



# CLIMATE-RESILIENT HEALTH AND WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2025-2030

**ASIA PACIFIC**

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# FOREWORD

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The IFRC made a global call to increase urgency and action on the climate crisis and has presented the priorities of the Membership at the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP2023 and COP2024). Health and WASH teams in Asia Pacific have rallied a collective response to strengthen climate-resilient health systems and are unanimous on the urgent need for targeted adaptation efforts to tackle the impacts of climate change. To address them, we need greater creativity, innovation, and stronger partnerships at all levels, often beyond health and WASH.

This Strategic Framework outlines IFRC, Partners' and National Societies' work in Asia Pacific over the next five years to catalyse actions and aspirations on climate-resilient health and WASH programming. It emphasizes the importance of investments to increase capacities for climate resilient health and WASH systems - acting today to address future climate challenges. It articulates a shared vision for healthy and thriving communities across Asia Pacific who are more resilient and better prepared for the impacts of evolving crises and the changing climate.

The framework encourages IFRC, Partners and National Societies to work with governments, line ministries, local partners and stakeholders, and establish themselves as partners of choice in the climate-health and WASH ecosystem. Importantly, it advocates for IFRC, Partners and National Society leaders to commit to the global climate resilient health and WASH agenda and build partnerships towards achieving a common goal within the region. It does not aim for health and WASH programmes to be climate invincible. Instead, it provides coherence and alignment to build adaptable and robust health and WASH systems capable of responding to an ever-changing climate landscape.

The IFRC Health and Care team in APRO, along with country cluster and country delegations, will support National Societies and partners in adopting the strategy. The strategic objectives are formulated based on regional consultation to steer stakeholders in a unified and collaborative direction. However, these objectives are broad goals to guide the development of country-specific tools and operational plans for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

This strategic framework may be adjusted along its implementation journey and upon completion, inform impact study and learning. A fundamental assumption for the successful delivery of this strategy is availability of sustained funding for capacity building and IFRC coordination. An adaptable approach to programming and funding will facilitate greater cross-sectoral integration and local participation – working together to weather changes for healthier, more resilient communities.



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## Acknowledgements

This strategy is informed by the Asia Pacific National Societies of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and coordinated by the Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO) Health and Care team, in close developmental collaboration with thematic leads in the Health, Disasters, Climate & Crises (HDCC) unit. We are grateful to all colleagues from National Societies, partner National Societies, IFRC offices (country delegations, country cluster delegations, APRO and Geneva), colleagues from regional and global partners who contributed valuable support, perspectives and important insights.

## Acronyms

APRO	Asia Pacific Regional Office
CBS	Community-based surveillance
CEA	Community engagement and accountability
COP28	UNFCCC 28th Conference of Parties
COP29	UNFCCC 29th Conference of Parties
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECV	Epidemic control for volunteers
EWS	Early warning system
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHG	Greenhouse gases
HR	Human resources
HVAC	Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IM	Information management
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCD	Non-communicable diseases
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NS	National Society
NSD	National Society development
PGI	Protection, gender and inclusion
PMER	Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting
RCRC	Red Cross Red Crescent
RCV	Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SO	Strategic Objective
SOP	Standard operating procedures
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UHC	Universal health coverage
UN	United Nations
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization



## INTRODUCTION

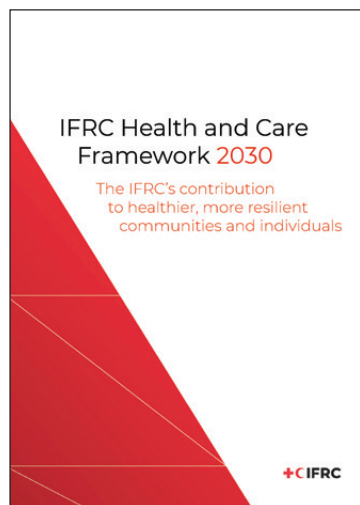
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### Preamble

The IFRC Asia Pacific Climate-resilient Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Strategic Framework 2025-2030 outlines the objectives, priorities and principles for Health and WASH programming in Asia Pacific.

The Strategic Framework will guide 38 Asia Pacific National Societies and the IFRC Health and Care team in the Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO) to scale up programming, providing actionable guidance on strengthening resilience in the face of current and future climate-induced challenges.

In 2023, the IFRC Health and Care Framework 2030 was updated with operational redirection informed by the global health and WASH landscape. It outlines four Pillars with redefined areas of services and brings the climate nexus into health and WASH programming. This regional Framework is developed in coherence with the global redirection; aimed at improving access to quality health and WASH services for the most vulnerable populations and individuals in Asia Pacific. The objectives are aligned to operationalize health and care elements of IFRC Strategy 2030, and collective efforts contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to be achieved by 2030, primarily to SDG 3 and SDG 6.



## IFRC HEALTH AND CARE FRAMEWORK 2030

[updated in March 2023 with Operational Redirection to 2030]

### Operational redirection informed by:

- o global response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- o escalating impacts of major crises including climate and health
- o efforts to better prepare for and respond to the next epidemic and pandemic
- o lack of access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene and, increasing malnutrition.

