll-out, activities will be carried out in Izabal and Peten, including pre-hospital care services, sharing information about the migration route, identifying and

documenting protection needs, restoring family links and referring to services as needed. In Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango, where the main reference centres for returnees are situated, activities will focus on children and adolescents. In Quetzaltenango, interventions will be complemented by the concurrent Guatemalan Red Cross projects which offer psychosocial support and pre-hospital care for children and adolescents. Raising awareness at the community level will continue, intensifying efforts to create inclusive spaces. Data will be collected around migration trends and causes of migration, which will inform anticipatory and protection plans.

The Guatemalan Red Cross develops its interventions in collaboration with the Government's National Plan for Response to Crisis and Migratory Emergencies. In its auxiliary role, the National Society will increase its participation in public and civil society spaces, and create a round table to share experiences and complement efforts with other actors in the migration space.

At the regional level, the IFRC supports technical assistance to promote the implementation of Humanitarian Service Points and collect feedback from users, as well as training volunteers in safe referrals.

Values, power and inclusion

Central America continues to be considered highly violent. Although crimes affecting life and property have seen a decline, organized crime and gangs, including human trafficking organizations and other non-state armed groups, are still a major concern for many people. Opportunities to break out of these violent environments are few, because of high levels of structural inequality. These circumstances hinder equitable access to basic services and livelihoods that would allow for a standard of living above that of survival.

These compounded risk and vulnerability factors have a disproportionate impact on women, children, the LGBTI+ community and people living with disabilities, and are not addressed by the state. Vulnerable groups suffer not only differential impacts of compounded crises, but they face additional barriers to access adequate assistance and protection mechanisms. Gender inequalities are aggravated in rural communities, partly due to the traditions of indigenous populations, where inequalities are established at the moment of birth. This translates into limited access to basic services, resources, economic opportunities and livelihoods, as well as high vulnerability to violence, especially sexual and gender-based violence. There continues to be a gender gap in organizational and political participation.



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Despite its enormous diversity and natural wealth, Guatemala faces high levels of economic disparity. The Gini Index stands at 44.50, one of the highest in the world, and in 2018 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ranks Guatemala 127th in the Human Development Index. Around 60 per cent of the population lives in poverty, 23 per cent in extreme poverty, and 19 per cent of the population over seven years of age is illiterate.

According to official data from the Public Prosecutor's Office, almost 60,000 women reported being victims of some type of violence in 2021, including psychological, physical and economic violence. As of June 2022, there were more than 4,000 registered rape survivors, and nearly 43,000 registered crimes against children and women. The National Union of Guatemalan Women, a support organization for women survivors of violence, reports that the place where women are most violated is in private spaces such as their homes, that their perpetrators are close relatives, and that the effects of psychological violence can be especially impactful to women.

In addition, gender is often at an intersection with other vulnerabilities. Impoverished and poorly educated women suffer discrimination differently compared to women from more affluent social classes, who have increased access to justice in cases of violence. Similarly, indigenous or Afro-descendant women, women with disabilities or illnesses, young women, and heterosexual women, lesbians and transsexual women experience different types of discrimination.

Main actions and areas of support

The Guatemalan Red Cross operates under a transversal gender and diversity approach, and implements

accountability activities throughout its programmes. It maintains an inclusive environment in all actions in accordance with the IFRC's protection, gender and inclusion policy. The IFRC has assisted Guatemalan Red Cross in developing the roadmap for the implementation of the community engagement and accountability minimum commitments.

The IFRC network will support the Guatemalan Red Cross to:

- Develop information, education and communication strategies to raise awareness on rights, protection, gender and inclusion values
- Fight against social barriers to equal access to information, assistance and protection services
- Increase institutional capacities for social inclusion and gender, supporting the development of protection, gender and inclusion policies and operational protocols, monitoring and reporting tools, and training for staff and volunteers
- Improve decision-making processes aimed at promoting inclusion, diversity and equal participation both within the National Society, among their volunteers and in the communities in which they serve
- Develop operational and referral protocols addressing the specific inclusion, protection and assistance needs of women, children, the LGBTI+ community and people living with disabilities
- Develop community engagement and accountability policies and plans that use performance indicators to monitor community satisfaction within protection, gender and inclusion activities and programmes

