



SIERRA LEONE

2024-2025 IFRC network country plan

8 August 2024

Multi-Year Funding Requirement **CHF 22.3M**

In support of the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society



13

National Society branches



65

National Society staff



16,527

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



231,000

Climate and environment



338,000

Disasters and crises



1.3M

Health and wellbeing



28,000

Migration & Displacement



113,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multi-year focus

Longer-term needs

- Disaster risk reduction
 - Disaster response
 - Livelihoods
- Water, sanitation and hygiene

Capacity development

- Digital transformation
 - Governance
- Community engagement and accountability
 - Protection, gender and inclusion

Key country data

Population **8.6M**

INFORM Severity rating **Medium**

INFORM Climate Risk Index **Medium**

Human Development Index rank **181**

Population below poverty level **56.8%**

IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea & Guinea Bissau, based in Freetown

Funding requirements

2024

2025**

Total 9.9M CHF

Through IFRC

7.2M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

1.1M CHF

Through Host National Society

1.6M CHF

Total 12.4M CHF

Through IFRC

7.7M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

1.8M CHF

Through Host National Society

3M CHF

**Projected funding requirements

IFRC Breakdown

Longer-term needs

1.6M CHF

Climate and environment

1.1M CHF

Disasters and crises

2.6M CHF

Health and wellbeing

450,000 CHF

Migration & displacement

600,000 CHF

Values, power & inclusion

850,000 CHF

Enabling local actors

Participating National Societies

British Red Cross

Finnish Red Cross

Icelandic Red Cross

Swedish Red Cross*

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

IFRC Appeal codes

Longer-term needs:

MAASL002

Hazards



Floods



Landslides



Drought



Disease outbreaks



Food insecurity



Civil unrest

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Sierra Leone Red Cross Society** was officially established in 1962 and admitted to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1963. Transitioning from the former British Red Cross chapter, it has been highly active in alleviating human suffering across the country. The Act of Parliament that established the National Society was revised in 2012, clarifying the organization's mandates and entitlements as an auxiliary to the public authorities in emergency response and health.

The National Society has a grassroots presence nationwide and a national structure across Sierra Leone. It continues to be a strong, effective national responder that complements the government authorities in responding to disasters, emergencies and other situations of humanitarian concern.

The National Society responds to small- and large-scale disasters and crises that affect Sierra Leone. It took a lead role in providing humanitarian assistance to people affected by the country's 11-year civil war, and it supported the Ministry of Health and Sanitation to respond to outbreaks of cholera and Ebola in 2012 and 2014. In 2017, the National Society worked with relevant actors to respond effectively to victims of mudslides and flooding. It is currently working with the Government to prevent and respond to COVID-19 infections, through both vaccination and social mobilization across the country.

The National Society's strategic plan for 2022–2026 identifies its five priority areas as:

- Health, water, sanitation and hygiene
- Food security and livelihoods
- Disaster risk reduction
- Migration and shelter
- National Society development

Since its establishment, the National Society has managed emergency operations (preparedness, response & recovery) as well as long-term development programmes. It has a record of accomplishments in disaster risk reduction, first aid and psychosocial support, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), livelihood, women and girls empowerment as well as restoring family links (RFL).

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society priorities are driven by findings from community needs assessments and by the Government's national development plans. Despite its auxiliary role to the state authorities and its cooperation with other key actors, the National Society is autonomous and remains neutral.

In 2022, the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society reached 9,255 people through its long-term services and development programmes and 6,704 people through disaster response and early recovery programmes over time.

IFRC NETWORK ACTION

JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Sierra Leone is located in West Africa and is bordered by Guinea, Liberia and the Atlantic Ocean. With a population of approximately eight million, it is divided into five administrative regions of the north, northwest, east, south and western areas. The official language is English, and most people also speak the most common local language of Krio.

Inequality and social protection are significant issues in Sierra Leone, and considerable disparities between groups remain. According to data from 2019, the country has a Gender Inequality Index value of 182 out of 189. In 2020, it had a Global Gender Gap Index of 121 out of 156. These two indexes define gender-based inequalities across the dimensions of reproductive health, empowerment, and economic and political empowerment. In Sierra Leone, women continue to

suffer significant inequalities in terms of literacy, access to land and legal protection.

