



The Border Consortium

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2028



www.theborderconsortium.org

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INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan is both a framework for change and a commitment to maintain the quality and relevance of the Border Consortium's core work - ensuring food, shelter, protection, and dignity for displaced and conflict-affected communities on either side of the Thai-Myanmar border.

The 2026 to 2028 period will be one of deliberate and managed transition for The Border Consortium (TBC). This strategy is designed to guide TBC through a period characterised by uncertainty, evolving humanitarian needs, and complex operational and political challenges. It provides a structured approach to decision-making, resource allocation, and program prioritisation, enabling TBC to remain agile, responsive, and accountable to the communities it serves.

TBC operates in a context shaped by multiple pressures. Funding opportunities are contracting, and after decades of considerable support, international attention to the Thai-Myanmar border context has diminished. Refugee resettlement in third countries is increasingly constrained, while safe returns to Myanmar remain suspended due to ongoing conflict. In Thailand, policy changes offer both opportunities and challenges, including the potential for refugees to access limited work and the Government's stated intention to transform border camps over the next several years. These developments signal a potential long-term shift from camp-based assistance towards supporting displaced populations in more dispersed community settings.

At the same time, TBC is implementing an organisational restructuring to create a smaller, leaner, and more regionally grounded organisation. This strategic transition reinforces the imperative to balance the delivery of essential humanitarian services with the development of community-led leadership, advocacy, and locally embedded decision-making.

This Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for TBC to navigate a period of transition, uncertainty, and constrained resources, while remaining steadfast in its commitment to displaced and conflict-affected communities. It articulates a deliberate approach to maintaining core humanitarian services, adapting to evolving circumstances, and fostering resilience and self-reliance among the populations TBC serves. By balancing operational continuity with strategic flexibility, the plan positions TBC to respond effectively to immediate needs, anticipate emerging challenges, and uphold its mission and values throughout a dynamic and complex operating environment.





THE BORDER CONSORTIUM

Founded in 1984, the Border Consortium (TBC) is unique among humanitarian organisations in Southeast Asia as the only entity established at the request of the Royal Thai Government to assist in managing the refugee influx from Myanmar at that time and to work across the border to provide emergency support to displaced communities.

This origin laid the foundation for a relationship of trust and cooperation between TBC, the Royal Thai Government, international donors, and, importantly, the refugees and displaced persons it serves. It established TBC's ability to work in ways other organisations do not – on both sides of the border.

Over more than four decades, this trust has been strengthened through consistent collaboration, transparency, and accountability. Today, these longstanding partnerships and mutual respect continue to underpin TBC's role as a trusted and strategic leader in working with refugees and displaced communities along the Thai–Myanmar border.



OUR MISSION

Based in Thailand, TBC supports community-led humanitarian assistance in refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border, emergency assistance to displaced persons outside these camps, and supports displaced communities inside Myanmar. Its work focuses on ensuring access to food, shelter, protection, and dignity, even in the most difficult circumstances.

In addition to meeting urgent needs, TBC works alongside communities to strengthen resilience and self-reliance. The organisation partners with refugee and community-based organisations, enabling them to lead in designing and delivering assistance that is relevant to local needs and priorities. TBC also facilitates durable solutions, including local integration and resettlement. Where conditions within Myanmar allow, TBC can assist with safe returns, provided these are voluntary and desired by the refugees being supported.

TBC is a consortium of non-governmental organisations, each bringing valued expertise and experience to the partnership. It is governed by a Board that includes consortium and independent members who contribute strategic oversight and diverse perspectives.

Incorporated as a charity in the United Kingdom, TBC currently operates under charitable governance standards while maintaining a strong presence in the region. This structure has served TBC well, ensuring accountability to its members, donors, and the communities it serves, while enabling it to draw on both regional knowledge and international networks.

OUR VISION

People displaced from Southeastern Myanmar, refugees in Thailand, and the communities where they live are rebuilding their lives – free to move safely, work, study, and plan their futures with dignity.

TBC's Vision articulates a clear direction for its work, grounded in principles of protection, dignity, and self-reliance. It reflects TBC's long-term commitment to supporting displaced communities from Southeastern Myanmar, refugees in Thailand, and the communities where they reside, as they work to rebuild their lives and plan their futures.

This Vision serves as the cornerstone of TBC's Strategic Plan, providing a strategic foundation for decision-making, ensuring that priorities align with the aspirations of the people served and the partners TBC works alongside. It is a statement of intent and accountability, reflecting both the challenges faced by these communities and the opportunities for transformation. Through collaboration with local communities, governments, and regional partners, TBC is committed to advancing a future of safety, resilience, and dignity for all.



OUR VALUES



- **Refugee and Displaced Person Centred:** We place the needs, perspectives, and aspirations of displaced people and host communities at the centre of all decisions, programs, and partnerships, ensuring our work is responsive, inclusive, and empowering.
- **Integrity and Ethics:** We uphold the highest standards of honesty, fairness, and transparency in all our actions, ensuring trust and accountability with the communities and partners we serve.
- **Respect and Empathy:** We treat every individual with dignity, seeking to understand their experiences and needs, and responding with compassion and care.
- **Collaboration and Teamwork:** We believe in the power of partnerships and collective effort, working across teams, organisations, and communities to achieve shared goals.
- **Inclusion and Diversity:** We value diverse perspectives and experiences, actively promoting equality and creating spaces where everyone is represented and empowered.
- **Commitment and Work Ethic:** We demonstrate dedication, professionalism, and resilience in delivering meaningful and sustainable outcomes for displaced communities.

Our values form the foundation of TBC's identity, shaping the way the organisation works with communities, partners, and each other. Central to TBC's work is a strong commitment to being refugee and displaced community centred, ensuring that those served are at the heart of every decision and initiative. By prioritising their voices and experiences, TBC facilitates programs and partnerships that are not only responsive but also empowering. Our values of integrity, respect, collaboration, inclusion, and commitment build on this foundation, fostering dignity, fairness, and trust throughout operations.



