

What the RC/RC Climate centre can do for the RC/RC Partners

The Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC) is a reference centre of the Red Cross Red Crescent family . Established in 2002 and based at the Netherlands Red Cross headquarters in The Hague, it helps the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to understand and address the humanitarian consequences of climate change. Based on experiences in now more than 50 countries the RCCC can contribute in the following way to the national program development by RC/RC Partners.

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1. Getting started

1.1. Supporting the local partners in-country to identify past, ongoing, or planned programs on climate change adaptation in the country that are of relevance to the RC/RC This could also include former programs like the RC Climate Centre's Preparedness for Climate Change program (PfCC), but also governmental programs, International programs from bilateral or multilateral donors and other Civil Society Organisations (CSO).

1.2. Assisting with the development of an initial workshop with all climate related stakeholders (RC/RC and CSO partners, national/local climate knowledge centres, climate policy makers). In this workshop key issues for the programs are identified and a process towards more cooperation and enhanced action is identified.

Elements of the workshop:

By climate knowledge centre: Identify the key climate related risks for the country/region through sharing the state of knowledge on climate change trends for the program country/region and existing tools for seasonal and weather forecasts.

By RC/RC partners (and governmental representatives): sharing the identified vulnerabilities in the program areas, including geographical, social and institutional vulnerabilities. This includes sharing current RC/RC and CSO approaches to addressing these vulnerabilities and current use of early warning systems.

Identification of areas where cooperation can be improved, in particular in developing synergy between ongoing approaches like Early Warning/Early Action ecosystem based climate adaptation etc.

2. Capacity building and advocacy

2.1. At national level

Dialogue with knowledge centres

From past experiences we know that cooperation between knowledge centres and operational field staff is not easy. There is a mismatch between scientific knowledge and the operational use of it. For example, if we know climate change is going to increase risks of droughts and floods in a region, we may look to climate information

providers to help anticipate these events. However, these forecasts often require careful interpretation for effective use in operations and programmes. The Climate Centre can assist in communicating with climate service providers, and can also provide guidance on developing materials about regional risks related to climate change.

See also annex 1 the document on Early Warning/ Early action workshops.

In the 'Partnership to Save Lives' between the IFRC and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) at Columbia University, a successful internship program has been developed through which RC National Societies can strengthen their capacities to better understand and use seasonal forecasts and other early warning information. There is also a special helpdesk for RC questions related to seasonal and weather predictions and longer-term climate related influences. This capacity is available for the PfR.

Dialogue with policymakers

The Climate Centre is well connected to the global, regional and national policy developments related to DRR/CCA. In the last few years, notably since 2007, there is lot of action at the policy front to develop policies and programmes to address the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

All governments are now in a process to develop climate change adaptation strategies. Some move faster than others, depending on a range of factors, among them the level of support they receive from donors and UN agencies.

Likewise there is more and more progress in addressing Disaster Risk Reduction in national policies and programs. Synergy between the two processes makes a lot of sense, is acknowledged at the UN level and can be enhanced at the national level. The RC/RC can contribute to this policy dialogue, in particular by bringing the experiences of community based programmes to the table and highlighting the possibilities of DRR/CCA

The Climate Centre will provide relevant information on national policy developments and related DRR/CCA programs to the RC/RC, and update regularly as new developments take place.

Furthermore the Climate centre can support the RC/RC and partners with trainings and online support for policy dialogues.

2.2 At community level

Over 50 RC/RC National Societies have now undertaken work on climate change through the PfCC program (see www.climatecentre.org). Based on their experiences, the Climate Centre can help share approaches to integrating climate risks in community-based programs, including by integrating climate change into community-based assessments.

Strengthening community resilience to climate risks typically has two components;

1. the software: Such as improved early warning systems, through better links between climate information, community organisations, awareness raising efforts, community and household risk reduction plans, simulations, etc.
2. the hardware: encouraging risk reduction measures that are specific to the local context, like building or strengthening community shelters, clearing of drains to redirect excess water, planting trees to prevent landslides, planting mangroves to mitigate storm surges, harvesting rainwater to reduce drought impacts, or many other practical actions.

3. Documenting Experiences and Sharing Best Practices

Bringing local and national experiences to the regional and global level

It is crucial to monitor and document advances made and lessons learned, to strengthen RC/RC approaches to addressing climate change risks and scale up successful approaches in other regions and countries. The climate centre can assist in this process, to assure mainstreaming of methodologies.

Not only within the RC/RC methodologies and tools will be developed to address the impacts of climate change, other civil society organisations, government institutions and multilateral organisations are doing the same.

The Climate Centre will coordinate with the RC/RC partners to facilitate regional and global interactions with these actors on ecosystem services, climate change and disaster risk reduction, including work conferences, to take stock of lessons learned and progress. The Climate Centre will also continue to assist in international advocacy efforts that bring local experiences to the global arena by advocating for the needs and voices of the most vulnerable to be heard.

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