



MEKONG

IFRC network mid-year report, January – June 2023

19 January 2024

IN SUPPORT OF THE CAMBODIA, LAOS, THAILAND AND VIET NAM RED CROSS NATIONAL SOCIETIES



National Society branches



National Society staff



National Society volunteers

CAMBODIA



1,874

branches

364

staff

40,000

volunteers

LAOS



18

branches

589

staff

885

volunteers

THAILAND



341

branches

11,000

staff

19,000

volunteers

VIET NAM



13,000

branches

16,000

staff





338,000

volunteers

Appeal number **MAA51001**


FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

in Swiss francs (CHF)

Total		Funding requirements	 326,000
IFRC	Longer-term	Funding requirements	 275,000
		Income	 102,000
Participating National Societies		Funding requirements	 51,000

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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Climate	People reached with activities to address rising climate risks	46,000
	People reached with activities to address environmental problems	46,000
	National Society is implementing nature-based solutions (including those with a particular focus on the planting of trees and mangroves)	Yes
	National Society is implementing environmental or climate campaigns focused on behaviour change, plastic reduction or clean-ups	Yes
Disasters and crises	People reached with livelihoods support	97,000
	People reached with disaster risk reduction	54,000
	People reached per year with support services, in-kind, cash and voucher assistance for emergency response and recovery	53,000
	Percentage of humanitarian assistance delivered using cash and vouchers	50%
	People reached with contextually appropriate health services	 7M
People reached with contextually appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene services	 2M	

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (CON.)

Health and wellbeing	People reached with psychosocial and mental health services	72,000
	People trained in first aid	9,000
	People reached with immunization services	4,000
	People donating blood	2,000
Migration and displacement	Migrants and displaced persons reached with services for assistance and protection	73,000
	People reached by protection, gender and inclusion programming	245,000
Values, power and inclusion	Percentage of people surveyed who report receiving useful and actionable information	96%
	Community Engagement and Accountability is integrated and institutionalized in the National Society policies, operations, and procedures (with clear benchmarks)	Yes




IFRC NETWORK SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

National Society	Multilateral Support	Bilateral Support			
		Values, power and inclusion	Enabling Functions	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing
Finnish Red Cross		Planned	Supported	Supported	Supported
Italian Red Cross	Supported				

Planned
 Supported

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

in Swiss francs (CHF)

Total		Funding requirements	 1.1M
IFRC	Longer-term	Funding requirements	 995,000
		Income	 484,000

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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Health and wellbeing People trained in first aid  501

ENABLING FUNCTIONS

National Society Development Number of volunteers involved in the response operation that have increased their skills in response and management of operations 32




IFRC NETWORK SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

National Society	Multilateral Support		Bilateral Support	
	Enabling Functions	Disasters and crises	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing
Japanese Red Cross Society				
Swiss Red Cross				
The Thai Red Cross Society				

 Supported



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

in Swiss francs (CHF)

Total		Funding requirements	 1.7M
IFRC	Longer-term	Funding requirements	 1.7M
		Income	 1.4M

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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Climate	People reached with activities to address rising climate risks	 561,000
	National Society is implementing nature-based solutions (including those with a particular focus on the planting of trees and mangroves)	Yes
Disasters and crises	People reached with disaster risk reduction	 561,000






IFRC NETWORK SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

	Multilateral Support	Bilateral Support			
		Climate	Migration and displacement	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing
National Society					
British Red Cross	●				
Canadian Red Cross Society	●				
Danish Red Cross	●				
Italian Red Cross	●				
Japanese Red Cross Society	●				

 Supported








FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



in Swiss francs (CHF)

Total		Funding requirements	 1.7M
IFRC	Longer-term	Funding requirements	 1.1M
		Income	 525,000
Participating National Societies		Funding requirements	 485,000
		Income	 54,000

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IFRC NETWORK SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

National Society	Multilateral Support		Bilateral Support	
		Climate	Enabling Functions	Disasters and crises
American Red Cross				
Australian Red Cross				
Kuwait Red Crescent Society				
Swiss Red Cross				

 Planned
  Supported

Cambodia

Cambodia has sustained high levels of economic growth over the last two decades and is considered to be on the path to achieve the status of a higher middle-income status country by 2030. However, economic growth is marred by high levels of inequality and the debilitating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local economies, particularly the marginalized rural populations. These populations are extremely vulnerable and have faced the most severe effects on employment, household wages and non-wage incomes - impacts that are significantly larger than macro-economic trends would suggest (UNICEF, 2021).

