



Contingency planning guide

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Contingency planning guide

Strategy 2020 voices the collective determination of the IFRC to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade. Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified and peaceful world.

Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

- 1. Save lives, protect livelihoods and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises**
- 2. Enable healthy and safe living**
- 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace**

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Foreword



Natural disasters affect millions of people every year, and National Societies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are at the forefront of the response to these. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is a world leader in disaster management with a global disaster management system focused on effective preparedness for, and response to, disasters and crises of all magnitudes.

Strengthening disaster preparedness at global, regional and national levels is thus critical to save lives, protect livelihoods and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises. However, significant gaps exist in the IFRC's systems for the coordination of its National Societies' preparedness efforts. These can be addressed by better integrating the current diverse practices of contingency planning and business continuity planning through establishing agreed standards and tools for multi-hazard emergency preparedness.

Contingency planning ensures that we know what to do when disaster strikes, and have the systems and tools to respond fast. It means anticipating the types of disasters we might face and knowing practically how to manage disasters when they do strike. It also means rehearsing our procedures and working out where the gaps are, so that we can be ready when we are needed most. Plans need to be regularly updated and tested through simulations.

This contingency planning guide is the second version produced by the IFRC, and builds on our experience around the world. The simple steps outlined here are the distillation of years of good practice. Most important of all, this is a guide for practitioners, volunteers and staff working with National Societies around the world, who wish to benefit from the collective experience of their colleagues.

Contingency planning and preparedness should be considered a core organizational activity for every National Society. The revised guide will support disaster management practitioners in developing contingency plans which are simple, participatory, realistic and supported by preparedness actions that are identified as a result of the contingency planning.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Bekele Geleta'.

Bekele Geleta

Secretary General

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Introduction

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) is a world leader in disaster management. Effective preparedness for and response to emergency situations are fundamental elements of its mandate. The Movement's comparative advantages are its large number of paid and volunteer staff throughout the world, who are able to respond immediately at a local level, and the significant resources of the 186 National Societies and the secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Each member bases its actions on the Movement's seven fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

Most National Societies are recognized by their governments as "auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field".¹ National Societies and the IFRC are uniquely placed to work with government authorities and response agencies. They have community-based outreach networks to identify people most at risk and vulnerable to disasters.

Most countries periodically face emergencies so severe that international Red Cross Red Crescent humanitarian assistance is required. These disasters may arise from natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, droughts and cyclones or from any number of risks, such as food or water shortages, epidemics, environmental or technological disasters, acute economic distress, civil unrest or armed conflict. Refugee outflows and internal displacements are consequences of humanitarian emergencies and are also emergencies in their own right.

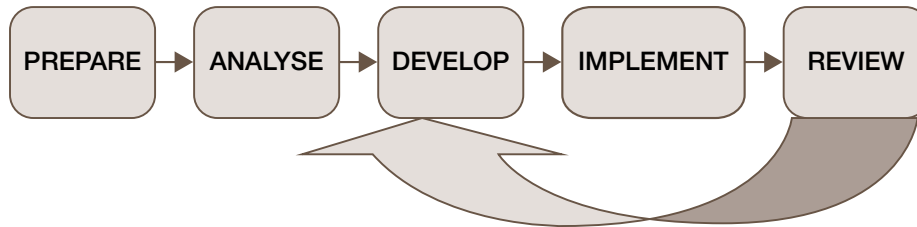
Using the guidelines

These guidelines aim to ensure that Red Cross Red Crescent disaster response is consistent and of a high quality. This document provides an overview of the key elements of contingency planning. This guide is aimed at assisting National Society and IFRC staff responsible for developing contingency plans at the local, national, regional or global levels. It is essential to develop contingency plans in consultation and cooperation with those who will have to implement or approve them. This document provides guidelines, not strict rules; planning priorities will differ according to the context and scope of any given situation.

¹ *Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement adopted by the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross at Geneva in October 1986 and amended by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross at Geneva in December 1995. www.ifrc.org/Docs/idrl/I290EN.pdf*

Contingency planning guide

This guide breaks contingency planning down into five main steps, shown in the diagram below. Each step is covered by a separate chapter in this document.



