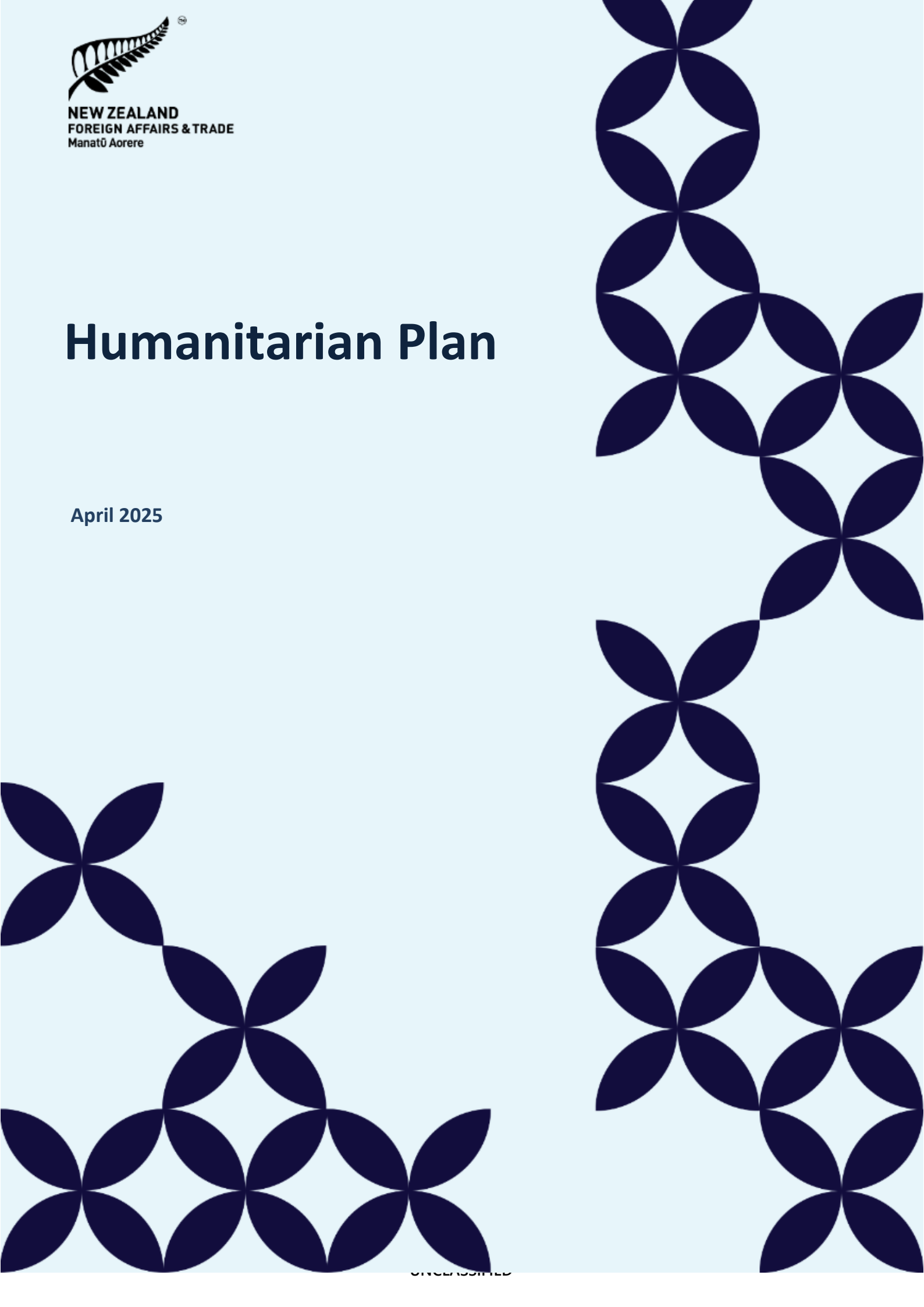


Humanitarian Plan

April 2025



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Purpose of this document

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) has developed this Plan to guide the planning and management of New Zealand's humanitarian action and our engagement with the humanitarian system, and as a foundation for dialogue with partners and stakeholders.