Cambodia has remained categorized as a least developed country (LDC) by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 2021. According to the Asian Development Bank in 2021, the prevalence of undernourishment across the country was 14.5 per cent (2017–2019); stunting among children under 5 years of age was 32.4 per cent (2014); and wasting among children under 5 years of age was 9.7 per cent (2014). Maternal mortality ratio reaches 160 per 100,000 live births (2017), while the under-5 mortality rate is 27 per 1,000 live births (2019) and neonatal mortality stands at 15 per 1,000 live births). As of 2017, the proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water services was 25.8 per cent, with considerable differences between urban (56.6 per cent) and rural (16.7 per cent) populations.

The Cambodian Red Cross is one of the National Societies implementing the European Commission's Humanitarian Office (ECHO)'s Pilot Programmatic Partnership (PPP). There has been significant progress in-country with lead support in Cambodia provided by the Finnish Red Cross. To date, the programme has provided support for capacity building in disaster risk management (DRM), epidemic preparedness, CEA, for PGI policy development and for the preparation of a migration & displacement assessment. However, the project will not continue beyond May 2023. The migration and displacement assessment will be led by a national consultant.

The cross-border HIV/AIDS project between Cambodia and Lao PDR also started during the reporting period. There has been continued support to the Cambodian Red Cross from the IFRC to ensure the development of Youth and Volunteering and PGI policies.

Cambodian Red Cross has also been very proactive in the preparation and organization of the South East Asia leaders meeting, that the National Society will host in September 2023.

Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR)

Like its neighbouring countries, Lao PDR's poverty rate has declined significantly from 46 per cent in 1993 to 18 per cent in 2019, compared with a rapid Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth to an annual average rate of 7.3 per cent during the same period. Furthermore, the population of Lao PDR is 7.5 million people (105th in global ranking in 2022) and its GDP ranks 133rd worldwide (Data source: World Bank).

In December 2021, the launching of the high-speed railway from Vientiane to the border with the People's Republic of China was a major step in turning the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia into a connected hub in the region.

In addition, in 2022 after achieving a high vaccination rollout rate, most of the measures put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 in country were relaxed, including the opening of international borders. However, this coincided with a period of global macroeconomic instability, with soaring food, fertilizer, fuel prices and financial costs ("the 4F crisis") and a sharp depreciation in the national currency. This affected all aspects of national development, particularly as Lao PDR depends on imports for its key commodities, such as fuel, food, and medicines. This resulted in a rapid increase in domestic inflation, reaching a record 39 per cent by the end of the year.

The new Prime Minister of Lao PDR was appointed in 2022 and immediately committed to improve macroeconomic stability, pursue sustainable development, prioritize poverty alleviation, and narrow inequalities. (Data source: UN Country Annual Results Report 2022).

During the first half of 2023, **the Lao Red Cross** has focused on implementing and monitoring its DREF funded flood response, followed by a lesson learn workshop at the end of the operation. Following this DREF operation, which ended in February 2023, Lao Red Cross focused on strengthening its relevant staff and volunteer capacities in readiness for the next monsoon season, providing them with DREF-funded training and simulation exercises in the Champassak, Khammuan, and Luangprabang branches. These exercises have focused on search & rescue, water rescue, fire extinguishing, First Aid, patient transportation and rapid relief distribution.

Lao Red Cross has completed two critical self-assessment processes with support from the IFRC, as part of its National Society Development (NSD) work: the Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment (BOCA) and the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) assessment. Their related recommendations will guide Lao Red Cross in its NSD strategy and plan in the years to come.

During this reporting period, Lao Red Cross has continued to disseminate its Red Cross Law, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's Principles and values, and the National Society's auxiliary role in country to the public through social media, radio and television. Lao Red Cross also raised funds, both internationally and domestically, to support its humanitarian services.

The key achievements in Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) during this reporting period were the implementation of an emergency WASH project and a First Aid project as key parts of the National Society's "Strengthening Health Capacity", which aimed to strengthen its effective response to disasters, injuries and illnesses in Lao PDR.

Lao Red Cross also increased its preparedness efforts for the monsoon season, which starts in August 2023) via the Red Ready project, with funding from USAID's BHA and technical support from the IFRC.

There has also been progress in the development of the IFRC's legal status in country, which is planned to be finalized by the end of 2023.