Whilst it is hoped most practitioners will find this an easy-to-use format, this is not the only way to go about contingency planning. The essential elements of the process can be organized in a number of ways and there are several excellent reference works that provide more detail.²

In order to be relevant and useful, contingency plans must be a collaborative effort. They must also be linked to the plans, systems or processes of other government, partner or Movement bodies at all levels – national, regional and global.

There is a suggested format for contingency plans annexed to this guide and there is a set of training modules, also available from the IFRC.

² Chief amongst these is the Humanitarian Practice Network Paper “Contingency planning and humanitarian action: a review of practice” by Richard Choularton. This can be found at www.odihpn.org/report.asp?ID=2868.

1. Prepare

This section sets out some of the definitions, key considerations and principles that must be taken into account when preparing a contingency plan. Subsections are:

- **What is contingency planning?**
- **When and how to plan**
- **National Society mandate and contingency planning**
- **Humanitarian reform and the cluster system**
- **Principles, quality and accountability**
- **Data collection and practical steps to prepare for planning**

1. What is contingency planning?

Contingency planning aims to prepare an organization to respond well to an emergency and its potential humanitarian impact. Developing a contingency plan involves making decisions in advance about the management of human and financial resources, coordination and communications procedures, and being aware of a range of technical and logistical responses. Such planning is a management tool, involving all sectors, which can help ensure timely and effective provision of humanitarian aid to those most in need when a disaster occurs. **Time spent in contingency planning equals time saved when a disaster occurs.** Effective contingency planning should lead to timely and effective disaster-relief operations.

The contingency planning process can basically be broken down into three simple questions:

- What is going to happen?
- What are we going to do about it?
- What can we do ahead of time to get prepared?

This guide helps planners think through these questions in a systematic way. Contingency planning is most often undertaken when there is a specific threat or hazard; exactly how that threat will actually impact is unknown. Developing **scenarios** is a good way of thinking through the possible impacts. On the basis of sensible scenarios it is possible to **develop a plan** that sets out the scale of the response, the resources needed and the practical management tasks that will be needed.

See Annex 1 for a suggested contingency plan format.

Disaster response or contingency planning?

The definitions below set out the theoretical distinctions between disaster-response and contingency planning. In reality, National Societies have limited resources and may end up doing 'a bit of both'. This guide aims to develop a set of simple, practical tools that can help with either, whilst retaining a main focus on contingency planning:

Disaster-response plan – Disaster-response planning involves identifying, strengthening and organizing resources and capacities so as to reach a level of preparedness for timely and effective response to a potential disaster. Disaster-response planning is preliminary in nature, based on educated assumptions of risks and hazards, and does not address specific disaster scenarios.

Contingency plan – Contingency planning involves anticipating a specific hazard based on specific events or known risks at local, national, regional or even global levels (e.g., earthquakes, floods or disease outbreaks), and establishing operational procedures for response, based on expected resource requirements and capacity.

2. When and how to plan

Contingency planning is the responsibility of all levels of the organization. The IFRC recommends that National Societies and IFRC offices develop either a multi-hazard disaster-response plan with hazard-specific annexes, or several hazard-specific contingency plans to cover high-risk disaster events. However, many emergency management procedures are common to all disasters, regardless of the hazards involved, and as mentioned above, the important thing is to plan ahead.

Contingency planning is an ongoing process and the planning process is often as important as the plan itself. Red Cross Red Crescent leadership should include it in its annual planning process, and as part of strategy development and staff accountability measurements. Plans must be tested and updated regularly to check their relevance. During rapidly changing situations, plans will need to be updated more frequently.

Contingency planning should always be undertaken when there is a high risk or probability that a disaster or emergency situation may occur. National Societies and IFRC delegations should also plan when there is evidence of recurring natural disasters (e.g., seasonal events such as floods, hurricanes or cyclones, and droughts).

What do you need to plan for?

