



PANAMA

2025-2027 IFRC network country plan



Multi-Year Funding Requirement **CHF 19M**

21 April 2025

In support of the Red Cross Society of Panama



23

National Society
branches



32

National Society
local units



132

National Society
staff



1,300

National Society
volunteers

People to be reached



2,000

Climate and
environment



6,000

Disasters
and crises



3,000

Health and
wellbeing



45,000

Migration and
displacement



5,000

Values, power
and inclusion

IFRC network multi-year focus

Longer-term needs

- Disaster risk management
- Climate change adaptation
- Violence prevention and protection
- Epidemic preparedness and response

Capacity development

- Humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy
- Partnerships and resource mobilization
- Quality and upgraded management systems

Key country data links

INFORM Severity rating

Medium

INFORM Climate Change Risk Index

Medium

Human Development Index rank

57

World Bank Population figure

4.5M

World Bank Population below poverty line

21.8%

Funding requirements

2025

2026**

2027**

**Projected funding requirements

Total 6.5M CHF

Total 6.3M CHF

Total 6M CHF

Through the Host National Society

3.3M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

1M CHF

Through the IFRC

2.2M CHF

Through the Host National Society

3.6M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

426,000 CHF

Through the IFRC

2.2M CHF

Through the Host National Society

3.7M CHF

Through the IFRC

2.3M CHF

HNS Breakdown

IFRC Breakdown

HNS Breakdown

IFRC Breakdown

HNS Breakdown

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

Longer term needs

88,000 CHF

Climate & environment

275,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

660,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

2.2M CHF

Migration & displacement

22,000 CHF
Values, power & inclusion

50,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

55,000 CHF

Climate & environment

433,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

37,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

1.1M CHF

Migration & displacement

99,000 CHF
Values, power & inclusion

499,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

97,000 CHF

Climate & environment

302,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

726,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

2.4M CHF

Migration & displacement

24,000 CHF
Values, power & inclusion

54,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

60,000 CHF

Climate & environment

214,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

41,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

1.2M CHF

Migration & displacement

109,000 CHF
Values, power & inclusion

549,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

100,000 CHF

Climate & environment

312,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

748,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

2.5M CHF

Migration & displacement

25,000 CHF
Values, power & inclusion

56,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

62,000 CHF

Climate & environment

221,000 CHF

Disasters & crises

42,000 CHF

Health & wellbeing

1.3M CHF











Migration & displacement

112,000 CHF
Values, power & inclusion

566,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

See back page for explanatory note on funding requirements

Participating National Societies bilateral support for 2025

National Society name	Funding Requirement	Climate	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling local actors
Italian Red Cross	25,000						
Spanish Red Cross	1M						
Swiss Red Cross							

Total Funding requirement **CHF 1M**

Participating National Societies

Italian Red Cross

Spanish Red Cross

Swiss Red Cross

IFRC Appeal codes

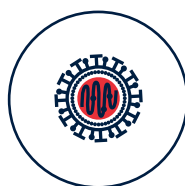
Long-term needs:

MAAPA002

Hazards



Floods



Disease outbreaks



Population movement



Hurricanes and cyclones



Drought



Economic hardship

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

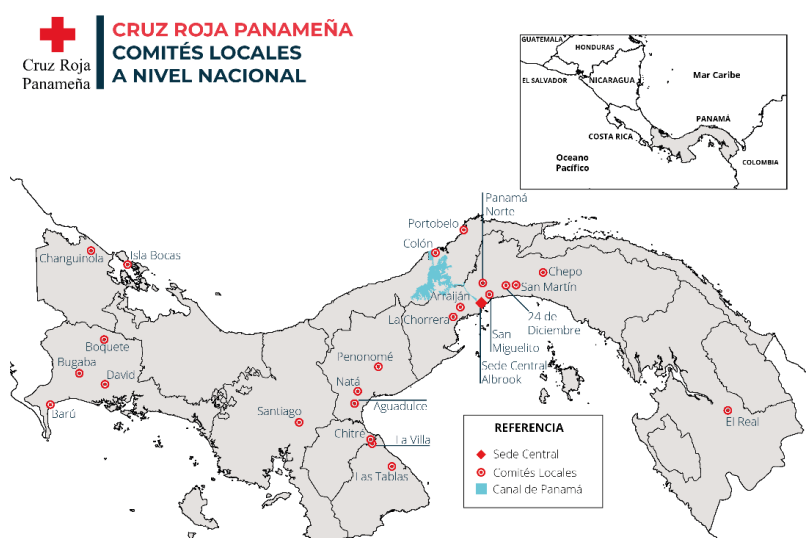
The **Red Cross Society of Panama** was established in 1917 and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1925. Recognized by the government as an autonomous volunteer-based humanitarian organization, it acts as an auxiliary to public authorities, providing critical support in emergency response, disaster preparedness, health services and community development. The National Society plays a vital role in the protection and relief of communities, focusing on emergency and disaster relief, health services, education and training, community development and volunteering. It provides medical care, disease prevention campaigns, first aid services and support for migrant reception centres and host communities. Additionally, it engages in capacity-building efforts through first aid training, disaster preparedness and advocacy, while also running social and economic support projects for vulnerable populations. Volunteers play an essential role in the Red Cross Society of Panama's humanitarian efforts, undergoing recruitment, training and mobilization.