### Operational redirection Pillars:

- Pillar 1: Global Health Security
- Pillar 2: Global Health Protection and Universal Health Coverage
- Pillar 3: Global WASH Services
- Pillar 4: Transformative Partnership

### Operational redirection prioritizes:

- Climate resilient strategies, acknowledging the interconnectedness of health and climate change
- Climate change, social determinants and structural inequalities significantly influence health outcomes. Therefore, address the root causes of health disparities and promote inclusive, sustainable health solutions.

## The climate crisis is a health crisis

Climate change directly threatens human health by triggering or exacerbating climate-related hazards such as air and water pollution, heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, floods, rising sea temperatures and levels, tropical storms, and hurricanes. Indirect effects of climate change on human health and wellbeing include the negative impacts on national health systems, health facilities and an increase of risks of health-related injuries, morbidity, mortality, respiratory illnesses, water-, food- and vector-borne diseases, zoonosis, non-communicable diseases (NCD), malnutrition, mental and psychosocial health issues. These issues, especially for low-income countries, impact the quality of healthcare services provided to the population with severe outcomes on the capacity to provide universal health coverage (UHC). Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from undernutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat stress alone<sup>1</sup>.

### Climate risks to health and WASH systems are widespread, complex and costly

Climate-driven impacts do not appear alone, they are driven by compounding risks and issues such as poverty, inequality, degradation of natural resources, urbanization and marginalisation which make them worse. Currently, climate impacts are also compounding with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, protracted crises, conflict, as well as wider issues of debt.

Climate-induced impacts will account for a further \$1.1 trillion in extra costs to healthcare systems, creating a significant additional burden on already strained medical infrastructures and human resources. A recent report from the World Economic Forum<sup>2</sup> showed that by 2050, climate change is likely to cause an additional 14.5 million deaths and \$12.5 trillion in economic losses worldwide.

The climate crisis threatens to undo the last 50 years of progress in development, global health, WASH, and poverty reduction, further widening existing health inequalities between and within populations. Without assistance, countries with weak health and WASH systems will struggle to prepare and respond. For millions of people, a reliable clean water supply and proper sanitation could be the difference between being resilient to climate change or not.

1 [https://www.who.int/health-topics/climate-change#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/climate-change#tab=tab_1)

2 WEF. Quantifying the Impact of Climate Change on Human Health, Insight Report 2024 ([here](#))





## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

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### The Asia Pacific riskscape

Climate change poses a '*profound existential threat*' for Asia and the Pacific, with the potential to disrupt decades of progress and, to burden future generations with the costs of unsustainable economic development. Several countries in the region have high population densities, with a high prevalence of climate-sensitive diseases. The Global Health Security Index gives a fair oversight into the countries' capacity to prepare for and respond to future pandemics<sup>3</sup>.

Climate change affects food availability, quality, and diversity, exacerbating food and nutrition crises. According to the Global Climate Risk Index, out of the 25 economies in the world that are most affected by climate risk, a quarter reside in Southeast Asia. The Philippines, Vietnam, and Myanmar have experienced more extreme weather in the last ten years than any other of the top ten climate-risk-affected countries put together. This has resulted in a combined drop of 1.7 per cent in their GDP.

By 2050, between 600 million and 1 billion people in Asia will be living in areas severely affected by heat waves. In Asia, the probability of experiencing a deadly heat wave once or more in a decade could increase by 80 per cent. Approximately 7 million people worldwide die prematurely each year from air pollution-related diseases, with about 4 million of these deaths occurring in Asia-Pacific.<sup>4</sup> The 2018 heatwave in Japan led to a significant increase in heat-related illnesses among older persons, highlighting the need for climate-resilient care services for older persons. Mental health is often overlooked in climate change discussions, but meteorological conditions are linked to post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression.

3 Global Health Security Index <https://ghsindex.org/>

4 WHO. One third of global air pollution deaths in Asia Pacific ([here](#))



In addition to direct threats to human health, the Asia Pacific region is seeing and will continue to experience pressing consequences of the interaction between climate change phenomena and factors driving the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as physical inactivity, food insecurity, and poor nutrition.

Similarly, climate-influenced health events, including the 2020 surge in dengue cases in Bangladesh, have strained health systems and workforces. Restricted access to health care in rural areas can occur because of damage to transportation routes, as seen in Solomon Islands following the 2014 flood.

Above the immense challenges of climate change, Asia Pacific remains the most disaster-prone region in the world, where 2 million people have lost their lives to disasters since 1970<sup>5</sup>. In 2015 the Nepal earthquake damaged over 1,200 health facilities and severely disrupting healthcare access.

Despite the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warnings of considerable further health-related risks due to climate change, the region's progress on climate change mitigation and adaptation remains insufficient; hampered by heavy reliance on fossil fuels, policy constraints, limited access to climate financing, lack of public awareness and technology gaps<sup>6</sup>.

The capacity of human resources to proactively prevent or address health and WASH risks of climate change is limited. This hinders the effective implementation of adaptation strategies and limits ambition in the health and WASH sectors. In addition, surveillance and monitoring of climate-sensitive health and WASH outcomes are insufficient, and there is limited expertise on data management and analysis.