Under the Pilot Programmatic Partnership and through the Hurricanes Eta and Iota campaigns, the organization began conducting perception surveys, including in Mayan languages. The expansion and standardization of community feedback systems will enable prioritizing the use of local knowledge, skills and capacities to drive actions that are effective and accepted by the population. Information will be provided to help communities mitigate the effects of threat of disasters, diseases, violence, stigma and discrimination, with tailored messages to help target groups take protection and prevention

measures and actions. Communication techniques will be developed using social networks, mass and alternative media and community motivation. The Guatemalan Red Cross will monitor the acceptance of risk communication targeted at specific groups, and adapt messages according to the information needs, concerns, beliefs, knowledge and practices of those involved, as well as their perception of the National Society. This will allow for identifying and managing the dissemination of misinformation, and possibly preempt other challenges.

Enabling local action

The Guatemalan Red Cross is committed to institutional strengthening, and carried out the self-assessment part of the IFRC's Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process in 2012 and 2016. The self-assessment part of the OCAC process is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies as a whole in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities. The National Society is also committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response (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 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.

Engaged

- Develop an innovative and adaptive communications strategy aimed at key national and international actors
- Give special attention to digital transformation, strengthening and protecting the network structure and operating systems, and the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment at the national level
- Carry out a diagnosis and implement an Enterprise Resource Planning system, replacing the Peachtree accounting system
- Develop and implement a response operations management software, and a digital stock management system
- Strengthen IT infrastructure and information backup systems at headquarters and branches

Accountable

The National Society will continue with its commitment to comply with national norms and regulations for providing services for the benefit of the Guatemalan population. Priority will be given to implementing a Zero Tolerance to Fraud and Corruption Policy, Financial Policy, and Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy, as well as the internal mechanisms for implementing those policies.

Within the framework of the National Society's Resource Mobilization Strategy, work will be done to achieve financially sustainable services and actions at the national level, and a portfolio of projects will be prioritized and developed to increase income generation. Special attention will be given to the main areas for expanding the Guatemalan Red Cross's unrestricted funds, which are essential services, including health care and corporate first aid training. A Resource Mobilization Unit will be established, and a cost recovery policy developed.

The National Society will strengthen its activities and services management system by adding a module for planning, monitoring and evaluating projects in a standardized and integrated manner. This will integrate into a single system all of the information related to projects in a specific area, providing the ability to identify areas where human and financial resources are overlapping, and allowing management to make better decisions and optimize resources.

Talent management within the Guatemalan Red Cross will be enhanced by better screening and onboarding processes. Personality and aptitude tests will be implemented in the hiring process, and induction resources will be standardized with workshops, printed material and agendas. A human talent management strategy will also be developed.

Trusted

Results from the OCAC self-assessment will be reviewed, and areas that need strengthening will be prioritized. A work plan will be developed and actions carried out so that the National Society may obtain OCAC certification.

In line with the National Society's Strategic Plan, the Guatemalan Red Cross will strengthen volunteering and youth. Strategic actions are aimed at education, empowerment and social promotion within programmatic areas. Efforts will focus on promoting leadership, innovation, continuous learning, motivation, recognition

and duty of care. Measures will also be implemented to recruit diverse profiles of volunteers who represent the communities in which the Guatemalan Red Cross works. Effective systems to register volunteers will be established and updated by volunteer and youth focal points on a regular basis. Training will ensure that all volunteers have knowledge of Guatemalan Red Cross statutes, regulations, policies, codes of conduct and other regulatory documents.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC is represented by its Country Cluster Delegation for Central America in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and operates with an extended team of specialists in different areas in all Central American countries. This enables close support, coordination and constant communication with the National Societies of Central America and the participating National Societies that support them. The IFRC support centres on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development, and humanitarian diplomacy. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme.

The IFRC's annual programme consists of supporting the Guatemalan Red Cross in National Society development, disaster risk management and preparedness, health, WASH, migration and displacement, cash and voucher assistance, and community engagement and accountability.

In the last decade, the IFRC has supported the Guatemalan Red Cross through multiple Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeal operations in relation to tropical storms and hurricanes, floods and landslides, droughts, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, population movement, civil unrest and disease outbreaks. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IFRC, through its Global Emergency Appeal, has supported the Guatemalan Red Cross in its COVID-19 response.