These guidelines are designed to assist in the preparation of contingency plans for all types of humanitarian emergencies, including: complex emergencies, conflicts, natural disasters and technological disasters. Planning should be specific to each context and take into consideration a number of factors including: the government's disaster-response plans and capacity; reception and coordination of national, regional or global inputs; potential sources of donor support; the likelihood of disaster occurrence; and the vulnerability of the population.

Who should plan?

A good plan will need the support of many parts of the organization, including the senior leadership. It should be led ideally by a focal person from the Disaster Management Team (DMT), who is familiar with disaster-response and contingency planning. Alternatively a task force, committee or working group comprised of DMT members and members from other sectors can be formed.

Developing a plan requires teamwork. The greater the input, the better the product, although there will always be a trade-off in terms of time and complexity. Also, National Societies may benefit from developing internal plans before engaging in external planning. Groups to consider involving are:

- **Internally** – governance, senior managers, sector technicians, volunteers, administrative staff and logisticians.
- **Movement** – national, regional and global IFRC, Participating National Society and ICRC.
- **External partners** – government, United Nations (UN) partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Planning is most effective when it is a participatory process involving all the actors who will be required to work together in the event of an emergency. A contingency plan should ideally be a dynamic document, i.e., continually updated. Planners should encourage screening, analysis and discussion from those who must approve and/or implement its components. This means the plan should be widely distributed and communicated to National Society board members, headquarters' offices and departments, branches, volunteers and to relevant external agencies.

Inter-agency contingency planning

There has been a strong move in recent years toward inter-agency contingency planning and it is important that Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies participate in such processes.³ National Societies might be requested to lead the shelter component of inter-agency contingency planning exercises on behalf of the IFRC.⁴ Having internal plans in place will help National Societies to be clear about what they can offer. They should also be prepared to revise internal plans as a consequence of inter-agency planning.

Where to plan

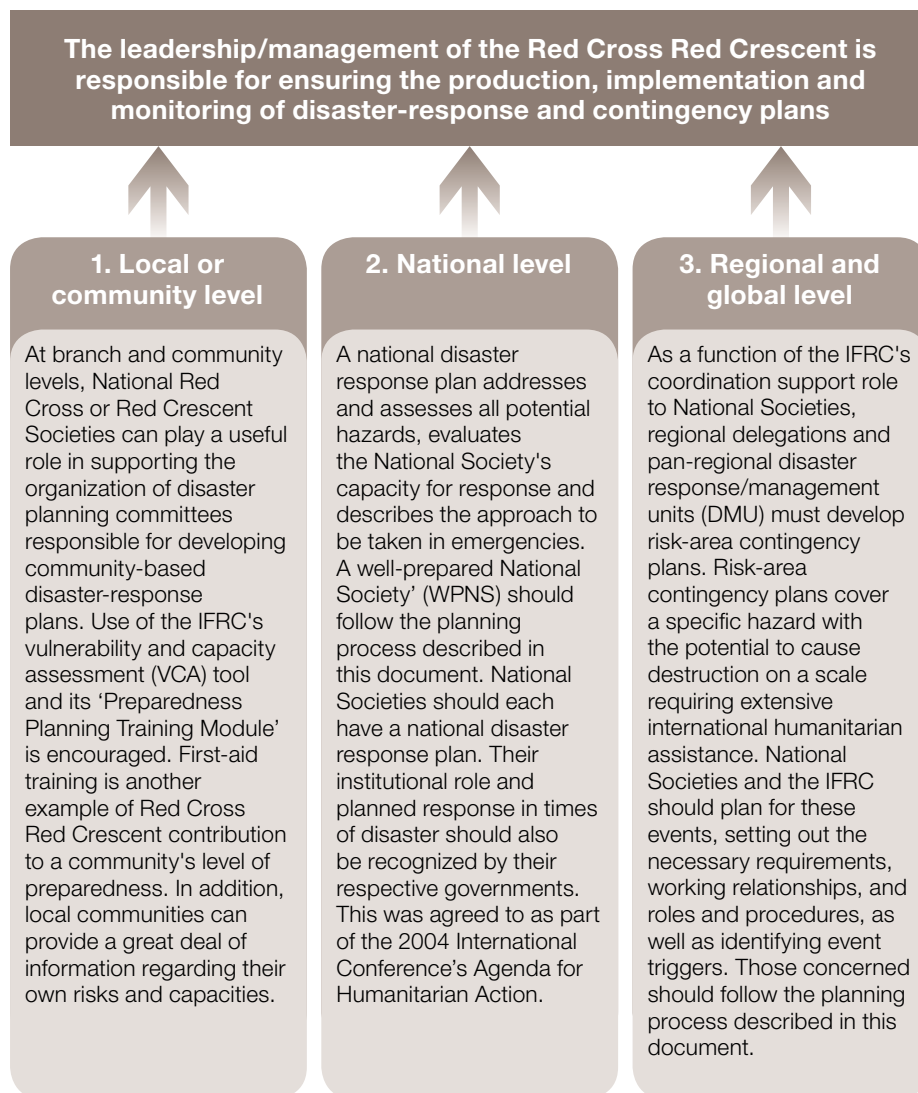
Contingency plans are necessary at national and regional levels (and sometimes at a global level), to ensure effective coordination and response to large-scale disasters. Plans should be established by all National Societies and Federation delegations.