OPERATING CONTEXT

MYANMAR

Myanmar is facing a profound and multifaceted crisis. Nearly five years after the February 2021 military coup, the country remains engulfed in widespread armed conflict, political repression, economic collapse, and humanitarian emergency. These overlapping dynamics have created one of the most complex operating environments in the region.

Conflict and Displacement

Armed violence continues to escalate across the country, particularly in southeastern Myanmar and Rakhine State. Ethnic armed organisations and resistance forces control large swathes of territory, while the military junta relies increasingly on aerial bombardments and drone warfare. Civilian infrastructure—including schools, clinics, and displacement sites—has been repeatedly targeted.

Displacement remains staggering. Over 3.5 million people are internally displaced, of which 1.5 million are displaced in Southeastern Myanmar, with Kayah and Kayin states among the most affected. The reactivation of the People's Military Service Law in early 2024 has triggered mass flight, as young people flee forced conscription. In Rakhine, renewed conflict between the Arakan Army and the junta has displaced hundreds of thousands, including Rohingya communities facing compounded risks.

Political Repression and Elections

The junta has announced national elections in December 2025. However, these elections are widely viewed as illegitimate. Opposition parties are banned, political leaders remain imprisoned, and large parts of the country are inaccessible due to conflict. Martial law is in effect in dozens of townships,

and restrictions on media and civil society severely limited any possibility of free campaigning. Rather than opening space for dialogue, the elections have been boycotted by key actors and are expected to entrench military rule and deepen divisions. Nevertheless, it could not be ruled out that an inclusive reconciliation process initiated by neighbors could take place, with the aim of moving together toward a federal union.'

Economic Collapse

Myanmar's economy has deteriorated sharply since the February 2021 coup. GDP has contracted significantly, inflation has surged, and the kyat has lost much of its value. Formal employment has collapsed, and many households now rely on remittances, informal labour, or subsistence farming. Food insecurity is widespread, with millions facing hunger and malnutrition. The humanitarian system is underfunded and overstretched, with local organisations filling critical gaps in service delivery.

Humanitarian Emergency

Humanitarian need inside Myanmar has reached unprecedented levels. Nearly one-third of the population—an estimated 19.9 million people, including 6.3 million children—require assistance.

Protection risks are pervasive, including arbitrary detention, torture, gender-based violence, trafficking, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians. Trafficking and labour exploitation are also intensifying. Myanmar remains a significant source and transit country for victims coerced into scam centres or hazardous labour. Mixed flows from border regions continue to include trafficking survivors, necessitating systematic identification, safe shelter, and case management services.

The March 2025 earthquake added a new layer of crisis, killing thousands and displacing millions. Infrastructure damage

included hospitals, schools, and transport corridors, further straining humanitarian response capacity. Despite the scale of need, humanitarian funding remains critically insufficient.

Southeast Myanmar

Southeast Myanmar, TBC's geographic focus area, remains one of the country's most volatile and heavily impacted regions, with Kayin, Kayah, Mon, and Tanintharyi areas experiencing sustained and intense conflict.

Since the 2021 coup, clashes between the military and ethnic armed organisations, as well as local resistance forces, have expanded dramatically. The junta's heavy reliance on airstrikes, artillery shelling, and drone attacks has devastated towns and rural communities, driving repeated waves of displacement.

Civilian casualties continue to rise, while schools, health facilities, and religious sites have been damaged or destroyed. Entire villages have been emptied, with communities seeking refuge in forested areas or across the border in Thailand. Access to conflict-affected zones remains extremely limited, and local humanitarian responders, often operating clandestinely, serve as the primary lifeline for displaced populations.

Humanitarian conditions in the southeast are deteriorating rapidly. Over 1.5 million people in Kayah and Kayin states alone are believed to be internally displaced, many living in makeshift shelters without adequate food, water, or medical care. Border areas are seeing growing cross-border movement, with displaced families seeking safety and access to aid in Thailand. Despite strong local networks and community solidarity, access constraints, insecurity, and funding shortfalls severely limit the delivery of humanitarian assistance, leaving much of the southeast on the brink of a protracted protection and survival crisis.

THAILAND

Thailand hosts a diverse population of Myanmar nationals, including refugees, displaced persons, undocumented migrants, and documented workers. As of 2025, around 103,000 refugees live in nine temporary shelters along the Thai–Myanmar border, many residing in these camps for several decades. Thailand remains a key host and transit country for those fleeing conflict in Myanmar.

Alongside refugees, an estimated 1.5 to 2 million undocumented Myanmar nationals live and work in Thailand. Lacking legal protections, they face high risks of exploitation, arrest, and forced return, as well as restricted access to health and education services.

Thailand also hosts an estimated 2.2 million documented Myanmar migrant workers, a significant increase from 1.7 million in 2023, with the increase attributed to continued instability in Myanmar. Myanmar nationals make up the majority of the total documented migrant workers in Thailand.

Continuing cross border displacement

Continuing conflict in Myanmar has driven persistent cross-border displacement into Thailand. Event-driven surges of new arrivals are periodically received in official reception sites, particularly during escalations of fighting around border towns, with many subsequently moving into temporary shelters along the border.

These event-driven influxes have added to the caseload of refugees already residing in shelters and placed additional pressures on reception capacity and humanitarian services.

Recent Thai Policy Framework Changes

Thailand has adopted a cautious humanitarian approach alongside restrictive protections for refugees. The 2022 Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearance Act codified non-refoulement, prohibiting returns to areas of serious harm.

