



# International strategy

2025-2030

# Strategy in brief

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**The British Red Cross is a humanitarian auxiliary to the UK Government, a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement). We partner with sister National Societies, the IFRC, the ICRC and non-Movement actors.**

## **British Red Cross mission**

To mobilise the power of humanity so that individuals and communities have the capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from crisis.

We work with the Movement to achieve our mission as part of a global network spanning 191 countries. Together with our Movement partners, we help people prepare for, respond to and recover from conflicts and disasters, and become more resilient in the face of climate threats. Together, we are the world's emergency responders.

### **International vision 2040 | Shifting power**

People will have the resilience to withstand and resources to respond to crises, supported by an impactful and accountable Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, centred on locally-led action.

### **International goal 2030 | Sharing power**

People facing crises are supported with locally-led emergency preparedness, response and climate resilience at scale, which is dignified and gives agency, enabled by an influential Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

## The change we want to see:

- 1. People-centred** programmes and services that are large-scale, high-quality, protect people's dignity and promote agency.
- 2. Resilient National Societies** equipped and **empowered** to act.
- 3. An inclusive and dynamic, effective and efficient workplace**, that supports locally-led action.
- 4. A stronger**, fairer, more influential **Movement**.
- 5. System change** to enable locally-led response and strengthen humanitarian action.

British Red Cross will take an adaptive, 'as local as possible, as international as necessary' approach that is context specific, effectively meets humanitarian needs and strengthens sustainable and locally-led humanitarian action. All of our work will be underpinned by the Movement's Fundamental Principles, and by British Red Cross's core values: dynamic, courageous, compassionate and inclusive.

## What this will look like by 2030:

- All National Society partners will have rapid access to funding enabling them to take action within 24 hours of a crisis, and people facing crisis will receive cash assistance to address their urgent needs within 72 hours.
- Community-led adaptation and resilience solutions to the climate crisis will be implemented at scale in six countries.
- We will provide multiyear unrestricted funding to a minimum of 10 partners.
- Humanitarian policy change and the strengthening of international law will be supported in eight complex crises, including through direct partnerships with National Societies.

## Our priority investments

- Strengthening locally-led response – supporting National Society partner capabilities and driving an evolution in ways of working to enable locally-led response.
- Accelerating community-led climate resilience – exploring opportunities for National Society partners to scale-up community-level solutions and adaptation in the face of climate shocks.
- Scaling-up cash – giving people a dignified way to choose how best to meet their needs.
- Transformative partnerships and National Society Development – providing multiyear unrestricted funding and partnering in new ways to demonstrate our commitment to locally-led action, contribute to learning and advocate for change.
- Influencing and international law – strengthening humanitarian diplomacy and the Movement's ability to influence decision-makers on humanitarian action.

# Context

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## An uncertain future

The global backdrop for our next strategic period is heightened volatility and vulnerability: the continuing fallout of the global pandemic; the worsening impacts of climate change; protracted and overlapping crises; new national and regional conflicts; and an unprecedented number of people on the move. Looking ahead, growing geopolitical instability and multi-polarisation, the potential for large-scale conflicts, future global health risks, extreme weather events and ecosystem collapse could create extraordinary suffering, making an already fragile global situation even more unstable.

The international humanitarian system is increasingly unable to meet the scale of current and future crises, with rising needs outstripping available budgets. The system also reflects inequitable power dynamics between donor and recipient countries, often based on complex colonial legacies. There has not been the necessary investment in preparedness and resilience,

despite clear evidence of the value for money and potential reduction in suffering they offer. Humanitarian actors are consistently required to do more with less. They are asked to address problems arising from a failure to find political solutions or stay on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

There is also a real risk that respect for international humanitarian law, humanitarian norms and principles is being eroded.

At the same time, development gains are opening up new opportunities and contributing to wider change. The growing role of global south leadership and strengthened national governance is challenging the status quo, and the humanitarian system will have to evolve to remain relevant. Improvements in education, training and expertise have strengthened skilled labour markets that we and our partners can draw on. And there are funding opportunities for National Society partners with governments, through domestic fundraising and diaspora markets.

The digital age is connecting communities at previously unimaginable speed. It is transforming what is possible and testing standards of participation and accountability as the voices of people facing crises become more proximate and immediate. The significant threat posed by misinformation, disinformation and cyber insecurity, as well as the transformational potential of artificial intelligence, all contribute to an uncertain future.



## The case for change

The humanitarian system must adapt to deepening and more complex humanitarian challenges. It must be more agile, equitable and efficient, while delivering lasting high-quality outcomes. Locally-led humanitarian action can make a critical contribution to this change.

To unleash the potential of locally-led action, we must remove the barriers that constrain it. Humanitarian organisations based in the global north continue to receive most of the funding, prioritise investment in themselves and hold a disproportionate amount of power. We must foster a culture of shared leadership with our partners. We must be more courageous and dynamic as we take steps towards a fairer future – sharing power and resources, and fostering inclusive and accountable relationships based on mutual learning and respect.

