



MONTENEGRO

2026-2027 IFRC network country plan



14 January 2026

In support of the Red Cross of Montenegro



23

National Society branches



179

National Society staff



841

National Society volunteers

People to be reached in 2026



9,000

Climate and environment



10,000

Disasters and crises



21,000

Health and wellbeing



4,000

Migration and displacement



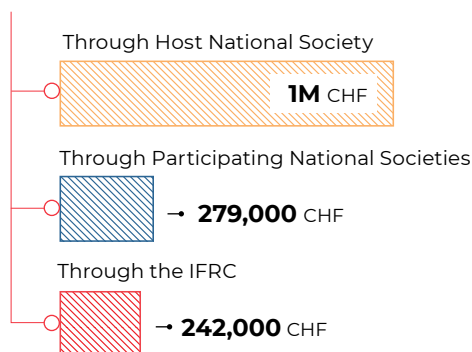
12,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network Funding Requirements

2026

Total 1.5M CHF



2027

Total 97,000 CHF

Projected funding requirements

Participating National Societies

Austrian Red Cross

French Red Cross*

Italian Red Cross

Swiss Red Cross

IFRC Appeal codes

Longer-term needs:

MAAME002

**National Societies which have contributed only multilaterally through the IFRC in 2025.*

Hazards



Floods



Drought



Extreme Weather
Conditions



Forest Fires



Population Movement

IFRC network multi-year focus

Longer term needs

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

Capacity development

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

Key country data links

INFORM Climate Change Risk Index **Low**

Human Development Index rank **48**

World Bank Population figure **624,000**

World Bank Population below poverty line **20.3%**



Red Cross of Montenegro volunteers conducting first aid simulation. (Photo: Red Cross of Montenegro)

Detailed funding requirements

2026

	Host National Society	IFRC
Longer-term needs		
Climate and environment		40,000
Disasters & crises	50,000	50,000
Health & wellbeing	34,000	7,000
Migration & displacement		145,000
Values, power & inclusion	935,000	
Enabling local actors		
Total	1M	242,000

Participating National Societies bilateral support

National Society	Year	Funding Requirement	Confirmed Funding	Climate and environment	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration and displacement	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling Functions
Austrian Red Cross	2026	194,000	194,000		97,000	97,000			
	2027	97,000	97,000		97,000				
Italian Red Cross	2026	85,000				30,000		45,000	10,000
Swiss Red Cross	2026						-		

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Red Cross of Montenegro** was founded in 1875 in Cetinje as the first National Society in the Balkans. It was internationally recognized in November of the same year. After the restoration of the sovereignty of the state of Montenegro in 2006, the Red Cross of Montenegro renewed the status of an independent National Society in 2006. It was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 2007. The Red Cross of Montenegro assists the state in implementing national strategies, including those for humanitarian response, social inclusion, disaster risk reduction, disability integration, elderly care, child protection, and others. The organization's position, authority, and obligations are regulated by the Law on the Red Cross of Montenegro and were proclaimed by the Parliament of Montenegro on 18 April 2006.

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

The Red Cross of Montenegro operates through 23 units, including 21 local Red Cross branches, Red Cross of the Capital City Podgorica and Red Cross of the Old Royal Capital Cetinje. These units, as legal entities, work together to provide unique services across Montenegro. Members and volunteers, mostly young people, play a significant role in humanitarian activities.

Based on the Development Strategy of the Red Cross of Montenegro for 2023-2026, the main strategic goals are as follows:

- Strengthened organization at all levels of operation to fulfil legally entrusted powers and other programmes and activities within the mandate of the Red Cross of Montenegro
- Developed systems of sustainable financing in the Red Cross of Montenegro
- Enhanced capacity of the Red Cross of Montenegro for saving and protecting lives and property in disasters and crises
- Improved actions of the Red Cross of Montenegro in preventive and health protection in Montenegro
- Improved actions of the Red Cross of Montenegro in the social field through providing support to groups in vulnerable situations and contributing to their social inclusion

In 2024, the Red Cross of Montenegro reached around 70,000 people through its long-term services and development programmes and almost 6,000 people through its disaster response and early recovery programmes.



Map of Red Cross of Montenegro branches and sub-branches

The map does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the IFRC or the National Society concerning the legal status of a territory or its authorities

IFRC NETWORK ACTION

JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

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

A meeting point of different cultural and religious influences, Montenegro has 72 per cent Orthodox Christians, 3.43 per cent Muslims and 15.97 per cent Catholic. The country has a population of 623,633 people marking a 0.6 per cent increase compared to the 2011 census. The modest population growth is primarily driven by immigration. According to the latest 2023 census, more than 96,000 foreign nationals with temporary or permanent residence permits reside in the country, making up approximately 15 per cent of the total population. Although immigration has increased in recent years, it remains insufficient to offset the large outflow of economically active people, especially as Montenegro continues to face low birth rates and negative natural population growth.