The Red Cross Society of Panama has made significant advancements in disaster preparedness and response, including the implementation of a national disaster risk plan approved at the cabinet level. Its health initiatives have had a tangible impact, particularly in Panama North, Colon, and Panama West, where disease prevention programmes have benefitted many communities. The National Society has also been instrumental in reconnecting separated families through the restoring family links (RFL) services. Strengthening its internal structure, the National Society has standardized local committee communication channels and social networks. Policy advancements have also been a priority, with the

adoption of a National Migration Policy, a National Policy on Safer Access and Operational Risk Management, a National Policy for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), a Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) Policy, a Fraud Prevention Policy and an Environmental Policy and Health Strategy.

To enhance institutional capacity, improve emergency response and increase its impact on vulnerable communities, the Red Cross Society of Panama has outlined its Strategic Plan for 2021-2025. This plan aims to strengthen risk reduction, emergency response and environmental preservation, enable healthy, safe and dignified lives for communities, promote social inclusion and support for disadvantaged populations and enhance institutional values, accountability and public trust. The National Society actively assesses its capabilities through structured evaluations such as the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC), which identifies areas for improvement and the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) assessment. The 2022 PER evaluation demonstrated significant progress, reducing non-existent preparedness components from 54 per cent to 7 per cent, leading to a structured work plan for improving migration response efforts.

The Red Cross Society of Panama faces ongoing challenges, including adapting to evolving humanitarian needs, particularly in migration and climate change adaptation and securing funding for sustainable community development. Despite these challenges, the National Society has strengthened its disaster response capacity, expanded community programmes and improved organizational efficiency through strategic planning and policy implementation.



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

The Republic of Panama is strategically located at the centre of the Western Hemisphere, serving as a vital bridge between Central and South America. It is bordered to the north by the Caribbean Sea, to the east by Colombia, to the south by the Pacific Ocean and to the west by Costa Rica. Covering an area of 75,517 square kilometres, Panama features an isthmus that is at its narrowest point only 80 kilometres wide. This unique geography has made Panama a crucial transit hub, particularly with the presence of [the Panama Canal](#). A significant portion of the country is covered by the dense jungle of the Darien Gap, an area that remains one of the least accessible and most ecologically significant regions in the world. The capital, Panama City, is the country's political and economic centre, and the official currency is the balboa, which is pegged to the U.S. dollar.

Panama has a population of approximately [4.6 million people](#), with a population density of 59 inhabitants per square kilometre. The country is administratively divided into ten provinces, 79 districts, 668 townships, and five indigenous territories. Most of the population is mestizo, with a strong presence of indigenous groups including the Ngöbe, Buglé, Kuna, Emberá, Wounaan, Naso-Teribe and Bri-bri peoples. Spanish is the official language, and while the culture and customs of the population are primarily Caribbean Spanish, there are notable influences from African, Chinese and indigenous traditions.

Panama is a democratic republic, governed by a constitution that guarantees individual and social rights. The country's [political system](#) includes a president, currently José Raúl Mulino, who was elected in May 2024 for a five-year term. Legislative power resides in the National Assembly, composed of deputies elected by popular vote. The Panamanian government plays a crucial role in the development of the nation, particularly

in economic and social policies aimed at improving living conditions and reducing inequality.

The Panamanian economy is predominantly service based, with major contributions from banking, commerce and tourism. Its strategic location has facilitated international trade and financial services, positioning it as a key player in global commerce. The economy experienced strong growth of 8.1 per cent in 2022, followed by a moderate expansion of 7.5 per cent in 2023. The growth forecast for 2024 stands at 5.5 per cent, reflecting continued economic resilience. However, despite these positive indicators, Panama still faces significant social challenges. The multidimensional poverty rate remains [particularly high](#) among indigenous populations, standing at approximately 55.8 per cent, signalling severe deprivation in education, healthcare and housing. Economic inequality remains a pressing issue, with one of the highest income inequality rates in [Latin America](#). Inflation stabilized at around 4.2 per cent in 2023, and [unemployment has improved](#) to 8.2 per cent, although challenges persist in generating formal employment opportunities.

Education in Panama is structured across four levels, and the literacy rate is relatively high at 96.2 per cent. However, concerns remain about school dropout rates, which increased to 5.5 per cent in 2022. Additionally, 20 per cent of the population continues to live in poverty, emphasizing the need for inclusive economic policies. Migration remains another key issue for Panama. Due to its geographical position, the country serves as a major transit point for migrants traveling from South America toward North America. The [Darien Gap](#), a dangerous and remote jungle region, has seen an increasing number of irregular crossings, with over 520,000 recorded in 2023 and more than 300,000 in 2024.

While Panama has enjoyed consistent economic expansion, it continues to grapple with social and environmental challenges. Issues such as poverty, corruption, crime and climate change pose ongoing threats to sustainable development.



The Red Cross Society of Panama provided cash transfers to families affected by past floods in Pacora, Panama Este, helping them meet their most urgent needs in February 2025 (Photo: Red Cross Society of Panama)

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Climate and environment

Panama is highly vulnerable to climate change due to its geographical location, tropical climate, and topography. The country is frequently affected by extreme weather events, including flooding, droughts, and hurricanes. Its extensive river network and long coastline make it particularly susceptible to rising sea levels and increased precipitation, which lead to severe flooding. Furthermore, being in the path of Atlantic hurricanes exacerbates the damage to infrastructure and population centres. These climate impacts pose significant threats to health, food security, access to clean water and environmental stability, particularly for remote and vulnerable communities with limited coping mechanisms.