In May 2025, Thailand moved to fast-track permanent residence and nationality for over 480,000 stateless individuals, mainly long-settled ethnic minorities. While not benefiting recent Myanmar refugees, this marks a major immigration policy change.

Deteriorating Camp Conditions

Humanitarian conditions within Thailand's nine official camps have deteriorated in recent years, largely due to reduced donor funding, which has resulted in, or is likely to result in, cuts to food rations, health services, and educational programs. Basic infrastructure and living conditions are further strained by rising numbers of refugees, increasing competition for already limited resources. The situation is compounded by the location of many camps in remote mountainous areas, which restricts access to external services and opportunities for self-sufficiency.

Integration and legal right to work

In August 2025, Thailand's Cabinet officially approved measures allowing approximately 77,000 long-staying Myanmar refugees residing in nine border camps to work legally. This policy shift aims to address labour shortages in sectors such as agriculture,

construction, and services, which have been exacerbated by the return of Cambodian workers to their home country. While the permits provide legal employment opportunities, they do not grant full rights to work in all sectors or guarantee permanent residency. Granting work rights to a defined group of refugees marks a significant policy shift and represents a first step towards greater economic inclusion and the ability for refugees to achieve self-reliance.

Camp transitions and closure

Thai authorities have expressed intentions to close the country's border camps within the

next several years. However, such a timeline is widely regarded as unlikely to be fully achieved given the scale of the population, logistical challenges, and the political and security environment. An alternative plan being considered involves transitioning some camp populations into local Thai communities, integrating them within the Thai administrative system but with limited working rights and protections.

It is possible that the future of Thailand's camp management will involve a combination of approaches. Some camps may be closed entirely, with populations consolidated in remaining camps, and transitioned into Thai communities under the local administration.

DONOR ENGAGEMENT

Global geopolitics combined with the multi-decade nature of the Myanmar conflict has resulted in reduced Western donor engagement, and consequentially reduced funding for humanitarian assistance. Many donors, including the United States, have announced reduced funding for Myanmar, including significant reductions to humanitarian, health, and civil society programs.

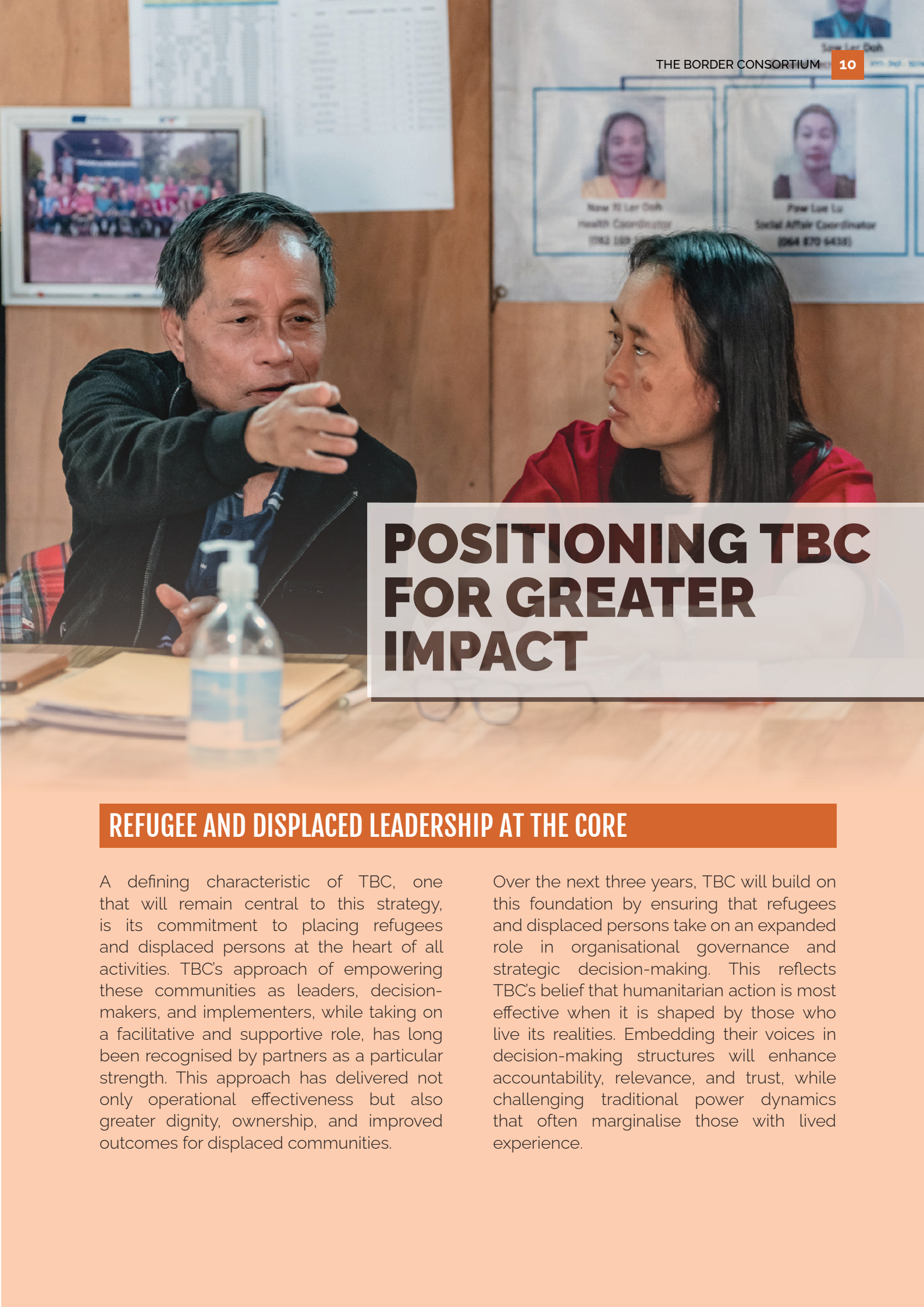
In this context China, Russia, and other regional actors have expanded their influence. China responded rapidly to the 2025 earthquake, providing significant relief while continuing to position itself as both an aid provider and a political broker, negotiating ceasefires in select areas while maintaining close relations with the junta. Likewise, Russia's ongoing provision of humanitarian aid, including following the earthquake, reinforces its close military support for the junta.