Food insecurity is pervasive, due to extremely low agricultural productivity. Half the population does not have access to adequate nutritious food for a healthy life, and chronic malnutrition is widespread. Agriculture is at the core of Sierra Leone's economy, but domestic production by smallholder (often subsistence) farmers is insufficient to feed the population. As a result, Sierra Leone imports more than 70 per cent of the food its population consumes.

Sierra Leone has experienced traumatic times in the last two decades, including a long civil war from 1991 to 2002, the 2012 cholera epidemic, Ebola in 2014–2015, mudslides in 2017, and COVID-19 since 2020. All of these events cost lives and livelihoods, while damaging infrastructure and institutions, and increasing social and economic challenges for the population. Lack of access to quality health care, household income and safe drinking water, along with climate change and food insecurity, are just some of the country's major public concerns.

The Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey in 2019 showed that half of households (50.9 per cent) have [access to water](#) for at least 12 hours a day. Protected wells have the highest availability, with 92.2 per cent reported having water available daily. Piped water is much less available when needed, with two-fifths of sources (37 per cent) only having water between three and five days a week. Households in urban settings still use more piped water and protected dug wells (28.6 per cent and 39.8 per cent respectively) as their main sources of water. In the provinces, rivers and streams are the main sources of water for household use.

According to the [National Youth Policy 2020](#), 30 per cent of the country's population is aged between 18 and 35. Youth unemployment is a growing concern, with levels among the

highest in the West Africa sub-region. According to International Labour Organization estimates in 2019, youth unemployment represented 8.88 per cent of the total unemployment figure. Youth unemployment affects both people with employable skills and those who have very few or no skills. There are high rates of illiteracy, so most people fall into the latter group.

For decades, there has been limited access to technical education and vocational training, and this has prevented many young Sierra Leoneans from acquiring skills that would make them employable. This forces thousands to migrate through irregular means, often directed by smugglers, which frequently shifts into trafficking situations. Many young people are trafficked after being promised fake employment opportunities in Europe.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Climate and environment

Sierra Leone faces many of the social and environmental risks that are common to West Africa. The situation is compounded by the effects of global warming and the challenging economic and political situation in the region. According to the 2018 Sierra Leone Hazard Profile and Assessment, there are nine major [natural hazards](#) in Sierra Leone: landslides, floods, droughts, epidemics, coastal erosion, rising sea levels, storm surges, tropical storms and thunderstorms. People are particularly exposed to these hazards in the hilly, low-lying areas and coastal areas of the western area, and in the northern and southern provinces.

It has become evident that climate change is altering weather patterns, increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. People in the poorest and most risk-prone communities are disproportionately affected. On 14 August 2017, a devastating [twin landslide](#) and flooding disaster ripped through Sierra Leone's capital city, Freetown, causing millions of dollars of damage to buildings and infrastructure, and claiming more than a thousand lives. Before the landslide, Freetown had experienced three successive days of intense and heavy rainfall, causing part of Sugar Loaf Mountain (the highest peak in the northwestern area of the peninsula) to collapse. Over the same period, further heavy downpours led to flooding in Freetown, Tombo in the western rural district, Kenema and Kailahun districts in the east, and Pujehun, Bonthe and Bo in the south. This flooding was attributed to a combination of:

- Massive, unchecked deforestation due to rapid urbanization
- Uncontrolled bush fires

- Rising demand for charcoal and firewood for domestic cooking and other uses
- Subsistence farming
- Timber logging over the last decade as alternative revenue source to the Government.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society 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; (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

Planned activities in 2024

- Implement [tree planting and care](#) projects
- Conduct community sensitization and awareness campaigns on the significance of healthy ecosystems and the risks associated with depleted environments

- Collaborate with the community-based disaster management committees
- Provide basic skills training in [environmental sustainability practices](#) and climate change adaptation to enhance community resilience
- Strengthen collaboration with relevant state actors such as the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and the regional climate centres to enhance the monitoring of both short- and long-term impacts
- Conduct research on climate change and environmental issues and utilize it for advocacy efforts