Thailand

Over the last four decades, Thailand has made remarkable progress in social and economic development, moving from a low-income country to an upper-income country in less than a generation. It has the second largest economy in Southeast Asia propelled mainly by its manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism industries. Although poverty has declined over the last three decades from 65 per cent in 1988 to nearly 10 per cent in 2018, income inequality has increased. The country remains at risk of major disasters, including floods, tropical cyclones, and droughts. Other risks that have been identified are mainly related to health issues or crises, which have caused economic loss as well as loss of lives. The major health risks include pandemics, non-communicable diseases, infectious diseases (e.g., malaria and tuberculosis) as well as road traffic accidents.

Thailand's general election took place in May 2023, and as of July 2023, the Parliament is actively selecting a new Prime Minister.

The key achievements made by **the Thai Red Cross Society** under this Unified Plan 2023 reporting period were made as part of the "Enhancing DRR capacity in Thailand" project funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). This:

- supported Thai Red Cross to enhance the PhonPhai application system to expand it across the country and to improve its database for vulnerable groups database within the system to prioritize assistance during disaster and crisis
- strengthened Thai Red Cross's preparedness for effective response and enhanced community resilience

In addition, in the area of health and with funding from the Centre for Disease Control (CDC), the IFRC supported the National Society's health services, by developing its Biometrics Authentication System to record and store the vaccination data of undocumented people living in Thailand when vaccinated.

In terms of capacity building, the IFRC also supported Thai Red Cross personnel to attend several workshops and professional training, for instance in Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Kobo training as part of a DREF operation, and Enhanced Voucher and Cash Assistance (eVCA) training as stand-alone training organized by IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO).

Viet Nam

Viet Nam is counted as one of the fastest growing economies of the 21st century and its economic and political reforms, launched in 1986, have spurred rapid economic growth and development, and transformed Viet Nam from one of the world's poorest nations to a lower middle-income country. Viet Nam has made significant progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a reduction in poverty rates from nearly 10 per cent in 2015

to less than 7 per cent in 2017 and a primary education net enrolment rate of 99 per cent. Viet Nam is also one of the countries most affected by Climate Change. It is at continuous risk of natural disasters, including floods, tropical cyclones, landslides, droughts, and heatwaves.

Over the past two years, changes made by the Government of Viet Nam in terms of its policies towards international aid and external funding, have significantly impacted the process for and progress around receiving and implementing externally funded projects, and **Viet Nam Red Cross** is one of many organizations to have been impacted by this. As a result, any funding support to Viet Nam Red Cross must be submitted to the relevant ministries for a technical opinion and approval, and in some cases the process can take a few months or even longer. All Viet Nam Red Cross's partners are facing challenges around these changes, which significantly delay the progress of implementation.

Consecutive storms and floods affected thousands of people in central Viet Nam in 2022. 50,000 affected people received assistance from Viet Nam Red Cross through the distribution of relief kits and cash through a DREF allocation of CHF 568,263, with this project running into 2023.

One of main achievements of Viet Nam Red Cross so far this year has been the Greening Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) initiative funded by USAID and with technical support from the American Red Cross at country level). This innovative programme has been extended for another three years (including a cost extension) and will be supported by the IFRC country cluster delegation as of quarter three of 2023.

There has also been significant progress in preparing for the Asia Pacific Conference which Viet Nam Red Cross will host in November 2023 - a major commitment for the National Society.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Climate and environment

Thailand

Anticipatory Action: Air pollution and heatwaves have both had marked impacts on human health and livelihoods in Thailand during the first half of the year. The IFRC assisted Thai Red Cross in developing a concept note for an operational research project called "Heat, Humidity Air Pollution Early Action Plan (EAP) in Thailand", implemented by Thai Red Cross and supported by the Prudence Foundation and the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Climate Centre. The aim of the one-year initiative is for Thai Red Cross to develop a research paper, a set of practical recommendations, and a simplified EAP to enable the National Society to effectively address the compounding effects of heat, humidity and air pollution on human health and reduce the impact on health risks in Thailand.

Capacity Strengthening: Thai Red Cross personnel attended a Regional Training of Trainers (ToT) for the "Road Map to Community Resilience via Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (R2R via EVCA)" between 8–12 May 2023 and a Nature-Based Solution (NbS) training from 15–18 May in Kuala Lumpur, both organized by the IFRC APRO. After the training, the National Society aims to translate the material into Thai and to implement EVCA training within the community, to support resilience and adaptation as part of Thai Red Cross community projects.