ASEAN remains divided with Malaysia and Indonesia voicing stronger criticism of the

junta, while Thailand adopts pragmatic approaches, prioritising economic and security ties, but encouraging the regime to move to an inclusive political dialogue. On the humanitarian front, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and the Philippines, also mobilised support following the earthquake, with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management coordinating joint assessments and relief distribution.

Third-country resettlement options

Third-country resettlement options remain limited. Reduced funding and political will among traditional host states have limited resettlement quotas, scholarships, and legal migration pathways. Domestic pressures and competing global crises have further limited opportunities, leaving refugees with fewer resettlement options and prolonging their reliance on temporary shelters in Thailand and neighbouring countries.

A photograph of a man and a woman in a meeting. The man, on the left, is wearing a black jacket and is gesturing with his right hand while speaking. The woman, on the right, is wearing a red jacket and is listening attentively. In the background, there are posters on a wall, including one with a group photo and another with two portraits. A bottle of hand sanitizer is on the table in the foreground.

POSITIONING TBC FOR GREATER IMPACT

REFUGEE AND DISPLACED LEADERSHIP AT THE CORE

A defining characteristic of TBC, one that will remain central to this strategy, is its commitment to placing refugees and displaced persons at the heart of all activities. TBC's approach of empowering these communities as leaders, decision-makers, and implementers, while taking on a facilitative and supportive role, has long been recognised by partners as a particular strength. This approach has delivered not only operational effectiveness but also greater dignity, ownership, and improved outcomes for displaced communities.

Over the next three years, TBC will build on this foundation by ensuring that refugees and displaced persons take on an expanded role in organisational governance and strategic decision-making. This reflects TBC's belief that humanitarian action is most effective when it is shaped by those who live its realities. Embedding their voices in decision-making structures will enhance accountability, relevance, and trust, while challenging traditional power dynamics that often marginalise those with lived experience.

This strengthened approach prioritises:

- **Centrality in program delivery:** Refugees and displaced persons will continue to play leadership roles in designing and delivering services in camps and cross-border contexts, with TBC serving as a facilitator rather than implementer.
- **Centrality in strategic direction:** Refugees and displaced persons will be systematically engaged in shaping TBC's strategic planning, program design, and advocacy priorities. TBC will formalise consultation structures, dedicate resources for engagement, and ensure their perspectives directly influence organisational decisions.
- **Representation in governance:** Current or former refugees and/or displaced persons will be supported to take on meaningful roles on TBC's Board, contributing to strategy, oversight, and advocacy at the highest levels.
- **Empowerment:** TBC will expand its investment in building capacity, equipping refugees and displaced persons with the skills, confidence, and resources to maximise their impact on TBC programs.
- **Inclusive participation:** Representation will prioritise diversity and lived experience, ensuring meaningful engagement of women, men, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups. This commitment to inclusivity strengthens leadership while safeguarding TBC's reputation for contextual understanding and leaving no one behind.

Placing refugee and displaced persons at the centre of TBC's vision is both a natural evolution of its history and a strategic imperative for its future. By formally recognising displaced communities as key decision-makers, TBC will model a

humanitarian partnership grounded in dignity, equity, and solidarity.

To ensure this shift is meaningful and sustainable, TBC will develop transition plans that:

- Identify capacity requirements for these enhanced roles.
- Design and deliver targeted leadership development and capacity-building initiatives.
- Allocate sufficient resources to enable leaders to contribute effectively.
- Acknowledge that changes in leadership representation will take time and may extend beyond the scope of this strategy.

LOCALISATION

TBC is at a pivotal point in its evolution, with a unique opportunity to strengthen its relevance and effectiveness through a comprehensive, multi-layered localisation strategy. This strategy will underpin TBC's position as an International NGO, provides sound governance oversight, has built trust with local partners and community, and provides TBC the ability to work with, and advocate for, displaced persons on both sides of the Thai-Myanmar border.

As the humanitarian and political context on the Thai-Myanmar border shifts, localisation offers a pathway for TBC to further deepen ties with host authorities and partners, allow for rapid adaption to emerging dynamics, and reinforce TBC's position as a trusted, agile humanitarian actor by embedding expertise and decision-making closer to affected communities.

For TBC, localisation means establishing a balance between international, regional, and local structures and engagement.

It is a strategic repositioning, not a single organisational reform. For TBC localisation means:

1. **Partnership localisation** – TBC will continue to build long-term, equitable partnerships with community-based and regional actors to strengthen service delivery and advocacy.
2. **Management localisation** – TBC will embed a mix of local, regional and international senior decision-makers, technical officers, and program managers to increase agility and ensure contextual understanding, while retaining international expertise and networks.
3. **Governance localisation** – TBC will diversify its Board membership to include Thai, Myanmar, regional, and international expertise, creating a governance structure that reflects a mix of regional and international leadership while upholding political neutrality.
4. **Consortium evaluation** – TBC will evaluate its consortium structure with a view to maximising its impact and effectiveness. As a first step, TBC will seek to expand the consortium to include more local and regional partners alongside INGOs, strengthening advocacy, coordination, and technical depth.

