



Climate  
Centre

# Strategy 2017 2020

## Mission

*The Climate Centre supports the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its partners in reducing the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events on vulnerable people.*

This particularly includes the commitments made at the 2007 International Conference and the objectives of Strategy 2020, by contributing to strengthening the ability of all components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (“Red Cross Red Crescent”) and partners to understand and address the rising risks related to climate change, climate variability and extreme weather events.

## Context

Since 2002, when the Climate Centre was founded, our understanding of climate risks has advanced, as well as our ability to inform actions on the ground. Climate change has also never been higher on the policy agenda, as evidenced throughout the aims of global agreements such as the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. At the same time, international climate change financing is of the same order of magnitude as official development assistance.

While there is clear evidence that climate risks are disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, advancements in science, policy and finance flows are not reaching those who need it most. In the past years, the Climate Centre has supported the Red Cross Red Crescent and its partners to address this gap, with some success amidst the rising risks. Addressing this gap remains an important challenge for the future.

This Strategy outlines our pathways to change and outlining our implementation approaches.

*Annex 1* contains principles of how we operate as a reference centre, and *Annex 2* explains how this Strategy is linked to the planning for our annual work plans, ensuring explicit contributions to plans of the IFRC and other key partners.

## Pathways to change

The Climate Centre advances its mission through **three interrelated pathways to change**:

1. First, the Climate Centre supports **practical action to address the rising risks**, by providing technical inputs to Red Cross Red Crescent actors and their partners, so they can integrate climate risk management approaches into their work, across sectors, and across scales, from local, national, and regional to global level.
2. Second the Climate Centre seeks to **influence policy discussions and investments**, by drawing on the practical experience of the Red Cross Red Crescent and its partners, as well as scientific research. As policies are adopted, the Climate Centre also supports the Red Cross Red Crescent and its partners to translate these policy frameworks and agreements into practical action on the ground.  
This second pillar also includes support to the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's humanitarian agenda through its statutory meetings and processes, ensuring that climate risk management is both maintained and promoted as an area of focus.
3. Third, the Climate Centre seeks to **advance understanding** of climate risks and how these risks impact the most vulnerable. The Climate Centre partners with social and natural science research institutions, learning from and sharing Red Cross Red Crescent experiences to shape research agendas and promote evidence-based policy and action.

In pursuing the pathways to change the Climate Centre facilitates innovation, learning, knowledge creation and capacity building for enhanced climate risk management.

## Implementation approaches

The Climate Centre enables the Red Cross Red Crescent and partners to leverage technical support, bridging gaps and bringing coherence to the implementation of humanitarian, development and climate strategies from the local to global level.

Reflecting on the landscape of actors and past successes in promoting climate risk management for the most vulnerable, we have identified three implementation approaches for the coming years:

### A. Connect to transform

A major strength of the Climate Centre is the ability to design and facilitate connections across diverse actors, and to nurture innovative collaborations with far-reaching results.

What does **success** look like?

The Climate Centre is a go-to partner for dialogue and innovation in climate risk management and helps ensure the Red Cross Red Crescent and its partners reach new audiences and forums.

We commit in the coming four years to improve climate risk management by strengthening existing partnerships – ranging from hydropower dam operators to world-class artists –, as well as brokering new connections for the Red Cross Red Crescent. Innovative communication, knowledge management, and dialogues are key tools to change minds and galvanise action.

*"We consistently strive to infuse our work with the latest scientific thinking and evidence, and seek to innovate to teach new methodologies to our operational colleagues and country counterparts. Developing games with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre offered us a great opportunity to experiment, and we have learned a great deal from the game design process itself."*

Marianne Fay, Chief Economist for Sustainable Development, World Bank

## B. Influence where it matters

The Climate Centre has earned the reputation for identifying and harnessing critical opportunities to advance climate risk management for the most vulnerable. For instance, we played a key role in ensuring that disaster risk reduction was included by the UNFCCC as a key component of climate change adaptation – an achievement which changed political discourse and humanitarian practice for years to come<sup>1</sup>.

What does **success** look like?

The Climate Centre has significant impact in at least three emerging thematic areas that have exceptional potential to address climate risk facing the most vulnerable.

The Climate Centre works with the Red Cross Red Crescent and its partners to target thematic areas with exceptional potential for influence and impact. Examples include urban risk; social protection; climate risk screening of investments; migration and conflict; and early warning systems downstream of hydropower dams.