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society in engaging communities throughout all stages of planning, implementing, supervising, monitoring, and evaluating projects. It supports the National Society to engage in the IFRC Pan-African Tree Planting and Care initiative, with the goal of adapting to and mitigating climate change by planting and caring for multi-purpose trees. Other activities in this initiative include environmental care campaigns, promoting energy-saving cooking and lighting solutions, using school environmental clubs to increase climate awareness and spearheading seedling production. The National Society is also developing its relationships with Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners, government ministries, agencies, and departments to ensure effective delivery of humanitarian services.



Disasters and crises

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

According to the country's [Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019–2023](#), Sierra Leone is exposed to a range of natural and man-made hazards. The population is exposed to recurrent localized hazard conditions, potentially threatening any gains made in development. The country's vulnerability correlates to its climate, geography, high poverty levels and limited environmental management systems.

More recently, since mid-August 2022, the capital city of Freetown has experienced persistent torrential rain. The highest recorded rainfall was on 28 August 2022, when rains caused flooding in low-lying areas and new low-scale landslides. Major roads in the city centre became impassable to both vehicles and pedestrians due to flood waters. In September, the city continued to experience heavy rains, while over 13,000 people were affected by flash floods and landslides.

Nearly one in four fishing families is severely [food insecure](#), followed by households that rely on selling fruit and vegetables. The latter is a livelihood primarily associated with women. Income, education, nutritional quality of foods consumed and hygiene all heavily influence food and nutrition security. The higher the education level of the head of the household, the better their food security. For example, a household headed by someone without formal education is more food insecure than one whose head has vocational training (61 per cent compared with 46 per cent). Women in Sierra Leone have [less education](#) than men and often drop out before completing primary school.

Disaster risk management is still a new concept in Sierra Leone, and very few legislative and policy frameworks are in place for disaster risk reduction and management. The Government of Sierra Leone has made disaster preparedness and risk management a top priority, creating the National Disaster Management Agency. This agency is currently playing a central role in promoting [public awareness](#), incorporating disaster risk management into development planning and reducing



The National Society volunteers playing a mobile cinema screening to share health information with community members. (Photo: Sierra Leone Red Cross Society)

bureaucracies around accessing funds for effective disaster coordination.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society disaster response teams are trained in [disaster risk reduction](#) and emergency first aid and conducts district and community vulnerability and capacity assessments. The National Society aims to continue developing community-based structures in operational districts and establish and strengthen disaster management systems and mechanisms at all levels. It aims to support communities to prepare for timely and effective mitigation, response and recovery to crises and disasters in the country.

The National Society has developed an integrated resilience programme which is aligned with the [IFRC Pan-African Zero Hunger initiative](#) as well as with the Sustainable Development Goals. This programme aims to contribute to Sierra Leone's [Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023](#) to address vulnerability and build resilience in Sierra Leone.

In 2024, the National Society will continue to utilize the multi-hazard preparedness and response plan developed in 2023. This plan, created with support from the National Disaster Management Agency, the Sierra Leone Meteorological Station, the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, and other partners, with support from IFRC, will guide the National Society's preparedness, anticipatory action, and response to disasters and crises.

Planned activities in 2024

- Conduct training sessions for senior staff and government officials on [disaster laws](#) in partnership with key stakeholders
- Partner with National Disaster Management Agency to raise awareness and train community stakeholders on disaster prevention strategies

- Prompt deployment to disaster-affected communities, offering essential assistance during emergencies such as mudslides, epidemics, fires, and floods
- Establish committees and provide training on roles and responsibilities in responding to multiple hazards and environmental crises
- Strengthen existing disaster management committees and platforms at all levels to enhance disaster preparedness and response capabilities
- Support community understanding of [early warning and use of early warning signs](#)
- Provide camp management and shelter assistant to displaced persons
- Provide search and rescue support for disaster victims
- Provide safe and dignified burial in emergencies
- Provide people affected by crises and disasters with timely and appropriate cash and voucher assistance (CVA)

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the National Society in advancing their role as auxiliaries to local authorities for effectively contributing to local development and disaster response efforts. It works with the National Society to enhance its coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders at national and branch levels and assists in advocating for effective and protective disaster-related laws, policies and regulations. Technical support for the National Society is provided by the IFRC to enhance its capacity in areas such as cash and voucher assistance ([CVA](#)), emergency response, distribution of equipment, among others. The National Society also deploys IFRC mechanisms such as the disaster response emergency fund ([DREF](#)) and IFRC [Emergency Appeals](#) to respond swiftly and effectively disasters.