## Global opportunity

The Movement offers a unique and invaluable contribution to this future. It represents a global emergency response network spanning 191 countries, supported by its international bodies.

National Societies – humanitarian auxiliaries to their public authorities – have local legitimacy. Our branches and volunteer networks know, can access and are trusted by communities across the world. The Movement exists to support people facing crisis – and people sit at the centre of everything it does. Our community-centred approaches put people first, protect their dignity and promote their agency before, during and after crises.

## A clear role for the British Red Cross

The role of the British Red Cross is established in our [Royal Charter](#), in the [Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#) and in international law. Our purpose is to provide assistance to victims of armed conflicts, and to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the UK and throughout the world. Our international work is carried out through partnerships. As the humanitarian landscape shifts, the way we do this is changing. Our challenge now is to accelerate and deepen the evolution we've described.



# Ambition

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**This strategy presents a direction of travel not a prescriptive course. It enables us to remain agile while keeping sight of our change ambitions. What we hope to achieve by 2030 is a milestone towards a wider ambition, with a 2040 vision to guide the choices ahead of us.**

## **British Red Cross mission**

To mobilise the power of humanity so that individuals and communities have the capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from crisis.

## **International vision 2040 | Shifting power**

People will have the resilience to withstand and resources to respond to crises, supported by an impactful and accountable Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement centred on locally-led action.

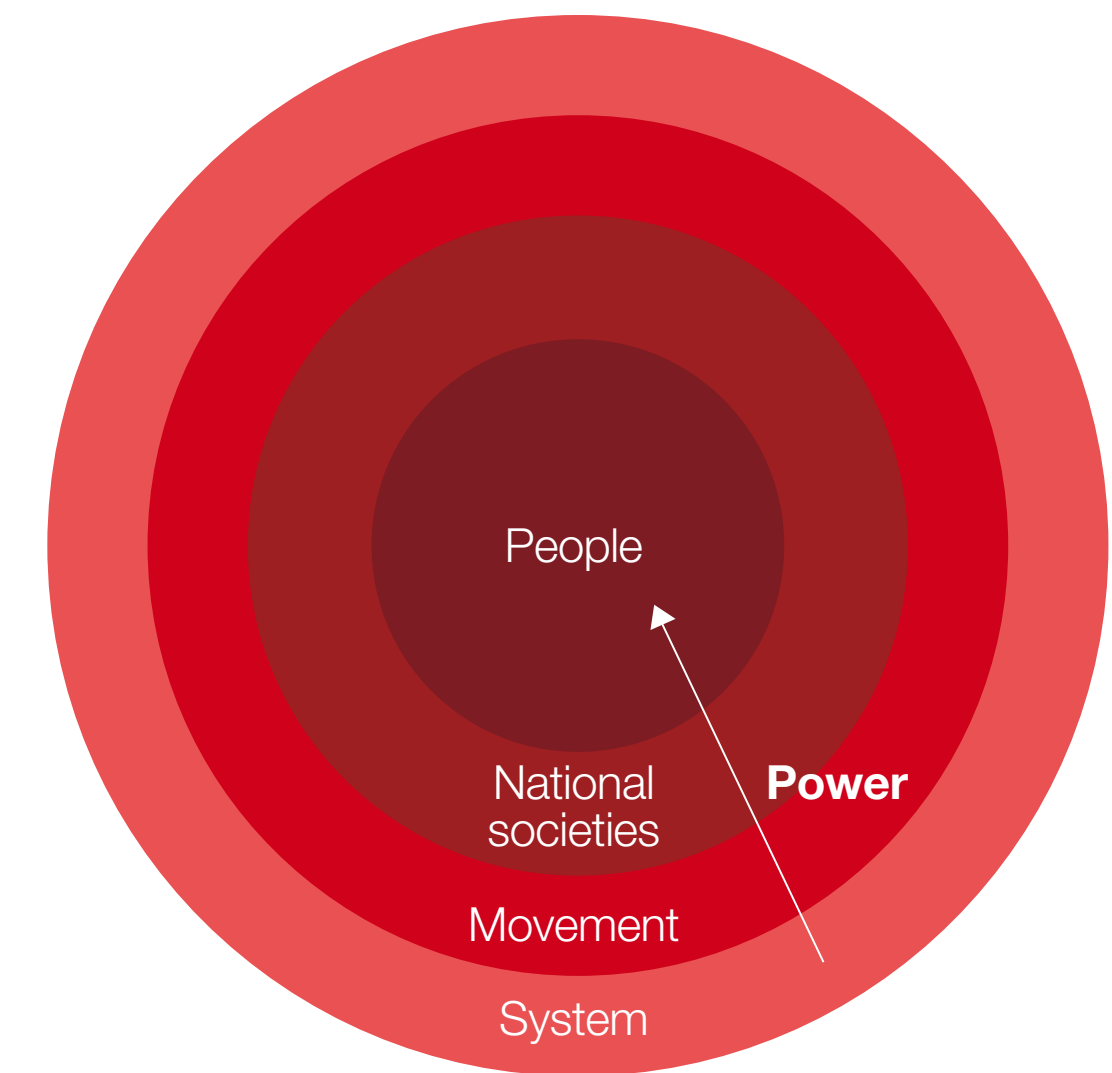
## **International goal 2030 | Sharing power**