³ *The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) contingency planning guide can be found at: <http://ocha.unog.ch/drptoolkit/PreparednessTools/Contingency%20Planning/IASC%20IA%20CP%20Guidelines,%20version%20Dec%202007.pdf>.*

⁴ *Please refer to the Shelter Cluster contingency planning checklist at <https://www.sheltercluster.org/Global/Pages/Contingency-Planning.aspx>*

Most plans are prepared for individual countries; however, plans can also be made jointly for a number of countries or for regions where there are cross-border issues to consider. This is often the case with large-scale natural hazards, such as hurricanes or cyclones. In such instances, consultation between disaster-response planners from all affected countries is critical when developing regional scenarios, which will then inform and shape country-based contingency planning. The IFRC's regional delegations have made a commitment to support and lead this regional disaster-response and contingency planning process. The graphic below sets out the different levels of contingency planning.

Figure 1: The different levels at which contingency planning can take place



3. National Society mandate and contingency planning

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies carry out their humanitarian activities in line with the fundamental principles and statutes of the Movement, the constitution of the IFRC, as well as with their own statutes and national legislation. As auxiliaries to their governments in humanitarian service, National Societies support their respective country's public authorities according to the needs of the population. However, this auxiliary role does not limit the initiative of National Societies to undertake other humanitarian activity within their countries. They are independent national organizations, supporting the public authorities with their own programmes. National Societies are required to work closely with their governments to ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law, guard the integrity of the Red Cross Red Crescent Emblem and to uphold the fundamental principles.

A National Society's precise role in times of disaster should be negotiated and defined with its government. Policy should then be developed accordingly, and the society's role incorporated into the government's national disaster plan. It is the **duty of National Societies to prepare themselves to provide and receive assistance in the event of a disaster**. This will include, for instance, negotiating with their governments for exemption from taxes and customs duties on items intended for disaster victims, and agreeing on procedures for the rapid issuance of visas for Red Cross Red Crescent staff taking part in relief operations if Movement-wide assistance is required.

Contingency plans will be rooted in the institutional mandate, policies, strategies, standards and norms, and legal framework of the organization.

4. Humanitarian reform and the cluster system

Since 2005 there have been significant changes to the way the international humanitarian system of response has been organized. Of most relevance to the IFRC and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the 'cluster' system. This assigns coordination and leadership responsibilities to a number of operational humanitarian agencies globally for key sectors such as food (World Food Programme), water and sanitation (UNICEF), health (WHO) and agriculture (FAO). There are currently 11 clusters, details of which can be found at the website www.humanitarianreform.org/.

The IFRC is the convener of the Global Shelter Cluster for natural disasters. This has implications for all National Societies, especially when an emergency response is of an international scale. Contingency plans should routinely take account of this global obligation and make specific preparations for it.

When a disaster happens and there is a need for additional international coordination, the Humanitarian Country Team will decide this. The IFRC should be represented at that meeting. If additional support to the existing coordinating structures is needed, the IFRC can provide a Shelter Coordination Team (SCT) to support the government in the coordination of shelter activities during the emergency phase.