Recent years have seen a rise in maximum and minimum temperatures across Panama, coupled with declining rainfall levels. These climatic shifts have strained the country's water resources, leading to prolonged droughts that negatively impact key economic sectors such as agriculture, fishing, and tourism. A notable example of climate change's direct effect is the reduction of daily passages through the Panama Canal due to severe droughts, leading to economic and logistical delays in global trade. Projections indicate further increases in temperature, which will have broad implications for agriculture, pest populations, public health, and even natural processes such as photosynthesis.

Recognizing the need for climate action, Panama has committed to global environmental efforts, particularly under the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through Executive Decree No. 393 and the National Strategic Plan with a State Vision, Panama integrates economic, social and environmental sustainability into its policies. These frameworks emphasize regional and municipal consultations to ensure the legitimacy of sustainable initiatives, with a focus on reducing the country's environmental footprint.

Panama's climate policies are an intersection of economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development. The country seeks to balance economic growth with environmental stewardship while ensuring social inclusivity. This involves leveraging governance mechanisms to drive climate action and sustainability, effectively integrating the principles of universality, resilience and long-term sustainability into national policies and community-based initiatives.

Panama faces significant climate challenges but remains proactive in addressing them through strategic environmental policies, international commitments and community-driven resilience efforts. While extreme weather events, rising

temperatures, and water scarcity pose ongoing threats, Panama's commitment to sustainability and climate resilience through the Paris Agreement, SDGs and national policies positions it as a key player in global climate action. Continued emphasis on adaptation, mitigation, and inclusive governance will be essential for the country's long-term environmental security and sustainability.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross Society of Panama 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.

The Red Cross Society of Panama has aligned itself with the universal call for climate resilience through its commitment to poverty reduction, inequality mitigation and sustainable development. Article 8, paragraph 11 of Law 422 of 8 February 2024 highlights its role in addressing humanitarian consequences linked to climate change. This includes environmental education, sustainable development initiatives and the promotion of resilience-building strategies in local communities. By aligning with the 17 SDGs, the National Society aims to implement both short- and long-term strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen Panama's climate adaptability.

Planned activities in 2025

- Continue initiatives within the National Society focused on recycling, waste sorting and paper use reduction
- Conduct comprehensive environmental analyses to identify, prevent and mitigate potential negative effects in its operations
- Incorporate environmental education into projects and operations, emphasizing the link between degradation, health and livelihoods
- Embed environmental considerations into institutional strategies, projects, regulations and procedures

- Develop action plans to optimize waste management using the principles of reduction, reuse and recycling
- Design income-generating projects through sustainable agriculture, recycling and repurposing waste materials
- Implement educational and awareness programmes on climate change adaptation and mitigation at the local level
- Enhance environmental education through school brigades, local committee training and activities such as reforestation, beach cleanups and renewable energy promotion

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The Red Cross Society of Panama is part of the global [Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#) between the IFRC and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and

Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), and receives implementing support from the Spanish Red Cross. The Red Cross Society of Panama will be supported in promoting good environmental practices in communities and schools. Trained volunteers will work with students in schools to protect water resources and the environment. Volunteers trained in climate-smart livelihoods will support communities in engaging in income generating activities that are adapted to the climate.

The IFRC will further support the National Society with the technical implementation of the guide on climate-smart operations and programmes and workshops. It will provide technical support for the development of 'green' sectoral interventions through pilot projects such as waste management in communities. The National Society will also be supported in developing digital content and campaigns to catalyse social conversations about addressing climate crises and their impact on livelihoods, communities and ecosystems.



Disasters and crises

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

According to its geographic position and geo-tectonic characteristics, the country is exposed to a variety of hydrometeorological and geophysical hazards. Panama is characterized by [intense and long-lasting rainfall](#) and is susceptible to ENSO/El Niño-La Niña episodes. The recurrent impacts of weather and climate-related events present natural hazards including hurricanes, strong electrical discharges, floods, sea spills, droughts and vegetation fires.

The disasters and crises generate damage and losses which cause crop failure, infrastructure damage, loss of livestock, and reduced operations in the Panama Canal. In addition, such severe crises make it difficult to respond to emergencies and recover from all impacts.

Other geological, sudden-onset and high-impact events include volcanos, earthquakes and tsunamis. Spills of hazardous substances also represent a risk. Panama [ranks 14th](#) among the countries most exposed to multiple hazards based on land area. The country has 15 per cent of its total area exposed and 12.5 per cent of its total population is vulnerable to two or more climate-related hazards. In addition, Panama ranks 35th among the countries with the highest percentage of total population considered to be at high mortality risk from multiple hazards.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

Under Law 422 (2024), the Red Cross Society of Panama collaborates with national, provincial and local authorities to provide emergency and disaster response, leveraging its human and material resources. It supports security forces and the National Civil Protection System in humanitarian crises and public emergencies.

In line with its [auxiliary role](#), the Red Cross Society of Panama aids in the development and implementation of contingency plans and risk-based response mechanisms. It plays a key role in Integrated Disaster Risk Management (GIRD), mobilizing volunteers and staff to address climate, environmental and health crises.