Montenegro faces a range of environmental challenges which include deforestation, air and water pollution, inadequate waste management, climate changes vulnerability, and coastal and marine degradation. Unsustainable logging, urbanization and industrial activities contribute to deforestation, habitat loss and air and water pollution, while inadequate

waste management exacerbates these issues. Additionally, Montenegro's vulnerability to climate change impacts such as rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and changes in precipitation patterns poses risks to agriculture, water resources, and coastal ecosystems. Coastal erosion, habitat degradation and marine pollution further threaten the country's Adriatic coast, impacting biodiversity and the tourism industry.

Montenegro's inflation fell sharply from 8.6 per cent in 2023 to 3.4 per cent in 2024, with further declines projected to 2.9 per cent in 2025 and 2.3 per cent in 2026. Despite steady growth over the past four years, rising global uncertainties now threaten prospects, making fiscal discipline and structural reforms vital for inclusive, sustainable development. Poverty is expected to drop to 7.5 per cent by 2027, though most affected groups—chronically unemployed, students and those outside the labor force—are concentrated in the north, requiring targeted policies. Montenegro's HDI stands at 0.832, reflecting progress in health, education and income.

The country is pursuing European Union (EU) accession, aiming to conclude negotiations by 2026 and achieve membership by 2028, supported by the European Commission. However, frequent changes in institutional focal points disrupt reforms and slow integration. The Russia-Ukraine international armed conflict has also impacted Montenegro, with 308,724 arrivals from Ukraine since 2022 and 12,803 approved Temporary Protection Status applications, granting rights to housing, healthcare, education and employment until March 2026.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Climate and environment

Climate change presents a unique dual threat to vulnerable communities: it leads to more frequent, intense and unpredictable extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and extreme heat while the macroeconomic impacts of climate change impact income and resilience among the poorest, reducing the ability of low-income communities to cope with shocks or crisis situations.

The results from the [climate projections](#) show an increase in the annual temperature of 1.5°C to 2°C by 2040 throughout the country. The increase in the temperature during the winter months of December–February is expected to be between 2°C and 2.5°C, and in the summer months of June–August an estimated average of 2°C.

The new [Forest Law](#), enacted in 2024, has faced delays in implementation due to the absence of a functioning state enterprise and necessary equipment. Additionally, the Forest and Forestry Strategy for 2023–2028 has not yet been adopted, leaving the sector without clear guidelines and further hindering effective forest management.

Air pollution in Montenegro is a significant environmental and public health issue, particularly during the winter months. The country's air quality is primarily compromised by emissions from coal-fired power plants, household heating using coal and wood and vehicle exhaust. Pljevlja and Bijelo Polje are the most polluted. Wildfires are a frequent issue due to poor forest management and companies operating outside of regulations (illegal logging, improper use of machinery or other unlawful activities that increase the risk of fires). Recycling in Montenegro remains a significant challenge due to limited infrastructure, low public awareness and insufficient enforcement of waste management regulations. As a result, the recycling rate is very low and much of the waste ends up in landfills or is improperly disposed of.

In response to the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change, Montenegro has embarked on a strategic initiative titled 'Enhancing Montenegro's Capacity to Integrate Climate Change Risks into Planning' ([National Adaptation Plan Project](#)).

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro's key objectives under climate and environment are to:

- Continue to strengthen and advocate for its vital role and responsibilities under the Law on Protection and Rescue
- Ensure the resilience of communities across the country is progressively and sustainably reinforced through a suitably enabled National Society embedded in national and regional networks
- Improve public knowledge and skills about climate risks, disaster prevention and preparedness to build more resilient communities

Planned activities in 2026

- Implement [greening initiatives](#) to reduce its carbon footprint and promote environmental sustainability
- Conduct risk assessment and disseminate [early warning](#) messages and promote [anticipatory action](#) to help communities prepare for climate-related hazards
- Develop and distribute educational materials, such as flyers and leaflets and run social media campaigns focused on climate change prevention and environmental protection
- Conduct educational sessions and awareness-raising activities (older people, students, people with disabilities) in educational institutions to build community resilience on topics such as climate change, recycling and flood preparedness

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC assists the Red Cross of Montenegro through ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing, in developing strategies and implementing programmes that address climate change and environmental challenges.

Participating National Societies contribute to the priorities of the Red Cross of Montenegro by sharing best practices, lessons learned and innovative approaches from their respective countries. This exchange of knowledge helps the National Society to adapt and implement effective climate and environmental initiatives.



Disasters and crises

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

Montenegro faces growing disaster and crisis risks, with floods and earthquakes posing the greatest threats to lives and livelihoods. Floods affect around 10,000 people annually and cause damages of about CHF 81 million, while earthquakes impact 9,000 people each year, resulting in losses of roughly CHF 63 million. These hazards disrupt agriculture, transport and economic stability, and are expected to worsen as climate change accelerates. Vulnerable groups, particularly rural communities in the north, refugees and Roma populations remain inadequately prepared, with limited evacuation and shelter capacities. Coastal regions also face high storm vulnerability, yet a systematic approach to storm protection is lacking. Despite progress in civil protection, Montenegro still relies heavily on international assistance, underscoring the urgent need for [comprehensive climate adaptation](#) and disaster preparedness measures.