People facing crises are supported with locally-led emergency preparedness, response and climate resilience at scale, which is dignified and gives agency, enabled by an influential Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

## **Power**

People facing crises should be able to make impactful decisions to prevent and alleviate suffering. We view

power as the ability of individuals and communities to take action in a dignified manner, to shape their own lives and to influence decision-making processes. Power is fundamental to locally-led humanitarian action. Over the course of this strategy and beyond, we must challenge how we wield and interact with power in our system, and drive transformative change towards more equitable and people-centred action.



# Change ambitions

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**To achieve our goal and vision we will drive change across five areas.  
These five change ambitions are:**



Our change ambitions present us with a series of questions that can shape our day-to-day actions and decisions, empower staff in their respective areas of expertise, and foster cultural change:

- How does this support people-centred action?
- How does this empower National Societies?
- How does this contribute to our own organisational evolution?
- How is this effective in driving positive change in our wider Movement and system?



# Change ambition 1

## People-centred action

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We will support our partners to deliver people-centred humanitarian action that is high-quality, accountable and protects people's dignity.

### **Quality, dignity and accountability**

We believe that people facing crises should be able to make decisions to prevent and alleviate suffering. It is hardest to achieve this aim in the contexts in which our work is most needed, so it continues to require focused attention. We value community engagement and accountability, particularly approaches that build on local capacity and emphasise dignity in humanitarian action. We will work with our partners to meet the [Core Humanitarian Standards](#) and continue to insist on safeguards to protect people from any harm that might result from work we support. In our communications and influencing work, we will explore new ways to be shaped and led by the voices of people with lived experience, telling compelling stories of strength and resilience with respect.

### **Our Humanitarian Action**

We are well placed in the UK to raise funds during emergencies, and we're part of an international humanitarian movement that can respond quickly to crises across the world. Our partners' strategic ambitions and strengths will determine what we fund.



We will increasingly provide flexible funding for partners to deliver sustainable, high-quality humanitarian services and to support people before, during and after emergencies.

[The Fundamental Principles](#) of humanity and impartiality commit us to take action to prevent and alleviate suffering, led by individuals' needs. We will play our part in ensuring that vulnerable groups are included and their specific needs addressed, continuing to work in restoring family links and in migration and displacement.

At the heart of our work are two areas where we will have impact and seek to support people-centred action:

### **Emergency preparedness, response and recovery**

This is the core of what we do. National Societies work at community-level with local stakeholders and public authorities to prepare for crises. With our resources and expertise, we support the delivery of humanitarian services during conflicts, disasters and protracted crises. We will help National Society partners speed up and scale up their vital work, and take early action to reduce suffering and cost.

### **Resilience in the face of climate threats**

The climate crisis will present people with new challenges in every part of their lives. Communities can prevent or mitigate the worst effects through local, low-cost action. They can also better prepare to face this new reality through early and anticipatory action that use forecasts to release funds ahead of crises. We aim to showcase locally-led action as a crucial and effective part of the response to the climate crisis, amplified through our influencing, advocacy and research.

#### **Targets**

- All National Society partners will have rapid access to funding to take action within 24 hours of a crisis, and people facing crisis will receive cash assistance to address their urgent needs within 72 hours.
- Community-led adaptation and resilience solutions to the climate crisis will be implemented at scale in six countries.



Photo © Libyan Red Crescent

A photograph showing a woman in a Red Cross uniform (with a visible logo on her sleeve) assisting an elderly woman who is using a cane. The scene is outdoors, possibly in a residential area. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red circle on the left side.

## Change ambition 2

# Empowered National Societies

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Our partnerships contribute to resilient National Societies that are equipped and empowered to act.

### **The status quo**

There is a prevailing narrative that humanitarian organisations in the global south are ‘weak’ and do not do enough to adhere to the standards and practices of donors.

In reality, progress has been slow because of the ways organisations receive funding and the unequal nature of partnerships. Project-based funding often does not cover the full cost to the organisation of implementation, nor does it contribute to investment in organisational development.

Meanwhile, intermediaries invest in themselves to manage the perceived shortcomings of the operational partner, often recruiting from the same labour market but offering better salaries, or bringing in international staff. Many National Societies in the global south are rarely given the opportunity to make free decisions about where resourcing should flow so they can truly demonstrate their strengths and develop their capability.