In preparation for disasters, National Societies might be requested by the Humanitarian Country Team or the Resident Coordinator to lead the shelter component of inter-agency contingency planning exercises on behalf of the IFRC. This exercise is very similar to the one being described in this guide but it includes all the shelter actors across the country concerned. The National Society can ask the IFRC for support in this role and can use the Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines and the Shelter Cluster Contingency Planning Checklist. These resources and more about the IFRC and the Shelter Cluster can be found at www.sheltercluster.org and in FedNet <https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources-and-services/disasters/shelter/>.

5. Principles, quality and accountability

Any contingency plan must be mindful not only of the National Society's mandate and the international response system, but also of principles, standards and norms that the Movement has adopted.

Chief amongst these, as has already been mentioned, are the fundamental principles and statutes of the Movement, the constitution of the IFRC, national legislation and the statutes of the National Society. In addition, however, there is the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, as well as standards such as those developed by the Sphere project. There is also an increasing body of work on beneficiary accountability. This is developed in more detail in section 5 in Chapter 3: Develop.

6. Data collection and practical steps to prepare for planning

Contingency planning is often best carried out in a workshop environment. A useful resource for this approach is the IFRC Contingency Planning Workshop Package.⁵ The main benefit of this approach is that stakeholders can be brought together so assumptions and commitments are made jointly.

To make the most of a contingency planning workshop it is necessary to do some data collection in advance. Having enough time, space and material is essential. Using an external facilitator is often useful and it is important to ensure the right participants attend (e.g., internal and external experts and decision-makers).

The following chapter ('Analyse') develops some of the key concepts on which contingency planning should be focused. Most of this 'data' will need to be gathered in advance of a workshop so that participants have the right information from which to develop different scenarios.

Recommended reference documents

- Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- The Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief
- Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures
- Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response
- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief
- Guidelines for Well-prepared National Societies (WPNS)
- Better Programming Initiative (BPI)

⁵ <https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/our-federation/secretariat-offices/asia-pacific/what-we-do/disaster-management/disaster-management-planning/contingency-planning/>

2. Analyse

This section helps planners to create realistic scenarios on which the contingency plan will be based, including what the likely priority humanitarian needs will be and the Red Cross Red Crescent role in addressing these.

- **Introduction**
- **Hazards**
- **Vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA)**
- **Risk analysis**
- **Disaster impacts**
- **Role, mandate and capacity of the National Society**
- **Developing scenarios**

1. Introduction

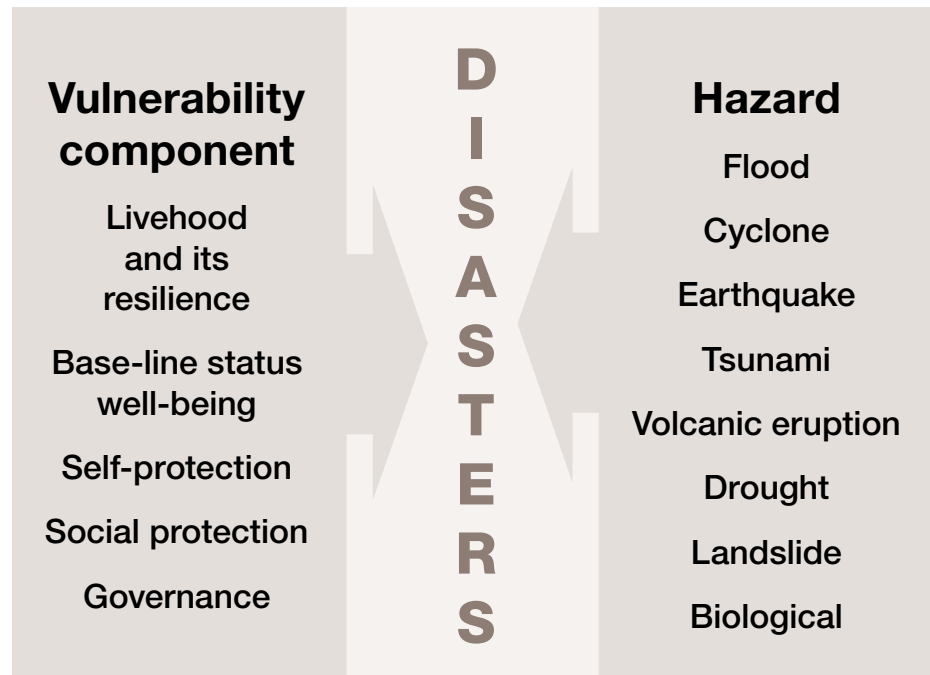
Contingency planning has three components: an estimate of what is going to happen, a plan based on this estimate of what the response should be; and some actions identified to be best prepared. This chapter helps planners think through **what is going to happen**, and the likely impact on people's lives and livelihoods.