This strategy will be pursued through consultation with key stakeholders, including the Royal Thai Government, ethnic organisations and other refugee/displaced person representative bodies, and longstanding consortium members, ensuring neutrality and safeguarding TBC's reputation.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy will become an increasingly important part of TBC's operations over the next three years. TBC's advocacy will focus on three primary objectives:

- Supporting the self-reliance and integration of refugees into Thai communities, including access to work, services, and legal protections that enable a dignified future and eventual camp closures.
- Improving the lives, rights, and dignity of displaced and conflict-affected persons in Myanmar, ensuring their basic needs are met and long-term solutions remain viable.
- Raising local, regional, and global awareness of the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, its impact on Thailand, and the consequences for people on both sides of the border.

TBC's comparative advantage lies in its status as an INGO, proximity to affected populations, deep contextual knowledge of Myanmar and Thailand, and trusted relationships with authorities, donors, and community-led organisations. These strengths make TBC a credible, evidence-based advocate capable of influencing policies, mobilising resources, and sustaining attention at local, national, regional, and global levels.

Advocacy with the Royal Thai Government will focus on practical policy changes that create opportunities for refugees to contribute to Thai society while strengthening humanitarian protections. At the regional level, TBC will engage ASEAN and neighbouring states to encourage coordinated responses to the Myanmar humanitarian need, while globally it will advocate for continued funding and political support to address Myanmar's protracted crisis.

Over the strategy period, TBC will invest in supporting displaced persons and camp communities to lead mutually agreed advocacy efforts themselves, providing training, networks, and platforms to amplify their voices. Over time, this approach will strengthen locally led advocacy while ensuring TBC remains a reliable partner and resource for community-based advocacy.

Evidence-based advocacy will be a priority, supported by strengthened staff advocacy, research, and communication skills.

FOCUS

TBC's defining strength lies in its community-led model, where refugees and displaced persons are central to shaping assistance. This participatory approach has earned deep trust, ensured programming is grounded in lived realities, and strengthened the dignity and agency of affected populations. These values will remain at the core of TBC's work.

Looking ahead, changing operating conditions and resource constraints, particularly:

- Thailand's stated intention to transform and potentially close refugee camps over the next several years, and
- The escalating conflict increasing demand for humanitarian assistance for newly arrived, out-of-camp, refugees,

require a sharper definition of where and how TBC works. The need to reach a more dispersed population; work through potential closure of one or more camps; and facilitate the transformation of remaining camps into Thai communities, are defining factors for the 2026 to 2028 strategy. It will reshape the lives of camp residents and the nature of TBC's support. TBC must prepare for a transition in which assistance shifts from camps to communities or, if conditions permit, to

safe and voluntary returns to Myanmar, and increasingly emphasises livelihoods and self-reliance.

To maximise impact and sustainability during this period of transition, TBC will set clear geographic and sectoral boundaries. Its work will focus on populations in southeastern Myanmar and temporarily displaced persons in Thailand. This does not represent a change in mandate, but rather continuity of support as camp-based populations adapt to new realities.

Within these boundaries, TBC will prioritise deepening and improving the quality of its support rather than expanding into new areas. Flexibility will come from scaling the depth of interventions according to needs and resources, not from broadening TBC's mandate. This disciplined focus will enable TBC to remain agile while concentrating its expertise where it can make the greatest difference.

Supporting transitions into community settings will require preparing camp residents to access Thai services, guiding families through integration, and strengthening relationships with Thai government administrations. TBC may also engage more closely with ethnic community-based organisations (CBOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) to ensure displaced populations living in Thai communities continue to receive coordinated support. Planning for these transition scenarios is a central task for the life of this strategy.

By narrowing its boundaries, deepening quality, and elevating preparations for camp transformations and potential closure, TBC will consolidate its comparative advantages while adapting to a changing environment. This refined approach integrates localisation and refugee-centred leadership into programming and advocacy, ensuring TBC remains a trusted, effective, and forward-looking humanitarian actor.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

While TBC does not hold a stand-alone climate change or environmental objective, environmental considerations are systematically integrated into its programs. In practice, this means that every major intervention is assessed not only for its humanitarian impact but also for its environmental footprint. For example, the provision of cooking fuel in refugee camps is designed to reduce reliance on surrounding forests, many of which are protected national parks, that would otherwise be cut down for firewood. By supplying charcoal sourced from low-carbon production methods, TBC mitigates deforestation risks while supporting the health and safety of refugee households who would otherwise face protection risks when collecting firewood. In future, TBC will investigate alternative environmentally sustainable fuels including the provision of solar energy stoves.

TBC also embeds climate-smart practices into livelihoods and food security programs. Agricultural assistance promotes climate-smart techniques that improve soil health, conserve water, maintain fish sanctuaries, and build resilience to shifting rainfall and temperature patterns. Sustainable animal husbandry and alternative income generation are promoted as alternatives to natural resource extraction. Media is supported to investigate environment misconduct. Shelter and camp management activities prioritise locally available and sustainable materials where possible, while community-based projects are encouraged to incorporate environmental safeguards. These approaches ensure that TBC's humanitarian mandate is aligned with longer-term sustainability, reducing environmental degradation and supporting both displaced and host communities to adapt to the realities of a changing climate.



CONSOLIDATION

TBC's current operating structure reflects its long history of adapting to a complex border environment, with teams based across Thailand and Myanmar. This structure has enabled proximity to operations and strong, trusted relationships with communities and authorities. However, it has also created some duplication in administrative functions, increased overhead costs, and at times reduced cohesion across teams working on similar issues.

In 2025, TBC commenced a process of restructuring to become a leaner, more agile organisation. This reduction in staffing numbers across the organisation necessitates careful analysis of how TBC can continue to maximise impact with fewer personnel and heavier workloads. Consolidation planning will therefore consider not only efficiency gains, but also how to safeguard program quality, manage organisational risks, and ensure continuity through effective succession planning and implementation of localisation strategy. The aim is to balance cost reduction with resilience, ensuring that TBC remains capable of meeting its commitments to displaced and conflict-affected persons, while supporting staff wellbeing.