We recognise that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to these problems. Our partners have different ambitions, perspectives and capabilities.

Our partnership principles call for a contextualised approach, founded upon a shared partnership vision: equality, respect and mutual benefit. All our partnerships should aspire to be effective and value mutual accountability, integrity, openness and courage. To support this, we must further shift from a project focus to a partnership mentality.

## Resilient

British Red Cross will be a reliable partner committed to the journey, engaging in long-term collaboration and accompanying partners through challenging times. We will provide and facilitate flexible funding and invest in National Society Development to support resilient organisations. We will pay our fair share of organisational costs to implement the programmes and services we support. We will actively advocate for the fundamental challenges that undermine National Society sustainability to be addressed, including promoting flexible and fair funding.

## Empowered

We do not operate in a vacuum. Various power imbalances exist in the countries where our partners work, in the Movement and in the wider system. Guided at all times by our partners, we can play a role in sharing our power and addressing these imbalances by wherever possible:

- giving partners greater decision-making power in funding choices by increasing the flexibility of our grants
- supporting partners' auxiliary role and wider influencing agenda, and giving their voices a platform
- working towards an equitable approach to accountability that provides the right controls while taking a step back from the detail, reducing bureaucracy and holding everyone to the same standards
- with our partners exploring new ways of staffing such as funding partner roles rather than expanding the British Red Cross, or embedding our staff in partner organisations, establishing joint recruitment and performance management with our partners for in-country British Red Cross staff.

## Equipped

As well as providing flexible unrestricted funds to an increasing number of partners, we will make our expertise and funding available to support partners':

- emergency response capacity and national disaster management
- ability to implement high-quality cash and voucher assistance
- humanitarian diplomacy efforts and auxiliary role.

We will continue to support organisational work that strengthens accountability, safeguarding and wider efforts to promote people-centred programmes and services.

## Targets

- We will provide multiyear unrestricted funding to a minimum 10 partners.



## Change ambition 3

# Organisational evolution

We will make internal changes to enable locally-led action, model an inclusive workplace in which our people thrive, and deliver more funding for our partners with effective and efficient ways of working, in line with British Red Cross 2030 organisational strategy.

### People and culture

We want British Red Cross to model a culture that we can be proud of – one that is equitable, diverse, empowering, fosters a sense of belonging and supports staff wellbeing and growth. We must also adapt to the future requirements of a locally-led approach and guide our people through this change.

Regardless of role or location, individuals will feel empowered to speak up and share their views, knowing that they will be heard, and their contributions taken into account. We envision a British Red Cross where people share their knowledge and culture, working together in an agile, innovative and inclusive way. This will be an environment where people have the time to meaningfully connect with others and break down silos.

We will provide equitable opportunities for career progression and development for all British Red Cross staff. To get there, we will proactively dismantle barriers, eliminate discrimination and create equity for our people, in line with our anti-racism action plan and British Red Cross's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.



## Proceeds

We will secure more resources for our partners that can be spent in line with their priorities. We will work closely with our partners, fundraising colleagues and donors to ensure our funding and technical support is flexible, responsive and sustainable, and that as much of our funding as possible reaches the communities that need it most. To excel in our stewardship responsibilities, we will invest in our grant-management systems, process and staff capabilities.

## Productivity

We will streamline and simplify our decision-making and operating processes, enabling us to work more effectively and efficiently with a reduced cost to serve. This will include a review of:

- our operational model
- our role profiles, responsibilities and workloads
- how we can to deliver a leaner way of working.

We will invest in our own journey, ensuring that we are equipped with the leadership, foresight, digital skills, data and evidence to make meaningful progress and support our people and partners.

To foster innovation and reflect our iterative approach to strategy, we will continue to explore ideas and take calculated risks.

## Greening the Red

As part of our organisational climate commitments, we will measure our carbon footprint and take steps to reduce and offset our emissions.

## Targets

- Have people from historically marginalised communities represented across our workforce, especially at leadership levels.
- Maintain a minimum annual expenditure of £100m to increase investment in locally-led action and reach more people facing crises.



## Change ambition 4

# A stronger Movement

We will contribute our influence, resources and role as a facilitator to drive positive change towards a locally-led, impactful and accountable Movement.

## The Movement

We are committed to playing an active role in strengthening Movement cooperation, collaboration and complementarity. Our support for the Movement's humanitarian work will be guided by the approach: 'as local as possible, as international as necessary'.

We must collectively address barriers to locally-led action through transformative progress on National Society financial sustainability, ability to recruit and retain skilled staff, and governance. We will contribute to systemic change to strengthen the individual and collective roles of Movement partners, with reference to the goals set out in the IFRC 2030 and ICRC 2024-27 strategies. We will demonstrate effective shared leadership within the Movement in our priority investment areas. And we will seek to provide increased funding to the Movement with a clear stewardship role for British Red Cross and an enhanced partnership with FCDO.