Community Resilience: As part of the "Enhancing DRR Capacity in Thailand" project supported by USAID, Thai Red Cross has rolled out tree and mangrove plantation with communities and schools across the country, to enhance the community's resilience to climate-related hazards. The collaborative nature of the activity, involving multiple stakeholders, not only strengthened bonds between communities and the National Society but fostered a sense of teamwork within the communities and schools.

Viet Nam

Capacity Strengthening: Viet Nam Red Cross personnel attended the Regional ToT course on the "Road Map to Community Resilience via Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (R2R via EVCA)" on 8–12 May 2023 and Nature-Based Solution (NbS) training from 15–18 May in Kuala Lumpur, both organized by the IFRC APRO. After the

training, Viet Nam Red Cross debriefed with its management and will, in the future, aim to contextualize, translate all materials and organize a workshop for the integration of the R2R via EVCA approach in its existing Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) programme and pilot it in 10 communities.

The Greening DRR Project, funded by USAID's BHA, has been successfully implemented by Viet Nam Red Cross branches in Thanh Hoa province and will be completed by 31 July 2023. This has been carried out with technical support provided in country by the American Red Cross. Considering the project's relevance and achievements, the BHA has granted a cost extension until 2025. Technical support will be provided by the IFRC as of quarter three of 2023, as the American Red Cross is closing its office in Viet Nam.



Disasters and crises

Lao PDR

During the first half of 2023, Lao Red Cross was primarily focused on implementing its DREF operation responding to floods. The operation started on 24 August 2022, ended on 28 February 2023. It reached 18,467 people, in 6 provinces (Champasak, Salavan, Xaignabouli, Odomxai, Pongsali, Houaphan) providing food and non-food assistance and information to communities.

Following this, the National Society continued its efforts in flood preparedness in collaboration with partners, distributing food packages to communities in the southern part of Lao. Despite the challenges, Lao Red Cross managed to contribute positively to the relief efforts, by successfully procuring relief kits, totalling 3,000 sets, intended to support 12,000 people (one set for one family of four people) in the affected communities and by producing cloth bags to help volunteers and communities contain and carry relief kits during the DREF operation.

In February 2023, Lao Red Cross organized a DREF orientation session to ensure its staff had a basic understanding of the DREF application procedures. The session had 75 participants (53 males, 22 females) from headquarters, branches, and representatives of other relevant authorities were invited. Following the orientation, Lao Red Cross requested the IFRC to provide further DREF training, which took place from late February to early March 2023, with 35 participants (23 males, 12 females) from various headquarters departments and including disaster management staff from all 18 branches.

Thailand

A CHF 670,868 DREF allocation was granted to the Thai Red Cross for its relief operation, which provided relief assistance to more than 20,000 of the most vulnerable households affected by the 2022 monsoon flood in Thailand. This DREF operation ran from October 2022 to April 2023.

Viet Nam

Consecutive storms and floods affected thousands of people in the central provinces of Viet Nam in early October 2022. The affected people received relief assistance from the Viet Nam Red Cross. 50,000 people were reached with essential relief kits and cash. The total allocation of this DREF was CHF 568,263.

Cash readiness training was held with support from RED READY project, funded by USAID through the American Red Cross, with technical support and coordination from the IFRC. This was effectively implemented by the Viet Nam Red Cross headquarters in 63 provincial branches. Knowledge regarding CVA SOPs were delivered to the National Society staff and volunteers of the Provincial Chapters by members of the Cash Working Group of the Viet Nam Red Cross headquarters. The training has equipped all levels of the Red Cross Chapters with knowledge of cash response in emergencies. The project is planned to be ended by 30 September 2023 and no extension will be provided to Viet Nam Red Cross.



Cambodia

As above, the Cross-border cooperation for migrants living with HIV/AIDS in Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos has been successfully implemented and the Italian Red Cross has now decided to extend its support for this specific sector in Cambodia and Laos in 2023, to support the eradication of HIV in these two countries. The project plan was developed and target areas and groups selected by June 2023 and activities will be implemented for one year, until May 2024.

A basic health training curriculum for branch staff and volunteers was finalized and used to train 900 Cambodian Red Cross volunteers on community and emergency health in four target provinces. In addition, Cambodian Red Cross improved the skills of its staff and volunteers in dealing with dengue fever and H5N1 in response to an increased number of cases. After completing the training, the volunteers carried out health and hygiene promotion activities, especially in border areas with disease outbreaks or confirmed cases.

