

# **International Strategy**

**2015-  
2020**



Revised June 2017

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## NORWEGIAN RED CROSS INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY 2015-2020

### INTRODUCTION

This strategy was revised in June 2017 and will guide the international work of the Norwegian Red Cross (NorCross) for the period 2018-20. It applies to all of NorCross' international activities.

The purpose of the strategy is to:

- establish the strategic direction and objectives for NorCross' international work;
- recall and elaborate on principles and parameters for how NorCross works internationally

### 1. WHO WE ARE

#### NorCross' mission and strategic frameworks

NorCross' mission is to "reveal, prevent and alleviate human suffering and distress". As an auxiliary to the Norwegian authorities in the humanitarian field, NorCross' activities in Norway aim to assist and supplement relevant public services. NorCross is a membership organisation with a country-wide presence through 383 local branches in 19 district branches. NorCross' activities are grounded in local needs, resources and competencies, and carried out by volunteers working in their own communities. The experience that NorCross has developed as a humanitarian organisation mobilising thousands of volunteers in Norway is a foundation for working internationally and partnering with other National Societies.

NorCross is part of the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement, the world's largest humanitarian network with millions of volunteers<sup>1</sup> in 190 countries. The RCRC Movement's mission is to alleviate human suffering, protect life and health, and uphold human dignity especially during armed conflicts and other emergencies.

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<sup>1</sup>The Movement's 190 National Societies represent about 17 million active volunteers. About half are youth volunteers. Additionally, approximately 50 per cent of the Movement's volunteers are women.

The RCRC Movement consists of 190 National Societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the Federation) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

- **National Societies** act as auxiliaries to their national authorities in the humanitarian field and provide a range of services including disaster management, health and social programmes. In situations of armed conflict, National Societies assist the civilian population and may support the medical services of the armed forces. The Norwegian Red Cross was founded in 1865 and is one of the oldest National Societies in the RCRC Movement.
- **The Federation**, founded in 1919, is the umbrella organisation for all National Societies. The Secretariat of the Federation directs and coordinates the member National Societies' actions to assist the victims of disasters and supports the development of National Societies. The Secretariat's work focuses on four core areas: promoting humanitarian values, disaster response, disaster preparedness, and health and community care.
- **The ICRC**, established in 1863, is at the origin of the RCRC Movement. The mission of the ICRC is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC directs and coordinates the RCRC Movement's international relief activities during armed conflicts. It also promotes respect for and strengthening of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The ICRC's mandate during armed conflicts is established in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.

All the components of the RCRC Movement are guided by seven Fundamental Principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. The first four principles have now been accepted by the international humanitarian community at large, while the last three remain unique to the RCRC Movement.

As a member of the Federation, NorCross' activities are informed by the Federation's Strategy 2020 "Saving lives – changing minds"<sup>2</sup>. Adopted in 2009, it establishes as a common vision "to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world". The Federation Youth Engagement Strategy is also informing Norcross' work, ensuring strong youth engagement.

NorCross' international work is directed by NorCross' Long-Term Plan of Action and the Main Strategy. The international engagement of NorCross is based on and guided by humanitarian needs and the humanitarian imperative aiming at achieving humanitarian objectives.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Including the mid-term review of Strategy 2020

<sup>3</sup> This implies that NorCross does not engage in programming that has an explicit and direct transformational political, social or cultural objective in its international work

NorCross bases its humanitarian interventions on a holistic and cross-sectoral analysis. Recognizing the prevalence of protracted crises, NorCross aims to ensure that short-term emergency response is complemented by longer-term interventions.

## 2. HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS AND CHALLENGES

Towards 2020, the humanitarian environment will continue to be shaped by several on-going trends. On the one hand, while there has been a decrease in the number of armed conflicts since the Cold War, this trend has been partly reversed over the last decade. 120,000 were killed in war and conflict during 2016 - the highest figure for decades. Most current conflicts are intra-state and low-intensity. Many are protracted and last for decades. Armed groups are becoming fragmented, often reflecting corporate along with political agendas, and hostilities increasingly take place in densely populated urban areas. On the other hand, climate change is demonstrated by the increased frequency of disasters and extreme weather events. While large-scale disasters like earthquakes, typhoons, tsunamis and floods still cause massive death and destruction, small and slow-onset disasters like drought and environmental degradation are also affecting more people.