## IFRC Secretariat

We will prioritise the following for the IFRC Secretariat to be effective in performing its core enabling functions:

### Strategic and operational coordination

- Support the Secretariat to prioritise its primary role of coordination.
- Contribute towards the development of future operating models and an efficient, effective and accountable Secretariat geared to support the timely delivery of quality services by National Societies.
- Work to improve disaster response tools and approaches (including the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund, DREF) so they are fit for purpose to enable National Society and local humanitarian action.

### National Society Development

- Collaborate on efforts to strengthen National Societies through the roll-out of the National Society Development competencies framework, investing in learning and demonstrating impact.

- Support the roll-out of the IFRC certification process, risk sharing, shared reporting and revised strategic planning approach.

### Humanitarian diplomacy

- Support the development of effective humanitarian diplomacy systems, processes and structures.
- Contribute expertise to ensure well-coordinated humanitarian diplomacy from local to global levels.

## IFRC membership – The network

Our distributed network is among our greatest strengths, but demands more effective coordination and increased efficiencies. We are committed to pooling resources, supporting unified plans and common standards, and finding ways to improve collaboration. We will push for greater coherence and equity across Federation partnerships and promote transformative approaches to National Society Development.

## ICRC

We will seek to increase our combined humanitarian impact through both operations and influencing.

We will support the ICRC's ability to exercise its mandated role and implement its institutional strategy, including its stated objective to operate from within the Movement and engage in genuine, mutually enabling and supportive partnerships. We will provide financial and human resources to ICRC's programmes and activities. Our partnership's major focus areas are set out in the British Red Cross-ICRC Partnership Framework Agreement.



A photograph of three women in traditional beaded attire, likely from the Hamar region of Ethiopia. They are wearing multiple layers of beaded necklaces and have their hair styled in traditional ways. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The text 'Change ambition 5' and 'System level impact' is overlaid on the image.

## Change ambition 5 System level impact

We will contribute to meaningful change in support of locally-led action and strengthen the humanitarian system for the future.

### Influencing agenda

We must capitalise on the expertise of British Red Cross, our National Society partners and other Movement organisations to deliver meaningful change at national, regional and global levels. We will contribute evidence, experience and foresight, and share our platform with others, promoting diverse community-level voices. Our influencing will be guided by:

- our unique mandate
- commitment to locally-led action
- addressing humanitarian need.

We must continue to enhance respect for international law, including by providing expert technical advice, emblem protection, international humanitarian law training, policy influencing and convening. We will reinforce the value and relevance of principled humanitarian action. And we will position the Movement's unique work, particularly the role of National Societies, as effective, community-based and permanent humanitarian auxiliaries to their governments.





We will conduct research and analysis on key humanitarian policy priorities, developing and stewarding policy and research partnerships. We will create an evidence base that encourages greater support for locally-led humanitarian action. And we will advocate privately and publicly to influence positive change so that the humanitarian system remains fit for purpose in the face of conflicts, the climate emergency and growing need.

## UK Government

As a [humanitarian auxiliary to the UK Government](#), the British Red Cross has a unique legal status: it is neither part of government nor a non-governmental organisation. This is a unique relationship that enables the British Red Cross to coordinate effectively with government officials on humanitarian issues and meet needs during crises. It also provides a direct platform for dialogue on humanitarian challenges.

We will strengthen our efforts to provide the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and other parts of Government with expertise, advice and analysis, including by providing the FCDO with secondees and exploring deeper country-level engagement. We will increase our ability to secure and

responsibly steward UK Government funds for the Movement.

We will work closely with the FCDO to help define its approach to localisation in support of our shared ambition. We will explore new investment opportunities at a global level and in specific contexts of mutual priority to strengthen locally-led humanitarian action, where there is a joint willingness to take managed risks.

## External partnerships

We will contribute evidence, stories and expertise to promote a shift in donor perceptions and practice to support locally-led humanitarian action. This will increase our ability to secure multiyear flexible funding for our National Society partners, promoting people-centred approaches such as cash assistance. We will collaborate with organisations, individuals and private sector partners to:

- benefit from their expertise
- create influence together for positive change
- secure funds for the most urgent humanitarian needs and to invest in our wider strategic vision

# Priority investments

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**British Red Cross will be known for the following areas of existing or emerging strength. We are investing in them because they are catalysts to achieving our goal and they contribute to all our five change ambitions.**

## **Strengthening locally-led response**

Our work is most effective when led by strong National Societies, with support from Movement partners only where necessary, in line with their unique mandates. We believe more needs to be done to enable National Societies to take the lead, and to prepare for and respond rapidly to crises as viable and independent organisations. We will be:

- supporting our partners to be leaders in emergency response, by opening up our financial and human resources to them and by committing to their strategic and National Society Development ambitions
- maximising our emergency fundraising offer to ensure we make the most of our excellent brand and fundraising capacity, and that we are first-rate stewards for emergency funding globally

- helping build a regional surge system that better serves National Societies, creating viable networks of deployable experts that National Societies can have ownership of and draw on
- influencing Movement partners to put National Societies at centre and ensure that Movement tools (emergency appeals, coordination mechanisms, DREF) are designed with their needs in mind.