The National Society's disaster risk management approach is structured around four main pillars:

- Anticipatory action – proactive measures to reduce risks before disasters occur
- Disaster risk reduction – preventative strategies to minimize vulnerabilities
- Preparedness and response – enhancing readiness and rapid intervention capabilities
- Early recovery – supporting communities in rebuilding livelihoods post-disaster

GIRD integrates disaster management into broader development strategies, recognizing climate change as a key factor in worsening disasters. The approach prioritizes human rights, social inclusion and sustainable development, ensuring vulnerable communities are empowered and included in risk management programmes.

Planned activities in 2025

- Establish a framework for action to align with national laws and international agreements, strengthening its capacity to reduce, prepare for and recover from disasters while ensuring organizational resilience
- Implement cash transfer programmes
- Advocate for the inclusion of anticipatory actions within national disaster risk management plans
- Strengthen crisis, emergency and disaster response coordination through the Risk Management Headquarters and its connection to Institutional and Government Operations Centres
- Strengthen local capacities by appointing Risk Management focal points in committees to support communities in preparedness, early action and response
- Provide technical and informational support to Disaster Risk Management Committees, focusing on local risk management leadership
- Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements related to disaster risk management, aligning with global agreements Panama has committed to
- Allocate and manage resources effectively to identify and mitigate risks at national, regional and local levels, integrating disaster risk management into strategic decision-making

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

Through the [DG ECHO-IFRC Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#), the Red Cross Society of Panama will be supported in training local emergency committees and engaging them in the development of early warning systems. Key messages on flood preparedness will be delivered to at-risk communities in their local language. The National Society will continue to strengthen its response capacity, supporting volunteers to become accredited in urban search and rescue, and preparing for hurricane season in line with the approved National Disaster Response Plan.

The IFRC will also assist the National Society with developing training on community resilience for its staff and volunteers. This will include adapting, contextualizing and sharing information in local languages, and putting in place community feedback systems and participatory approaches to all operations. The National Society will also be supported in developing protocols for formulating contingency plans and the Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs).

IFRC mechanisms such as the Disaster Response Emergency Fund ([IFRC-DREF](#)) and Emergency Appeals will be drawn on as needed for the National Society to respond to disasters and crises. In 2024, IFRC provided DREF allocations for two separate emergencies.

The IFRC approved a [DREF for flood](#) in 2024, in support of the Red Cross Society of Panama. This enabled the National Society to utilize an immediate allocation of CHF 249,979 to assist 2,500 people affected in Los Santos, Panama and Herrera. The actions included distribution of cleaning and hygiene kits, blankets and jerrycans to people affected, search and rescue for the people missing, [first aid](#) assistance and pre-hospital transfers to the people evacuated, monitored the affected areas through EOCs, and conducted needs assessments.



Health and wellbeing

Medical care in Panama is divided into two large systems run by the [Ministry of Health](#) and the [Social Security Fund](#) which function in parallel; both are administratively divided into 14 health regions. Around 90 per cent of the [population](#) has access to health services from at least one of these two public institutions. Panama has a national average of 29.2 physicians and nurses per 10,000 inhabitants; however, that ratio is less in rural areas and 'comarcas' (provinces).

The public care provided by the Social Security Fund and the Ministry of Health is limited, since they often must resort to buying external medicines, which are extremely expensive

in the country. An area of priority is [maternal and child health](#) focusing on caring for women during pregnancy and childbirth, as well as children from birth to five years of age. The quality of care is an area of concern since only 65.7 per cent of pregnant women receive all the tests and vaccines recommended during pregnancy. A total of 26.1 per cent were assisted by doctors, and 73.9 per cent by traditional birth attendants in 2022.

[Non-communicable diseases](#) constitute the number one cause of death in Panama, primarily cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks, arterial hypertension, and strokes (26

per cent); cancer (14 per cent), chronic respiratory diseases (4 per cent) and diabetes (7 per cent).

Panama's ongoing struggle against climate change and disasters also increases the risk of vector-borne diseases and disruption to health services, as well as damage to infrastructure.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross Society of Panama is actively responding to the dengue outbreak declared on 25 July 2024, through the DREF emergency fund, assisting 60,000 people in Colon and Panama provinces. Key actions include medical supply distribution, awareness campaigns and community assistance in coordination with the Ministry of Health, focusing on mosquito control, hygiene promotion and epidemiological surveillance.

In line with its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, the National Society also strengthens water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes, addressing vector control and waterborne disease prevention in vulnerable communities. Efforts in Darién's Migration Programme provide safe WASH promotion for displaced populations. The National Society collaborates through the WASH HUB to enhance regional response capacity.

Plans include expanding WASH infrastructure ("hardware") and hygiene promotion ("software"), covering water treatment, sanitation and disease prevention training. However, financial sustainability remains a challenge, requiring increased resources and technical support.

The Red Cross Society of Panama remains committed to community participation, volunteer training and integrated health approaches, ensuring accessible and sustainable healthcare for vulnerable populations.