[Flash flooding](#) frequently affects the northern region of Montenegro, where rural communities living near rivers are the most vulnerable groups and are often unprepared to respond. This includes areas hosting refugee camps and a large proportion of the Roma population. Currently, there are insufficient capacities for the evacuation and sheltering of these groups of people. The government provides support for recovery efforts, but this support is not always comprehensive or available in every situation.

Several areas along Montenegro's coast are highly vulnerable to storms due to factors such as low-lying shores, semi-enclosed bays and river mouths. These regions have been categorized as having high vulnerability levels, indicating a significant risk from storm events. Despite the recognition of these risks, Montenegro currently lacks a comprehensive and systematic approach to storm protection. This gap in preparedness and response mechanisms leaves communities exposed to the impacts of severe weather.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro has been playing a key role in the development of the new [National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy](#) for the [period 2025–2030](#) with the Action Plan for 2025/2026. This strategy aims to enhance the country's resilience by strengthening risk management frameworks, improving coordination among stakeholders and promoting proactive measures to reduce the impact of disasters. The Red Cross of Montenegro is legally obliged to participate actively in conducting measures and tasks in relation to rescue and protection as an integral part of disaster management system. The Law on the Red Cross of Montenegro originally outlined its disaster preparedness and response responsibilities, which

have since been incorporated into the Law on Protection and Rescue. The high-level objectives of the National Society are to:

- Reinforce the resilience of communities across the country through a suitably enabled National Society firmly embedded in national and regional networks
- Strengthen human and material capacities, as well as those of the local communities most affected
- Ensure all activities aim to create more resilient communities and save lives

Planned activities in 2026

- Carry out disaster preparedness activities, including comprehensive risk assessments and regular evacuation drills and simulations
- Exchange knowledge and best practices with other National Societies through regional events and study visits
- Enhance cross-border cooperation to improve coordinated responses during disasters and crises
- Continue using the [X-STOCK](#), a digital tool that enhances logistics and stock management capacities, enabling more efficient and timely humanitarian response
- Develop a new Preparedness for Effective Response ([PER](#)) and Contingency Plan with the aim of enhancing readiness and ensuring a coordinated, timely and effective response to emergencies
- Strengthen capacity by training regional-level teams, procuring necessary equipment and conducting refresher training

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC [Reference Centres](#) and IFRC Hubs and Labs foster long-term support through collaboration and innovation. These platforms facilitate the exchange of ideas, experimentation with new technologies and the development of innovative approaches to address evolving challenges in disaster management. The IFRC will provide technical support to the Red Cross of Montenegro in mainstreaming and integrating mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in [disaster management](#) training and interventions, including caring for staff and volunteers.

The **Austrian Red Cross** supports the Red Cross of Montenegro by sharing expertise and experience in disaster management. This partnership includes developing joint projects, conducting simulations and drills and providing mentorship and peer-to-peer support. Cooperation in

disaster preparedness will continue by strengthening the Red Cross of Montenegro's capacity as part of the national disaster response system. Key priorities include enhancing Advanced First Aid (AFA) capabilities and creating clear, actionable early

warning messages and communication channels to ensure affected communities are prepared and able to respond effectively to disasters and crises.



Red Cross of Montenegro volunteers distributing school supplies and assistance to people from Ukraine. (Photo: Red Cross of Montenegro)



Health and wellbeing

Montenegro's healthcare system faces mounting challenges driven by rapid demographic shifts, rising chronic non-communicable diseases, outdated infrastructure, limited funding and the need to adopt new technologies. A severe shortage of healthcare professionals, coupled with migration of doctors and nurses seeking better conditions abroad, leaves staffing levels below EU averages. This results in long wait times (up to a year), restricted access to specialized care and increased strain on remaining staff, undermining service quality and sustainability.

Awareness of mental health services remains low, while vaccination coverage is alarmingly poor: only 22 per cent of children born in 2023 received the first MMR dose, the lowest rate in Europe, with similar declines in other routine immunizations and boosters. Blood donation availability has improved, with 20,139 units collected in 2024 (up by 1,639 from 2023), due to

awareness campaigns and multi-institutional efforts, though demand still outpaces supply. Services for older people remain inadequate, with greatest needs in northern regions and major cities, where homes for the elderly face long waiting lists and limited capacity.