Lao PDR

The emergency WASH project supported by the Japanese Red Cross Society was successfully completed in March 2023. Supervision by a headquarters team was conducted in March 2023, at the end of the project. The team visited six provinces (Champasak, Sekong, Salavan, Khammuane, Xayabouly, Vientiane) out of 12 involved in providing emergency WASH support. A two-day lessons learned workshop was also held in March for 12 provincial branch staff and volunteers.

The second phase of a First Aid project supported by Japanese Red Cross started in September 2022. In January 2023, the first training of trainers (ToT) was conducted in Vientiane with technical support from the Japanese Red Cross First Aid and Health Care Training Centre and the IFRC. A second ToT was conducted in Vientiane in February, again with technical support from both Japanese Red Cross and the IFRC. In addition to these existing trainers, a total of 21 trainers from the Lao Red Cross headquarters and six target provincial branches have all now completed this training. The materials and equipment necessary for First Aid training were also procured, and finally a total of 24 First Aid trainings were rolled out to schools in six targeted provinces, with 480 new participants taking the two-day training by June 2023.

The project to support cross-border cooperation for migrants living with HIV/AIDS in Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos has been successfully implemented from October 2019 to December 2020. The Italian Red Cross decided to extend its support to this work in 2023, but only in Cambodia and Laos, to support HIV eradication in these two countries. The project plan was developed and target areas and groups selected by June 2023 and activities will be implemented for one year, until May 2024.

Thailand

With the support provided by the IFRC, Thai Red Cross has completed an initiative to obtain IT equipment and a vaccination system to provide COVID-19 vaccinations for residents without identity documents in Thailand. The one-year project was successfully completed in June 2023. The National Society also rolled out a vaccination campaign and provided Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines to girls living in the temporary refugee camps along the Thailand-Myanmar border, using IT equipment, such as a face recognition system, iris scanners, notebooks, etc. to record the identity of those who received the vaccines and to keep that data secure of the National Society's cloud. Thai Red Cross, with their partner, the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC), conducted a training for administration staff and users on the "Thai Red Cross Biometrics Authentication System (TRCBAS)" in June 2023 at the national headquarters. The training introduced the TRCBAS, as well as the face verification and iris identification API systems and equipment to ensure the effective management of user data and client safety and security. More training will be conducted for the Disease Control Department staff.

With support from USAID's BHA, Thai Red Cross has successfully implemented and continued to further develop and promote its PhonPhai mobile application as a tool for humanitarian assistance, helping those affected by disasters, by providing real-time relief information and assistance. The new phase of the project is continuing for another two years.

IFRC Health Networks

In collaboration with the Asia Pacific Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Training and Learning Collaborative (AP MHPSS Collaborative), the IFRC organized an online MHPSS Response Preparedness Workshop on the 7 and 14 June

2023. The workshop was attended by 35 participants from Thai Red Cross, Lao Red Cross, Cambodian Red Cross, and Viet Nam Red Cross. The goal of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of these National Societies in MHPSS response preparedness. The workshop provided a platform for National Societies to network and learn from each other's experiences. The participants were encouraged to continue working together and to share their learning within their respective National Societies.

Aligning with the IFRC First Aid Vision 2030 and IFRC First Aid Policy 2030, the IFRC CCD Bangkok assisted the four National Societies in developing their First Aid priority action plans for three out of the six priorities for First Aid. All the action plans were submitted to the Global First Aid Reference Centre (GFARC) in March 2023.

The Asian Red Cross and Red Crescent HIV (ART) taskforce was formed in 1994, and this task force was renamed the ART Network in 2003. It has built momentum and capacity for HIV programming among National Societies across the region, resulting in better planning, stronger linkages between National Societies' national HIV strategic plans and programmes, and diversification of funding and activities for almost two decades. The IFRC, together with the ART network chairman (Cambodian Red Cross) decided to review this network and formed a review team in April 2023. The review team worked on developing evaluation tools and the official announcement of the evaluation was sent out to member National Societies in June 2023.



Migration and displacement

Cambodia

Following a request from Cambodian Red Cross and continuing funding support from the Italian Red Cross, it has been decided to conduct a migration and displacement assessment in Cambodia during this reporting period, to better understand the migration and displacement landscape in the country, the specific needs of migrants and displaced people, and to produce a set of practical recommendations for the National Society with the aim of addressing those needs.

The Italian Red Cross has decided to continue its support for migrants living with HIV/AIDS in Cambodia and Laos into 2023. The project plan has been developed and the target areas and groups selected by June 2023. The activities will be implemented for one year, until May 2024.