Planned activities in 2025

- Conduct health, self-care and nutrition awareness campaigns with a focus on children's nutrition and promote health education in schools by engaging school brigades to teach children about health and hygiene
- Disseminate and train communities and volunteers in the mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

strategy and provide MHPSS to affected populations, volunteers and staff to help manage stress and trauma

- Distribute essential hygiene supplies (soap, disinfectants, water purification tablets, clean water storage containers)
- Establish interim emergency water and sanitation solutions, including portable water purification systems, emergency latrines and mobile showers
- Build and maintain safe drinking water and sanitation systems (wells, rainwater harvesting, wastewater treatment systems)
- Train communities in maintenance and management of water and sanitation infrastructure, forming local water committees
- Implement hygiene and waste management education programmes, including workshops on water conservation and sanitation system maintenance
- Provide health care to migrant populations and host communities, ensuring access to quality services while upholding humanitarian principles
- Train and support health focal points and WASH focal points to strengthen community-based health and sanitation efforts

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

Through the DG ECHO-IFRC Pilot Programmatic Partnership, the Red Cross Society of Panama will be supported by the IFRC and EU National Societies in further strengthening its capacity for epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response, in line with the recently developed national health strategy. This support will include awareness-raising on vector control for the prevention of mosquito-borne illnesses in target communities, as well as early response to outbreaks, community surveillance, active case finding and infection prevention and control.

The IFRC will also assist the National Society with first aid training in schools and communities, including the formation of community first aid brigades.

The IFRC approved a DREF for dengue epidemic in 2024, in support of the Red Cross Society of Panama. This enabled the National Society to utilize an immediate allocation of CHF 420,995 to support 60,000 people.



Panama's strategic geographic location has made it a key transit country for migrants traveling northward, particularly toward the United States. Every day, people from over 45 countries enter Panama, driven by economic hardship, violence and insecurity in their home countries. The Darien Gap, a vast and treacherous jungle that separates Panama and Colombia, has become the primary crossing route for migrants. This area is characterized by its extreme environmental conditions, lack of infrastructure and serious security risks, making it one of the most dangerous migration routes in the world.

In recent years, migration flows through Panama have increased exponentially. In 2022, over 100,000 migrants had crossed the Darien Gap by August, marking a 69 per cent increase from the previous year. The crisis worsened in 2023, with a record 520,085 migrants making the journey, primarily from Venezuela, Ecuador, Haiti and China. By August 2024, approximately 238,185 migrants had crossed, reflecting a significant 80 per cent decrease compared to August 2023. However, migration continues to place immense pressure on Panama's humanitarian response capacity, as national institutions, humanitarian agencies and host communities struggle to provide adequate support.

Migrants crossing the Darien jungle face numerous risks, including exposure to extreme weather conditions, lack of food and water and high rates of disease and injury due to the rugged terrain. Additionally, criminal organizations and human trafficking networks operate in the region, increasing the risk of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse. Migrants are also vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion upon reaching host communities, often struggling to access essential services and employment opportunities. Among the most at-risk populations are children and adolescents, who make up 22 per cent of the migrants, with 35 per cent of them being under five years old, as well as unaccompanied minors and indigenous communities living in the Darien region, who already face high levels of poverty and marginalization.

To address these challenges, the Panamanian government, humanitarian organizations and the UN Human Mobility Group have joined forces to improve migration management and response efforts. The country's legal framework, including Law No. 5 of 1977, provides some protections for refugees and safeguards against forced expulsion. Additionally, the Panamanian government has strengthened coordination with international agencies to ensure a more effective response. In 2024, Panama and the United States signed a migration agreement, which includes funding for deportation flights and assistance for repatriating migrants.

The continued migration crisis has also impacted host communities, straining local resources and services, particularly in health, shelter and security. Tensions have

arisen between migrants and local populations as social and economic pressures increase, making long-term integration efforts more difficult. Moreover, humanitarian organizations are facing funding shortages, limiting their ability to provide sustained assistance.

Although migration numbers have declined in 2024, the root causes of migration including economic instability, violence and climate-related displacement persist. Future migration flows are likely to fluctuate depending on regional crises and policy changes. To ensure safe and dignified migration, Panama must continue to strengthen international cooperation, enhance protection measures and secure additional resources to address the humanitarian needs of migrants and the communities that host them.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

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

As a result of its auxiliary role and the close collaboration with the Ministry of Security through SENAFRONT, the Red Cross Society of Panama will:

- Ensure that migrants and displaced persons have access to humanitarian service points (HSPs) along migration routes, and durable solutions where appropriate
- Engage with migrants, displaced persons and host communities to assess, understand and respond to their priority needs more effectively
- Reduce the vulnerabilities of migrants through the provision of humanitarian services at temporary stations and host communities
- Promote the rights and dignity of migrants and protect them against violence and exploitation

Planned activities in 2025

- Provide essential services, including access to health care, safe water and distribution of necessities
- Promote the protection of migrants' rights through awareness campaigns and guidance for vulnerable populations

- Align migration policies and strategies with the broader humanitarian movement, strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders
- Revise and strengthen the National Society's migration strategy to reflect current challenges and trends
- Adapt the migration programme to address the specific needs of different groups, such as migrants in transit and asylum seekers
- Develop and execute a structured plan for migration response, including training for volunteers and leadership teams
- Enhance infrastructure and services at key support centres, integrating protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) and WASH approaches
- Work alongside governments, international agencies and NGOs to enhance migration assistance and protection efforts

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

Under the [DG ECHO-IFRC Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#), the Red Cross Society of Panama will be supported in providing humanitarian assistance and protection to the growing number of people on the move. **The IFRC** will support the National Society in tracking migration flows and actions. At least one community engagement and accountability ([CEA](#)) feedback mechanism will be present in a humanitarian service point. The National Society will also be provided with technical support in the preparation of information materials to be delivered to migrants and host communities. The material will be cognizant of language, culture and literacy needs.