Notably, natural disasters, conflict and fragility increasingly coincide, creating complex crises that challenge traditional humanitarian response, cause protracted displacement and development reversals.<sup>4</sup> Wars and persecution have driven more people from their homes than at any time since records began, totalling more than 65 million people or one person for every 115 worldwide. Protracted conflicts necessitate a long-term approach to addressing humanitarian needs. Moreover, there is a trend where IHL is under increased pressure with civilians being targeted, including attacks on medical facilities, medical staff and humanitarian workers. Since hostilities today often take place in urban areas, the negative consequences for the civilian population are severe and increasing. For humanitarian organisations, high levels of insecurity, as well as the politicisation or obstruction of aid, increasingly hamper access

The Middle East and parts of Africa will continue to face some of the most acute humanitarian needs throughout this strategy period. The “Syria crisis” continues unabated. Civilians are victims of IHL violations, including deliberate and indiscriminate attacks, the destruction of infrastructure and goods indispensable to their survival. The forced displacement of civilian populations results in loss of life, injury and deprivation. By 2017, two-thirds of the Syrian population need humanitarian assistance, including six million IDPs. The most affected are the five million people living in areas under prolonged siege or other areas where humanitarian access is obstructed. Additionally, more than five million Syrians have fled into neighbouring countries. Turkey is hosting in 2017 the biggest refugee population in the world while Lebanon has the highest per capita ratio of persons registered as refugees. Iraq is experiencing one of the largest internally displaced populations. In these settings, public institutions and infrastructure are exceptionally overstretched, severely impacting access to and the quality of basic services. Affected communities are experiencing eroded coping capacities and considerable hardship, with fewer resources available and an increased reliance on humanitarian assistance.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/protracted-conflict-and-humanitarian-action>

Africa is facing persistent challenges. Despite significant economic growth in many countries, thirty-four out of fifty-three African countries remain among the world's Least Developed Countries, and the gains have not raised the income share of the poorest quintile. Advances in technology and connectivity are changing life in the region – mobile phone ownership was at 70% in 2016 – while coverage of water and electricity infrastructure are lagging behind at around 60%, and gaps in educational and health coverage remain high.<sup>5</sup> The extended Horn of Africa and Sahel regions are experiencing unprecedented suffering; malnutrition is the greatest risk factor for health, which in turn increases vulnerability to disease. While food-insecure countries often experience conflict, instability and climate extremes, the worst countries lie in Sahel, extended Horn of Africa and Central Africa with more than 20% of the total population food insecure or at risk of acute malnutrition. In 2018 famine will not happen in places with working governments and functioning local economies. At the same time food crisis unfolding since 2015 has come to affect over 20 million people who by mid-2017 face a severe food crisis and are in urgent need of assistance. In Somalia over half of the population are acutely food insecure and in need of urgent life-saving assistance. In South Sudan, five million needed food assistance to cope and 100,000 are facing famine conditions. Yemen, experiencing long conflict duration and the absence of effective government institutions, sees ten million people in acute need of humanitarian or protection assistance; half of the population lack access to drinking water. In these contexts, excess mortality is mainly concentrated among mothers, children and patients suffering from non-communicable diseases, malnutrition or communicable diseases who cannot access care as a result of conflict. Access to prevention and treatment for prevalent diseases such as malaria is hindered by fragile health systems, resulting in higher mortality due to preventable conditions. Amongst unmet humanitarian needs feature protection, health, WASH and access to food whereas specific needs as a consequence of forced displacement comprise shelter/ landlessness and non-food items (NFIs) in the initial phases of displacement.

Asia Pacific, by contrast, is the most at-risk region on earth to sudden onset natural disaster; ten out of the ten most at-risk countries in the world are in Asia.<sup>6</sup> Nearly 40% of all natural hazard-related disasters occur in Asia, where 88% of people affected by such disasters live. Every decade, 1,000-1,500 natural disasters hit the region, killing half a million people.<sup>7</sup> Destruction of shelter and other infrastructure, the subsequent detrimental effects on sanitary conditions and access to and use of basic health services, are some of the most common humanitarian consequences of these shocks.