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

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro's mobile teams have played a key role in improving access to mental health services for its

beneficiaries. However, there is currently no dedicated SOS helpline operated by the National Society to provide immediate support at the national level. Some of the high-level objectives of the National Society are to:

- Increase the number of people capable of providing basic first aid, including public and private sector staff, lifeguards, older adults and drivers
- Increase the percentage of voluntary blood donors, with a special focus on youth
- Enhance activities in preventing HIV/AIDS and other diseases to improve public health and awareness

Planned activities in 2026

- Provide psychological first aid (PFA) and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to groups in vulnerable situations such as Roma population, displaced people and others in need
- Ensure care and support for staff and volunteers and implement awareness-raising initiatives through campaigns, key messages and psychoeducational materials
- Establish two Community Care Centres in Cetinje and Nikšić, including support for informal carers
- Expand and strengthen the pool of qualified MHPSS and PFA trainers at both national and local levels by establishing a structured supervision and support system
- Integrate the national plan for voluntary blood donors into relevant state-level policies and frameworks
- Promote women's reproductive health and raise awareness on non-communicable diseases through targeted education and outreach initiatives
- Organize healthy ageing activities, such as clubs for older people and preventive and social programmes

- Conduct capacity-building activities, including training for home care helpers, coordinators and meetings with Red Cross branches
- Organize and deliver first aid training, including self-aid for the public, advanced first aid (AFA) for staff and volunteers and emergency preparedness exercises in coordination with partners
- Provide health-related education, such as HIV prevention training for staff and volunteers with peer-to-peer dissemination and motivational workshops on voluntary blood donation for students, employees and other interested groups
- Participate in specialized rescue and safety training, including water rescue with a focus on first aid

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will offer ongoing guidance, technical expertise and resources to strengthen the Red Cross of Montenegro's capacity in healthcare services and community health promotion. The IFRC Reference Centres will provide specialized knowledge and resources to enhance the National Society's understanding of and response to health challenges. The IFRC Hubs and Labs will promote innovation by enabling the exploration of new approaches and technologies in healthcare.

Furthermore, the IFRC will support the Red Cross of Montenegro in scaling up MHPSS efforts and strengthening its capacity to address emerging MHPSS needs. This will include providing basic psychosocial support, integrating MHPSS into core humanitarian activities and prioritizing the mental health and psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers.

Participating National Societies will share best practices and provide mentorship, contributing to the development of the Red Cross of Montenegro's long-term health programmes.



Montenegro remains primarily a transit country on the Western Balkan route, which continues to serve as a [key corridor for migrants](#) and refugees seeking entry into the EU. Since 2015, [over 1.5 million](#) migrants have passed through the Western Balkans. After a sharp decline during the pandemic, arrivals surged in 2022 (8,318 people) following the escalation of the international armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia but have since fallen significantly. In 2024, 2,970 new arrivals were registered—a 40 per cent drop compared to 2023—and the downward trend [continued into 2025](#), with 1,009 arrivals between January and April, marking a 55 per cent decrease year-on-year. However, actual numbers may be higher as many migrants avoid registration due to stricter border controls and the deployment of Frontex alongside Montenegro's border police.

Montenegro operates two [reception centres](#)—Spuz (near Podgorica) and Bozaj (near the Albanian border)—with a combined capacity of 164 beds. Occupancy remains low because migrants typically stay only four to six days before continuing their journey. The asylum system, governed by the [Law on International and Subsidiary Protection \(2018\)](#), faces persistent challenges. These include healthcare access gaps due to mismatched insurance provisions and employment barriers, as asylum seekers gain the right to work after nine months but encounter administrative delays between the [Ministry of Interior](#) and Employment Agency. Integration efforts for those [granted international protection](#) remain limited.

The international armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia has also had a profound impact. Montenegro hosts one of the largest numbers of Ukrainian refugees per capita globally, with over 200,000 displaced people from Ukraine arriving since 2022. Nearly 5,000 people currently benefit from Temporary Protection Status (TPS), valid until March 2025, granting access to housing, healthcare, education and employment. In addition, more than 60,000 displaced people from Ukraine hold other residence statuses, such as short-term or long-term permits. This influx has tested Montenegro's social systems and highlighted the need for sustainable integration policies.

At the regional level, migration remains [highly politicized](#), affecting humanitarian funding and operational flexibility. Pushbacks and reverse flows have increased, while migrants continue to face legal barriers, health risks and inadequate shelter during transit. The Western Balkans also grapples with dual migration pressures: emigration of skilled workers and increasing immigration, requiring coordinated, rights-based policies to balance humanitarian needs with development priorities.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro is part of the IFRC three-year [Global Route Based Migration Programme](#), which aims to

improve the safety and dignity of people on the move along deadly and dangerous land and sea-based migration routes across Africa, the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa. The programme aims to support 4.7 million people on the move and people in host communities annually through three operational pillars: (1) improving access to assistance and protection, including through humanitarian service points; (2) strengthening National Society capacities; and (3) local to global humanitarian diplomacy.