Potential benefits of consolidation include reducing duplication in support functions, strengthening organisational cohesion, and fostering improved communication across teams. Programmatic functions could also be increasingly organised around thematic expertise rather than geography, while still maintaining flexibility to respond to context-specific needs and acknowledging very different implementation methodologies for activities in Thailand and Myanmar.

In parallel, TBC will examine its physical footprint to assess whether efficiencies can be gained through a more streamlined office structure, while ensuring that operational presence remains sufficient to maintain community trust and effective program delivery.

As Thailand moves forward with plans for camp transformations and potential closures, the rationale for maintaining a large physical presence near camps may diminish, underscoring the importance of flexibility in determining where and how TBC maintains proximity to the communities it serves. Consolidation would strengthen business continuity by ensuring staff expertise and organisational knowledge are spread across the organisation, rather than confined to specific teams or locations.

Any moves toward consolidation will be carefully studied as a phased and deliberate process, balancing efficiency gains with operational effectiveness, staff wellbeing, and the need to maintain long-standing community relationships. Decisions will be guided by cost-benefit analysis and informed consultation, recognising that TBC's field presence is integral to its credibility and effectiveness.

Importantly, consolidation will complement TBC's broader strategy by reinforcing localisation and refugee-centred leadership, ensuring that streamlined systems continue to support meaningful community voice and participation, and align with potential transitions arising from Thai policy on camp transformations and potential closures.



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

TBC's Strategic Directions for 2026–2028 reflect our commitment to standing alongside displaced people and host communities in Southeast Myanmar and Thailand during a period of continuing uncertainty and change. Building on more than four decades of experience, TBC aims to balance immediate humanitarian needs with long-term resilience and solutions. Our approach is grounded in inclusion, accountability, and localisation. Across all four priorities - humanitarian assistance, local integration and recovery, strengthened local leadership, and organisational adaptability - TBC acts as a facilitator, connector, and advocate, enabling communities to access timely support, claim their rights, and lead their own futures.

TBC will advance all strategic directions over the life of this Strategic Plan, recognising that impact unfolds over different timeframes. Immediate humanitarian support is delivered directly to meet urgent needs, while programs build resilience and recovery through partners and communities over the medium term. Efforts focusing on local leadership and governance, fostering inclusive, accountable, and sustainable community structures will bear fruit over the longer-term enhancing sustainability of all programming. This approach ensures urgent needs are met today while steadily strengthening self-reliance and local capacity for the future.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: HUMANITARIAN AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Communities affected by conflict and displacement can access timely life-saving food, shelter, and protection, with no one left behind.

TBC's humanitarian response prioritises timely, life-saving assistance for communities affected by conflict and displacement in Southeast Myanmar and Thailand. This includes essential support such as food, cooking fuel, shelter, essential non-food items, and protection tailored to the emergency dynamics, with a clear focus on local leadership and refugee-led delivery systems. Humanitarian action is grounded in TBC's trusted networks of refugee committees, ethnic leadership, and local civil society, ensuring that interventions are culturally relevant, community-driven, and accountable.

Refugees and displaced persons are not only recipients of emergency humanitarian assistance but are empowered as leaders, decision-makers, and first responders. TBC acts as a facilitator, providing technical support, funding, and advocacy to ensure communities have the resources, skills, and authority to respond effectively. This approach strengthens resilience and reinforces community trust while ensuring assistance is tailored to local realities.

OBJECTIVES

1.1 Displaced people and refugees access timely and equitable food assistance that meets minimum nutritional requirements

TBC will respond to emergencies by meeting food security needs of displaced persons through assistance that is timely, equitable, and appropriate. This includes not only emergency food but also the provision of essential fuels for cooking, which are vital for dignity and nutrition. Assistance will prioritise vulnerable groups.

In Myanmar, TBC will provide emergency food assistance to displaced households affected by conflict and natural disasters, ensuring minimum nutritional standards are met.

In Thailand, TBC will continue to deliver food in ways which enables dignity and choice in meeting nutritional needs. If Thailand moves toward camp transformation or closure, delivery systems will be adapted to dispersed settings through local organisations.

1.2. Displaced people and refugees access safe, adequate, and timely shelter, and essential non-food requirements, adapted to local conditions and needs.

TBC will ensure that displaced persons have safe and dignified shelter that protects them from environmental risks, provides privacy, and reflects local conditions.

In Myanmar, TBC will support displaced and conflict-affected communities with temporary and resilient shelter and essential non-food requirements. Communities will be engaged in shelter design and construction, ensuring relevance to local conditions and hazards such as monsoons and flooding.

In Thailand, TBC will continue to provide safe shelter for refugees in camps and reception areas. Assistance will prioritise households most at risk, including women-headed households, people with disabilities, and the elderly. If Thailand moves towards camp transformations or closures, TBC will explore pathways to sustain housing support in community settings.

1.3 At-risk groups, including women, children, people with disabilities, and minorities, are protected through strengthened safeguarding, referral pathways, and access to safe spaces.

In responding to Emergency humanitarian situations, TBC will prioritise the safety of at-risk groups by strengthening safeguarding mechanisms, referral pathways, and survivor-centred support systems.

In Myanmar, protection mechanisms, including psycho-social support, rice banks, and support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, will be reinforced for the most vulnerable groups.

In Thailand, TBC will focus on immediate protection needs during refugee influxes by ensuring displaced people have access to safe spaces, referral pathways, and safeguarding systems.

1.4. Displaced people, refugees, and host communities actively lead and shape the design, delivery, and monitoring of humanitarian assistance, ensuring dignity, inclusivity, and accountability

TBC will strengthen refugee, and displaced persons led systems for humanitarian response. Assistance will be designed and delivered with displaced persons at the centre, actively leading planning, delivery, and monitoring. This ensures assistance is inclusive, accountable, and shaped by the dignity and priorities of those it serves.