In the last decade, humanitarian action has been challenged by growing security concerns. There is a reduced acceptance for the presence of international actors, as well as a lack of respect for international law by both states and armed groups. The security situation remains fragile and unpredictable, and access to some of the worst-affected people remains a major concern. The importance of local organisations is growing and is increasingly a prerequisite for access and acceptance. The Grand Bargain, launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, included a commitment from aid organisations and donors to increase the support to local responders, such as

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<sup>5</sup> While high fertility, rapid growth and young populations coincide also on other continents, fertility remains high in Africa, particularly in rural areas. More than half of the global population growth between now and 2050 is expected to occur in Africa.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.inform-index.org/>

<sup>7</sup> Reference to the International Disaster Database, 2015

RCRC National Societies, which have taken on increased roles and responsibilities as a result of this trend. Meanwhile, a broader range of states, organisations and other actors have entered the humanitarian field, in some cases challenging the traditional humanitarian principles and methods.

Meanwhile, people are increasingly connected. Active mobile-broadband subscriptions increased to four billion by mid-2017, with more than 60% coming from developing countries.<sup>8</sup> Advances in technology provides tremendous opportunities, including for humanitarian actors and populations in need, for example by connecting directly with vulnerable people and communities, collecting and sharing information, increasing transparency and providing new means of delivering aid (e.g. through electronic cash transfers or mobile phones). The increased use of new technology and digital data also increases the need for improved data protection to ensure the security of people at risks, and the impartiality of humanitarian action.

### 3. THE CHANGE WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

The overall objective of NorCross' international work during 2018-20 is to:

*Reduce the vulnerability of local communities and to prevent loss of life*

This objective articulates how NorCross both domestically and internationally translates its mission to “reveal, prevent and alleviate human suffering and distress”. NorCross' Main Strategy establishes the strengthening of local resilience and preparedness as a priority. The Federation’s definition of resilience is “[t]he ability of individuals, communities, organisations, or countries exposed to disasters and crises and underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, prepare for, reduce the impact of, cope with, and recover from the effects of shocks and stresses without compromising their long-term prospects.”<sup>9</sup> Resilience can be strengthened at individual, household, community, national, regional and global level. While NorCross’ focus is on the community level, NorCross also contributes at the national, regional and global level, through working with National Society Partners and through strengthening regional and global preparedness and response systems.

Strengthening resilience cannot be achieved by any one actor. It requires engagement and contributions by a range of stakeholders, including the communities themselves, government institutions and civil society. Given its network, mandate and auxiliary role, the RCRC Movement can play an important role in brokering partnerships and promoting complementary action in vulnerable communities and global and regional response systems alike.

Moreover, the RCRC Movement is uniquely placed to contribute to community resilience due to its continuous presence through National Societies and their volunteers in communities before, during and after disasters, conflicts and other crises. The RCRC Movement is well placed to reduce the consequences of such events significantly by systematically strengthening local, national and regional capacities to better cope with future shocks and stresses.

<sup>8</sup> ITU 2017 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/273016/number-of-mobile-broadband-subscriptions-worldwide-since-2007/>

<sup>9</sup> IFRC, Framework for community resilience, Geneva 2014.

NorCross' international contribution to resilience of conflict-affected and disaster prone communities is mainly towards ensuring healthy, knowledgeable and prepared communities that can meet their basic needs and respond effectively in times of crisis as well as improving their social cohesiveness. Based on the auxiliary role of National Societies and the principle of unity NorCross contributes to strengthen its partners both on national, branch and community levels. National Society partners mobilize and organise volunteers who ensure that communities are better prepared and thus able to respond to external shocks and stresses.

NorCross' international work will focus on the following **humanitarian objectives** which further describe NorCross' specific contribution to resilience:

*Ensure basic needs are met, and improve the health of the most vulnerable people affected by conflict and protracted crisis*

NorCross will prioritise contexts affected by conflict and protracted crisis, given the scope and scale of unmet humanitarian needs, and the added value of National Societies with access to and acceptance in conflict-affected communities. NorCross will support promoting community health, access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene as well as increasing the coverage of health service delivery in areas where health services are unavailable for vulnerable populations. NorCross' support will be targeting the most vulnerable in each context based on holistic humanitarian needs analysis, the auxiliary role and key competencies of the National Society and NorCross added value.

*Improve national, regional and global disaster preparedness and response systems to acute disasters, and ensure coordinated recovery from large-scale disasters*

NorCross will support National Societies in selected disaster-prone countries, focusing on building preparedness and response capacity to slow and sudden onset disasters. Furthermore, NorCross will coordinate with the RCRC Movement to continue improving global and regional disaster preparedness and response systems. This includes further refinement and strengthening of the Emergency Response Unit as a global tool for disaster response, contribution to RCRC Movement-wide emergency appeals to unfolding disasters as well as efficient local response to small-scale disasters through the Federation Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). NorCross will strengthen partnerships with selected National Societies who can engage in regional large-scale disaster preparedness and response. Finally, NorCross will promote coordinated RCRC Movement action during recovery operations with a special emphasis on owner-driven shelter construction.