In the absence of an actual disaster, contingency plans are based on **scenarios**. These are focused on analysing the risks to the population and likely **impacts** of potential disasters. Producing realistic scenarios is important for effective contingency planning.

Determining the risk of disaster to a population and its potential impact starts with an analysis of the likely hazards faced by a country or region. Once this has been done an assessment of vulnerabilities and capacities at local, national or regional levels can be undertaken. Based on the analysis of hazards and the vulnerability and capacities of the population, disaster-response planners can determine risk and a list of likely needs. Realistic scenarios can then be developed for planning purposes.

The diagram below illustrates how the combination of hazards and vulnerabilities combine to produce disasters.

Figure 2: How hazards and vulnerabilities combine to create disasters



Source: Ben Wisner, Piers Blaikie, Terry Cannon and Ian Davis. (2006)

2. Hazards

Most National Societies will be aware of the principal hazards that need to be planned for, as will most at-risk communities. Contingency planning is likely to have been triggered by the probable threat of a particular hazard.

Hazard data is largely scientific: quantitative or spatial. It can take many forms; e.g.⁶:

- geological hazard maps showing fault lines or unstable slopes likely to cause landslides
- hydrological maps of flood-prone areas
- wind, rainfall and sea-surface temperature data
- recordings of seismic activity from monitoring stations
- local rainfall and flood-level records.

Whilst such data is useful for informing detailed planning, it may need interpretation.

When developing multi-hazard disaster-response plans it is helpful to also consider new hazards such as the possibility of extreme weather linked to climate change, major shifts in risk due to deforestation and unplanned urbanization that may have dramatically greater impact.

⁶ Twigg, J (2004). *Disaster risk reduction: Mitigation and preparedness in development and emergency planning*. Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London, UK.

3. Vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA)

The risk of disaster is linked to a population's vulnerability to particular threats; varying conditions can affect vulnerability levels. Good planning must also assess capacities within the communities at risk, and identify opportunities and methods for strengthening and drawing on these capacities – in both planning and disaster response activities.

The IFRC has been using VCA for a number of years and has an extensive set of resources for undertaking such an exercise. Many National Societies have carried out VCA and so have good data sets, which can be drawn on for contingency planning. Analysis of vulnerability data from reliable secondary data sources (academic, governmental, scientific, etc.) can also be used.

VCA is primarily a tool to help communities engage in disaster mitigation and preparedness. It draws on community development methodologies such as participatory rural appraisal. VCA can also be a good source of data to identify which communities and groups are most vulnerable to disaster, and the types of capacities they might draw on in responding. See the table below as an example, reproduced from the IFRC's VCA guidelines.

Figure 3: Mapping vulnerabilities and capacities (taken from the IFRC's VCA guidelines)

Problem/ issue/hazard	Potential risk	Vulnerabilities	Capacities
Flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The river floods over the banks affecting homes in the vicinity • Homes become water-logged at ground level • Household equipment is damaged • Most vulnerable people (elderly and very young) lost their lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor infrastructure • Poor agricultural practices • Poor drainage • Poor sanitation • Lack of agricultural supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Skilled personnel • Storage facilities • Evacuation plan

VCA is essentially a social science tool, which primarily considers the social aspects of vulnerability and capacity such as marginalization and social capital. Other aspects are physical and institutional. The table below illustrates some examples of these.