The **Spanish Red Cross** has been collaborating with the Red Cross Society of Panama for more than 40 years. Currently, it is contributing to strengthening the National Society's management, coordination, and response capacity in the provision of humanitarian assistance to migrants in the Darién and Chiriquí region, in accordance with the National Migration Strategy.



Values, power and inclusion

Four out of ten children in Panama do not have access to pre-school education, and three out of five do not have access to secondary school. A study by the Ministry of Labour and Labour Development and the International Labour Organization in [2017](#) concluded that 17.2 per cent of adolescents and young people in Panama were neither studying nor working. Panama also suffers high rates of violence. Although there has been some reduction in crimes affecting life and property, organized crime, and gangs, including human trafficking organizations and other non-state armed groups, are still a major concern for many people. As of 2019, Panama saw [17.2 homicides](#) a year per 100,000 population. Most people killed were between the ages of 15-29. While the country has national action plans addressing different types of violence, the regulation of handguns is yet to be brought into legislation. Panama ranks 58th in the [gender gap index](#) which measures inequality in participation in the economy and the skilled labour market, in politics, in access to education and life expectancy. Panama experiences violence in all its manifestations such as domestic violence, homicides, and sexual violence. The most vulnerable groups in Panama include people of African descent, indigenous people, the LGBTQ+ community, and people with disabilities.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Red Cross Society of Panama is committed to improving its institutional capacity and strengthening its transparency, ensuring that every action is aligned with the principles of commitment, accountability and trust. In this context,

a strategic framework has been designed to anticipate, adapt and transform the National Society in the face of new challenges:

- Develop innovative approaches to improve crisis anticipation and adaptation, integrating a new funding structure that increases the resources available to the National Society
- Establish strategies to generate new financial flows through international collaborations, strategic alliances and sustainable funds that allow long-term growth. In addition, internal processes will be strengthened to ensure accountability in the use of resources and transparency in operations, which will build trust both nationally and internationally

Planned activities in 2025

- Create annual care plan with a focus on protection, gender and inclusion ([PGI](#))
- Promote educational brigades in communities as agents of change
- Promote dialogue and cooperation between different groups to create safe and harmonious environments
- Ensure that all people, regardless of their origin, gender, age, disability or condition, can actively participate in its activities and decisions

- Establish educational and training programmes that highlight the importance of inclusion, participation and diversity aimed at people who, for various reasons, have had to abandon their studies, offering them opportunities for their educational and personal reintegration
- Assist vulnerable children, the elderly and vulnerable populations through key messages in their native languages
- Train staff and volunteers on integrating community engagement and accountability (CEA) approaches into programming

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The Red Cross Society of Panama is increasing its capacity for CEA through the [DG ECHO-IFRC Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#). Trained staff and volunteers are integrating CEA into the National Society programmes and identifying the appropriate channels to disseminate key messages and receive feedback. This will include strengthening community feedback systems to better monitor and act on community perceptions, concerns, rumours and misinformation on various issues, including disease.

As part of the [DG ECHO-IFRC Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#) framework, **the IFRC** will provide technical support to the National Society in the implementation of the training of Youth as Agents of Behaviour Change ([YABC](#)). It will also assist the Red Cross Society of Panama in training PGI staff and volunteers on approaches to CEA. It will ensure that all feedback data collected is disaggregated by age and gender

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Red Cross Society of Panama is committed to pursuing institutional strengthening and carried out the self-assessment part of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification ([OCAC](#)) process in 2016 and 2020. The self-assessment is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities.

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



Strategic and operational coordination

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Develop strategies for fundraising and resource mobilization
- Establish partnerships with key stakeholders, focusing on corporate social responsibility
- Create a benefits programme for strategic allies and collaborators, encouraging their long-term participation and building loyalty among strategic partners
- Ensure effective coordination of hosting clusters with partners as well as other various entities including local actors

- Modernize resource mobilization through digital platforms to attract new donors

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will assist the Red Cross Society of Panama by ensuring participation in inter-agency platforms, such as the humanitarian country team, thematic groups and working groups, especially in the context of migration. It will also ensure that all partners adhere to a National Society framework for joint planning and prioritization, both in short-term crises and in longer-term planning. The planning will be built in a way that takes advantage of the capacity of the different partners, emphasizing complementarity in the face of competition and facilitating co-creation and innovation.

The IFRC supports the Red Cross Society of Panama in coordination efforts by facilitating partnerships with international, regional and national organizations, providing

technical assistance and ensuring the National Society remains engaged in key humanitarian response networks.