The **British Red Cross** supports the National Society in its Integrated Resilience Programme. It provides technical and financial resources to help implement key components of disaster risk reduction, capacity building of staff and volunteers in cash assistance, empowering girls and women through direct support, and supporting village savings and loan associations.



Health and wellbeing

[Access to health care](#) in Sierra Leone is limited by issues related to the affordability, availability, accessibility and quality of services. The Ebola outbreak in 2014–15 had direct and disproportional effects on the health sector, reversing much of the progress made in the previous decade and exposing weaknesses in Sierra Leone's structures and systems. It also led the public to lose confidence in the health sector. Post-Ebola recovery started in 2015 and aimed to strengthen the overall

resilience of the health system. The [National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2017–21](#) builds on the initial achievements of this recovery and on the commitments stated in the Government's 2013 strategy paper The Agenda for Prosperity, which seeks improvements in health care for the most vulnerable people, particularly women and children.

Water, sanitation and hygiene recovery, reconstruction and development is essential to addressing structural weaknesses

and poor services in this sector that contribute to recurrent epidemics of diseases like cholera in Sierra Leone. Acute respiratory disease and diarrhoea lead to [deaths of children](#) under five years of age every year in Sierra Leone. These diseases are among the leading causes of death in this age group, contributing to one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. According to the [UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017](#), only 18 per cent of the population in Sierra Leone can get to an improved water source in less than 30 minutes. For 33 per cent of the population, it takes up to three hours to reach an improved source of water. About 58 per cent of the population have access to basic water and only 15 per cent have access to basic sanitation. According to the [2019 Sierra Leone Demographic Health Survey](#), water and sanitation coverage is higher in urban areas than in rural areas.

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society's priorities for health, water and sanitation align with the Sustainable Development Goal three that focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for everyone at all ages. These priorities also align with cluster two of the Government's [New Direction Development Strategy 2018–2023](#).

The Government and the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society aim to scale up the number of community health workers in Sierra Leone to 12,000 individuals, with the support of Africa CDC and the IFRC. This will be part of a continent-wide ambition to achieve two million community health workers in Africa, with each worker supporting an estimated 250 people (50–100 households). The main goal of this initiative is to improve health outcomes for African communities by scaling up and strengthening the integrated community health workforce and system, putting people at the centre of it.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society's objectives are targeted at improving community's capacity to effectively detect, prevent, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. The National Society intends to achieve this through the improvement of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and practices within targeted communities and by developing a comprehensive WASH strategy and ensure its effective implementation. It supports communities to promote and measure positive behavioural change in personal and community hygiene among the targeted communities. Taking into account the changing needs in emergencies, the National Society aims to increase the capacity of its branches to respond to [mental health and psychosocial needs](#) during emergencies and support its branches in delivering evidence-based and impactful health promotion.

Planned activities in 2024

- Establish and nurture collaborative relationships with national and district stakeholders, for community ownership and sustainability after program phase-out

- Advance the Building Resilience Inclusive Development and Gender Equity (BRIDGE) Programme to improve health-seeking behaviours among vulnerable communities, particularly pregnant women and lactating mothers
- Promote and measure community awareness of pandemics and epidemics, including cholera, under the IFRC One WASH initiative, and the means to better mitigate their impact
- Increase access to healthcare services, raise awareness on sexual and reproductive health and rights and provide support for income-generating activities in beneficiary communities
- Support training for community structures, including mothers' clubs, on childbirth, postnatal care, nutrition, disease prevention, and intimate partner violence support
- Improve WASH facilities through the BRIDGE Programme by constructing and rehabilitating boreholes, wells, and institutional latrines
- Train WASH committees and pump technicians using participatory methods for community ownership and sustainability
- Conduct sanitation and hygiene education among community members, including school children, to ensure affordable, appropriate, and environmentally sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene services
- Address health risks associated with inadequate water access by constructing and rehabilitating nonfunctional hand-dug wells and establishing new wells in communities currently relying on unsafe water sources