Figure 4: Physical and institutional vulnerabilities

Area of analysis (country or regional level)	Examples of indicators
Physical vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of means of communication • Presence and quality of public infrastructure and shelters • Presence and accessibility to evacuation routes in the event of a disaster • Quality of dwelling construction • Proximity of homes or population centres to identified hazards/threats
Organizational vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence, effectiveness and awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – early-warning systems – disaster-response plans and systems • Existence of skilled response teams • Presence of development projects or NGOs (local and international) • Existence of community-based organizations, social groups, etc. • Ways of delivering basic services to the population • Centralized/decentralized decision-making in disaster management
Institutional vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of assistance/relief entities such as Red Cross Red Crescent, fire department, police, civil defence, etc. • Human resources dedicated to disaster response • Financial resources dedicated to preparedness and disaster response • Awareness and commitment of local authorities to disaster reduction • Legislation, plans and instructions for local and national disaster management • Access to vulnerable population in disaster situations • Readiness and quality of mechanisms for receiving external and international assistance

Vulnerability analysis can be as detailed and as comprehensive as required. It is important the information is regularly updated and of good quality. The amount of detail in the analysis will depend on the time and resources available.

To provide a National Society and other Movement partners with an overall picture of the situation, a broad macro-analysis or profiling exercise of all hazards faced by the country and/or region is recommended as a first step. This will assist in prioritizing high-risk areas during the planning process. In cases where a potential hazard or threat prompts the contingency planning process (e.g., a sharp deterioration in the stability of a country), the analysis (and the contingency planning process) should focus on that particular hazard or threat.

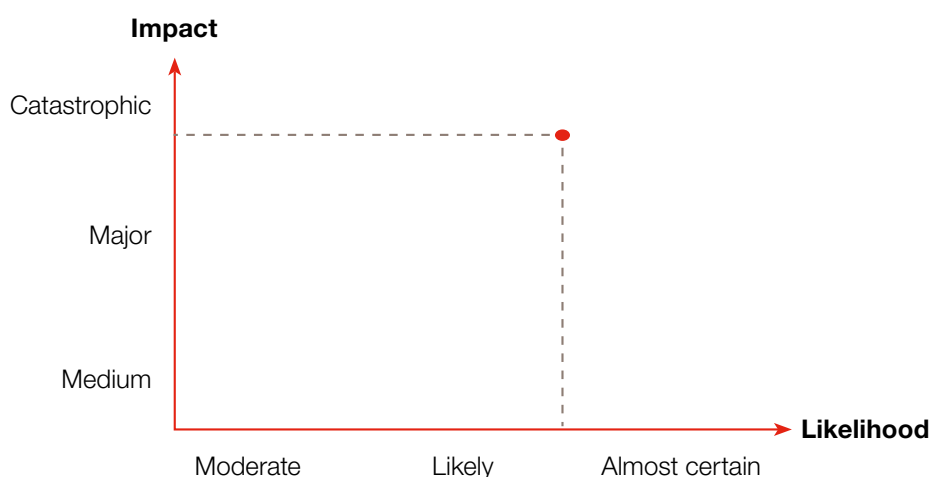
4. Risk analysis

Whilst the majority of contingency planning will be to focus on a specific threat, it may be the case that a National Society is faced with multiple hazards. As part of the analysis of 'what is going to happen?', it may also be worth considering more extreme variations of the expected disaster.

For both of these situations, the concept of ‘risk analysis’ can be useful. The literature on this is extensive and is the main focus in much of the academic material about disaster management. At its simplest, the equation **risk = hazard x vulnerability** expresses the concept that the impact of the disaster depends on both the type of hazard and the level of vulnerability.

The diagram below introduces the concept of probability into the risk equation. This is especially useful when deciding which hazards are worth planning for. A tsunami may be a once-in-a-200-year event, but its impact can be catastrophic as seen in 2004 in the Indian Ocean. An earthquake may be a low probability, but its impact very high. In such scenarios it is worth planning for, as the time invested is small compared to the benefits of knowing what to do if it actually occurs.