To achieve these humanitarian objectives, NorCross invests in the "enabling environment" through non-operational activities articulated as the following objectives:

***Improve Financial Development, Resource Mobilisation and PMER<sup>10</sup> of National Society Partners***

RCRC National Societies strive towards becoming well-functioning "*organisations that consistently deliver, through volunteers and staff, relevant country wide services to vulnerable people sustained for as long as needed and that contribute to the strength of the Federation and the RCRC Movement.*"<sup>11</sup> Challenges related to financial development, resource mobilisation and quality services<sup>12</sup> are among the persistent challenges faced by NorCross National Society partners. Based on its core competencies these represent NorCross focus areas for National Society development support. NorCross further contributes to capacity building of National Society partners at branch level through its engagement in international branch-to-branch and youth exchange cooperation.

***Strengthen complementary roles and responsibilities in the RCRC Movement***

NorCross will prioritise strengthening complementary roles and responsibilities within the RCRC Movement, thereby supporting the ICRC, the Federation and National Societies within their distinct mandates as well as further aligning within the RCRC Movement.

Given NorCross' focus on conflict and protracted crisis, NorCross aims to strengthen its role as a convener of National Society engagement in conflict contexts and protection more generally, complementary to the ICRC. Specifically, NorCross aims to contribute to ensuring global technical standards and best practices in *Financial Development, Health Care in Danger* and *Community Based Disease Surveillance*. Furthermore, NorCross aims to contribute to common plans among National Societies who support the Federation with financial and human resources.

***Strengthen humanitarian diplomacy and development of RCRC Movement policy***

With its presence in vulnerable communities combined with its auxiliary role and internationally recognized mandate, the RCRC Movement can bring the needs and challenges of vulnerable groups to the attention of authorities and other stakeholders. The RCRC Movements' focus is on the rights and obligations under IHL and human rights law to protect such vulnerable groups and individuals.

NorCross' humanitarian diplomacy will focus on principled and non-political humanitarian action, localized humanitarian responses through National Societies, as well as promoting good donorship, protection from weapons, urban violence and sexual and gender-based violence, in addition to safe access to healthcare. Furthermore, recognizing the humanitarian challenges related to access to education due to protracted conflicts, NorCross will contribute to explore and develop the RCRC Movement's role related to the protection of schools and access to education.

<sup>10</sup> Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) refers to systems and procedures which increases the chances of achieving intended humanitarian objectives, as well as documenting and communicating these achievements.

<sup>11</sup> National Society Development framework. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 19th Session of the General Assembly, Sydney, Australia, 12-15 November 2013

<sup>12</sup> Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Accountability to affected populations

<b><i>Increase funding and strengthen external partnerships</i></b>
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Based on unmet humanitarian needs, NorCross will continue to invest in resource mobilisation efforts to ensure an increased funding base for its international priorities, including support to the ICRC, the Federation and National Society partners. NorCross promotes good donorship to ensure funding conditions are aligned to its institutional policies.

NorCross will further develop its strategic partnership with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) through multi-annual cooperation agreements, strategic dialogue and humanitarian diplomacy, and added value in the humanitarian-development nexus.

In addition to its key institutional donors, increased funding will be sought from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) and other European Union funding instruments, as well as other possible donors.

Funds raised from private donors and corporate partners remain essential to be able to respond independently to humanitarian needs when other funding is not available. NorCross will promote joint initiatives with the corporate sector that can create shared and added value.

NorCross will also explore partnership and strategic alliances both with RCRC Movement and external partners to achieve its humanitarian objectives. NorCross will consider how cash-based approaches can complement its international engagement.

## 4. HOW WE WORK

NorCross' international work is directed by its Long-Term Plan of Action and the Main Strategy. These documents establish four criteria guiding the organisational priorities:

1. There are unmet needs among people in vulnerable situations;
2. The task follows naturally from the RCRC mission and is in accordance with NorCross' principles;
3. The needs are not met by others with greater competency or that are better placed to respond;
4. The Red Cross has the competency and resources to carry out the task.

In line with these criteria, a central consideration for NorCross to engage internationally is whether NorCross has an added value to bring to the specific partnership, programme or operation.