Siloed interventions with limited coordination across ministries and sectors do not address health outcomes adequately across all societal groups. There is limited enabling policy, institutional regulatory framework, and weak coordination mechanisms on integrated climate risk management.

Inequalities in access to quality healthcare and rights exist for vulnerable populations and marginalized groups. There is limited engagement of health workers, communities, marginalized groups (such as women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous people) in the design, implementation, and evaluation of health adaptation projects. These gaps will widen significantly without redress because climate change also exacerbates existing patterns of inequality while disproportionately impacting social groups that are more vulnerable to crisis.<sup>7</sup>

Financial and economic barriers, including the availability of baseline resources for the health and WASH sector, further complicate efforts for climate adaptation.

## **Ambitious climate action imperative to protect health and WASH**

The IFRC-initiated Climate Environment Charter<sup>8</sup> is a global commitment to “step up our response to growing humanitarian needs and help people adapt to the impacts of the climate and environmental crises” while in 2020, the Movement Ambitions to Address the Climate Crisis<sup>9</sup>, has clearly identified health and WASH in two of four of its pillars for collective actions to “reduce the current and future humanitarian impacts of climate change and support people to adapt in the face of it.”

The IFRC organized compelling key messages to support the IFRC Network's advocacy in the lead up and participation in the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which resulted in the COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate and Health 2023.

5 UNESCAP. Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2023 ([here](#))

6 UNESCAP. Impacts of climate change on population and development in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok 2023 ([here](#))

7 IFRC Global Programme: Scaling up locally-led climate-smart DRR and adaptation, 2022 ([here](#))

8 IFRC. The Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations ([here](#))

9 IFRC-ICRC-Climate Centre. Movement Ambitions to address the climate, 2020 ([here](#))

## Climate adaptation is climbing up the global health agenda

On COP28's 'Health Day' in 2023, it was acknowledged that health is among the most critical sectors for adaptation and resilience, and that the transition to cleaner energy will not only cut emissions but will also save lives. Global leaders from 125 countries united in endorsing the health and climate change declaration, sounding the alarm on the severe health implications of climate change. The Declaration underscores the urgent need to confront the connections between climate change and health, and includes a set of shared priorities and a path forward to overcome existing barriers to mainstream health in the climate agenda. It is a milestone to elevate the political profile of the climate-health nexus and contributed to integrating health into the global climate change agenda<sup>10</sup>.

At the 29th Conference of Parties (COP29), IFRC reiterated fortified resolve to challenge the climate crisis, calling for greater urgency, collaboration and accessible financing in three focus areas: 1. Health and well-being, 2. Investment in people and communities, and 3. Timing to get ahead of disasters.<sup>11</sup>

The strong and coordinated articulation of the Red Cross Red Crescent call for action on global platforms drive the aspirations of IFRC Asia Pacific health and WASH teams in formulating this regional strategy. In May 2024, the IFRC APRO Health and Care and Climate and Environment teams organized a three-day consultation with National Societies, Country Delegations and Partners to underpin strategic areas of work under climate-resilient health and WASH in the region. This five-year Strategic Framework brings together the agreed outcomes of the regional consultation. It clearly indicates National Societies' understanding of climate challenges and interest in integrating climate risk management across health and WASH programmes. The technical aspects of this strategy development is framed around the following guidance and tools:

- ▶ IFRC's Guide to Climate-Smart Programmes and Operations<sup>12</sup>
- ▶ IFRC Asia Pacific Climate and Environmental Crises Strategic Roadmap<sup>13</sup>
- ▶ IFRC Global Operational Direction for Water Security 2024-2030 (*document in process*)
- ▶ The IFRC WASH programme has recently endorsed a global consensus on the WHO Global Framework for Action 2024-2030: Universal WASH, waste and electricity in healthcare facilities<sup>14</sup>.

This Strategic Framework through 2025-2030 aligns IFRC programmes and investments in Asia Pacific to prepare and make health and WASH systems ready to respond to climate change. Drawing on its strengths as a lead humanitarian agency with significant presence, and National Societies with strong community networks and as auxiliary to governments, IFRC will make all efforts to strengthen capacities of National Societies and their partners to implement ambitious, climate-resilient, gender-sensitive and locally adaptable health and WASH programming.

10 COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health, UAE 2023 ([here](#))

11 IFRC COP29 Call to action, 2024

12 IFRC Guide to Climate-smart Programmes and Operations, IFRC, 2023 ([here](#))

13 IFRC Climate and Environmental Crisis Strategic Roadmap, Asia Pacific, 2023

14 WHO-UNICEF. Global Framework for Action 2024-2030 - Universal WASH, waste and electricity ([here](#))

## Tackling health and WASH impacts of climate change in Asia Pacific

The IFRC Asia Pacific is positioned to support National Societies and partners to strengthen their **capacities** on health and WASH, to anticipate and address consequences of climate change and environmental degradation. This includes systematically integrating climate risk management across health and WASH programmes, particularly targeting people experiencing increased exposure and vulnerability, including those in emergency contexts. Critically, the first steps would require scaling up movement-wide literacy, ownership, and investments towards climate health and WASH resilience.

