

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION GUIDELINE 2025

1. Introduction

The strength and reach of the Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) are built on the dedication of its Volunteers. They are integral to delivering MRC's humanitarian mandate. Volunteers are the heartbeat of the Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC). They embody the principles of humanity, neutrality, and voluntary service through their unwavering commitment to communities across the Maldives. Every contribution, whether through first aid, emergency response, community resilience, or technical expertise strengthens our humanitarian mission.

This guideline replaces the Volunteer Service Recognition Criteria (2010) and establishes an updated, inclusive, and meaningful approach to recognizing the contributions of MRC volunteers. It acknowledges that volunteering today goes beyond hours served; it encompasses leadership, innovation, technical support, and community impact.

2. Context

The volunteer landscape of MRC has evolved significantly over the past decade. MRC now engages a diverse network of volunteers across six active units, contributing to areas ranging from emergency response and health promotion to youth engagement and advocacy.

The Volunteer Voices Initiative (2025) was carried out to better understand the motivations, experiences, and challenges of volunteers across the organization. Findings highlighted that while most volunteers feel valued, there is a strong call for more consistent, personal, and inclusive recognition of contributions.

Volunteers expressed appreciation for certificates and events, but also emphasized the importance of:

- Regular, merit-based recognition throughout the year
- Visibility of contributions through digital platforms and social media
- Recognition that reflects impact, leadership, and innovation, not only service hours
- Equal opportunities for new, long-serving, and less active volunteers to feel valued

This guideline integrates those voices, aligning the IFRC Volunteering Policy (2022), Hanoi Call for Action (2018), MRC Volunteering Policy (2025), and MRC Strategic Plan 2019 – 2030.

3. Objectives of the Recognition Framework

This guideline aims to:

- Acknowledge and celebrate the diverse ways volunteers contribute to MRC’s mission
- Promote fairness, transparency, and inclusivity in recognition practices
- Strengthen volunteer engagement, morale, and retention
- Build a culture of gratitude and belonging within MRC
- Encourage leadership, innovation, and continuous personal development

4. Guiding Principles

#	Guiding Principle	Description
1	Fairness and Transparency	Recognition decisions are guided by clear, documented criteria and verified records
2	Inclusivity and Equity	Every volunteer, regardless of age, gender, race, or ability has an equal opportunity for recognition
3	Volunteer Centeredness	Recognition processes reflect volunteer feedback and experiences, ensuring that recognition feels personal and meaningful
4	Dignity and Respect	Recognition promotes pride and well-being, without creating competition or bias
5	Diversity of Recognition	Both formal and micro recognition

5. Levels and Categories of Recognition

MRC recognizes service, leadership, innovation, and impact across multiple levels. Recognition is assessed on a calendar year basis (1 November of previous year to 30 November of the ongoing year), unless otherwise specified. This provides a clear and consistent timeframe for both review and eligibility.

Recognition may be granted for verified volunteer hours accumulated within the calendar year, sustained technical contribution, or demonstrated leadership in humanitarian service. The recognition levels are reviewed annually, allowing volunteers to plan, track, and target specific levels of recognition from the beginning of each year.

#	Level	Eligibility Criteria	Recognition Type
1	Bronze	Foundation of Service: 50 – 149 verified hours or equivalent contribution	Certificate of Appreciation, MRC Hub digital badge
2	Silver	Commitment to Service: 150 – 299 hours of verified hours or equivalent contribution and active leadership in Unit activities	MRC Hub digital badge, Recognition during International Volunteer Day activities; signed certificate from MRC President
3	Gold	Leadership in Action: 300 – 499 hours of verified hours or equivalent contribution, active leadership in Unit activities, and/or leadership in project, training, or mentoring	MRC Hub digital badge, Recognition during International Volunteer Day activities; signed certificate by the MRC President,
4	Platinum	Exemplary Service: 500+ hours of verified hours or equivalent contribution, active leadership in Unit activities, and/or leadership in project, training or mentoring and demonstrating exceptional dedication	MRC Hub digital badge, Recognition during International Volunteer Day activities; signed certificate by the MRC President, Award plaque with leadership appreciation note; and nomination for external awards from MRC

Special Awards:

- Technical Excellence Award: For outstanding technical or specialized service (e.g. First Aid, Emergency Response, Health, IT, Communications)
- Innovation and Impact Award: For creative initiatives or projects that strengthen MRC operations or community resilience

- Volunteer of the Year: For exceptional humanitarian leadership and embodiment of the fundamental principles
- Favorite Volunteer Award: For a volunteer recognized by peers for dedication, teamwork, and positive impact, through open nomination and internal voting, subject to meeting minimum eligibility requirements.
- Best Volunteer of the Unit Award: Awarded to one volunteer from each unit, selected based on overall contribution, including commitment of time and hours, quality of service, teamwork, reliability, and positive impact at unit and community level.

Volunteer Engagement Index and Leaderboard

To strengthen fairness, transparency, and holistic recognition, MRC will introduce a Volunteer Engagement Index that goes beyond counting service hours. This index will reflect a broader picture of volunteer contribution by considering:

- Types of activities volunteers engage in (emergency response, community outreach, governance roles, training delivery, etc.)
- Frequency and diversity of participation
- Leadership roles, mentoring, and initiative-taking
- Consistency of engagement over the year

This Index will be used as an additional reference point, particularly for the Volunteer of the Year and other high-impact awards, to ensure recognition reflects not just hours served but the quality, diversity, and depth of volunteer engagement.

In alignment with this, the MRC Hub will also feature a Volunteer Leaderboard, showcasing:

- Total verified hours
- Total events and activities participated

Leaderboards will be live and continuously updated at unit level and across MRC, strengthening motivation, transparency, and a healthy culture of recognition.