Having been part of the IFRC Emergency Appeal on the Ukraine and Impacted Countries Crisis, the Red Cross of Montenegro has significantly enhanced its ability to scale up humanitarian efforts. Accordingly, the National Society aims to respond effectively to a diverse range of evolving crises including the continued need for humanitarian assistance and support among displaced persons upon the conclusion of the Emergency Appeal in December 2025. The National Society's high-level objectives are:

- Provide timely, needs-based humanitarian aid and essential healthcare through mobile medical teams at [transit centers](#) for asylum seekers, displaced people from Ukraine and persons with international protection
- Identify and address the social inclusion needs of migrants and refugees by facilitating their access to rights, essential services and active participation in community life, regardless of legal status
- Facilitate and engage in regional exchanges and coordination with other National Societies and stakeholders to strengthen migration response efforts and promote the sharing of best practices
- Actively participate in national working groups and advocacy platforms to contribute to the development and implementation of policies and strategies that support the rights and well-being of migrants and refugees

Planned activities in 2026

- Provide protection and health services to migrants through humanitarian service points ([HSPs](#)) and mobile teams
- Promote integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees through coordinated initiatives with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- Conduct workshops on employment, social inclusion, cultural understanding, hygiene promotion, trafficking and first aid in partnership with the UNHCR
- Implement PER activities for the period 2025-2026 tailored to migration contexts

- Deliver humanitarian assistance for migrants and displaced people from Ukraine, including cash and voucher assistance ([CVA](#)), based on assessed needs
- Open new HSPs (only one is currently operational) to expand access to protection, health and essential services for migrants and facilitate regional exchange of experiences through events, training, study visits and a joint online platform to strengthen migration response and coordination
- Provide technical expertise in protection and assistance along migratory routes, support cross-border response planning and promote integration and inclusion
- Enhance data-driven decision-making, facilitate the development of multi-sectoral contingency plans and strengthen the capacity of field actors through harmonized technical standards and integrated monitoring mechanisms
- Strengthen route-based capacities through information sharing, peer exchange and focused approaches such as protection, gender and inclusion ([PGI](#)) and community engagement and accountability ([CEA](#))
- Facilitate coordination, collaboration and partnerships across all levels to enable joint approaches and evidence-based programming

Migration, which concluded that there is a risk that Montenegro may experience an increase in prolonged stays of migrants, as people may face challenges in continuing their journeys. The IFRC will also facilitate coordination and collaboration among National Societies engaged in migration activities. It will provide a platform for sharing information, resources and best practices across borders.

Through this network, the Red Cross of Montenegro will be able to access knowledge and expertise from different countries, enhancing its understanding of migration dynamics and enabling the implementation of effective programmes and services. In line with the Integration and Inclusion Framework Plans developed by the Red Cross of Montenegro, the IFRC will provide guidance, technical expertise and resources to support the National Society in implementing inclusive programmes that promote protection and gender equality.

The **Swiss Red Cross** supports the Red Cross of Montenegro in delivering protection and health services to migrants through Humanitarian Service Points ([HSPs](#)) and mobile teams. It also assists the Red Cross of Montenegro in organizing workshops on employment, social inclusion, cultural understanding, hygiene promotion, anti-trafficking and [first aid](#), in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Additionally, the Swiss Red Cross will support the implementation of Preparedness for Effective Response ([PER](#)) activities in 2026.

Through bilateral cooperation, the Swiss Red Cross actively contributes to initiatives that ensure migrants, asylum seekers and refugees along the Balkan route have access to timely, flexible and relevant services. It also promotes regional cooperation and coordination among National Societies by sharing best practices and facilitating knowledge exchange to address the evolving needs of people on the move.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** will provide guidance, technical expertise and resources to support the Red Cross of Montenegro in effectively managing migration-related challenges. In this connection, in 2025, the IFRC conducted an assessment on the potential impact of the implementation of the EU Pact on



Values, power and inclusion

Montenegro continues to face economic and social [inequalities](#), with 20.3 per cent of the population at [risk of poverty](#) and an even higher rate among children (28.4 per cent). Despite this, the Government has not adopted a Strategy for Combating Poverty, nor is its development planned in the 2024–2027 Medium-Term Work Programme, leaving efforts fragmented and data gaps unresolved. Social assistance remains inadequate—monthly support for vulnerable families covers only 11 per cent of basic living costs, underscoring systemic shortcomings. To [mitigate poverty](#), cooperation between the Employment Agency and Centres for Social Work aims to activate unemployed beneficiaries through integrated services.

A major step forward is the [Deinstitutionalization Strategy](#) (2025–2028), Montenegro’s first formal framework to prevent institutionalization and promote community-based living. It

focuses on transforming service providers, expanding advisory, therapeutic, and socio-educational services, and ensuring family or community care, supported by over CHF 48 million in state and donor funding.