Further on, IFRC Asia Pacific climate-resilient health and WASH **programming** is expected to embrace innovative approaches to enhance resilience and sustainability in health and WASH services. New ways of working involve integrating climate data and predictive analytics into planning and operations, ensuring that health and WASH interventions are responsive to evolving climate conditions. The programme will facilitate and emphasize community-led solutions, leveraging local knowledge and fostering inclusive participation to build ownership and sustainability.

National Societies act as auxiliary to public authorities and are well positioned to strengthen the link between public health policy, national health systems and the communities. By strengthening **partnerships** with governments, organizations, academics, and the private sector, the programme seeks to harmonize efforts and resources for greater impact. Additionally, it prioritizes capacity building through continuous training and education of the health and WASH workforce on climate adaptation strategies, disaster and epidemic/pandemic preparedness, and early warning systems.

These deliberations call for greater cross-sectoral collaboration and seamless synergies that collectively aim to reduce vulnerability, enhance resilience, and increase capacity to deliver effective health and WASH services to people who need them most in the face of climate crises. Addressing the barriers identified earlier will require a comprehensive approach that includes:

- Improving education on climate impacts, as well as data collection and analysis capabilities
- Openness to evidence-based research, and increasing capacity to advocate for policy frameworks that support climate resilient health and WASH for the protection of most vulnerable communities and people
- Engaging communities and vulnerable groups in the adaptation process to ensure inclusive, effective and sustainable responses to the climate challenges
- Increasing resource allocation for building climate resilience of health and WASH systems.





## ASIA PACIFIC CLIMATE-RESILIENT HEALTH AND WASH STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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### Working together to weather changes for healthier, more resilient communities

IFRC is motivated by a vision of healthy and thriving communities who are resilient and better prepared for the impacts of evolving crises and climate, now and in the future. The strategic framework will guide Asia Pacific National Societies and community stakeholders in collaborative efforts to ensure that affected people are empowered, informed, resourced and able to access quality and sustainable health and WASH services in an unstable and changing climate.

The Strategy has three Strategic Objectives (SO) with each objective addressing core transformations required under Capacity, Programming and Partnerships. Three cross-cutting approaches underline aspirations to ensure that communities are empowered, and that systems are effective and sustained. All approaches are interactive and work to progress towards the goal of the framework and overall vision, guided by the values and fundamental principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

### New ways of working

The Strategic Framework seeks to translate IFRC Asia Pacific's overall objectives into clear guidelines for investment decisions that are driven by impact potential and support the mitigation and adaptation indicators underpinned in the framework. These range from upgrading systems, to early warning and disease surveillance, and low emission health infrastructures.

It will facilitate a paradigm shift by strengthening the capacity of community health workers, including volunteers, to anticipate and respond to climate-related health and WASH risks. This is crucial for developing effective strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change and safeguarding the well-being of future generations.

Equipping the health and WASH workforce with necessary tools and digital technologies will enable them to deliver timely and effective health and WASH interventions to the most vulnerable populations and those in need.

Climate change adaptation and human health protection interventions are expected to offer significant economic co-benefits such as job creation in new sectors of low-emission services, technologies and infrastructures. Ultimately, these programmes enhance community resilience and reduce healthcare costs by preventing climate-related health issues. Overall, the integration of climate change strategies with economic development can foster sustainable development outcomes.

The weight of the strategic framework lies in ensuring a people-centred approach and continuous advocacy around country ownership and alignment with national commitments in relevance to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that are central to the Paris Agreement's long-term goals<sup>15</sup>, representing each country's plan to reduce emissions and adapt to climate impacts.

The Strategic Framework fosters cost-effectiveness, coherence and collaborative partnership towards new co-financing modalities, forecast-based financing readiness and application of best practices.



# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK – AT A GLANCE

**VISION** Healthy and thriving communities across Asia Pacific who are more resilient and better prepared for the impacts of evolving crises and the changing climate.

**GOAL** To enhance the capacity of communities, National Societies and national health systems to protect and improve health and WASH in an unstable and changing climate.

PILLAR 1 Global Health Security		PILLAR 2 Global Health Protection and UHC		PILLAR 3 Global WASH Services		PILLAR 4 Transformative Partnership	
Areas of focus	Service delivery in health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)				Health and WASH emergency preparedness and response		
	Disease prevention and health promotion		Humanitarian diplomacy in health and WASH		Epidemic / Pandemic preparedness and response		

## Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

READINESS CAPACITY	RESILIENCE PROGRAMMING	INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS
<b>Anticipate &amp; Adapt</b>	<b>People-centred</b>	<b>Partner &amp; Advocate</b>
<p><b>Strategic Objective 1</b> Scale up and improve institutional capacity to adapt to climate impacts on health and WASH by bolstering early warning and anticipatory actions and response systems and a climate-ready workforce.</p> <p><b>Outcome 1.1</b> IFRC and National Societies' capacities to prevent, detect early and respond to disease outbreak and disaster are strengthened.</p> <p><b>Outcome 1.2</b> IFRC and NS health and WASH human resources and community workforce capacity about understanding of climate informed health and WASH programming are strengthened.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Objective 2</b> Enhance the resilience of communities and effectiveness of health and WASH systems by implementing comprehensive climate adaptation measures.</p> <p><b>Outcome 2.1</b> National Societies continue to deliver health and WASH services when facing the effects of climate change through climate-smart systems and sustainable transformations.</p> <p><b>Outcome 2.2</b> National Societies continue to support communities in reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience through climate-adaptable water, sanitation, and hygiene services.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Objective 3</b> Accelerate system transformation and partnerships to enable and increase impact towards sustaining climate health and WASH resilience.</p> <p><b>Outcome 3.1</b> IFRC network is better resourced with increased visibility and capability to deliver climate resilient health and WASH programmes.</p> <p><b>Outcome 3.2</b> Longer term partnerships are established to support resilient health and WASH system reforms through effective laws, policies, regulatory frameworks and sustainable financing.</p>

### Cross-cutting drivers/approaches:

Anticipate and Adapt (drives capacity: new skills and systems, pro-active, embrace change)  
 People-centred (drives programming: all of society, multi-stakeholder approach, inclusive, local)  
 Partner and Advocate (drives investment: collaborative outcomes, aligning for action)



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 – Capacity for readiness

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.** Scale up and improve institutional capacity to adapt to climate change impacts on health and WASH by bolstering early warning and anticipatory actions and response systems and a climate-ready workforce.

IFRC Asia Pacific will accompany National Societies to strengthen the network's capacity in early warning, detection, and prevention of climate-induced disease outbreaks and, to ensure a strong, sustainable health and WASH workforce. This calls for urgent review of existing systems, and cultivation of a resilient and informed workforce capable of responding to climate-induced impacts on health and WASH. Central to this objective is the process of establishing effective mechanisms and climate-sensitive modifications in the programme models currently in use for health and WASH interventions in the communities and for epidemic/pandemic preparedness and response.



Effective monitoring and disease surveillance and anticipatory actions are critical in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Community-Based Surveillance (CBS) and Early Warning Systems (EWS) are key IFRC tools for early detection of outbreaks, to address vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue and combat waterborne diseases such as cholera. National Societies will be supported to integrate or expand CBS and EWS into targeted climate actions, as well as investments around preparedness and response to climate-induced disease outbreaks.

As environmental and climate conditions deteriorate, there is an increased incidence of climate-related health and WASH issues such as epidemics, respiratory and diarrhoeal diseases, and heatstroke. Efforts to combat the dangers posed by heatwaves and environmental pollution and to mitigate malnutrition, food and water insecurity are equally important. These elements amplify non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular, respiratory and autoimmune diseases, diabetes, mental health conditions, hypertension, kidney dysfunction.

Effective mitigation suggests integration with national nutritional support programmes, resilient agricultural practices, and food security initiatives. Response and emergency actions against fatal diseases require coordinated efforts and climate-resilient disease actions, especially under climate stress.

It is important for IFRC and National Societies to align epidemic and pandemic preparedness with regional and national health security agenda and plans. Better outcomes are achieved by empowering local people to take leadership roles in preparedness, response and recovery. It strengthens the role of National Societies as auxiliaries to public authorities during emergencies.

Health and WASH teams will need support to adapt and implement climate-resilient health and WASH planning, assessment and M&E training, policies and guidelines, as well as appropriate digital technologies for information management, effective data collection and analysis to support monitoring and learning. Health workers at local and community level must be trained on the use of technologies and tools deployed to ensure sustained effectiveness and community empowerment.

With transformational planning, adaptive and aligned approaches, National Societies contribute to timely public health response, reduce disease transmission, enhance community resilience to climate extreme events, and improves overall community health and resilience.



## **Outcome 1.2 IFRC and National Societies' health and WASH workforce capacity on climate informed health and WASH programming is strengthened.**

A robust health and WASH response system needs a resilient and equipped workforce to meet the escalating impacts of climate change. As climate and environmental change are typically outside the traditional training context, few have the knowledge and skills to effectively prepare for and manage extreme weather events and infectious disease outbreaks. For this reason, there is a need to recruit and train more health and WASH service providers, including volunteers. The focus is on equipping health and WASH service providers to address the health and WASH impacts caused by climate change and extreme climate conditions.

Skills development to understand linkages between climate, health and WASH, emergency response techniques, and sustainable service delivery practices will contribute to cultivate a knowledgeable workforce that can comprehensively and actively engage in addressing health impacts of climate change. They will be mobilized to educate community health workers on health risks associated with extreme climate events to improve awareness and resilience of local communities. Such a prepared workforce can play a vital role in communication and advocacy on climate change mitigation and adaptation to communities, policy-makers and stakeholders.

Substantial increased investment is required for health and WASH services to remain consistently safe and operational during extreme events and disasters. Maintaining a surge roster and business continuity plans supports uninterrupted services in the event of emergencies. This goes beyond the



provision of physical infrastructure, training on tools and new approaches for preparedness and response to climate induced disease outbreaks, but also capacity enhancement and motivation of the workforce.