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society's efforts under health and wellbeing by providing technical and financial support for its initiatives. The National Society's efforts in ensuring adequate water, sanitation and facilities (WASH), community-surveillance, and first aid are supported by the IFRC. It also includes expanding the National Society's reach, quality and modalities of first aid activities, including training volunteers, staff and the general public across all contexts.

The **Finnish Red Cross** supports the National Society's health, water, sanitation and hygiene interventions, and providing technical and financial support through the BRIDGE programme.



Migration and displacement

In Sierra Leone, approximately 1.4 million people (25 per cent of the total population) live outside their district of birth. While the western region (Freetown) is most popular for a lifetime and recent migrants, partly because it is the economic, financial, and cultural hub of the country as most companies are located there, the northern region (Bombali, Kambia, Koinadugu, Port Loko, and Tonkolili) is popular for sending out the most migrants. Most migrants are between the ages of 20 and 44, and their sex representation is equal. However, the migrant population is predominantly male between the ages of 25 and 60. The eastern region (precisely Kailahun) is the hub of diamond mining, which mostly employs men, while in the western region, the difference between men and women is equal.

In 2019 there were an estimated 54,300 international migrants in Sierra Leone, representing 0.7% of the total population. 97 per cent of them were of West African descent arriving from Guinea, Liberia, Gambia, Nigeria, and Ghana. Nationals from Britain, America, India, and Lebanon also constituted a significant minority. The economic centre of the country (western area and eastern province) hosted about 80 per cent of all immigrants in the country.

In 2021, Sierra Leone made strides in recognizing, promoting, and implementing decent work for women and men, by rectifying nine International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and one protocol. Recent emigration trends from Sierra Leone are largely determined by the search for economic opportunities and security.

In 2019, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) estimated that Sierra Leone's diaspora population was 187,100. Four of the 5 top destination countries of Sierra Leone emigrants are other African countries (Guinea, Liberia, Senegal, Nigeria), and the UK in Europe comes in fifth place. Many Sierra Leoneans who have benefited from state scholarships to study abroad do not return home, causing a financial loss to the state. The 2021 human flight and brain drain in Africa indicates that Sierra Leone is above the world average of 5.25 index points, currently at 7.4.

Sierra Leone is a source and transit country for human trafficking. It is a Tier 2 country and does not entirely meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking despite efforts to do so. The key driver of human trafficking in Sierra Leone is poverty. Victims of human trafficking mostly come from rural areas and are trafficked into urban areas, where they are subjected to sexual exploitation, forced labour in domestic service, artisanal diamond and granite mining, petty trading, begging, street crime, sex trafficking, and exploitation in the fishing and agriculture sectors. Some are trafficked into neighbouring countries, for example, Mali, Niger, and Guinea, and others to Gambia, Mauritania, Egypt, the Middle

East, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Iraq, and Europe, where they are employed in domestic service, sex exploitation, begging, and street crime.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society aims to increase awareness of the evolving risks associated with 'Temple Run' migration (embarking on risky and potentially perilous journeys to Europe), along with rural to urban migration and human trafficking. It will do this through community awareness-raising sessions, such as the Forum Theatre performances about the effects of irregular migration in border communities. The aim is that community stakeholders are knowledgeable about basic migration, human trafficking laws and policies, and they can provide referral pathways to relevant services. The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society will ensure it is well prepared to respond to irregular migration and human trafficking in a timely and effective way, and it will make sure that its auxiliary role in migration and shelter management is well defined and recognized.