11 per cent of the [population](#) faces daily activity limitations due to illness, disability, or age and Montenegro’s population is ageing rapidly, with projections showing one in four residents over 65 by 2050. Older people in rural areas remain particularly at risk due to poor infrastructure and limited healthcare access. Meanwhile, Roma and Egyptian communities [continue to experience](#) severe exclusion, with disparities in education, employment, housing and health. A [new Strategy](#) for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians (2026–2030) is under development to build on previous efforts and ensure equal access to rights and services.

Montenegro's [Gender Equality Index](#) stands at 59.3, well below the EU average of 68.6, with the largest gaps in economic participation and earnings. Gender-based violence (GBV) remains widespread — the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that [one-third](#) of women have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, yet underreporting is common due to low trust in institutions. Despite Montenegro's ratification of the Istanbul Convention, two-thirds of citizens believe GBV is inadequately addressed. Other protection concerns, including trafficking in persons, child safeguarding, and discrimination against minorities, remain pressing issues.

The wealthiest 20 per cent earn 7.4 times more than the poorest 20 per cent, surpassing EU averages. Children and youth are most vulnerable, with poverty rates reaching 32.6 per cent for those under 18, compared to 15.5 per cent among older adults. [Addressing](#) these disparities require systemic reforms, stronger social protection and inclusive policies that prioritize [marginalized groups](#).

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross of Montenegro promotes humanitarian values as part of its education outreach. Through its high-level objectives, the National Society aims to:

- Enhance support for people in vulnerable situations to promote their well-being, dignity and independence
- Offer integrated support services aimed at preserving and enhancing the quality of life of older people and other at-risk populations through care, companionship and socio-emotional support
- Actively participate in national level working groups to advocate for legislative reforms to the Law on Social and Child Protection that enhance the socio-economic rights and status of groups in vulnerable situations in Montenegro
- Strengthen organizational capacities, infrastructure and human resources (HR) at all levels to ensure efficient and effective delivery of humanitarian services in line with its [auxiliary role](#)

Planned activities in 2026

- Conduct educational workshops for the public, staff and volunteers on topics such as International Humanitarian Law (IHL), [Fundamental Principles](#), [PGI](#) and [CEA](#)
- Organize integration events such as field trips and public gatherings for groups in vulnerable situations
- Develop and implement [safeguarding](#) policies to ensure the protection and well-being of people

- Plan and implement home care and community-based support, including professional home care, volunteer visits, mobile teams and a community care centre
- Conduct anti-trafficking training for staff and volunteers, including introductory sessions and dissemination methodology

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Red Cross of Montenegro in mainstreaming PGI across all programmes and approaches. Through ongoing collaboration with the IFRC Regional Office for Europe and participating National Societies, the Red Cross of Montenegro continues to strengthen its capacity to promote gender equality, inclusion and protection, ensuring its activities contribute to a more equitable and inclusive society.

The Red Cross of Montenegro actively contributes to social protection reforms by participating in working groups revising the Law on Social and Child Protection, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. The IFRC supports these efforts with an aim to align legislation with international standards and strengthen child protection and inclusion.

To enhance health and social services for older people, the **Austrian Red Cross** provides technical expertise and supports the Red Cross of Montenegro in positioning itself as a service provider, particularly with the introduction of fee-based services. This cooperation includes the 'Holistic Community Care for Older Persons and Informal Caregivers in Montenegro' (HOPE) project, funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection and facilitated by the Austrian Red Cross. The project focuses on establishing two community care centres offering holistic, client-oriented services for older people and caregivers, with special attention to underserved rural areas.

In October 2025, the **Italian Red Cross** funded the fourth phase of the bilateral project 'Roma Employment in Montenegro (REM),' which will run until October 2026. This initiative supports the operation of a business incubator in Podgorica and promotes inclusion activities for Roma and Egyptian communities in Rožaje and Cetinje. The Italian Red Cross has partnered with the Red Cross of Montenegro for over a decade, implementing projects that assist older people and foster social inclusion. From 2019 to 2022, a cross-border phase of the Home Care project was carried out with the **Albanian Red Cross**, including home care visits, clubs for older people, mobile team visits and technical training for trainers and volunteers. Since 2022, the **Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina** has joined the initiative, with the fourth and fifth phases now operating in a trilateral format. The sixth phase is expected to begin in 2026, with the Italian Red Cross continuing to monitor, evaluate and coordinate cross-border activities among the three National Societies.

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Red Cross of Montenegro is committed to the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process and is at the action and accountability phase. The PER approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyse the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism and ultimately take necessary action to improve it.