In the longer term, the investment translates to volunteer development and retention for National Societies; where community volunteers are motivated through knowledge opportunities, training other volunteers or supporting their own communities with health and WASH resilience.

In appropriate contexts where National Societies undertake basic public health and medical tasks, memorandums of understanding (MoU) with governments to institutionalize RCRC community health and WASH volunteers will ensure minimum standards of quality care, adequate training, and protection and support to volunteers.





## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 – Programming for resilience

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2.** Enhance the resilience of communities and effectiveness of health and WASH systems by implementing comprehensive climate adaptation measures.

*We have a responsibility to work together to reduce the impacts of the crises by accelerating our own action and mobilizing others to do the same.*<sup>16</sup> This principle drives the urgency for National Societies to adapt climate resilient health and WASH programming so as to cope and continue their service delivery and referral in the face of evolving and climate-induced challenges. It promotes integration of climate adaptation actions in alignment with the objectives of the National Adaptation Plans to better enable systems to achieve universal health and WASH coverage, ultimately contributing to the SDG progress of the countries.



It is essential to adopt low carbon emission strategies in healthcare and WASH that focus on reducing the environmental impact of medical services to achieve Universal Health Coverage standards. These initiatives are designed to transform health and WASH infrastructures into models of sustainability and resilience, aligning with global efforts to mitigate climate change and promote environmental stewardship.

Modernize buildings with green technology: Retrofitting existing health facilities to use renewable solar energy as a reliable power source reduces reliance on fossil fuels and cuts greenhouse gas emissions; encouraging health and WASH authorities on green building designs, promoting the use of locally sourced, sustainable materials, and incorporating passive solar design, natural ventilation, and insulation to reduce energy consumption.

Improve service delivery systems for efficiency and resilience: Modern medical equipment can guarantee a rapid emergency response in case of climate catastrophes. These measures make health facilities resilient by enabling them to function effectively amid climate-related disruptions such as extreme weather events. Implementing robust cold chain systems to ensure vaccines and medications stay at optimal temperatures, preventing spoilage and improving patient outcomes.

National Societies can leverage opportunities to strengthen partnership with governments and stakeholders. For instance, during climate risks such as heatwaves or high air pollution, engage health and WASH workforce in health programmes to improve community health.

This component fosters healthier communities, supports global climate goals, and ensures that healthcare systems can withstand and adapt to the growing challenges posed by a changing climate.



## **Outcome 2.2 National Societies continue to support communities in reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience through climate-adaptable water, sanitation, and hygiene services.**

National Societies continue to play a crucial role in supporting communities to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience, particularly in the face of climate change. By implementing climate-adaptable water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, communities can better prepare for and respond to environmental challenges.

Implementation strategies may vary according to communities and their inherent features and locations – rural or urban. The focus is on low-carbon climate resilient water and sanitation systems that promote water conservation measures, efficient water use, green technology and nature-based solutions. This translates to constructing climate-resilient infrastructure and services, such as flood-resistant latrines and water points, using renewable energy and promoting sustainable practices like rainwater harvesting, ground water recharge and efficient water use. Water recycling systems conserve vital water resources, reduce environmental impact, and lower operational costs. Boreholes offer a sustainable groundwater source, ensuring a steady water supply during shortages.

Through education and community engagement, National Societies empower individuals to adopt behaviours to improve their health and hygiene, and contribute to reducing their vulnerability to climate-induced health risks. For example, focus institutional health and WASH improvement in community hubs (e.g. schools, health facilities) to climate-proof infrastructure and services, and complement community health promotion with awareness of climate-change impacts.

The people-centred programming aspect of this strategy must contribute to the IFRC strategic goal for people to lead safe, healthy and dignified lives with opportunities to thrive - despite future uncertainties. Connecting with capacity investment discussed earlier, well-trained local community-based volunteers conduct thorough needs assessments to inform interventions. They can identify challenges and risks within the geography and community they know well, as well as existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. By prioritizing inclusivity and protection, vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly and the disabled, can have improved access to necessary resources and services.

National Societies are well placed to foster collaboration between local communities, governments, and international agencies ensure a cohesive and comprehensive delivery of climate-resilient WASH services.



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 – Partnership for investment

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3.** Accelerate system transformation and partnership to enable and increase impact towards sustaining climate health and WASH resilience.

The IFRC Strategy 2030 call to *work effectively as a distributed network* appropriately headlines critical efforts to increase access to funding and resources for scaling up climate-resilient health and WASH programming. Innovative partnerships, sustainable financing and programmatic models, and longer-term engagement with partners in the ecosystem are central considerations for National Society organizational development and financial sustainability. However, it is the emphasis on the IFRC network's positioning, advocacy, and contributions to policy frameworks that will result in sustained resilience, empowerment and capacity of the communities served by health and WASH programming.