Internationally, NorCross operates exclusively inside the framework of the RCRC Movement. NorCross seeks to maximize available resources for RCRC Movement operations through the most effective and efficient RCRC channel. Within the RCRC Movement, NorCross operates through the following different channels:

- supporting the ICRCs humanitarian action in line with the **Partnership Framework Agreement 2014-2017** between ICRC and NorCross and the **Tripartite Agreement 2016-2019**.<sup>13</sup>
- supporting the Federation in line with the **Memorandum of Understanding 2017-2020**

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<sup>13</sup> This may entail NorCross human resources seconded to the ICRC

- responding directly to disasters and their aftermaths, in coordination with the Federation and with host National Societies consent. In these situations, NorCross may deploy under the auspices of the **Federation**, the **ICRC**, or the **host National Society**.
- providing support to **National Society partners** to strengthen their response to humanitarian needs in their own countries. NorCross' support can be provided directly, through another Partner National Society, or through the Federation.

For the latter category, a guideline has been developed, establishing the analytical framework and criteria for choosing the most effective and efficient modality in each context. The guideline is to ensure optimal<sup>14</sup> use of resources with given restrictions and constraints, to achieve the intended outcomes.

When engaging in a direct bilateral partnership with a National Society, the approach is defined in *NorCross Partnership Approach & Guidelines*. While NorCross engages in many forms of cooperation both within and without the RCRC Movement, a partnership implies a higher level of institutional engagement as well as a longer-term commitment.

NorCross' partnership approach is embedded in the belief that focusing on targeted partnerships will lead to greater humanitarian impact. NorCross strives to clearly define the specific objective of each partnership it engages in. Partnerships and their objectives are formalised and articulated in a partnership agreement.

The key criteria for establishing and maintaining partnerships are:

- Significant humanitarian needs have been identified or significant risks for a future humanitarian crisis exist in the relevant country
- The National Society has a current capacity or future potential to reach people in need and provide assistance that alleviates identified needs
- NorCross has an identified added value as a partner, including thematic priorities, core competencies and efficient and effective funding.

#### **International branch-to-branch cooperation ('twinning')**

NorCross districts and local branches contribute to NorCross international work in general and to the support to National Society branches specifically.

NorCross' district and local branches engage in "twinning", i.e. cooperation with branches in other National Societies. Reciprocity is at the core of the twinning cooperation. The branch-to-branch cooperation is an integral and complementary part of NorCross international engagement and partnerships. Furthermore, it contributes to the enhancement of international knowledge and understanding in the RCRC Movement. The branch-to-branch cooperation is a long-term cooperation with three primary objectives:

1. capacity-building to strengthen and develop the branches involved in the cooperation
2. financial and technical support for activities where NorCross district branches have competencies
3. enhancement of international knowledge and understanding within NorCross domestically

<sup>14</sup> Definition of optimal: The most desirable possible given expressed or implied restrictions or constraints (see UK National Audit Office cited in British Red Cross Value for Money Workshop, GVA April 2016)

NorCross focuses its branch-to-branch cooperation in Europe to make complementary efforts to the international activities focused on the most vulnerable people globally.

### **International youth cooperation**

National Societies depend on recruiting and engaging young people to maintain relevance and to develop and change their organisations. Young people are important agents of change in their communities, and volunteerism is an effective and meaningful way to engage youth. The Red Cross Youth contributes to NorCross international strategy primarily through its Youth Delegate Exchange Programme as well as participation and youth representation of NorCross in international RCRC fora. The Youth Delegate Exchange Programme strengthens youth structures within National Societies and builds capacity of RCRC youth volunteers through the mutual exchange of young volunteers. NorCross Youth is actively engaged in the implementation of the Federation's Youth Engagement Strategy in international RCRC fora and through the Youth Delegate Exchange Programme.

In the period 2018-20 NorCross will aim to work towards a closer collaboration between this programme and the established bilateral partnership objectives. In line with the evaluation recommendations, this is expected to increase the impact of the programme as well as other programmes supported by NorCross.

### **NorCross thematic priorities and frameworks**

Recognizing the cross-sectoral investment needed to reach its humanitarian objectives, NorCross has developed thematic frameworks for its thematic priority areas: Health, Disaster Risk Management, Protection and, to underpin the others, National Society Development. Together they comprise the technical approaches proposed to strengthen resilience of conflict affected and disaster prone communities.