The Plan is used to bring clarity to what work should be prioritised, and to help monitor progress towards shared outcomes and strategic goals.

This is a living document that will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure it responds to changes in country / regional context, including the impacts of any external events.

An integrated approach to humanitarian engagement

New Zealand pursues an integrated approach to engagement with the international humanitarian system. We focus on coherence across our diplomatic, trade and economic, climate change, environment, security and development objectives to deliver sustainable progress in developing countries, and advance New Zealand's interests and values. As such, our humanitarian action and humanitarian diplomacy are integral pillars of our foreign policy - they reflect our network of international relationships and commitments, and are expressions of our values as well as our commitment to international humanitarian principles.



Humanitarian programme overview

Context

Globally, the unprecedented scale and range of humanitarian crises is stretching the humanitarian system to its limits. As of March 2025, 307.8 million people require humanitarian assistance.¹ The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and partner organisations have appealed to assist 190 million people most in need across 72 countries, which will require USD \$47 billion to respond².

Conflict, weather-related climate disasters and economic shocks are the current three main drivers of humanitarian need. The number of people forcibly displaced now sits at 1 in every 73 people which is a ratio that has doubled in the past 10 years.³ Acute food insecurity which is exacerbated by armed conflict, economic inequality and climate extremes, is impacting 258 million people across 58 countries.⁴ Nearly 2 million children are at risk of not receiving the required therapies to treat severe acute malnutrition due to funding shortages.⁵ Structural inequalities continue to disproportionately affect women and girls affected by humanitarian events⁶ and barriers for accessing protection and assistance are exacerbated for persons with disabilities and other groups at risk of marginalisation. The humanitarian system has been considerably underfunded in recent years. This trend is anticipated to worsen significantly in 2025 due to expected reductions in funding from key humanitarian donors. Faced with a steep drop in funding, key humanitarian organisations are taking rapid action to cut costs, including cutting back on assistance, decreasing staffing levels and closing some offices.

In response to these complex challenges, international humanitarian actors, including New Zealand, remain committed to improving the accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action, including through commitments under the Grand Bargain⁷. Continued focus is being placed on donors to provide quality, multi-year and flexible funding; on humanitarian actors and donors to increase support for locally-led humanitarian action; and on humanitarian actors to increase participation of those impacted by crises in a response and use efficient delivery mechanisms such as cash. An integrated multi-stakeholder collaborative approach is critical to address the chronic needs of the sector and to ensure key linkages and collaboration between humanitarian action, development, climate change, human rights, peace and stability actors.

The Pacific region remains vulnerable to the full range of natural hazards – cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, localised drought and volcanoes. In addition, the impacts of the global climate crisis are being acutely felt with sea level rise in the region above the global average⁸ and expected to result in more weather and climate driven crises which place development gains at risk. Pacific people are resilient and Pacific governments continue to take a leading role in developing fit-for-purpose disaster risk management and response measures. Pacific countries, New Zealand and Australia are working together to establish a new regional disaster risk management mechanism that will support national readiness and response efforts.

Southeast Asia is also one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, though often has highly developed capabilities which can lessen the need for international assistance.

¹ [Humanitarian Action Homepage](#)

² [Global Humanitarian Overview Humanitarian Action](#)

³ [Global Humanitarian Overview 2024 \[EN/AR/FR/ES\] | OCHA \(unocha.org\)](#)

⁴ [Global Humanitarian Overview 2024 \[EN/AR/FR/ES\] | OCHA \(unocha.org\)](#)

⁵ [Nearly two million severely malnourished children at risk of death due to funding shortages for therapeutic food \(unicef.org\)](#)

⁶ <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/un-women-humanitarian-strategy-2022-2025-in-brief-en.pdf>

⁷ a set of commitments launched at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and agreed to by various governments, UN agencies and other organisations with the intent of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

⁸ [Climate change transforms Pacific Islands \(wmo.int\)](#)



New Zealand's work with the humanitarian system

New Zealand delivers humanitarian support that saves lives, alleviates suffering, and helps maintain human dignity. Our humanitarian contributions and engagement focus on where there is humanitarian need, where we are best placed to make a fast and effective contribution, and where we have relevant relationships, capabilities and interests. We work with a range of partners, including other governments, government agencies, NGOs (non-government organisations), the United Nations, the Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement and private businesses.