National Society development

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Develop and implement a roadmap for improving management, governance and operational monitoring at the local level
- Strengthen its capacity to support the most vulnerable populations effectively
- Improve the training and readiness of volunteers to respond efficiently to emergencies and disasters
- Prioritize youth volunteerism as a key driver for behavioural change and community action
- Develop and implement initiatives to attract both individual and corporate donors, including recurring donation programmes, event sponsorships and exclusive benefits for staff and volunteers
- Ensure financial sustainability by engaging a broad range of sponsors and funding sources
- Collaborate with institutions to provide training programmes for staff and at-risk communities, reinforcing

social commitment and expanding impact in vulnerable areas

- Maintain a long-term financial strategy that balances immediate humanitarian needs with institutional growth and resilience
- Continue improving National Society capabilities in humanitarian response while staying committed to its vision and mission in alignment with its [Strategic Plan \(2021-2025\)](#)
- Establish consistent pricing models for services provided by local committees to ensure financial sustainability
- Acquire necessary equipment and expand outreach through comprehensive health, education and protection programmes

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will promote and facilitate the [OCAC](#) process and support the revision of the [Statutes of the Red Cross Society of Panama](#). The IFRC will also utilize the services of the Inter-American Centre for the Development of Volunteers to strengthen volunteerism. The IFRC will support the National Society financially through various funding programmes such as the IFRC Capacity Building Fund ([CBF](#)).



The Panama Red Cross Society distributed water storage tanks to help families prevent dengue by eliminating mosquito breeding sites in February 2025 (Photo: Red Cross Society of Panama)



Humanitarian diplomacy

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Promote humanitarian principles and values while enhancing volunteer capacity and transparency in operations
- Establish key messages, identify effective communication channels and implement tactics to reach diverse audiences through digital media, traditional media and public events
- Partner with community organizations, media and influential voices to amplify humanitarian campaigns and maximize impact
- Build credibility and support through clear, effective communication and awareness initiatives

- Engage in strategic alliances and advocacy efforts to advance humanitarian priorities and objectives
- Develop informative materials that showcase the National Society's role, achievements and ways for the public to contribute and support its mission
- Emphasize the National Society's position as an auxiliary to public authorities in humanitarian efforts

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will aid the National Society with humanitarian diplomacy, fundamental principles of the Movement and auxiliary roles of National Societies. The IFRC aims to develop content and key messages tailored to specific audiences communicated through the most effective channels.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Strengthen safety measures, tailor equipment and protocols to staff needs and ensure well-being in all operations
- Increase the number of courses aligned with strategic goals, offering educational programmes for volunteers and staff to strengthen competencies and response effectiveness
- Maintain a commitment to impartial humanitarian action, integrating individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation
- Train staff and volunteers in best practices for prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) while encouraging a safe and inclusive environment
- Implement systems and tools to enhance the National Society's emergency and humanitarian response capacity
- Update the volunteer database using the SIVOL System to optimize coordination and engagement
- Advance digital transformation by promoting the benefits of digitalization, ensuring buy-in from leadership, volunteers and staff to enhance operational efficiency
- Strengthen human resources for data analysis and information management while ensuring compliance with data protection policies

- Engage management and resource mobilization teams to actively drive digital transformation initiatives
- Work with universities and research bodies on digital projects and data management initiatives
- Expand the SIMS Network by training staff in information management to enhance digital capabilities
- Offer technical assistance to other National Societies in technology, information management and digital transformation through the Digital Transformation network

Longer-term support from the IFRC Network

The IFRC will support the Red Cross Society of Panama in enhancing accountability and agility by leveraging the available CBF funds to drive the digital transformation of the National Society and its components. This support will include improving digital and technological processes to ensure efficiency, transparency and responsiveness in humanitarian operations.

Additionally, the IFRC will provide guidance in adhering to international best practices, including compliance with IFRC policies, national laws and global data security and privacy standards. These efforts will align with the IFRC's Global Plan 2024 and Strategy 2030, ensuring that the Red Cross Society of Panama strengthens its technological infrastructure, optimizes data management and strengthens its overall operational effectiveness.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC supports the Red Cross Society of Panama through its Central America Country Cluster Delegation, based in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and the IFRC Americas regional office, based in Panama. IFRC's support focuses on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development and humanitarian diplomacy. It also supports the strengthening of accountability as a cross-cutting theme.

In 2024, the IFRC supported the Red Cross Society of Panama through a series of Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF-IFRC) operations and Emergency Appeals in relation to various hazards such as floods ([MDRPA020](#)) and dengue epidemic ([MDRPA019](#)) with allocations of CHF 249,979 and CHF 420,995 targeting 2,500 and 60,000 people affected, respectively.

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 Red Cross Society of Panama is part of the global [Pilot Programmatic Partnership](#) between the DG ECHO and IFRC, and as such, is receiving the implementation support of the **Spanish Red Cross**, as well as the coordination support of the IFRC. In this connection, the Red Cross Society of Panama is undertaking the following main interventions: promoting good environmental practices in communities and schools, climate-smart livelihoods, early warning early action for communities at risk, epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response, humanitarian assistance and protection to people on the move and community engagement and accountability (CEA). The National Society will also enhance its coordination with National Societies in Central America which are located along the migratory route, and as such, it will contribute to the Regional Information Management and Visualization System for people on the move in Central America. This partnership meets the realities of extended crises with longer-term predictable funding, facilitating actions and processes with the potential for greater, longer-term impact. It leverages the IFRC's global network and unique access to people and communities, and it helps to fulfil the ambitions of the European Union as the world's biggest international donor for humanitarian assistance. The partnership is scheduled to end in mid-2025.