Within each sector, NorCross wishes to excel in specialised thematics. This may be areas in which NorCross' competency is already recognized and in demand, or in emerging areas in which NorCross wishes to develop additional knowledge and expertise. Specialization enables NorCross to provide relevant quality support to partners and to enhance the RCRC Movement's capacity within selected areas of competence (see annex 1). Gender and diversity considerations are mainstreamed across all thematic areas.

#### **Health**

The RCRC Movement recognizes the responsibility of governments to ensure health for their populations. In order to achieve National Health Plans, some National Societies are mandated to contribute to either health services delivery or to addressing public health in emergencies. The RCRC Movement complements the health system by bridging the gap between the lowest tier of health system and vulnerable people. NorCross focusses on community-based health promotion and health care services, as well as improving water and sanitation in conflicts and protracted crisis and in the response to and recovery from large-scale disasters.

In line with its humanitarian mandate, the RCRC Movement may also play a role in replacing the health system:

- During acute crises, when health systems cannot cope with increased demand, when infrastructure, human resources and medical supplies are overwhelmed or exhausted.
- In selected protracted crises, the RCRC Movement provides health care services where health systems have broken down or simply do not meet people's needs due to armed conflict or exclusion of a particular vulnerable sub-population.

### **Disaster risk management**

The RCRC Movement works on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) including Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Disaster Preparedness (DP), Disaster Response (DR) and Recovery. DRR is understood as practices of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the underlying causal factors of disasters. DP refers to measures that help ensure a timely and effective 'first line' of response such as establishing contingency planning and response teams. Disaster response is understood to refer to the immediate actions taken by the RCRC Movement by mobilizing its resources so that the initial effects of disasters are countered and the immediate needs of the affected communities are met. Early recovery and recovery refers to those programmes which go beyond the provision of immediate relief to assist affected people in rebuilding their homes, lives and services and to strengthen their capacity to cope with future disasters.

Within this framework, NorCross mainly focuses on disaster preparedness and response, as well as supporting owner-driven shelter reconstruction in recovery to large-scale disasters.

### **Protection**

NorCross' interpretation of the term protection encompasses activities seeking to increase the protection of a population by encouraging all relevant stakeholders to fulfill their obligations and ensure respect for the rights of those affected by armed conflict and violence. This entails humanitarian diplomacy efforts and risk reduction and mitigation activities seeking to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and groups towards the threats they are exposed to.

Protection within the following areas are the main focus for NorCross humanitarian diplomacy efforts, and will be integrated into operations when contextually relevant:

- Protection from Weapons
- Safer access to and delivery of health care (HCiD)
- Mitigating the humanitarian consequences of organised urban violence (Urban Violence)<sup>15</sup>
- Addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
- Protection of schools and access to education

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<sup>15</sup> Based on experience of difficult to measure and demonstrate results in the area, NorCross will not invest in broad operational prevention programmes seeking to prevent violence from happening altogether.

## **National Society Development**

NorCross aligns with the Federation Strategy 2020, recognizing a strong, well-functioning and decentralized organisation as the foundation for every National Society to reach the people most in need with quality community actions and services of relevance. Supporting National Societies in their organisational development processes is therefore a substantial element in NorCross partnerships and a key enabling objective to ensure the achievement of humanitarian objectives. NorCross prioritizes support to the organisational development of partner National Societies in finance development, resource mobilisation and planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER). NorCross further contributes to capacity building of National Society partners at branch level, including through its engagement in international branch-to-branch and youth exchange cooperation when relevant.

## **Internal processes and organisational development**

NorCross is committed to improving the way it works to increase its added value and achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency and relevance. In 2015-16, NorCross international department underwent a comprehensive "Fit for Purpose" exercise aimed at improving the way it operates and implements its strategy. The key principles underpinning this change process were decentralization, specialization and cooperation. To ensure continuous improvement of the way the department works, the main internal improvement areas for the international department in 2018-20 are articulated as the following strategic objectives:

### ***Improve internal communication and collaboration***

NorCross aims to improve internal communication and collaboration by streamlining work processes and clarifying roles and responsibilities. This will maximize the benefits of staff expertise and competencies. NorCross will prioritise developing ways of working better together towards achieving humanitarian objectives and joint results. Focus will be given to improve team-building and increase collaboration on deliverables across units and departments, as well as between headquarters and regions.