Planned activities in 2024

- Collaborate with national and local organisations to identify root causes of migration in Sierra Leone
- Map migratory routes and collaborate with national organisations to develop durable solutions to illegal migration, with a focus on trafficking in persons/human trafficking
- Implement effective initiatives to prevent TIPs and migration in Sierra Leone, particularly targeting youth, including young women
- Conduct youth engagement and empowerment programs to deter internal and external migration
- Facilitate integration of returnee migrants into the broader Sierra Leonean community through supportive initiatives

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society's efforts to strengthen its existing systems around migration and to enhance the wellbeing of survivors of irregular migration. It supports the National Society in coordinating with government and non-governmental stakeholders at national and local level to identify the main causes of migration in Sierra Leone. The IFRC also supports the National Society to undertake realistic and productive programmes to prevent human trafficking in the country and supports its advocacy efforts.



Values, power and inclusion

Sierra Leone regularly ranks at the bottom of global indices of gender inequality, including the [Gender Inequality Index](#) and the [Global Gender Gap Index](#). These indexes are based on measures of health and survival, women's empowerment, economic participation and [educational](#) attainment. According to Sierra Leone's [2019 Demographic and Health Survey](#) (DHS), physical and sexual violence continues to be prevalent. 61 per cent of women aged 15–49 have experienced physical violence since the age 15 (an increase of eight per cent from 2013). This increases to 67 per cent for women aged 25–29. Experiences of physical violence include dragging, beating up, attempting to choke or burn, and threatening or attacking with a knife, gun or other weapon.

Regarding female genital mutilation, according to the Sierra Leone DHS 2019, the percentage of women who were circumcised decreased from 90 per cent in 2013 to 83 per cent in 2019. Sixty-three per cent of women aged 15–49 who have undergone female genital mutilation believe the practice should continue. At around 93 per cent, the prevalence of female genital mutilation is higher in the northwest province than in the southern province (74.1 per cent). The northwest province also presents the highest rates of physical and sexual violence in Sierra Leone.

The Government's [Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019–2023](#) lays out a clear development path, which is based on the idea of inclusive, sustainable growth that leaves no one behind. By dedicating one of the eight policy clusters to empowering women, children, and people living with disabilities, it recognizes the key role that gender plays in society. In a country where 1.1 per cent of the population (an estimated 77,000 people) is physically challenged or lives with a disability, the Government recognizes that these people are among the poorest in society. This includes people who are blind or deaf, amputees, and people with polio. Implementation of plans and legislation concerning people living with disabilities has been weak in Sierra Leone, with government budget allocation being limited and delayed.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society will continue to create a level playing field for the participation of men and women and persons with impairments through every phase of its emergency and development interventions. The National Society's safeguarding policies are in place to respect and protect the dignity of the most vulnerable people in the country and the National Society will continue to deliver on these objectives. The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society will continue to use community engagement and accountability (CEA) approach to equip community members with relevant disaster information and laws, rights and responsibilities to

be able to take part in decision making that affects their daily lives and wellbeing. The National Society will ensure that this approach assumes and anticipates the knowledge generated by community members for the overall development of the communities.

Planned activities in 2024

- Empower community members with disaster information, legal knowledge, and decision-making skills through [CEA](#) approaches
- Integrate insights and knowledge generated by community engagements into overall community and household development efforts
- Strengthen existing systems on migration and wellbeing of survivors of illegal migration
- Conduct a Protection, gender and Inclusion (PGI) Organizational capacity assessment and utilize findings to integrate a comprehensive PGI approach across all operations and programmes
- Ensure that the National Society's operations, programmes, and services uphold dignity, provide access, encourage participation, and ensure safety for all affected marginalized and excluded individuals
- Promote and support the systematic application of [agreed minimum standards for PGI in emergencies](#)
- Engage with authorities on the possible involvement of social protection of widows

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society by providing technical assistance ensuring the implementation of the protection, gender and inclusion action plan is in line with key recommendations. It also supports the National Society's efforts in areas such as strengthening risk management systems to limit people's exposure to risks of violence and abuse, strengthening safeguarding mechanisms within the National Society's structures and programmes, among others. The IFRC supports the National Society in increasing its support for survivors of [sexual and gender-based violence](#) by enhancing the National Society's capacity to respond and prevent SGBV risks through coordinated programming standards and tools.