The implementation aims at ensuring stronger positioning of the IFRC network, particularly National Societies as advocates and effective auxiliaries to their governments and strong local actors. It includes securing sustainable financing and effective allocations for health and WASH climate adaptation initiatives that are aligned with the objectives of the National Adaptation Plan. These initiatives are contributing to outcomes aspired under this Strategic Framework. National Societies will be supported to take an agency-based approach towards advocacy for increased investment in climate-resilient health and WASH systems at national and international levels. Through engagement in policy dialogue and forums to promote effective climate action, advocacy efforts will position the IFRC network as the partner of choice in climate health and WASH across donor and multi-lateral institutions.

IFRC can support National Societies on Early Action Protocols to be established in order to access forecast-based financing in preparedness for climate-induced disasters.





### **Outcome 3.2**

## **Longer term partnerships are established to support resilient health and WASH national system reforms through effective laws, policies, regulatory frameworks, and sustainable financing.**

The strategy of strength in unity is leveraged for additional resources and expertise integral to climate resilience. The implementation aims at developing a common understanding of goals and objectives related to health and WASH system resilience. When all partners are aligned on the vision and the role they each play, the IFRC network and the RCRC Movement can build and strengthen partnerships with other humanitarian organizations, governments, academic institutions, and private sector actors. It underlines the network's role to engage in policy dialogue to influence laws and policies and government investment that support climate-resilient health and WASH systems.

Highlighting strong coordination among Movement Partners to harmonize and prioritize climate health and WASH will amplify advocacy efforts for partnership and drive policy. These include:

- Results-oriented sectoral collaboration for effective climate resilient health and WASH
- Movement-wide systems to enhance technical implementation and support quality service delivery
- Movement-wide common indicators for monitoring and evaluation in line with sector standards
- Shared research, positive evidence of innovations, joint funding applications
- Coordinated response efforts focused on cost-effective strategies.

It calls for policy engagement with policymakers through formal agreements, ensuring transparency and accountability, to advocate for supportive policies and regulations in health and WASH systems, towards protecting most vulnerable populations from climate-induced health risks.



## PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION

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Climate-induced scarcity of natural resources disproportionately burdens women and girls, who bear the greatest brunt of climate change and climate-related disasters, as they have limited access to and control over prevention, health, finance and information. Extreme weather and climate-related disasters can severely limit access to sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health services, leading to increased health risks and complications. Additionally, climate change exacerbates issues like menstrual hygiene management, sexual violence, and malnutrition, particularly affecting women and children in vulnerable regions.

The Strategic Framework fosters local capacities to ensure that gender standards are followed by IFRC and National Societies. All interventions will ensure that PGI considerations are sufficiently reflected in the implementation guides and a PGI integration checklist is used while aligning the framework objectives with health and WASH programmes.

Health and WASH teams must be guided to design inclusive data collection that supports useful databases, and be able to analyse epidemiology data. To better understand health challenges specific to women, children and vulnerable groups, their participation, access to training, coordination and management must be intentional and planned for.



## ANNEX – EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.** Scale up and improve institutional capacity to adapt to climate change impacts on health and WASH by bolstering early warning and anticipatory actions and response systems and a climate-ready workforce.

**OUTCOME 1.1** IFRC and National Societies' capacities to prevent, detect and respond to disease outbreaks are strengthened and sustained.

- Advocate, sensitize and leverage IFRC and National Societies' literacy, ownership, and investments around preparedness and response to climate-induced disease outbreaks.
- Align IFRC and National Societies' epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response programmes with the regional and national health security agenda and plans.
- Increase engagement with governments, regional and national stakeholders to strengthen climate readiness of health and WASH systems.
- Establish, strengthen, and expand early warning, community-based surveillance, and regional and national surge capacity to achieve faster outbreak response.
- Conduct mapping of high-risk communities to climate sensitive infectious diseases.
- Develop/adapt climate informed health and WASH planning, training and programmatic guidelines and standard operating procedures.
- Establish and strengthen digital technologies within preparedness and response programmes for reliable evidence generation and effective data analysis.
- Strengthen data management and digital transformation to better service design and implementation.

**OUTCOME 1.2** IFRC and National Societies' health and WASH workforce capacity on climate informed health and WASH programming is strengthened.

- Train health and WASH workforce on early warning systems, contingency planning, and disaster preparedness, response, and recovery management to integrate climate change risks and to cope with any emergency from climate related disasters and outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics.
- Provide tools, methodologies and training to health and WASH workforce for assessing the potential impacts of climate-related hazards on health and WASH and relevant facilities. This may include vulnerability and adaptive capacity assessments, risk mapping, scenario planning, and use of digital technologies.
- Develop a disaster risk reduction and business continuity plan for the health and WASH workforce to manage measures of prevention, preparation, response and recovery from extreme weather events.
- Mobilize health and WASH workforce to educate community health workers on climate change and health risks associated with climate extreme events to improve the resilience of local communities.
- Engage health and WASH workforce in effective risk communication strategies to convey potential health risks associated with climate-related hazards to communities, policymakers and other stakeholders.
- Establish a surge pool/roster of health and WASH workforce for mobilization in emergency responses, with psychosocial support teams for staff, families of staff, patients and affected people in communities.
- Leverage task shifting to optimize available workforce and subsequently support systems to cope with evolving service delivery needs.
- Implement volunteer development programmes to attract, retain, strengthen expertise and volunteer base to respond to health and WASH climate impacts.
- Establish MoU with the government to institutionalize RCRC community health and WASH workers/volunteers.