IFRC membership coordination

The 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 in support of people in need incorporate clarity of humanitarian action, development assistance, and the auxiliary role efforts to reinforce the role of National Societies in their respective countries.

The Guatemalan Red Cross leads its partnerships with sister National Societies. The combined experience, technical capacities and field knowledge within the IFRC network constitute a solid basis for achieving the expected outcomes in the region, in terms of disasters and crises (both man-made and caused by natural hazards), primary health care, the prevention and response to epidemics (COVID-19 and others), longer-term resilience building programmes including livelihoods and protection, and responding to unmet humanitarian and protection needs of migrants and displaced people.

The National Society is part of the global Pilot Programmatic Partnership between DG ECHO and the IFRC, with implementation support from the **Spanish Red Cross** as lead European Union National Society, and from **German Red Cross**. The partnership implements activities in the areas of disaster risk management, epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response, humanitarian assistance and protection for people on the move, cash and voucher assistance, and risk communication and community engagement and accountability. The partnership meets the realities of extended crises with longer-term predictable funding, facilitating actions and processes with the potential for greater, longer-term impact. It leverages the IFRC's global network and unique access to people

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
American Red Cross	CHF 0.30M								
German Red Cross	CHF 1.54M								
Italian Red Cross	CHF 0.15M								
Spanish Red Cross	CHF 0.81M								

Total

2.80M

and communities, and it helps to fulfil the ambitions of the European Union as the world's biggest international donor for humanitarian assistance.

The following participating National Societies are providing support to the Guatemalan Red Cross:

The **American Red Cross's** most recent project in support of the Guatemalan Red Cross aims to address the most urgent WASH needs in Morales and the departments of Izabal, Gualan, and Zacapa, which were severely affected by Hurricanes Eta and Iota. Activities include restoring water distribution or supply networks to pre-disaster conditions; increasing household water storage and treatment capacity; delivering hygiene kits, including for menstrual hygiene; hygiene promotion on drinking water consumption; hygiene, hand washing and preventive measures against COVID-19; strengthening community capacities to control residual chlorine in water systems and incorporating protection, gender and inclusion issues in educational talks. The project aims to reach approximately 1,500 beneficiaries in 11 Morales and Gualan communities.

The **German Red Cross** is currently collaborating with the Guatemalan Red Cross mainly in adapting and implementing mechanisms for anticipatory action. It has also accompanied humanitarian response operations for Eta and Iota in 2020, assisted in epidemics and pandemics such as dengue and COVID-19, and responded to the migration crisis in 2022. Support is offered to strengthen the capacities of the Guatemalan Red Cross in managing their Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments, designing Early Action Plans to respond to forced mobility and activities within the Pilot Programmatic Partnership. The German Red Cross has

a permanent regional office in Honduras with specialized staff that collaborate with the National Society in capacity building.

Guatemala is one of the priority countries for the **Spanish Red Cross**, which began in Guatemala with providing humanitarian aid after the 1976 earthquake, and continued with establishing a delegation in-country in 1998 after Hurricane Mitch. This was a turning point in the Spanish Red Cross disaster preparedness strategy, and clarified the objectives of saving lives, homes and infrastructure, as well as livelihoods and the environment. The Mitch Special Plan for Reconstruction in Guatemala framed actions according to the needs of departments, which could be health and education, capacity building for the indigenous population and women, strengthening production and commercial capacities, promoting rural development, preparing for disasters and crises, institutional development, disaster prevention, institutional strengthening and encouraging a culture of non-violence and peace.

Currently, the Guatemalan Red Cross, with the support of the **Spanish Red Cross**, has developed several projects focused on health, WASH, disaster risk management, food security and nutrition, livelihoods, a culture of non-violence, emergency response, social inclusion, and migration, among others. These priorities respond to the Strategic Plan of the Guatemalan Red Cross as well as the International Cooperation Strategy of the Spanish Red Cross. Methodologies include new models of partnering and receiving technical assistance, as well as creating spaces for sharing lessons and tools with other National Societies. Volunteers and community involvement are cornerstones of projects and programmes.