New Zealand's primary geographic focus is the Pacific. We have deep relationships, the benefit of geographic proximity, and diplomatic footprint in the Pacific to deploy our widest range of humanitarian capabilities in this region. It is here we can make the biggest difference with our humanitarian and emergency response work through fast and effective contributions, in partnership with Pacific countries, other New Zealand Government agencies, the New Zealand Red Cross, New Zealand NGOs and international humanitarian partners. Both during and outside of responses, we seek to empower Pacific partners to define their priorities and lead their own responses, which partners can then help to deliver. We aim to enhance Pacific national and regional readiness and response capabilities with an emphasis on local leadership and management of disaster response and preparedness in our engagement with local, national, regional and international disaster management organisations.

New Zealand's humanitarian action also prioritises partnership and coordination with other donors. In the Pacific, we will continue to work closely with Australia and France under the long-standing FRANZ partnership to ensure we use our respective assets and capabilities to the most useful effect and to avoid duplication.

Our second geographic priority is Southeast Asia. We will remain a responsive partner in providing effective assistance if requested, in particular for significant events where national and regional capacity is stretched, supported by our strong bilateral and regional relationships and diplomatic footprint.

For humanitarian emergencies outside the Pacific and Southeast Asia, we consider the scale and severity of humanitarian needs, prioritising large-scale events (in terms of numbers of people impacted or at risk) and are guided by the decision-making framework of our Humanitarian Action Policy (see Annex 1). When responding in parts of the world with complex emergencies and where we do not have a large diplomatic footprint, we focus on supporting the coordinated efforts of international humanitarian responders. In extreme risk contexts where there is active conflict, our priority partners are the International Committee of the Red Cross or United Nations humanitarian partners. Here, and elsewhere, New Zealand provides timely and flexible funding to multilateral humanitarian partners to support the international humanitarian system to deliver effective, efficient and impactful humanitarian action.

Within resource, we actively engage in multilateral humanitarian advocacy and diplomacy at an international level, and a regional level, particularly in the Pacific and in Southeast Asia. Our approach focuses on encouraging practice that will strengthen humanitarian coordination and collaboration, efficiency and effectiveness, and that is fit for purpose for the Pacific, to achieve better humanitarian outcomes.

Gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, supporting persons with disabilities and inclusive humanitarian action for all, remain core values that underpin our humanitarian approach. New Zealand advocates for, recognises and supports the important role that local and national civil society organisations, NGOs and multilateral partners play in advancing these values.

New Zealand's engagement and partnerships with New Zealand NGOs remain a vital component of our humanitarian assistance, especially in the Pacific and Southeast Asia and in non-conflict contexts for major global responses, as we recognise their expertise, resources and networks to provide timely, effective and inclusive humanitarian action at the community level.



Other plans relevant to this programme of work

New Zealand's International Cooperation for Effective Sustainable Development (ICESD) Policy⁹ identifies four development principles that guide New Zealand's work with partners, and sets out a commitment to contribute to a more peaceful world, in which all people live in dignity and safety. As a result, we aim to deliver humanitarian action that is effective, inclusive, resilient and sustained.

New Zealand's humanitarian response approach is also shaped by our foreign policy priorities and strategic direction outlined in MFAT's Strategic Framework, Strategic Assessment, New Zealand's Foreign Policy Reset and Human Rights Priorities.

Our approach to humanitarian action is guided in great depth by New Zealand's [2019 Humanitarian Action Policy](#). The Policy is built on the fundamental principle that people who are affected by disaster or conflict have a right to life with dignity and, therefore, are entitled to protection and humanitarian assistance that meets their basic needs. Our conviction that action should be taken to prevent and alleviate human suffering is rooted in the rights and protections enshrined in international humanitarian law, international human rights law and refugee law.