### **Target**

- National Society partners have rapid access to funding to take action within 24 hours of a crisis.

## Accelerating community-led climate resilience

We will scale-up community-led climate adaptation and resilience programmes, including [climate-smart](#) food security, economic empowerment, disaster risk reduction, early action and nature-based solutions.

We will invest in our ability to act as a broker of expertise, so we can match global best practice and innovation with low-cost, low-tech interventions that capitalise on National Societies' strengths in volunteer mobilisation, community action and local authority engagement. We will accompany National Society partners in their [Climate Action Journeys](#), offering skills strengthening, facilitating shared learning with peers and leveraging UK expertise. Collaboration with organisations outside the humanitarian sector will be essential to bring in new knowledge and ideas on the environment and ecosystem restoration.

A crucial focus will be on research and evidence – investing in pilots and demonstrating impact to influence policy and future funding decisions.

### Target

- Community-led adaptation and resilience solutions to the climate crisis will be implemented at scale in six countries.





## Scaling-up cash

Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) creates transformational change in the way humanitarian aid is provided. It helps enable people to exercise choice and meet their needs in a dignified, timely, effective, efficient and appropriate way. It can contribute to locally-led action through providing a powerful response tool, catalysing systems development, and driving collaboration with government and the private sector. We have seen the impact of our investment and want to renew our commitment to re-energising CVA in the Movement and the wider sector. We will focus on three key elements:

- Hosting the Cash Hub as a global resource for the Movement, providing National Societies with access to tools, learning, coaching and an active network of CVA practitioners.
- Investing in CVA preparedness with our National Society partners.
- Support the Movement and partners with cash delivery in emergencies.

Our ambition to support partners and the Movement to deliver cash or voucher assistance within 72 hours

of a crisis hitting represents a gold standard. It will not be possible to achieve this across all partners and contexts, but we will measure our progress and consider meaningful gains in speed as successes to be celebrated.

### Targets

- People facing crisis will receive cash assistance to address their urgent needs within 72 hours.
- We will spend at least 50% of emergency response funds on cash and voucher assistance.



## Transformative partnerships and National Society Development

We want our partners to be stronger, more sustainable and empowered to lead the delivery of effective and relevant services and action, improving the support they provide for vulnerable communities.

British Red Cross will commit multiyear unrestricted funding against National Society country plans. The funding will be flexible to enable our partners to be responsive to changing needs and priorities. The approach will be rolled out with at least two of our partnerships in 2026, increasing to a minimum of 10 partnerships by 2030.

When asked, we will help our partners develop their organisational strategies and plans. We will also support our partners' National Society Development (NSD) work, including sourcing technical expertise when requested.

As the Movement and donor dialogue on localisation and NSD has picked up pace, so has the importance of British Red Cross's work in convening, investing, sharing learning and pushing for progress on the issue. We will continue to play this role and advocate for the fundamental challenges that undermine

National Society sustainability to be addressed. With our Movement partners, we must collectively provide the commitment and resources National Societies need to lead serious conversations about their ability to attract and retain skilled staff, secure flexible and fair funding, plan for financial sustainability and strengthen governance – and then implement the necessary improvements. These are requirements for meaningful transformation.

### Targets

- We will provide a minimum of 10 partners with multiyear unrestricted funding.
- A minimum of 25% of British Red Cross's flexible international funding and 10% of our appeal funding will be committed to unrestricted funding for partners.

## Influencing and international law

British Red Cross is regarded within the Movement and by our external stakeholders as holding unique and extensive expertise in this area. In the current global humanitarian context, our work to safeguard and promote the core functions and values of the Movement and humanitarianism more generally is of acute importance. We will:

- play a leading role in disseminating and strengthening the international legal and policy frameworks – in particular International Humanitarian Law (IHL) – which aim to protect people in conflicts and other emergencies
- offer to support and develop the capacity and expertise of our National Society partners in humanitarian diplomacy and IHL through peer-to-peer exchange and dialogue
- continue to cooperate with the ICRC and IFRC on priority legal and policy agendas, and work directly with the IFRC to strengthen its global and regional-level humanitarian diplomacy

- provide research and analysis on key policy priorities
- conduct strategic oversight of government relations and Movement affairs in relation to the above.