Lao PDR

The Italian Red Cross has decided to continue its support for migrants living with HIV/AIDS in Cambodia and Laos into 2023. The project plan has been developed, and the target areas and groups selected by June 2023. The activities will be implemented for one year, until May 2024. The Lao Red Cross also benefits from IFRC Network joint support as needed on issues of migration and displacement.

Thailand

Migration and Health: As mentioned above, Thai Red Cross obtained IT equipment and training to store the data of people without identity documents and developed a vaccination system to provide those without identity documents with COVID-19 and other vaccinations. This collaborative vaccination plan, involving the Department of Disease Control, the Ministry of Public Health, National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre (NECTEC), and relevant government agencies, has been successfully rolled out and Thai Red Cross and partners have been providing vaccinations to refugee girls in the temporary camps and plan to cover migrant workers and their families in targeted provinces.



Values, power and inclusion

Cambodia

The Cambodian Red Cross has been actively engaging in PGI work during the reporting period. At the time of reporting, the National Society has created a first draft of its PSEA and Child Safeguarding Policies in the Khmer language. The

policies are currently being reviewed by the relevant committees and partner organizations to ensure their suitability for Cambodian context.

Lao PDR

Lao Red Cross organized a sensitization workshop on the Prevention of and Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and on Child Safeguarding Policy in January 2023 with 10 participants from the National Society (6 male and 4 female). The participants originated from the headquarters and included the Vice President but also representatives from the Youth, Health, Disaster Management, Cabinet, Finance, and Blood Centre teams. The discussion covered the importance of having a code of conduct, feedback mechanism, and CEA focal point within the National Society and in support of programmes. It led to the development of the National Societies PSEA and Child Safeguarding Policy, in consultation with relevant government agencies, such as the Lao Women's Union.

Thailand

In February 2023, Thai Red Cross, with support from the IFRC, organized a three-day PGI and CEA workshop for National Society staff, under the DREF flood operation (2022–2023). There were 27 participants from Thai Red Cross headquarters and implementing branches. The workshop was part of the post-monitoring distribution. The key learning for the National Society was that PGI aspects need to be more integrated into operational needs and response to ensure more comprehensive assistance to vulnerable communities in future.

Viet Nam

Viet Nam Red Cross has received training on PGI mainstreaming with a focus on CEA and child safeguarding, via the online training platform.

■ IFRC Network joint support for values, power and inclusion

Institutional capacity: To maintain a safe, inclusive and nurturing workplace in National Societies, the IFRC has supported PGI institutional capacity development for both Lao Red Cross and Cambodian Red Cross, to enable them to develop and draft a policy and code of conduct on PSEA and Child Safeguarding in their native languages. As of this reporting period and looking forward in 2023, both National Societies aim to launch their policies, in coordination and with the approval from the relevant national stakeholders, as well as endorsement from the IFRC.

Programmes and operations: The IFRC country cluster delegation supported Cambodian Red Cross, Viet Nam Red Cross, and Thai Red Cross in mainstreaming PGI into their programmes and humanitarian operations. The IFRC provided guidance to incorporate a PGI analysis into all of their programmes, operations, services and tools, in order to ensure the dignity, access, participation and safety of affected people and communities. This was done by analyzing the specific needs and risks for persons of any gender-identity, ethnic origin, nationality or citizenship, age, disability, language, political opinion, religious belief, social background, sexual orientation, physical appearance, racial identity or other relevant factor. For instance, the IFRC provided PGI guidance to the HIV/AIDS projects implemented by Lao Red Cross and Cambodian Red Cross and provided guidance at activity level via a logical framework and PGI related questions to support a needs assessment, report and future recommendations.

Advocacy, partnerships and learning: The IFRC provided opportunities for representatives from National Societies to share knowledge and learning about PGI, to collaborate, to develop better ways to understand and promote equality, diversity, and intersectionality and to strengthen participation in and access to equal opportunities for those discriminated, neglected or marginalized.

In June 2023, the IFRC organized a PGI workshop for all Asia Pacific National Societies in Kuala Lumpur. With the IFRC coordinating support, six PGI focal points from National Societies – one from Viet Nam Red Cross, two from Thai Red Cross, two from Cambodia red Cross and one from Lao Red Cross successfully participated in the event. In addition to revisiting different PGI topics, the workshop was a platform for discussion on national, regional and global PGI priorities, plans and needs for technical support and to connect with PGI colleagues through a peer-to-peer exchanges. It was also an opportunity to identify best practices to enhance active and participatory PGI coordination in the region. The outcome of the workshop was the reactivation of the PGI network, which had previously been initiated by the IFRC to cover Southeast and South Asia region.