The **Icelandic Red Cross** is supporting the National Society's 'digital divide initiative' project funding, the National Society is providing solar-powered electricity system to keep the Information Communication Technology (ICT) viable in six branches.

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society is committed to pursuing its institutional strengthening and has carried out the self-assessment part of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process in 2018. The self-assessment is designed to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies concerning a wide range of organizational capacities.

The National Society is also committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response 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 in its preparedness and response mechanism, and take necessary action to improve it.



Strategic and operational coordination

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Continue to leverage partnerships to advocate and explore funding opportunities to undertake emergency and development interventions in Sierra Leone
- Build the capacity of National Society branches on resource mobilization
- Link up with key governmental and non-governments actors to mobilize resources and jointly upgrade and expand humanitarian services

- Contextualize emerging global concepts and principles into emergency operations and development programmes to match global standards

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society in its efforts to increase its engagement with both internal and external stakeholders for an effective humanitarian response. The IFRC ensures that the National Society is well placed to strengthen its existing relationships within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and with external partners including the relevant government ministries, agencies and departments. The IFRC will support the National Society to leverage its unique status in order to cooperate with other relevant actors both nationally and internationally, keeping up with evolving trends to remain a viable National Society. The IFRC is also supporting the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society in collaborating with other National Societies to advance the implementation of the New Way of Working mechanism, outlined in the IFRC's Agenda for Renewal. It aims to establish strong connections across all programming and response efforts, encompassing bilateral engagements and domestically funded activities.

The **British Red Cross** and the **Finish Red Cross** has supported the National Society through technical guidance in ensuring the completion and quality of the unified plan which will serve as a strong foundation for building cohesive response mechanisms, effective cooperation and enhancing humanitarian actions.



National Society volunteers setting up information kiosks in northern Sierra Leone amidst the Ebola outbreak. (Photo: Sierra Leone Red Cross Society)



National Society development

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Implement the findings of the IFRC organizational capacity assessment ([OCAC](#)) and the branch organizational capacity assessment ([BOCA](#))
- Implement competency, vision, and skills criteria for selecting new leaders, focusing on innovation, adaptive, and transformational leadership
- Ensure 30 per cent representation of women in National Society leadership positions at all levels within the next five years
- Increase the number of active volunteers and achieve high rates of volunteer retention

- Generate over half of National Society's yearly income domestically

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society in undertaking initiatives aimed at National Society development and increasing its sustainability. These initiatives include the implementation of the findings from the [OCAC assessment](#), the [BOCA assessment](#) which offers a way for the National Society to continuously monitor progress against every element needed to make it a well-functioning National Society in line with IFRC guidelines. The IFRC is committed to support key components of the National Society development and other [Pan-African initiatives](#) with technical and financial resources.



Humanitarian diplomacy

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Regularly engage with the public and donors on the National Society's work, efforts and its successes
- Continue to engage with relevant platforms such as social media sites and the media to publicize the National Society's work and enhance its visibility
- Continue to build the capacity of National Society staff and volunteers on effective communication

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society in conducting effective humanitarian diplomacy as part of its strategic plan to target decision-makers, international and national partners, and community organizations. It will continue to support the National Society in its efforts to enhance the capacity of its staff and volunteers on communications either through the facilitation of training or other technical support. These efforts are aimed at ensuring that the National Society capitalizes on its auxiliary role and is recognized as the first responder to emergencies in Sierra Leone.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Carry out a [digital transformation](#) of the National Society headquarters and branches
- Enhance data protection by adopting and implementing best practices and information security measures in ongoing and new operations
- Roll out policies for fraud and corruption, risks and compliance, and whistleblowing

- Develop a fraud register and update it regularly
- Appoint gender focal points at headquarters and branches, for reporting on abuse
- Hold quarterly reviews of financial management systems and make relevant updates to improve transparency and accountability
- Ensure programme quality and donor accountability through a Performance Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) system