### Targets

- We will support humanitarian policy change and the strengthening of international law in eight complex crises, including through direct partnerships with National Societies.
- We will help strengthen and shape the humanitarian impact of UK Government agendas on IHL, principled humanitarian action, localisation, displacement and climate change.



# Our approach

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**This strategy does not provide a rigid blueprint for the next five years, but represents our direction of travel and a central framework that we will build on as we continue to learn and adapt.**

## How we will operate

- We will embrace an **adaptive approach** to our operating model that is context informed, shaped by the principles of locally-led humanitarian action and ensures we fulfil our stewardship role.<sup>1</sup>
  - We will ensure technical and operational capability is **fully owned or embedded** within our National Society partners.
  - We believe in **shared leadership**: success cannot be achieved through our action alone. We must work with diverse collaborators and join collective ventures, not always seeking to lead from the front.
  - We must invest in **collective capacity** and take a key role in stimulating our Movement capabilities.
  - We need to strike a balance between our desire to maintain stability for our staff and partners with the need to **scale up and down quickly**, in accordance with needs and resource availability.
- We will work towards an **80/20 logic** to resourcing and workload, planning for core responsibilities to take 80% of an individual's time. The remaining 20% will provide for surge during peak periods, and be invested in side-projects to contribute to **innovation and transformation** at British Red Cross and **personal development**.
  - We will draw on our **full organisational capacity**, to share the invaluable expertise not only in our domestic services but in our core functions and capabilities.
  - We will work together as **one British Red Cross**, with our **leadership and governance** playing a key role in demonstrating and advocating for the change we want to see in ourselves and the wider Movement.
  - We will use our influence to **amplify the voices** of our partners and the communities they serve.

<sup>1</sup> Our stewardship role consists of our obligations in the Royal Charter, Movement statutes, UK legal context and regulatory framework, commitments to private and public donors and a need to uphold our reputation and brand.



## Accountability and risk

- Both British Red Cross and our partners bring **values** to our partnerships. Our partnership principles emphasise mutual accountability, integrity, openness and courage.
- **Quality humanitarian action and services** should be safe, provide people with agency and protect their dignity. British Red Cross will continue to improve in these areas and support our partners' organisational development.
- **Sharing power** necessitates the sharing of risk. We will agree with partners how this will be managed.
- Our processes should be as **light-touch, simple and flexible** as possible. They should be intentional, risk-informed and provide clear responsibilities and accountabilities for our staff and partners.
- We must improve how we demonstrate **impact** and tell stories with, not just about, people facing crises.

## Geographic choices

- We will commit to **long-term partnerships** with priority National Societies based on humanitarian need, the value British Red Cross can add and our leadership's mutual commitment to meaningful partnership, informed by funding availability.
- We will establish new funding relationships with non-partner National Societies to secure high-value and strategically relevant funds in response to **opportunities** from UK-based donors.
- We will continue to adapt to the shifting humanitarian landscape and **embrace new partnerships** with National Societies facing the challenges of conflict, disaster and climate change.
- We will **proactively develop new relationships** with National Societies where we can support the Movement to access strategically important resources and relationships, particularly with the FCDO.
- We will be decisive about exiting from partnerships to maintain **a financially sustainable and balanced portfolio of partnerships** that are consistent with our strategy.



# Financial framework

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**British Red Cross will continue to play a significant role in leveraging resources for the work of the Movement, with a minimum annual expenditure of £100m to increase investment in locally-led action and reach more people in crisis.**

We will also increase the funding that goes from donors directly to National Societies and recognise this contribution as part of our wider impact.

A key approach in our strategy is to grant more flexibly to partners. This will reduce inefficiencies, increase their ability to act quickly, and empower them to make appropriate choices and invest in their organisations. To do this, we will lead with our emergency credentials to secure increased, and increasingly flexible, funding. We will work closely with key donors to reduce the restriction placed on their contributions.

This will require us to take a new approach to our funding allocation. We will set a **central framework on financial targets** and standards to support this shift. As part of this work, we will:

- look at how much of our total expenditure is dedicated to community-level programmes and services
- increase the percentage of our flexible funding spent on grants to partners