**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2. Enhance the resilience of communities and effectiveness of health and WASH systems by implementing comprehensive climate adaptation measures.**

**OUTCOME 2.1** National Societies continue to deliver health and WASH services when facing the effects of climate change through climate smart systems and sustainable transformations.

- Evaluate the climate, health, and disaster risks of health facilities, along with their GHG emissions, and incorporate these considerations into facility planning and operations.
- Assess energy needs, availability and alternative sources of renewable energy in health facilities.
- Integrate climate adaptation actions including transitioning of health and WASH facilities to low-carbon and energy-efficient options in alignment with the objectives of the National Adaptation Plans.
- Retrofit health facilities to withstand natural disasters and extreme climate events, and install efficient HVAC systems (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning).
- Replace fossil fuel transportation with energy-efficient alternatives, including electric vehicles and ambulances.
- Educate health and WASH authorities on green building designs, promoting the use of locally sourced, sustainable materials, as well as incorporating passive solar design, natural ventilation, and insulation to reduce energy consumption.
- Leverage green supply chain systems for health and WASH services; and service delivery models that help communities and ecosystems adapt and build resilience to climate risks.
- Engage health and WASH workforce in community health programmes to improve community health during climate risks (such as such as home care for asthma to reduce health vulnerabilities during episodes of high air pollution or heat waves).

**OUTCOME 2.2** National Societies continue to support communities in reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience through climate-adaptable water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

- Improve institutional water, sanitation and hygiene by adopting green response and nature-based solution approach (e.g. schools, health facilities).
- Promote water and sanitation infrastructures that are resilient to climate variability.
- Implement water conservation and efficient water use technologies, from source to point of use.
- Engage with government to reduce urban community vulnerability through resilient water and sanitation infrastructures.
- Cultivate a low-carbon WASH sector with improved water and energy efficiency and sanitation practices; wherever possible, using renewable energy for water and sanitation services.
- Enhance the environment around healthcare facilities with greenery and ample open spaces to mitigate heat island effects.
- Develop and implement comprehensive chemical safety, wastewater and healthcare waste management systems.
- Integrate climate-resilient and green technologies to enhance access to safe water and sanitation services in health facilities.
- Broaden the WASH spectrum by integrating water system strengthening approach through thematic initiatives, for example Water and Peace, or Water and Livelihoods.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3. Accelerate system transformation and partnership to enable and increase impact towards sustaining climate health and WASH resilience.**

**OUTCOME 3.1** The IFRC network is better resourced with increased visibility and capability to deliver climate resilient health and WASH programmes.

- Position IFRC network at country, regional and global level as the partner of choice related to climate, health and WASH across governments, corporates, philanthropy, private sector, and multilateral development banks.
- Integrate and harmonize the Movement's activities on climate health WASH in the broader ecosystem.
- Develop Movement-wide common indicators for monitoring and evaluation in line with climate-resilient sector standards.
- Build consensus, result-oriented collaboration and coordination among all Movement partners to prioritize the climate health and WASH nexus as a flagship programme.
- Strengthen Movement-wide systems to enhance HR, technical support, technological infrastructure to support quality service delivery of climate resilient health and WASH programmes.
- Incorporate climate data and projections into programme planning to anticipate and mitigate climate-related risks.
- Establish early action protocols to access forecast-based financing in preparedness for specific climate-induced disasters.
- Foster research, evidence of impact, best practices and innovation to enhance quality service delivery; as well as contribute to advocacy efforts to position National Societies as partner of choice in climate health and WASH.

**OUTCOME 3.2** Longer term partnerships are established to support climate-resilient health and WASH system reforms through effective laws, policies, regulatory frameworks, and sustainable financing.

- Strengthen existing NS partnerships with governments as auxiliaries and key sector partners to position IFRC and National Societies as a strong actor in the ecosystem.
- Ensure representation in regional and national platforms and contribute to policy frameworks, decisions on climate resilient health and WASH plans/policies to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected.
- Generate evidence and strengthen advocacy efforts to influence policy decisions, plans, practices, regulations, laws and budget allocations to reinforce climate resilient health and WASH systems in the National Adaptation Plans.
- Work with regulatory bodies to ensure effective enforcement of laws and regulations. Develop mechanisms for regular review and updates of regulations to keep pace with new developments.
- Contribute during regular reviews of the National Adaptation Plans to reinforce impacts of climate change on women, girls, older people, people with disabilities, marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- Regularly assess the effectiveness of programmes and adjust strategies based on findings to ensure that they continue to meet their goals in the face of changing conditions.
- Enhance collaboration and coordination with external partners such as UN, INGOs, academia and private sector to leverage resources and expertise for climate-resilient health and WASH interventions.

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# THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

## **Humanity**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

## **Impartiality**

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

## **Neutrality**

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

## **Independence**

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

## **Voluntary service**

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

## **Unity**

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

## **Universality**

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



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

is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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