Movement coordination

The IFRC leads regular coordination meetings between the different International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement actors, including participating National Societies and the ICRC, through established national and regional mechanisms. It also coordinates humanitarian assistance during emergency responses. 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 contributes to the National Society's work in protection, including minimum standards, restoring family links, self-care messages for migrants, health and first aid, and supporting the National Society in humanitarian diplomacy. The ICRC also specifically supports the Guatemalan Red Cross with health, WASH and education.

Coordination with other actors

The Guatemalan Red Cross is part of the National Coordination System for Disaster Reduction with whom it coordinates disaster risk management at all levels (local, municipal and regional). It also coordinates with the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources, and plays an active part in the National Roundtable for Disaster Risk Reduction, the National Emergency Operations Centre, the National Coordination Centre for Humanitarian Aid and Assistance, and the Inter-institutional Liaison System, among other coordination platforms. The National Society is also a member of the Response Operations Centres at local and national levels that facilitate emergency responses, dialogues and coordinated actions with key actors.

The Guatemalan Red Cross coordinates with the National Epidemiology Centre and the Health Risk Management Unit. At the local level, it collaborates with authorities from the Health Area and Health District Directorates. The National Society carries out health responses in emergencies in accordance with the country's regulatory framework, which includes the Health Code, National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the National Response Plan. Additionally, in 2005, it signed an agreement with the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance to establish goals for the National Society, in its auxiliary role, to respond to emergencies, disasters and crises using Government funds.

The National Society's work in migration is coordinated through their membership in Departmental Migration Roundtables and Protection Networks. Interventions promote and reinforce the Guatemalan Red Cross's current role in community advocacy mechanisms, as well as roundtables on human mobility and care and protection. Examples are the Izabal Departmental Migration

Roundtable and the Peten Protection Forum. At the departmental governance level, advocacy and local positioning activities take place related to migration. Alliances with the Secretary of Social Welfare continue, especially around the Guatemalan Red Cross work with returned minors in Quetzaltenango.

The Guatemalan Red Cross is part of the Humanitarian Country Team and participates in the different clusters activated in each emergency including health, WASH, nutrition, protection and food security. It also participates in the cash and voucher assistance working group, and the community engagement and accountability working group, which is linked to the protection group, and focused on developing an accountability mechanism for migrants. The National Society works closely with agencies in the United Nations, including the International Organization for Migration (accommodation group), Pan American Health Organization (health group), United Nations Children's Fund (health and protection group) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (protection group). It also participates in civil society coordination spaces with international non-governmental organizations such as Doctors of the World, Médecins Sans Frontières, Save the Children, Plan International and Oxfam, as well as organizations specializing in health and protection issues such as New Land, Human Mobility Pastoral, LAMBDA Association, Child Shelter, Foundation for Ecodevelopment and Conservation, and Migrants' House.

The Guatemalan Red Cross, the IFRC, the German Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross are part of and periodically participate in a large number of civil society platforms. These include the Coordination Roundtable for Permanent Risk Management led by the National Coordination System for Disaster Reduction,

and various roundtables related to health, inclusion, migration and displacement, such as the Civil Society Migration Roundtable, that operates along the migration route. The Guatemalan Red Cross works in these civil society spaces to foster dialogue and coordination among stakeholders, and promotes evidence-based advocacy and knowledge management. This permanent coordination with local authorities, the Humanitarian Country Team and civil society allows the Guatemalan Red Cross to coordinate with different actors and sectors, optimizing resources and reducing duplication of efforts, thus reaching more people.

The IFRC participates in national and regional coordination spaces with external partners, to stay informed about the humanitarian context and contribute to the

IFRC network's perspective and work. Additionally, the IFRC provides support to the Guatemalan Red Cross for better partnerships and positioning. For instance, the IFRC has promoted the participation of the National Society in the Humanitarian Country Team and has supported the relationship with strategic partners such as the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC), the International Organization for Migration and Médecins Sans Frontières. Through the COVID-19 operation, the IFRC accompanied the National Society in participating in the health subgroup and, recently, the IFRC has accompanied the Guatemalan Red Cross in a successful drill at the regional level coordinated by CEPREDENAC.

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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Guatemalan Red Cross

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