In Myanmar, TBC will support displaced communities to plan and implement humanitarian assistance, with systems for feedback and accountability that ensure diverse voices are represented.

In Thailand, TBC will continue to collaborate with refugee committees and camp management bodies to ensure refugees lead humanitarian responses.

1.5. Civil society organisations and communities are better prepared for human-induced and natural disasters along the Thai–Myanmar border

TBC will strengthen preparedness for both conflict-related displacement and natural disasters. By working with displaced communities and local organisations, TBC will build capacity in risk assessment, early warning, and emergency response, enabling communities to be first responders in times of crisis.

In Myanmar, TBC will build the capacity of local civil society and community actors in disaster preparedness through risk mapping, early warning systems, and simulation exercises.

In Thailand, TBC will support camp committees, local NGOs, and host communities to strengthen preparedness for refugee influxes. Training will cover rapid assessment, emergency shelter provision, food distribution, and psychosocial support. Over time, TBC will work with CSOs and CBOs to sustain preparedness systems in dispersed communities should integration proceed.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: LOCAL INTEGRATION, RESILIENCE, AND RECOVERY

Displaced people and host communities can rebuild their lives with safety, dignity, and equal opportunity.

Displaced people, refugees, and host communities in Southeast Myanmar and Thailand can strengthen their ability to cope, adapt, and rebuild their lives. Women, people with disabilities, and minorities are supported to claim their rights, reduce exposure to harm, and pursue safe and fair opportunities for work, health, and education. TBC enables communities to take steps towards durable solutions and advocates with others to address the protection gaps where legal frameworks are absent.

OBJECTIVES

2.1 Displaced people and host communities actively strengthen resilience through sustainable livelihoods, food security, and access to health, nutrition, and education

TBC will strengthen the resilience of displaced persons and host communities by advocating for and supporting livelihoods, long-term food security, and access to health, nutrition, and education. Assistance will promote dignity and self-reliance, with displaced people driving priorities and solutions.

In Myanmar, TBC will support livelihood opportunities, nutrition programs, and access to essential services for displaced and conflict-affected communities.

In Thailand, TBC will sustain core support camp management systems that deliver food security and coordinate health and education

access. TBC will work with camp residents towards securing safe and regulated work opportunities outside camps, and ensuring refugees have sufficient information to make informed decisions. As camps transition, TBC will support CSOs and CBOs to expand livelihood and service systems into local communities, ensuring continuity and equity.

2.2 Displaced people progress toward durable solutions, including voluntary return, resettlement, or local integration; supported by policies and legal frameworks that protect their rights.

TBC will advocate for and support displaced people's pathways toward durable solutions, ensuring rights are safeguarded through policy and legal frameworks. Displaced persons will be supported to prepare for the future, with immediate assistance linked to longer-term safety, resilience, and opportunities.

In Myanmar, TBC will focus on improving resilience and access to essential services while preparing communities for eventual durable solutions. Support will strengthen communities' ability to adapt as displacement dynamics shift.

In Thailand, TBC will support refugee's rights to work, and to access education, and health care. Camp management systems will support refugees access reliable information on future options.

2.3 At-risk groups, including women, people with disabilities, and minorities, participate fully in community life.

TBC will strengthen inclusion and participation by ensuring at-risk groups are able to contribute fully to community life.

In Myanmar, TBC will work with CSOs and communities to create spaces for inclusive participation and challenge barriers faced by marginalised groups.

In Thailand, TBC will support refugee committees and ethnic organisations to ensure all camp residents have equal access to capacity building and work opportunities, and access to health and educational services.

2.4 Community-based protection mechanisms are strengthened to reduce risks, promote safety, and enhance support for vulnerable populations.

TBC will build longer-term community-based protection systems that safeguard at-risk populations and reduce exposure to harm. Displaced persons will lead in shaping these mechanisms to ensure they are culturally relevant, accessible, and effective.

In Myanmar, TBC will continue promoting human rights and humanitarian obligations through facilitating CBOs to document violence and abuse, and mobilise self-protection strategies and early warning systems. Children, people with disabilities, and other at-risk groups will remain a priority in all protection interventions.

In Thailand, TBC will support protection committees and safe spaces in camps, while preparing ethnic organisations to sustain community-based protection mechanisms in integrated settings.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3: STRENGTHEN LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Communities lead their own decisions, resources, and services in inclusive and accountable ways.

Communities affected by displacement and conflict in Southeast Myanmar and Thailand can take the lead in making decisions, managing resources, and organising local services. Women, people with disabilities, and minorities are supported to have an equal voice in leadership and governance. TBC plays a facilitative role, enabling and connecting communities with partners, so that local leadership is inclusive, accountable, and sustainable.

OBJECTIVES

3.1 Community-based organisations, refugee committees, and displaced communities are supported to make inclusive and accountable decisions on priorities, resources, and service delivery.

TBC will strengthen the leadership capacity of CSOs and CBOs, refugee committees, and displaced communities to ensure inclusive, transparent, and accountable decision-making. By investing in skills development, facilitating access to information, and promoting active community engagement, TBC will enable displaced people to identify and prioritise their own needs, manage resources effectively, and coordinate service delivery. This approach reflects TBC's commitment to refugee- and displaced person-centred responses, with communities leading decisions that affect their lives.

In Myanmar, TBC will continue to support CSOs and displaced communities to play an active role in governance and resource management, even in volatile and insecure environments. Training and mentoring will strengthen decision-making capacity, while inclusive participation processes will ensure the voices of women, people with disabilities,

and minorities are heard. TBC will also facilitate collaboration between CSOs and service providers to enhance coordination and accountability at the community level.