New Zealand's humanitarian action is underpinned by the humanitarian principles of:

- humanity (we support action that is focused on saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining people's dignity in times of crisis)
- impartiality (we support action that is needs-based, without discrimination between or within affected populations)
- neutrality (we support action does not favour any side in an armed conflict), and
- independence (we support the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from political, economic, military or other objectives).

Strategic framework for the Humanitarian Plan

The International Development Cooperation (IDC) Priorities Framework 2024-27¹⁰ is a guiding document for the Humanitarian Plan. It shows how the IDC Programme contributes to the Ministry's overall goals, as set out in the Ministry's Strategic Framework¹¹, and articulates the priority outcomes that we aim to advance through the IDC Programme.

The Humanitarian programme logic diagram that is included on the next page, sets out the ambitions for our work within the humanitarian system, in alignment with the IDC Priorities Framework, and in support of New Zealand's foreign policy objectives.

The logic diagram sets out how our strategic goals drive more specific medium and short-term outcomes. New Zealand will work towards these outcomes alongside our partners. The Strategic Goals are long term ambitions that MFAT's activities contribute towards, in line with supporting achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals. The medium-term outcomes in the logic diagram describe our interests in more detail. The short-term outcomes cover our areas of immediate focus, rather than all the initiatives required to deliver these medium-term outcomes.

⁹ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid-Prog-docs/Policy/Policy-Statement-New-Zealands-International-Cooperation-for-Effective-Sustainable-Development-ICESD.pdf>

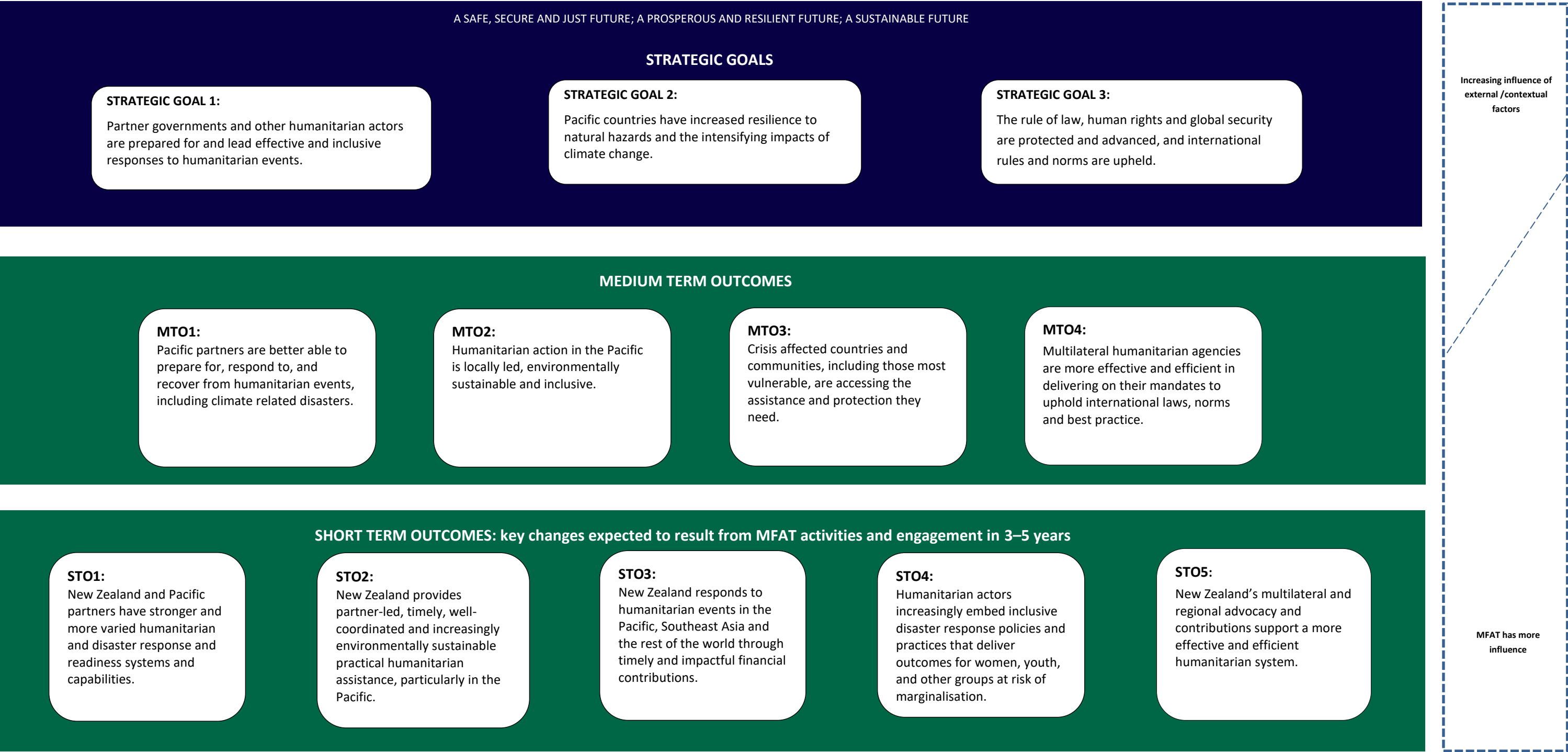
¹⁰ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Aid/Aid-General/IDC-Priorities-Framework-2024.pdf>