### ***Strengthen thematic specialisation***

NorCross will continue to invest in increasing thematic competencies and thematic specialisation to ensure continued relevance. Specialisation will be focussed on the areas defined as core competencies (see annex I), based on humanitarian objectives and NorCross niche expertise areas within the RCRC Movement. NorCross will aim to make technical expertise more consistently available to support the quality and relevance of the programmes it supports.

***Improve work processes and seek strategic innovation opportunities***

While NorCross has established structured work processes for its core activities and processes, continued improvement of those work processes and programme quality based on institutional learning will be prioritised. Humanitarian action is affected by rapid changes in technology and communication. NorCross will encourage early adoption of humanitarian innovations including relevant technology and tools where these can enhance activities and achievement of humanitarian objectives. It will prioritise adoption of technology and innovative approaches within its core competency areas.

***Strengthen humanitarian needs analysis and results focus***

NorCross will further strengthen humanitarian needs analysis, including gender and diversity issues, to ensure reaching the most vulnerable as the basis for all interventions. NorCross will seek to improve its evidence base and ability to document and communicate results, both internally and externally. As part of this, NorCross will improve the way it uses reviews and evaluations.

NorCross is committed to being accountable to all its stakeholders, first and foremost to the people and communities it serves. To achieve this, beneficiary communication and feedback mechanisms will be strengthened along with PMER.

The Common Results Framework (CRF) for NorCross international activities will be further finetuned and implemented. The CRF is a tool to focus NorCross' activities and document results achieved, through the totality of resources mobilised.

NorCross will seek to publish one annual results report for all its international activities.

***Strengthen PIMS and ICT support***

Relevant and user-friendly information and knowledge management systems are critical for maintaining relevance, learning, performance management and for documenting results. Digitalisation will improve how NorCross shares and uses evidence and knowledge across the organisation and how decisions are made to enhance impact. Further development and implementation of the Project and Information Management System (PIMS) will be prioritised, focusing on user-friendliness and consistency. NorCross will improve ICT setup and support to ensure relevant and effective daily work and availability of information. NorCross will improve integration with its financial system to enhance the ability to analyse financial data and provide analytical finance support for its international operations.

***Improve international HR & competency development***

One of NorCross' greatest assets is its qualified and motivated staff and volunteers. To attract and retain the best qualified staff for international activities, HR management will be strengthened.

NorCross will establish frameworks and procedures for career and competency development, including exploring possibilities for staff rotation. Providing opportunities for competency development is important to ensure continued relevance, increase learning and motivation. It is a joint responsibility of management and employees to prioritise competency development and to foster an organisational culture of continuous learning. NorCross will strengthen recruitment and training in its thematic priority and core competency areas.