In Thailand, TBC will continue supporting camp representative structures to lead service coordination and resource management for refugees. These structures play a central role in ensuring that community priorities are addressed. As the Thai government moves toward eventual camp transformations and potential closure, TBC will support a transition from camp-based governance to community-level leadership by working closely with ethnic CBOs and CSOs; and women's, youth and other community groups. This will help sustain accountability, representation, and coordination of services for refugees, including in geographically dispersed settings should integration into local communities occur.

3.2 Women, people with disabilities, and minorities exercise leadership and governance roles, with systems in place to ensure meaningful representation.

TBC will strengthen inclusive leadership by supporting women, people with disabilities, and minorities to play active roles in governance. This will include mentoring, training, and practical leadership opportunities, ensuring displaced persons' governance structures reflect the diversity of their communities.

In Myanmar, TBC will support CSOs and community structures to ensure representation of at-risk groups in leadership roles.

In Thailand, TBC will promote inclusive leadership in camp governance and CSOs and CBOs, ensuring diversity of representation continues through any transition toward integrated community governance.

3.3 Community governance structures in camps, displacement areas, and return sites are strengthened to coordinate with service providers, promote transparency, and ensure sustainability.

TBC will support community governance systems to be transparent, accountable, and sustainable. Displaced communities will lead coordination with service providers, ensuring

that governance reflects their priorities and strengthens resilience.

In Myanmar, TBC will strengthen CSO-led systems to coordinate services and manage resources effectively, even in volatile contexts.

In Thailand, TBC will work with camp committees to lead service coordination and manage resources transparently.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: MAINTAIN TBC ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY AND FLEXIBILITY

TBC stays strong, adaptable, and ready to support communities through changing times.

TBC remains a trusted and effective partner by keeping the right people, systems, and resources in place to support communities in Southeast Myanmar and Thailand. TBC's role as facilitator, enabler, connector, and advocate adapts to match the changing operating environment. This flexibility allows TBC to expand or reduce engagement as resources and needs shift, while maintaining a strong commitment to inclusion and localisation.

OBJECTIVES

4.1 Skilled and diverse staff are retained and developed, with pathways for local leadership, succession planning, and professional growth

TBC will continue to retain, recruit, and develop a highly skilled and diverse workforce, emphasising local and regional leadership balanced with international expertise and networks. An audit of staff skills against future program needs will be undertaken to inform recruitment planning.

4.2 TBC operates through streamlined, integrated organisational systems that improve efficiency, coherence, and collaboration

As TBC continues the restructuring process commenced in 2025, it will seek to further improve efficiency, coherence, and collaboration through continued consolidation of teams and strengthening organisation-wide systems. This integration will align program management, operations, and support functions across Myanmar, Thailand, and cross-border work, enabling streamlined planning, reporting, and resource allocation.

Consolidation will be guided by a careful cost-benefit analysis that considers operational risks, staff buy-in, logistical costs, and travel needs. Consolidation will be phased and studied to ensure organisational efficiency does not compromise operational effectiveness or the trusted relationships TBC has with communities and authorities.

4.3 Organisational systems for finance, compliance, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguarding are robust, transparent, and accountable.

TBC will maintain and enhance organisational systems for finance, compliance, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguarding to ensure accountability, transparency, and operational efficiency. Strong systems will support high-quality program delivery, safeguard beneficiaries and staff, and enable adaptive management.

Embedding localisation and MEL principles in system design will enhance the ability of regional offices to contribute to decision-making processes and support evidence-based, results-driven programming that aligns with the consolidated operational focus.

4.4 Funding is secure and diversified, ensuring financial sustainability and the flexibility to scale programs up or down according to need.

TBC will proactively secure and diversify funding to ensure financial sustainability and the capacity to respond flexibly to changing humanitarian needs. Localisation opens new opportunities with ASEAN, regional philanthropies, and private sector partners, complementing relationships with international donors.

A consolidated organisational structure would further improve financial efficiency, ensuring resources are allocated strategically across offices and programs. This approach will enhance TBC's ability to scale operations up or down according to funding availability and evolving needs, while maintaining strong donor relationships and program accountability.

4.5 Partnerships with local actors, donors, and international networks are deepened, embedding inclusion and localisation principles across all operations.

TBC will strengthen its relationships with local and regional organisations, donors, international networks, and government counterparts, ensuring that partnership approaches reflect localisation, inclusion, and the priorities of communities and host authorities. Strategic engagement with the Royal Thai Government, ethnic nationality leadership, and other representative bodies will guide organisational decisions and support a localisation pathway that is credible, contextually appropriate, and aligned with TBC's humanitarian mandate.

To sustain effective coordination, advocacy, and donor engagement, TBC will maintain a core presence in Bangkok, ensuring continuity of strategic relationships and access to funding while enabling stronger integration across Thailand and Myanmar offices. A more unified organisational structure will support coherent partnership management, reduce fragmentation and ensure that collaboration with local, regional, and international partners is coordinated, and aligned with TBC's strategic goals. Localisation will progress where it strengthens impact and accountability, while international linkages continue to provide essential political, financial, and technical support.

4.6 Governance structures evolve to increase the leadership and participation of local actors and organisations while maintaining constructive engagement with international partners.

TBC will adapt its governance to strengthen leadership by local, regional, and community-based actors, while retaining the value added by international partners. This will include developing an updated HR and recruitment policy that increases opportunities for local and regional expertise to take on senior and technical roles, supports leadership development, and provides clear pathways for progression.

TBC will also review its governance and consortium arrangements. This will include exploring options to expand consortium membership to qualified local and regional organisations, and considering adjustments to Board composition to increase the number and diversity of independent directors drawn from a broader cross-section of the community. Any changes will be designed to maintain organisational stability and uphold political neutrality while deepening local participation.

ANNEXES



ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
TBC	The Border Consortium

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