## C. Incubate for long-term impact

Attracted by the Climate Centre's ways of working, over 200 students and young professionals have joined our small team and successfully moved on to careers in places as diverse as DFID, NASA, the IFRC, and the insurance sector. Champions of our ideas and innovative concepts (such as forecast-based financing), now inform a vast network of stronger and more committed allies for the Red Cross Red Crescent and its partners.

What does **success** look like?

A growing number of people move in and out of the Climate Centre and continue to act as bridges to the Red Cross Red Crescent in other institutions.

A far-ranging and diverse network of allies incubated by the Climate Centre maintains relationships with the Red Cross Red Crescent and supports climate risk management for the most vulnerable.

In order to widen its impact, the Climate Centre follows an incubation model, where expertise is fluid and people move in and out of the team (rather than just aiming for growth of the Centre itself). In designing new projects and attracting human resources, we aim to develop and strengthen existing "incubation" structures such as mentorship programmes, secondment programmes, co-implementation models, and a robust alumni network to promote the climate risk management agenda, strengthen the capacity of the wider Red Cross Red Crescent and its partners, and advance the Red Cross Red Crescent strategic priorities and interests.

How to get to where we want to be

The Climate Centre's activities are largely enabled by its network of partners, and a diversity of projects that finance our activities. We will aim to increase the amount of flexible finance that allows us to focus more of our time on more risky innovations, as well as new that may not directly fit one of our existing projects or partnerships.

In addition, we will be critically analysing how every new opportunity or project contributes to the pathways and implementation approaches outlined above. This in particular includes an updated assessment of our core contributions to the Movement, which will be based on the new IFRC Plan of Action on Climate Change that is being developed in 2017 and planned discussions on climate change at the 2017 Red Cross Red Crescent Statutory Meetings.

<sup>1</sup> In the early days of discussions on adaptation, attention was primarily on long-term trends in average conditions, not on extreme events. The Climate Centre played a key role bringing the disaster element into the UNFCCC discussions. Towards COP16 in Cancun, the Climate Centre supported the IFRC to host a secretariat for an IASC task force on climate change, making sure that disaster risk reduction was recognised as a key area of work in the UNFCCC Adaptation Framework.

Finally, we consider our staff our core asset to achieve what we have outlined in this strategy. We want to ensure that they are attracted to the Climate Centre partly because of its unique mission and areas of work, but also because of its culture and professional management.

Therefore, we will ensure the Climate Centre is an attractive place to work; professionally managed; ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion; creating opportunities for professional development; and promoting work-life balance. We ensure oversight, accountability, and efficiency in management systems while continuing minimally stratified decision-making structures.

We continue to support creative professional arrangements. This includes working virtually, which enables us to recruit people from a diversity of locations, strengthening our ability to understand different context and to support partners at a distance; part-time employment; and joint positions with other employers, especially continuing to pursue cross-postings with the IFRC.

## Annex 1: Principles of working as a reference centre

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1. As a reference centre, we are not a separate channel of financial support from donors to Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies. Instead, we facilitate such financial support to flow directly from a donor to a National Society, or through other existing channels such as IFRC or Partner National Societies.
2. We always go through the appropriate Movement coordination systems when interacting with any specific government.
3. When engaging in formal international negotiation processes (such as UNFCCC) we represent IFRC (or by exception other Red Cross Red Crescent partners), and follow the associated coordination mechanisms.

## Annex 2: Planning system

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As a reference centre, almost all of our impacts are achieved through collaboration with others. Our impact on the ground is not our own impact, but should be measured by the contribution we're making to the effectiveness of the Red Cross Red Crescent and its partners in achieving broader objectives. Given that we want to remain flexible in light of evolving partner strategies, it is difficult to set long-term quantitative targets for our own effectiveness. Therefore, we have chosen not to set quantitative 4-year result targets.

Instead, our strategy sets out our three strategic directions and implementation approaches. This continuously guides what we focus on in our support to the Red Cross Red Crescent and its partners, and in project development.

We then set specific targets for individual projects – the primary source of our income – collated on an annual basis into our annual work plans, largely composed of the outputs of those projects.

The board reflects on this portfolio of projects, and guides the Centre in implementation and future project development, to provide optimal impact on our objectives, and to achieve the right balance between the different areas of work. To facilitate this strategic planning process, the annual work plan:

1. Lists the main outputs of our portfolio of projects;
2. Identifies how those outputs map to the three pathways to change identified in this strategy;
3. Describes how the workplan fits the implementation approaches identified in this strategy;
4. And explicitly highlights how the activities contribute to the Annual IFRC Plan and Budget (and eventually at a higher level the upcoming new IFRC climate change strategy and other Red Cross Red Crescent strategies).