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

Lao PDR

Lao Red Cross has actively engaged in productive meetings with the relevant government authorities, fostering collaboration and understanding. As a result, two decrees have been meticulously prepared and have now reached a significant milestone - they have been officially submitted to the Prime Minister's office for final approval.

Regarding its finance manual, Lao Red Cross has decided to put it on hold, because the current finance system developed by the National Society does not adequately meet the organization's requirements. Therefore, it is now essential to rework on the financial system first before proceeding with the analysis and preparation of the finance manual. This measure will ensure that the finance manual aligns accurately with the reconfigured financial system and provides a comprehensive guidance on the financial processes and procedures in place.

Due to the ongoing emergency response via the DREF operation, there were several planned activities that the Lao Red Cross was not able to complete for instance, the CVA and PMER training.

Thailand

The Disaster Law Team has been advocating for effective and proactive disaster-related law, policies and regulations. The team is actively supporting Thai Red Cross in its auxiliary role mapping project and is now in the process of finalizing TORs for a piece of work to strengthen their auxiliary role and legal foundation.

As the IFRC advocates for all National Societies to sign the Climate and Environment Charter, the IFRC supported Thai Red Cross in this process, by translating related documents into the Thai language for the National Society to review, with a view to eventually signing the Climate Charter. The document has been shared with Climate Charter colleagues to keep as a reference.

In terms of humanitarian response, the IFRC assisted Thai Red Cross to coordinate with the Red Crescent Societies of Turkey and Syria in support of the Earthquake that happened earlier this year, enabling bilateral support. Another notable bilateral support contribution came from Thai Red Cross to Lao Red Cross in the form of technical assistance for a First Aid Project with Lao Red Cross, which has been ongoing for some time. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation between the two national societies was also developed to strengthen the long-standing bond of friendship and to extend the highest possible quality of humanitarian services for people in need.



Strategic and operational coordination

Cambodia

Cambodian Red Cross staff have been supported to attend regional and global meetings, workshops and trainings or to join relevant working groups to ensure stronger partnerships with sister National Societies, and to raise the National Society's profile within the Movement.

The Cambodian Red Cross implements the ECHO PPP with the support of the Finnish Red Cross and the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation, Bangkok, Thailand. The ECHO PPP has improved coordination between the Movement partners in the areas of disaster risk management, epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response, and CEA.

Lao PDR

Lao Red Cross staff have been supported to participate in SEA networks for PGI, and to work with other Asia Pacific region Red Cross Red Crescent partners on hygiene promotion during emergencies. They also participated in the Global Communications Forum.

Thailand

Thai Red Cross staff have received assistance in participating in numerous meetings, workshops, and training sessions to enhance their expertise and promote better coordination among with other National Societies. Additionally, Thai Red Cross has provided significant support to sister National Societies (e.g., peer-to-peer engagement with Lao Red

Cross, contributions to Emergency Appeals), and has established strong collaboration with governmental bodies at all levels, providing support for a wide range of humanitarian initiatives.

Viet Nam

Viet Nam Red Cross has been supported to actively participate in South East Asia Networks for PGI, Corporate Social Responsibility and Youth, as well as to participate in sub-regional, regional, and global meetings to showcase the National Societies practices in prevention activities across various sectors. An annual digital fundraising campaign plan was also launched.



National Society Development

Lao PDR

From March through to May 2023, Lao Red Cross conducted two volunteer database trainings for 17 participants from eight branches - Xaysomboun, Bolikhamxay, Khammuane, Savannaket, Salavan, Sekong and Attapue branches – and for 15 staff members from headquarters and the Vientiane capital branches, including seven women. These participants were selected to become focal points for the teams working in Youth programming and Statistics. The Lao Red Cross President and three Directors/Deputy Directors from different departments also contributed to the training. The training primarily focused on two key aspects: managing a web-based database and understanding the legislation related to database management of and for volunteers. Additionally, the participants were introduced to supplementary programmes aimed at supporting the database.

A Blood and Emergency Fund decree has been developed during the first half of the year, and Lao Red Cross continues to work with relevant government agencies to finalize the draft.