¹¹ [Our strategic direction | New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)





Logic diagram for Humanitarian Plan



How we put this Plan into action

New Zealand's IDC funding for this Plan is managed over a three year period. There is flexibility to move funds into and between Plans in order to respond to rapidly changing contexts. Information about New Zealand's overall IDC budget for the current funding triennium is on the MFAT website¹².

To operationalise this Plan, we collaborate with various humanitarian actors to meet key result areas listed below.

Pacific disaster preparedness

This is an area of growth for the Humanitarian plan and programme. We will increase our advocacy on and investment into multi-country readiness activity on issues and priorities that matter to Pacific people and governments to enhance regional resilience. We will promote and support Pacific leadership and coordination in disaster preparedness and response, and will progressively increase our support for locally and nationally-led disaster preparedness activities.

In order to meet the expectations of MFAT's Strategic Framework in the next triennium, in particular the focus area of "Partnering for the Pacific", we will:

- Deepen our relationships in the humanitarian space with Pacific Island countries through new targeted investments, active engagement in regional mechanisms, and peer-to-peer lessons sharing; and
- Work more cohesively with other partner countries active in the region, especially Australia and other like-minded partners, to protect and advance our common interests in the humanitarian space.

Activities to support our Pacific workstreams include but are not limited to:

- Funding initiatives that build more effective and cohesive response assets for countries and across the region, such as the Pacific Warehousing Program;
- Lending our voice and, as required, resources to the emerging new Pacific regional disaster risk management mechanism;
- Enabling peer to peer partnerships between New Zealand and Pacific emergency management agencies;
- Investing in early warning systems such as the network of Deep-Ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunami systems in the Southwest Pacific
- partnering with the New Zealand Red Cross to strengthen Pacific and Southeast Asian National Red Cross Societies and maintain a cadre of New Zealand experts (delegates) that deploy to support International Red Cross Movement responses to natural disasters;
- partnering with New Zealand NGOs through the New Zealand Disaster Response Partnership to store pre-positioned relief supplies (through their local partners) which can be released rapidly and replenished when disasters strike;
- supporting organisations that represent persons with disabilities to participate in humanitarian preparedness activities;
- and providing funding support for community organisations to prepare for and respond to sexual and reproductive health and rights in an emergency.

¹² www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-approach-to-aid/where-our-funding-goes/our-planned-aid-expenditure/



Where relevant, we will ensure our disaster readiness support ensures stronger coherence between climate resilience efforts and disaster preparedness and response activities by integrating climate adaptation and disasters risk reduction measures.

New Zealand response readiness

Our most important focus remains that New Zealand is able to respond quickly to requests for assistance from Pacific countries affected by significant disasters.