Strategic and operational coordination

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Enhance cooperation and establish partnerships with relevant local, national and international stakeholders
- Strengthen the role and ensure active participation within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- Strengthen its auxiliary role through the updating and implementation of national legislation
- Improve cooperation with diplomatic missions and international organizations in Montenegro
- Contribute to the development of diverse policies and strategies while fostering ongoing communication and the exchange of best practices
- Utilize applicable tools such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for fundraising and provide training for local Red Cross branches related to resource mobilization



Key Institutional Indicators

The National Society has put in place the following:

- Health, accident and death compensation for volunteers
- Youth engagement strategies
- National Society Development plan
- Data management system
- Protection of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policy

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will continue to provide long-term support for strategic and operational coordination to the Red Cross of Montenegro. The IFRC promotes collaboration between the National Society and external partners, enhancing coordination structures and processes. Through the IFRC, the Red Cross of Montenegro gains access to technical tools and resources, strengthening its effectiveness in delivering humanitarian assistance.



Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Advocate for tax exemptions and improved legislation to increase access to resources and funding from government, donors and private sector
- Align local branch statutes and internal regulations with the new National Society [Statute](#) adopted in 2025
- Prepare and implement the 2026–2030 strategic planning cycle
- Establish minimum standards for local branches to ensure consistent quality and effectiveness and implement the Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment ([BOCA](#))
- Pilot and evaluate existing digital solutions for donor engagement
- Strengthen its capacity to fulfil its humanitarian mandate, including disaster and crisis response, through the Preparedness for Effective response ([PER](#)) Framework
- Enhance volunteer recruitment and training while upgrading systems to ensure the protection and well-being of staff and volunteers

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** will continue providing technical and financial support to the National Society towards its development initiatives. The IFRC will support the National Society in developing organizational development priorities and strong branch network that deliver quality humanitarian services through operational excellence and other targeted areas of assistance required for the overall development of the National Society.

In 2025, the Red Cross of Montenegro initiated the process of branch enhancement and development by utilizing the [IFRC BOCA](#) and responded to identified gaps with annual development plans at the local level. This approach is designed to establish consensus on priorities for enhancing branches, creating a plan to strengthen capacity and strengthen community resilience.

The **Italian Red Cross** supports the Red Cross of Montenegro through financial and technical contributions, including expert participation in online workshops and knowledge sharing. For 2025–2026, it has committed funding to the IFRC for resource mobilization in Montenegro and other regional initiatives. Additionally, with support from the Government of Italy, two young Italian volunteers will be deployed to Montenegro for 10 months. Hosted by Red Cross of Montenegro, they will contribute to youth and volunteer programmes and assist in implementing key bilateral projects.



Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Conduct targeted outreach through national and international campaigns to effectively mobilize donations
- Strengthen advocacy and communication efforts by identifying messaging multipliers: 'One message – many messengers', to enhance visibility and strategic positioning
- Strengthen linkages and ensuring alignment between local, regional and global [humanitarian diplomacy](#) efforts
- Establish extended teams of humanitarian diplomacy and communications experts to jointly address fundraising objectives and challenges

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** will support the National Society in [humanitarian diplomacy](#) by providing technical and financial assistance to influence government initiatives. The IFRC will continue to emphasize the need for stronger advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy to influence funding from public authorities. Efforts will focus on enabling the National Society to highlight its impact and increase its visibility as the primary humanitarian service provider in the country.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Strengthen capacities for humanitarian support and disaster response in Montenegro and internationally by ensuring efficient reception, storage and distribution of humanitarian aid and response equipment
- Ensure sustainable financing by diversifying funding sources and strengthening resource mobilization efforts
- Promote the [digitalization](#) of organizational processes and integrate new technologies to improve efficiency and service delivery
- Develop and establish a systematic risk management tool to support ongoing risk monitoring and mitigation

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the National Society's efforts to strengthen transparency and [integrity](#). It will provide technical assistance in developing agile systems, including feedback mechanisms and around planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting ([PMER](#)). Additionally, the IFRC will support the National Society in maintaining flexibility and accountability to effectively respond to evolving needs.

Building on the risk management training organized by the IFRC in 2025, the National Society has strengthened its integrity and reputational risk mechanism to support ongoing risk monitoring and mitigation.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC provides support to the Montenegro Red Cross through its Country Cluster Delegation to Central and South-Eastern Europe (CSEE) located in Sarajevo, as well as from its regional office for Europe, based in Budapest, Hungary. The IFRC support to the National Society centres on enhancing its operational capacity, improving [preparedness and response](#) systems and promoting the implementation of humanitarian programmes in line with international standards.

The IFRC provides the National Society technical assistance, capacity building and Capacity Building Funds ([CBF](#)) for innovation and [digitalization](#). The IFRC also provides guidance on [disaster risk reduction](#), health programming, mental health and psychosocial support ([MHPSS](#)), volunteer management and community resilience. In recent years, the IFRC has supported the Red Cross of Montenegro in its operations through the IFRC Emergency Appeal for [Ukraine and Impacted Countries Crisis](#).



Volunteers of the Red Cross of Montenegro distributing food and hygiene parcels, water jerry cans, blankets, rubber boots, kitchen sets and mattresses to the population affected by floods in Montenegro. (Photo: Red Cross of Montenegro)

IFRC membership coordination

IFRC membership coordination involves working with National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, agree on common priorities and jointly develop common strategies. This includes addressing issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian acceptance and access, mobilizing funding and other resources, clarifying consistent public messaging, and monitoring progress. It also entails ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need incorporate clarity of humanitarian action while linking with development assistance, and contribute to reinforcing National Societies in their respective countries, including through their auxiliary role.