Viet Nam

Viet Nam Red Cross was supported by the IFRC to update its regulations on project management and to revise its financial management guidelines and technical support was provided to the National Society on its financial audit and statement, to be compliant with IFRC requirements. Staff training on project proposal writing / management by the IFRC CCD Office was also planned to be carried out during this reporting period, however, the plan is currently under approval from the Viet Nam Red Cross leadership.



Humanitarian diplomacy

As Bangkok is a regional hub for development cooperation, the IFRC's Bangkok country cluster delegation plays a key role in promoting the work of the National Societies in Lao PDR, Cambodia, Viet Nam and Thailand, to like-minded organizations. The Head of Delegation is also the regional representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). This means there is often close collaboration between the IFRC and regional development partners, and representatives from the IFRC regularly participate in relevant meetings and forums.

All four National Societies have participated in a communications workshop, which aimed to build public trust, improve understanding of the National Societies' role and activities and enhance their impact. Some of the events that the IFRC has led and/or participated in so far this year include:

- The Regional Launch of the IFRC World Disasters Report at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Bangkok, led by the IFRC Regional Director. Guests included members of the diplomatic community and like-minded actors from the humanitarian community based in Bangkok.
- A webinar on Equitable partnerships and the central role of National Societies in local action and local response. This is the second of a series of sessions on localization and was aimed at sharing and learning lessons and good practices on localization, with a particular focus on equitable partnerships and the central role of National Societies in delivering effective and principled humanitarian action.

- In May 2023, IFRC organized two side events during the 79th Commission of UNESCAP in Bangkok. One was on Early Warning for All (EW4All) and the other on climate change, air pollution and health. The EW4All initiative roll-out was carried out in Cambodia and Lao PDR and IFRC holds a lead coordination role with pillar partners including World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and International Telecommunications Union (ITU), to support the work in those countries and across the region. In addition to representatives of external partners, there were speakers from the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, the Secretary General of the Maldives Red Crescent, and two Thai Red Cross youth moderators on the panels. It is worth noting that the side event on air pollution was a critical step that led to the development of a related project between the Thai Red Cross and the Climate Centre (see the Climate and Environmental Crisis section above).
- Representatives from the IFRC also attended the 10th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), which is an inclusive intergovernmental forum to support review and follow-up of progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the regional level. It also serves as a regional preparatory meeting to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Lao PDR

Meetings took place with Government representatives to adopt decrees, policies and regulations based on the Red Cross Law and other relevant legislation at headquarters and provincial levels.

Thailand

As part of the DREF operation, Thai Red Cross received PGI training, so that its staff and volunteers can better identify and address gender-specific needs. As a result, the National Society gained a deeper understanding of the diverse needs and vulnerabilities within affected populations and this understanding will enable them to tailor their assistance and support more effectively.

Viet Nam

Viet Nam Red Cross was supported to develop a Fraud and Corruption Policy and was given technical support to apply for funding for NSD activities from the National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA), the Capacity Building Fund (CBF) and the Empress Shoken Fund. The IFRC continues to dialogue with the Government of Viet Nam to seek for its formal legal status in country.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 15 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

DATA SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

- **Timeframe and alignment:** The reporting timeframe for this overview is covering the period from 1 January to 30 June 2023. However, due to the diversity of the IFRC and differences in fiscal years, this coverage may not fully align for some National Societies. Mid-year reporting data may have been based on estimations, with plans to submit more robust numbers at the annual reporting stage.
- **Missing data and breakdowns:** National Societies have diverse data collection systems and processes that may not align with the standardized indicators. Data may not be available for some indicators, for some National Societies. This may lead to inconsistencies across different reporting tools as well as potential under or over-estimation of the efforts led by all.
- **Reporting bias:** The data informing this Federation-wide overview is self-reported by each National Society (or its designated support entity) and which is the owner and gatekeeper, and responsible for accuracy and updating. IFRC tries to triangulate the data provided by the National Societies with previous data and other data in the public domain.

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](#)

Contact Information

Kathryn Clarkson

Head of Delegation
IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for
Cambodia, Laos, Thailand & Vietnam,
Bangkok
T +66 (0)2 661 8201
kathryn.clarkson@ifrc.org

Robert Laprade

Head of Strategic Engagement &
Partnerships
IFRC Regional Office for Asia Pacific,
Kuala Lumpur
T + 601 2204 3410
robert.laprade@ifrc.org

Cambodian Red Cross Society

redcross.org.kh
Lao Red Cross Society
Lao Red Cross | Facebook
Thai Red Cross Society
redcross.or.th
Viet Nam Red Cross Society
redcross.org.vn