In order to effectively deliver on our responsibility as lead the New Zealand Government Agency for New Zealand's offshore humanitarian response, we will maintain and enhance a well-coordinated New Zealand government offshore humanitarian response system that includes All of Government guidelines, briefings, exercises and early warning advice delivered in partnership with the New Zealand MetService. We also continue to maintain a stock of quality relief supplies in Auckland for rapid transport to affected countries.

We will continue to work with and build upon our partnerships with New Zealand Government Agencies working in the emergency response space (including New Zealand's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ), the New Zealand Defence Force, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the New Zealand Police). Where relevant, we will work with partners to strengthen existing capabilities, and also diversify our deployment capabilities so that New Zealand has a broader range of options to support Pacific priorities, such as diversifying our emergency medical response capabilities to include psychosocial health services.

We will work with partners to ensure that New Zealand's response capabilities meet best international standards and practice, including via engagement in, and in line with, specifications articulated through the UN International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and the World Health Organisation (WHO) Emergency Medical Team coordination mechanisms.

We will actively share information and lessons with the Council for International Development and its humanitarian membership (including its Humanitarian Network) and the New Zealand Red Cross.

Fast, effective and targeted humanitarian responses in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and beyond

The Pacific

MFAT leads New Zealand's offshore humanitarian responses under New Zealand's Officials Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination (ODESC). We work in close coordination with other government partners including the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Defence, New Zealand Defence Force, Ministry of Health, the National Emergency Management Agency, New Zealand Police, and Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Assistance is provided through a range of mechanisms, including financial assistance to national and international response actors (including via the New Zealand Disaster Response Partnership through our NGO partners), deployment of technical teams from New Zealand, the provision of relief supplies and logistics support.

In each response, New Zealand's humanitarian assistance is guided by the requests of Pacific governments and we operate through coordination systems that the affected governments have established. We coordinate closely with France and Australia under the FRANZ arrangement, as well as with the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and other humanitarian actors to ensure our support complements that of other actors.

We will incorporate early recovery, climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction and resilience measures into our response plans, and will coordinate with other parts of the Ministry's Pacific and Development Group to ensure a complementary approach across the disaster risk cycle.

Southeast Asia

As a region, Southeast Asia is already set up to respond to emergencies which invariably means that it calls on donor support less often. Nevertheless, the Ministry's enhanced humanitarian allocation positions New Zealand well to continue to be a responsive partner through the provision of direct and targeted practical assistance if requested in this region. Otherwise, we provide financial contributions to support the effective and coordinated humanitarian responses implemented by UN agencies, Red Cross & Red Crescent partners, and New Zealand NGOs through the New Zealand Disaster Response Partnership. Our assistance is complementary to wider New Zealand capacity sharing initiatives to strengthen regional disaster risk reduction.

Further afield

Beyond the Pacific and Southeast Asia, New Zealand's primary mechanisms of support are through financial contributions to the humanitarian response efforts of UN agencies, and Red Cross & Red Crescent partners. In instances where New Zealand is launching a large response to a major natural disaster or to a major refugee response, we may support New Zealand humanitarian NGO responses through the New Zealand Disaster Response Partnership Fund.

New Zealand is unable to respond to all global emergencies. However, as global humanitarian needs continue to dramatically increase in scale and complexity, forecasted MFAT humanitarian funding reflects an increased spend in other parts of the world because of the relative scale of need outside of the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Notwithstanding this, the Programme retains the ability to direct more funding to the Pacific or Southeast Asia, should that be required in any year. In considering which crises to prioritise we will consider the scale of humanitarian need and other factors as set out in the decision framework in Annex 1 of New Zealand's Humanitarian Action Policy¹³.

Impactful advocacy in support of a stronger humanitarian system

We will continue to support, advocate for and engage with the international humanitarian system through a range of multilateral fora¹⁴, and through core contributions to multilateral humanitarian agencies. Through these engagements, we call for principled and effective humanitarian action that is inclusive and meets the needs of affected populations, and for adherence to international humanitarian law, rules and norms, and for humanitarian action in the Pacific that is fit for purpose and locally led.