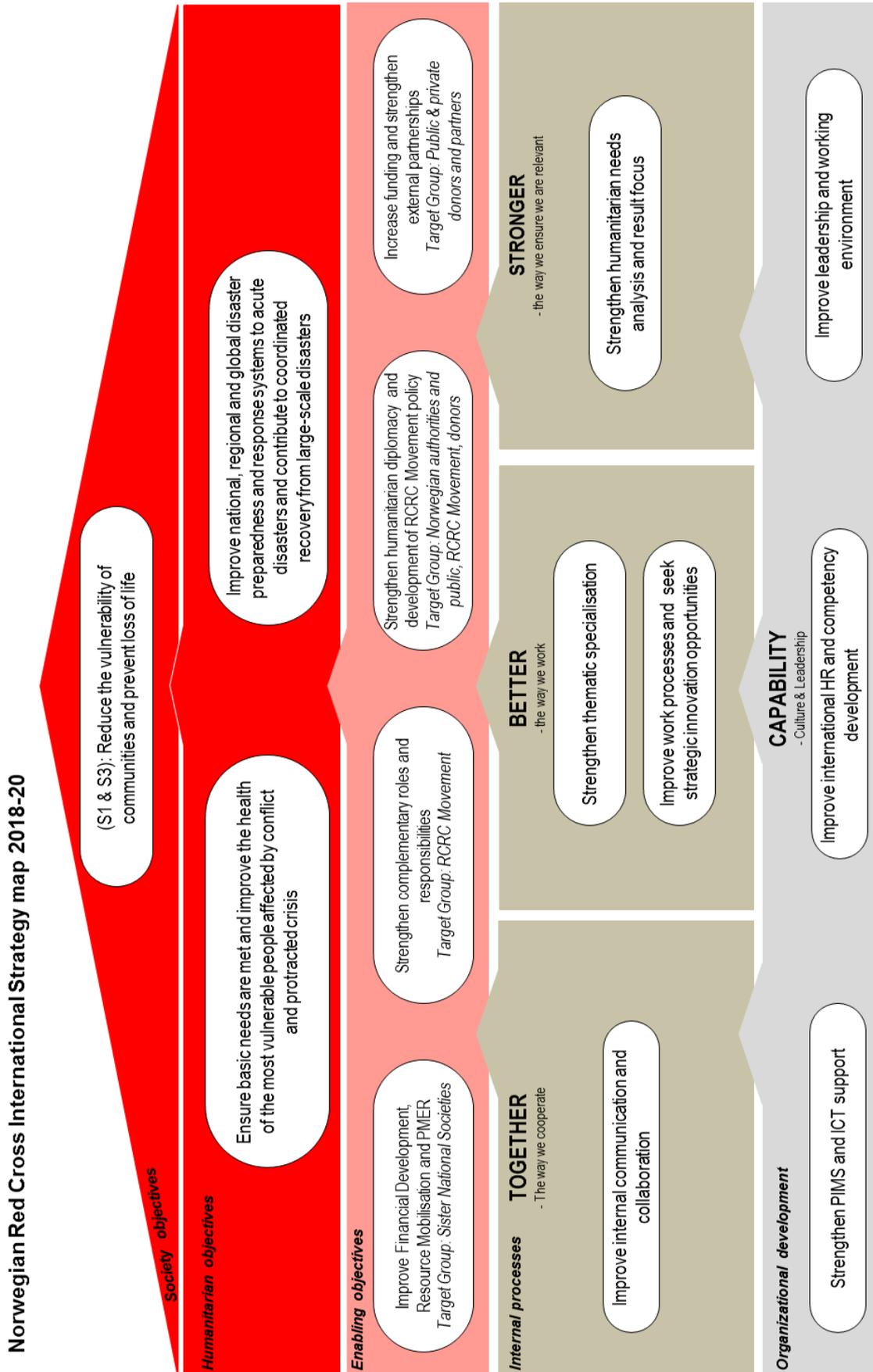
<b><i>Improve leadership and working environment</i></b>
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NorCross will invest in leadership development for managers at headquarters and in regional and country offices, to enable them to “set direction”, “engage people” and “make it happen”<sup>16</sup>. NorCross will further strengthen its organisational culture, building on shared values and proactive employees. NorCross will ensure that it is an inclusive workplace by continuing to strive for improved gender and diversity composition at all levels. In cooperation with the Federation and the ICRC, NorCross will ensure that it has adequate routines and systems in place to safeguard the security and safety of personnel while acknowledging the inherent risks of working in fragile contexts.

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<sup>16</sup> See “NorCross Leadership Development model”.

ANNEX I: Norwegian Red Cross International Strategy map 2018-20



## ANNEX II: CORE COMPETENCIES

<b>Thematic areas</b>	<b>Core competencies</b>	<b>Current level of competency</b>
Health	Emergency health (e.g. Emergency Response Units; Public and Mobile Health Teams, Community-Based Surveillance) Community health (CBHFA - Community-based Health and First Aid programmes) Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child health WASH	Existing Existing Existing  Existing Existing
Disaster risk management	Disaster Preparedness (further specialization within DP will be based on partner National Society needs and seeking complementarity with RCRC Movement Disaster response in health, incl. WASH Owner-driven shelter in recovery	Developing  Existing Developing
Protection and other cross cutting areas	Protection from Weapons Safer access to and delivery of health care (HCiD) Mitigating the humanitarian consequences of organised urban violence (Urban Violence) <sup>17</sup> Addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) Protection of schools and access to education Gender and Diversity	Existing Existing Existing  Existing Developing Existing
National Society development	Finance development Resource Mobilisation Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER)	Existing Existing Developing

<sup>17</sup> Based on experience of difficult to measure and demonstrate results in the area, NorCross will not invest in broad operational prevention programmes seeking to prevent violence from happening altogether.

### ANNEX III: Regional and country offices

NorCross is represented internationally through several offices at regional or country level. NorCross delegates liaise closely with the National Society and other RCRC Movement partners in-country. NorCross offices monitor the support provided, and represent NorCross with RCRC Movement partners, donors, Norwegian embassies and other stakeholders. Where possible, NorCross co-locates its office with the National Society or the Federation to facilitate cooperation and coordination.