6. Forms and Methods of Recognition

MRC applies a tiered and flexible approach to volunteer recognition, acknowledging that volunteers contribute in different ways, capacities, and contexts. Recognition may be formal, informal, or developmental, and can be applied at unit, regional or national level depending on the nature of contribution, available resources, and significance of impact.

Formal Recognition:

- Annual Volunteer Awards on International Volunteer Day (05 December)
- Certificates, pins, and plaques acknowledging milestones
- Nomination for national and international volunteer awards

Informal Recognition:

- Verbal appreciation during activities, events and meetings
- Peer-to-peer appreciation shared via governance groups or MRC Hub
- Monthly 'Volunteer Spotlight' stories on MRC platforms
- Small Gestures of Appreciation (e.g., Volunteer birthday cards, Voluntary Service Anniversary digital cards, Short Thank you notes from unit leaders)

Developmental Recognition:

- Priority access to training, leadership, and representation opportunities
- Recommendation letters for employment or education
- Mentorship roles to guide new and younger volunteers

7. Decentralized and Hybrid Recognition Model

Given MRC's distributed network and regional based structure, recognition will follow a multi-level model.

Unit and Regional Recognition

Each unit will organize an annual or mid-year appreciation event to celebrate their volunteers. Regional Offices will support logistics and ensure equitable access across islands.

Recognizing that smaller or newly established units may have limited resources or organizing capacity, Regional Offices and HQ will provide:

- A standard recognition event template (programme outline, suggested activities, branding guidelines)
- Budget guidance with cost effective options tailored to different unit sizes
- Practical support, such as facilitating shared events for nearby units or providing additional staff/volunteer assistance when needed

This approach ensures that all volunteers, regardless of unit size, location, or resource availability, can host meaningful and consistent recognition events aligned with MRC standards.

National Recognition

HQ Team will coordinate the national recognition event, ensuring standardization of awards, certificates, and branding

Hybrid and Digital Approaches

- Digital Wall of Honor: Online gallery of recognized volunteers on MRC Hub
- Impact Through Service Campaign: Volunteer stories across Units shared on social media
- Virtual Awards: National celebrations streamed live for remote participation

8. Implementation and Process

Introduction to the MRC Hub

The MRC Hub is the central volunteer management database and the primary platform through which volunteer information, service hours, training records, nomination forms, and recognition history are maintained. A well-updated and accurately maintained MRC Hub profile for each volunteer is essential for the integrity of the recognition process. Units and Regional Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- Volunteer profiles are complete and up to date
- Service logs and activity participation are recorded in a timely manner
- Supporting documents (recommendation letters, deployment reports, training certifications) are uploaded consistently
- Volunteer Engagement Index and Leaderboards are up to date

Roles and Responsibilities of Communications

The Communications Unit plays a key role in ensuring uniformity, visibility, and brand alignment across all recognition platforms. Their responsibilities include:

- Reviewing and endorsing visual and digital recognition elements such as the Wall of Honor, service pins, badges/plaques, certificates, digital spotlights, and social media features.
- Ensuring brand compliance across all units, regions, and recognition platforms.
- Maintaining consistency in design templates for certificates, spotlights, and appreciation materials.
- Producing recognition content based on verified information, nominations, and contributions submitted by departments, units, regional offices and designated focal points.

Volunteer Recognition Process Flow

This process outlines the standard volunteer recognition workflow at national level, based on nominations and verified data originating from unit and regional levels. Units play a central role in identifying and nominating eligible volunteers, using records maintained on the MRC Hub. The process ensures fairness, transparency, and consistency through multiple review points, while allowing volunteers to review their own records prior to final approval.

#	Step	Details
1	Nomination	Units nominate eligible volunteers annually, based on verified engagement data and records available on the MRC Hub, and submit nominations through the designated process.
2	Unit level Feedback / Appeal	Volunteers review their records and nominations, raise concerns or appeal discrepancies. Regional managers resolve issues and document them.
3	Review by Volunteer Management Committee	A committee comprising a GB representative, a management representative, and an HQ focal point reviews nominations to verify eligibility, fairness, and compliance, and cross-checks information against MRC Hub records.
4	Communications Review	Check for branding, consistency, and visual/digital recognition elements (Wall of honor, badges, plaques, certificates, digital spotlights)
5	Approval	The Secretary General endorses recognition.
6	Presentation	Unit/Regional or National level event recognition.

9. Inclusivity and Accessibility

MRC is committed to ensuring that recognition reaches all volunteers equitably, reflecting the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Recognition shall be granted without discrimination based on gender, age, disability, nationality, ethnicity, migration status, or any other demographic factor, ensuring that every individual's contribution is valued and celebrated.

To promote inclusive recognition, MRC may introduce specific recognition categories or considerations at unit or national level for underrepresented or minority groups, where appropriate. Recognition materials and events will be made accessible through appropriate formats and communication methods. Units, Regional Offices and HQ will take proactive steps to remove physical, digital, or social barriers that may prevent any volunteer from being acknowledged or celebrated.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Recognition systems will be strengthened through:

- Annual review of recognition data (participation, demographics, satisfaction, gender and inclusion balance)
- Volunteer feedback from Volunteer Voices and future follow-up surveys
- Benchmarking against IFRC and peer National Societies' practices
- Periodic updates to criteria and categories based on evolving volunteer roles

11. Conclusion

Volunteer recognition is not a one-time act; it is a culture of gratitude that defines our National Society. Through this guideline, MRC commits to ensuring every volunteer feels seen, valued, and inspired for their humanity, courage, and compassion in serving our communities across the Maldives.