In the Pacific, we will advocate, alongside other countries, for a new Pacific regional disaster risk management mechanism that enhances nationally led response efforts and priorities.

New Zealand supports coherence and coordination amongst donors to encourage principled donor engagement, good practices and improve humanitarian action.

Public engagement

We will provide information to the New Zealand public, including Pasifika communities, on New Zealand's humanitarian action in relation to how we have responded.

¹³ [New Zealand Humanitarian Action Policy 2019](#)

¹⁴ For example, Grand Bargain discussions, the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, the UN ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, INSARAG, the WHO EMT Initiative, and in informal donor coordination groups.

How we will assess progress against this Plan

We report back on progress towards our goals for the Humanitarian programme via the annual Minister of Foreign Affairs Report on the IDC appropriation¹⁵. In addition, we will track progress on the actions taken under this plan through our interactions within the international humanitarian system, with other New Zealand Government partners and with New Zealand NGOs. This not only gives us an opportunity to discuss what has been achieved in partnership, but also to test whether our plan remains fit-for-purpose and what aspects of it we may need to adapt.

We are also committed to improve the effectiveness of future responses through the identification of lessons learned as part of our response efforts in the Pacific. We aim to strengthen the way we track and monitor our humanitarian activities in real time to ensure ongoing strategic alignment and assess results.

Progress against the Plan will be assessed with the following indicators.

STRATEGIC GOALS	INDICATORS
Goal 1: Partner governments and other humanitarian actors are prepared for, and lead effective and inclusive humanitarian responses to, disasters and crises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG 11.5.1 – Number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population SDG 1.5.2 – Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to gross domestic product (GDP)
Goal 2: Pacific countries have increased resilience to natural hazards and the intensifying impacts of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ND-GAIN Index – Vulnerability and Readiness score
Goal 3: The rule of law, human rights and global security are protected and advanced, and international rules and norms are upheld.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG 16.1.2 – Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex age and cause

SHORT TERM OUTCOME (STO)	INDICATORS
New Zealand and Pacific partners have stronger and varied humanitarian and disaster response and readiness systems and capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of new or improved response and readiness systems and capabilities
New Zealand provides partner-led, timely, well-coordinated and increasingly environmentally sustainable practical humanitarian assistance, particularly in the Pacific.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of responses that are launched within MFAT internal mandated timeframes Number of affected people provided with assistance Evidence of a coordinated response across NZ agencies and with the impacted country. Evidence of policies, practises and products that support greater environmental sustainability.

¹⁵ See <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-approach-to-aid>

New Zealand responds to humanitarian events in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and the rest of the world through timely and impactful financial contributions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of humanitarian funding tagged as unearmarked and softly earmarked vs earmarked and tightly earmarked funding • % of humanitarian funding provided as multi-year
Humanitarian actors increasingly embed inclusive disaster response policies and practices that deliver outcomes for women, youth, and other groups at risk of marginalisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of inclusive policies and procedures that have been developed or updated • Evidence of New Zealand's engagement with and support for humanitarian actors implementing inclusive activities
New Zealand's multilateral and regional advocacy and contributions support a more effective and efficient humanitarian system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of New Zealand's engagement with the multilateral humanitarian system • Number of multilateral or regional humanitarian statements that New Zealand joins or delivers

The Plan will be evaluated approximately once every four years. The next strategic evaluation of the Humanitarian Plan is expected to take place in 2026. The Ministry's forward strategic evaluation schedule is available on the website¹⁶.

¹⁶ <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-approach-to-aid/evaluation-and-research>

For further information

To find out more about MFAT's Humanitarian programme go to our website at <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/humanitarian-action> or contact PHM@mfat.govt.nz.

This document is one in a series of Plans published by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and managed by the Ministry's Pacific and Development Group. For the latest version please go to www.mfat.govt.nz

ISSN 2744-7278

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¹⁷ <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

¹⁸ <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1981/0047/latest/DLM51358.html>