The **Austrian Red Cross** provides technical expertise and funding for programmes assisting older people, including the [HOPE project](#), which established two community care centres for older people and caregivers in underserved areas. It also helps the Red Cross of Montenegro position itself as a service provider and enhance early warning and advanced first aid capacities.

The **Italian Red Cross** has a long-standing partnership with the Red Cross of Montenegro, contributing to organizational development, resource mobilization and technical support. Current initiatives include the fourth phase of the Roma Employment in Montenegro (REM) project, promoting inclusion and economic opportunities for Roma and Egyptian communities, and preparations for a historical exhibition marking 150 years of the National Society. The Italian Red Cross also supports cross-border home care projects for older people, youth engagement programmes and IFRC resource mobilization efforts, alongside deploying volunteers to Montenegro.

The **Swiss Red Cross** focuses on migration and displacement, supporting timely and flexible services for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees along the Balkan route, while promoting regional cooperation and knowledge exchange among National Societies.

Movement coordination

The Red Cross of Montenegro 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](#).

Coordination with other actors

In line with its mission, the Red Cross of Montenegro is committed to strengthening and expanding cooperation with international humanitarian organizations. The Red Cross of Montenegro works closely with the diplomatic and consular sector in Montenegro and collaborates with numerous international organizations, including the Delegation of the European Union, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Health Organization (WHO) and various international networks.

Additionally, the Red Cross of Montenegro is a member of '[Neighbours Help First](#)' network that gathers Southeast European National Societies (SENS), IFRC and ICRC. Through this network, with National Societies sharing a common background and facing similar challenges, there has been strong regional cooperation in many areas, especially in connection with emergency response.



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 16 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.

About the plan

The plan reflects the priorities of the host National Society, the IFRC and National Societies providing international support, for 2026 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 for joint monitoring and reporting. It will be revised on an annual basis to adjust priorities and funding requirements to the needs in-country.

Explanatory note on funding requirements and definitions

- The total funding requirements show what the IFRC network seeks to raise for the given year through different channels: funding through the IFRC, through participating National Societies as bilateral support, and through the host National Society from non-IFRC network sources. All figures should include the administrative and operational costs of the different entities
- Host National Society funding requirements not coming from IFRC network sources can comprise a variety of sources, as demonstrated when reporting on income in the [IFRC network databank](#)
- Participating National Society funding requirements for bilateral support are those validated by respective headquarters, and often represent mainly secured funding
- IFRC funding requirements comprise both what is sourced from the IFRC core budget and what is sought through emergency and thematic funding. This includes participating National Societies' multilateral support through IFRC, and all other IFRC sources of funding
- Figures for the years beyond 2026 most often represent partial requirements that are known at time of publication. Many National Societies have annual internal approval processes for funding requirements, and lower figures do not mean a decrease in funding requirements in future years
- Missing data and breakdowns: data may not be available from all IFRC network members for funding requirements. This may lead to inconsistencies across different reporting tools as well as potential under-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) 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
- **Definitions:**
 - » **Local units:** ALL subdivisions of a National Society that coordinate and deliver services to people. These include ALL levels (provincial, state, city, district branches, sections or chapters, headquarters, and regional and intermediate offices, as well as community-based units)
 - » **Branches:** A Branch has its roles, responsibilities and relationship with the National Headquarters defined through the National Society's Statutes, including the level of autonomy given, especially in the area of its legal status, mobilising local resources and building local partnerships, and the decisions it makes. It has a local-level decision-making mechanism through its Branch members, board and volunteers, equally defined through the National Society's Statutes

Additional information

- [IFRC network country plans](#) • [All plans and reports](#)
- Data on National Societies on [IFRC Network Databank](#)
- Live data on active emergency operations on [IFRC GO platform](#)
- Live data on [IFRC-Disaster Response Emergency Fund Response and Anticipatory pillars](#)
- [Evaluations and research bank](#) • [Donor response reports](#)

Contact information

Jelena Dubak

Secretary General
Red Cross of Montenegro
T +382 6933 4084
jelena.dubak@ckcg.me
www.ckcg.me

Andrej Naricyn

Head of Strategic Partnerships & Resource Mobilization
IFRC Regional Office for Europe, Budapest
T +367 0430 6528
andrej.naricyn@ifrc.org

Maria Kristensen

Head of Delegation
IFRC Country Cluster Delegation to Central and South-Eastern Europe, based in Sarajevo
T +387 603 486 699
maria.kristensen@ifrc.org

Sumitha Martin

Lead
IFRC Global Strategic Planning & Reporting Centre
New Delhi
sumitha.martin@ifrc.org