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society's effort to enhance its overall accountability through technical and financial support for areas such as financial management

systems, internal controls, logistics capacity at headquarters and branch offices and by ensuring the implementation of complaints mechanisms. It supports the National Society's efforts in digital transformation and in developing tools to bolster the National Society's accountability systems.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC provides support to the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society through its presence in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Its support to the National Society focuses on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development and humanitarian diplomacy, including strengthening its auxiliary role. The IFRC provides technical assistance to the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society with humanitarian operations relating to:

- Disasters and crises
- Health services in hard-to-reach areas
- Longer-term resilience-building programmes
- Coordinating IFRC membership support to the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society

- Enhancement of the National Society's organizational development
- Representing the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society internationally

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society through a number of IFRC disaster response emergency fund ([DREF](#)) and [Emergency Appeal](#) operations relating to flooding and landslides, civil unrest, explosions and accidental fires. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has also supported the National Society's COVID-19 response and immunization programme rollout, through its global Emergency Appeal.

IFRC membership coordination

IFRC membership coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs; agreeing on common priorities; jointly developing common strategies to address issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance and space; mobilizing funding and other resources; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring progress. This also means ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need, incorporate clarity of humanitarian action, links with development assistance, and efforts to reinforce National Societies in their respective countries, including through their auxiliary role.

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society is part of four [IFRC Pan-African initiatives](#) focusing on Tree Planting and Care, Zero Hunger, Red Ready and National Society Development. These initiatives are reflected under the relevant sections of this plan.

The **British Red Cross**, the **Finnish Red Cross** and the **Icelandic Red Cross** currently support the National Society

with programmes around health, water, sanitation and hygiene, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods, and risk communication, community-friendly approaches, community engagement and accountability.

The **British Red Cross** is supporting the National Society with a two-year project focusing on risk communication, community engagement and resilience building in the western region.

The **Finnish Red Cross** is currently present in the six districts of Pujehun, Kenema, Bo, Moyamba, Bonthe and Kono in the BRIDGE project focused on community-based health approaches, promoting water, sanitation and hygiene, livelihoods and capacity building.

The **Icelandic Red Cross** is supporting the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society in consortium with the Finnish Red Cross and supporting through the IFRC the implementation of the Tree Planting and Care initiative in six branches.

Participating National Society Support

National Society name	Funding Requirement	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling local actors
British Red Cross	350,000		●				●
Finnish Red Cross	670,000	●	●	●		●	●
Icelandic Red Cross	50,000					●	

Total Funding requirement

1.1M

Movement coordination

The National Society ensures regular exchanges with the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and participating National Societies, for the alignment of support and action between Movement partners. In times of emergencies, closer coordination is organized. This is carried out in line with the [Strengthening Movement Coordination and](#)

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

The ICRC supports the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society with communications and National Society profiling.

Coordination with other actors

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society collaborates extensively with various government line ministries in implementing its programmes. It works with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Ministry of Social Welfare, local councils and other authorities at national and branch level to enrich the quality and sustainability of its programmes. The National Society leadership and its National Disaster Response Team participate in every planning meeting convened by the Government's National Disaster Management Agency, which has lead oversight for all disaster management and response-related incidents in Sierra Leone.

The National Society also has a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Food Programme (WFP) for the management and monitoring of cash-based assistance and distribution

of relief items to vulnerable communities. The World Food Programme has supported the National Society to build its capacity through volunteer training in food security and livelihoods assessments, [cash and voucher assistance](#), relief management and the humanitarian code of conduct for effectively distributing food to people affected by disasters.

The National Society will engage local councils and other stakeholders using existing platforms to implement key health, disaster risk reduction, water and sanitation, migration and [shelter](#), food security and livelihoods programme interventions and policies, and advocacy for the inclusion of women and persons with disabilities. The various district health management teams will provide direction on government policies, as well as the establishment/strengthening of certain structures.



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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\) data](#)
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)
- [Evaluations database](#)

This plan reflects the priorities of Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, the IFRC and National Societies providing international support for 2024 and subsequent years. It is aligned with IFRC [Strategy 2030](#), representing the collective ambitions of the IFRC membership, and is the result of a joint planning process and will serve joint monitoring and reporting. It will be revised on an annual basis to adjust priorities and funding requirements to the needs in-country.

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