The Red Cross Society of Panama, along with other National Societies in Central America, also receives support from the

[IFRC Reference Centre](#) for Institutional Disaster Preparedness (CREPD) hosted by the **Salvadorean Red Cross** and supported by the IFRC. Communication and coordination channels across the region are available for the exchange of information on operational activities and different contextual analyses, with meetings held on a regular basis. The centre assists National Societies in strengthening their disaster preparedness capacities through the development of methodologies, tools and harmonization processes, complemented by the expertise and best practices of National Societies. The following participating National Societies are supporting the Red Cross Society of Panama: The Italian Red Cross is supporting the Red Cross Society of Panama's efforts to promote a culture of non-violence and peace through educational brigades. The Spanish Red Cross has been collaborating with the Red Cross Society of Panama for more than 40 years. Currently, it is contributing to strengthening the National Society's management, coordination, and response capacity in the provision of humanitarian assistance to migrants in the Darién and Chiriquí region, in accordance with the National Migration Strategy. In this way, the Spanish Red Cross contributes to the strengthening of the Red Cross Society of Panama as a key local actor for the localization of aid with funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

The **Spanish Red Cross** collaborates with the National Society by providing funding and support in various areas, including migration, [MHPSS](#) and other initiatives currently under development. Meanwhile, the **Italian Red Cross** will contribute to the school brigade programme.

The **Dutch Red Cross** has approved funding to address migration and displacement, with these funds set to be transferred through the IFRC and integrated into its budget. Additionally, the **Swiss Red Cross** will coordinate the management of further funds based on the migration related PER assessment.

Movement coordination

The Red Cross Society of Panama ensures regular exchanges with the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross 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 in Panama works to ensure that people with the highest risk and vulnerability factors are protected and assisted and that their fundamental rights and dignity are respected. The ICRC has been present in Panama since 1989. In 2010, a headquarters agreement was signed between the Government of Panama and the ICRC, establishing a permanent presence and strengthening its exclusively humanitarian activities in the country.

Coordination with other actors

The Red Cross Society of Panama actively collaborates with national authorities, humanitarian organizations and international agencies to ensure a coordinated and effective response to emergencies, disasters and migration-related challenges.

At the national level, the Red Cross Society of Panama works closely with the Panamanian government through institutions such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Security, Ministry of Social Development and the National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC). These collaborations are formalized through agreements, conventions and memorandums of understanding, allowing joint efforts in emergency response, health promotion, social welfare and disaster prevention. The Red Cross Society of Panama also takes part in the National Operations Centre during emergencies, ensuring alignment with public policies and government response plans. Notably, during the COVID-19 pandemic and other national emergencies, the Red Cross Society of Panama coordinated extensively with the Ministry of Health and SINAPROC.

In response to the migration crisis in the Darién region, the Red Cross Society of Panama leads coordination efforts by participating in sector-specific working groups on shelter, WASH, protection and health. Key humanitarian organizations involved include HIAS, PADF, UNICEF, IOM, RET and Global Brigades. While state authorities have yet to join these coordination mechanisms, their inclusion is anticipated soon. Additionally, the Red Cross Society of Panama collaborates with the UNFPA and IOM to provide safe spaces for women at temporary migrant reception centres.

The Red Cross Society of Panama also engages in regional and international coordination efforts. It is a member of the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform (R4V) and participates in the human mobility, protection and WASH groups. The Red Cross Society of Panama works closely with DG ECHO-IFRC initiatives and partners with organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Doctors of the World and Save the Children. Weekly inter-agency meetings in Darién and Chiriquí further strengthen collaboration with the UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF and other humanitarian actors to address the growing needs of migrants, refugees and displaced persons.

Recognizing the transnational nature of migration, the Red Cross Society of Panama regularly coordinates with various state entities, including SENAFRONT, the National Migration Service and the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family Affairs. SENAFRONT plays a crucial role in leading a significant portion of the state's humanitarian response. The Red Cross Society of Panama also maintains strong partnerships with research institutions including the Gorgas Institute and regional bodies such as CEPREDENAC to strengthen disaster risk management and public health interventions.

Through these strategic collaborations, the Red Cross Society of Panama continues to strengthen its capacity to provide life-saving assistance and uphold humanitarian principles across Panama.



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

This plan reflects the priorities of the Djibouti Red Crescent, 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 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 Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)
- 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 2025 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 Global Plan and IFRC network country plan](#) • [All plans and reports](#)
- Data on National Societies on [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)
- Live data on active emergency operations on [IFRC GO platform](#)
- Live data on [IFRC-Disaster Response Emergency Fund Response and Anticipatory pillars](#)
- [IFRC Evaluation and Research Databank](#) • [Donor response reports](#)

Contact information

Red Cross Society of Panama

www.cruzroja.org.pa

Marjorie Sotofranco

Head of Delegation for Central Americas Country Cluster Delegation, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

T +504 93007044

marjorie.sotofranco@ifrc.org

Monica Portilla

Head of Strategic Partnerships & Resource Mobilization
IFRC Regional Office for Americas, Panama

T +502 586 57619

monica.portilla@ifrc.org

Sumitha Martin

Lead
IFRC Global Strategic Planning & Reporting Centre
New Delhi

sumitha.martin@ifrc.org