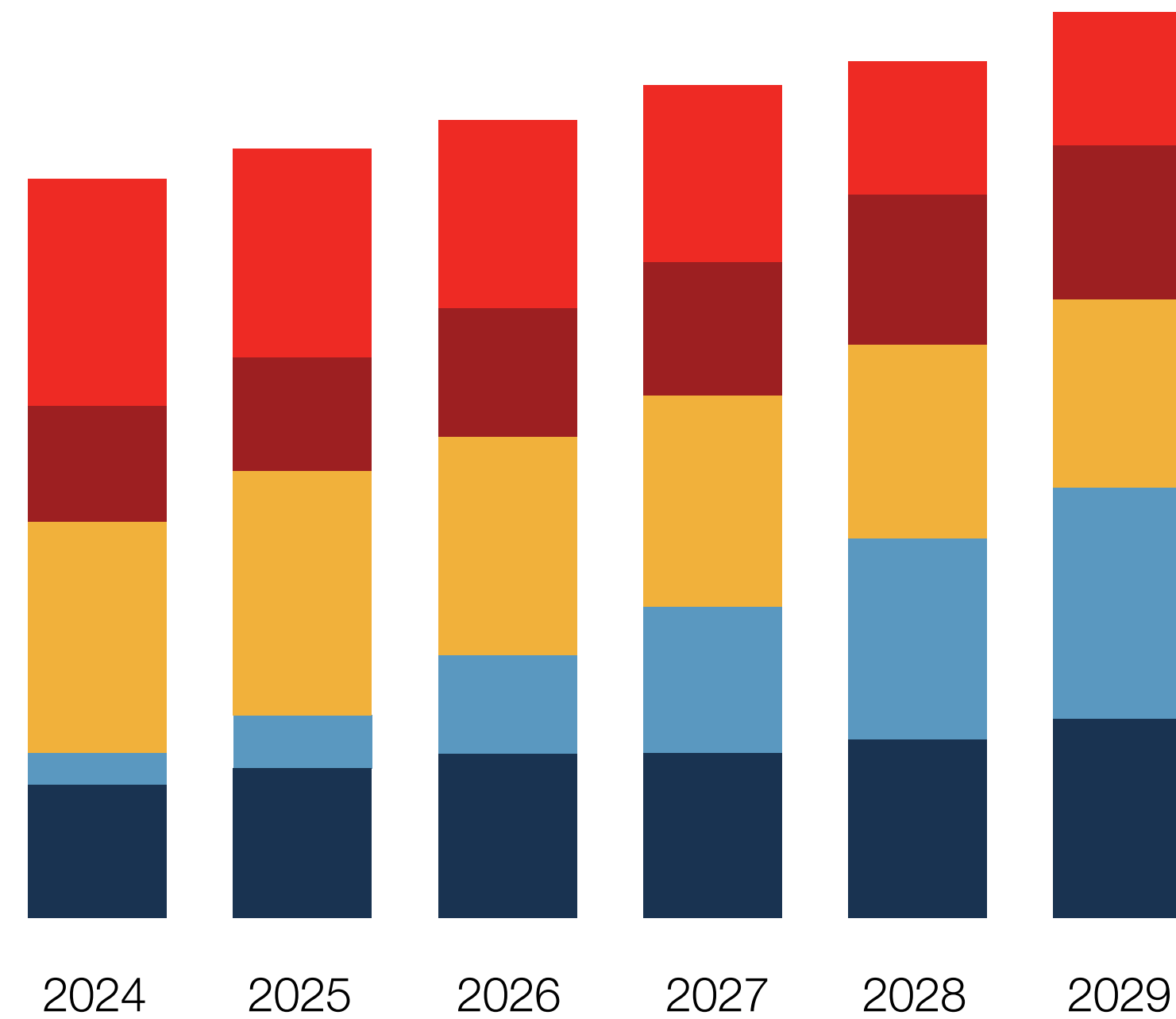
- scrutinise the ratio of non-grant expenditure vs our grants to partners
- seek to maintain or reduce our current levels of core headcount.



Photo © Farzana Hossen / British Red Cross



**This diagram illustrates our ambition for the shift in funding flexibility over the course of the next five years:**



- Restricted**  
Fully restricted, traditional grant funding
- Emergency restricted**  
Restricted to an emergency appeal, with further conditions.
- Loosely restricted**  
Clearly restricted by one or two factors e.g. geography.
- Quite flexible**  
Some caveats and conditions to their use e.g. disaster fund.
- Flexible**  
Totally flexible, unrestricted funds.

# Targets

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1. All National Society partners have rapid access to funding to take action within 24 hours of a crisis, and people facing crisis receive cash assistance to address their urgent needs within 72 hours.\*
2. Locally-led community adaptation and resilience solutions are implemented at scale in six countries.\*
3. A minimum of 10 partners receive multiyear unrestricted funding.
4. Humanitarian policy change and the strengthening of international law is supported in eight complex crises, including through direct partnerships with National Societies.\*
5. People from historically marginalised communities are represented across our workforce, especially at leadership levels.
6. Maintain a minimum annual expenditure of £100 million to increase investment in locally-led action and reach more people in crisis.
7. Spend at least 50% of emergency response funds on cash and voucher assistance by 2030.
8. A minimum of 25% of British Red Cross's flexible international funding and 10% of our appeal funding will be committed to unrestricted funding for partners.
9. Help strengthen and shape the humanitarian impact of UK Government agendas on IHL, principled humanitarian action, localisation, displacement and climate change.

\*This target appears as a Red Cross Movement goal in the British Red Cross Corporate Strategy.



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