Figure 5: The concept of risk can help to work out which hazards to plan for



Source: IASC

A good example of this might be whether to plan for floods, cyclones or earthquakes in Bangladesh. Flooding is a high-risk hazard there, as it is almost certain that every few years major flooding will occur. On this basis it is absolutely necessary to have contingency plans in place for flooding in Bangladesh.

The same is true for cyclones in Bangladesh. The frequency of very dangerous cyclones is less than flooding, but the impact is higher in terms of potential loss of life and damage to property. The value of contingency planning for cyclones in Bangladesh – together with rapid mobilization systems and shelters – is well documented. The probability of an earthquake in Dhaka is much lower than either floods or cyclones. However, if a shallow, high-magnitude earthquake hit Dhaka, the consequences would be devastating, potentially killing and injuring millions of people. The risk of an earthquake happening is very low, but the impact very high, so this should be planned for too.

Figure 6: A risk register can help you think about risk in a practical way

Field	Analysis of hazards/ threats	Analysis of vulnerability
Geographical unit of analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country/region • Province/area/city • District or municipality • Specific locality or neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population • Community • Family • Individual
Temporal framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period of recurrence (time frame) and incidence; e.g., months, years, every five years, decade(s), etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period during which specific vulnerabilities apply to a defined group • Dates of the information used and analysed
Events/areas of analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most important hazards/threats in the geographic zones analysed (e.g., earthquakes, flooding, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, droughts, epidemics, landslides, etc.) • Variations in the period of recurrence as a result of environmental or climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific conditions of exposure and vulnerability (e.g., physical, economic, social, organizational, institutional, educational, cultural, etc.)
Indicators of measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probability of occurrence • Potential area affected and territorial coverage • Magnitude of damage and losses • Percentage of population affected • Other 	Indicators for each area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic vulnerability: family earnings, unemployment rate, etc. • Social vulnerability: life expectancy, access to health services, education, infrastructure, sanitation, etc. • Organizational vulnerability: existence of committees and disaster-response plans, early warning systems, etc. • Physical vulnerability: shelters, location and quality of structures and dwellings, etc.
Sources of information	Provide specific references for sources of information as a means of verification.	

5. Disaster impacts

Contingency plans are basically used to estimate the impact of a disaster on the population. For example, how many people are affected, what the greatest needs might be, what the logistical constraints might be and what the capability of first-phase disaster-response agencies will be.

From an analysis of the hazards, likely social and physical vulnerabilities and the capacity of communities, it is possible to estimate the impact of a disaster. The more detailed the hazards and vulnerability data is, the more accurate the impacts estimate is likely to be, but there is one very important rule to remember when undertaking this analysis:

Prediction is very difficult, especially of the future. (Niels Bohr)

With that motto in mind, there are several obvious disaster impacts that will shape a potential response:

- the number of people killed
- the number of people affected
- morbidity data
- priority humanitarian needs
- logistics.

6. Role, mandate and capacity of the National Society

If analysing hazards and vulnerabilities helps us to think about ‘what might happen?’, then the second contingency planning question – ‘what are we going to do about it?’ – will largely be determined by the role and resources of the National Society and other components of the Movement. This is most important when undertaking the detailed planning explained in the next chapter (‘Develop’).

Two of the most vital elements in understanding this are:

- capacity analysis
- resource identification.

It is crucially important that information on capacities and resources is accurate and trustworthy – since this will be the basis for identifying weaknesses and gaps, as well as for making the best use of existing resources. Existing capacities can be strengthened in a strategic manner, to best meet anticipated needs during a likely disaster.

Once potential emergency needs have been identified, it will become clear how best to allocate existing resources and which additional ones might be required. While there is no simple formula or complete checklist to assist in analysing capacities and identifying resources, for the purposes of Red Cross Red Crescent planning, five categories can be identified:

- community-level capacities and resources, including participatory approaches targeting various segments of the population, as well as the public and private sectors
- national and branch-level Red Cross Red Crescent capacities and resources
- regional and international institutional capacities and resources, including readiness to request and receive resources from within the Movement
- external institutional capacities and resources
- agreements with other partners.

Responding to an emergency requires resources, and the contingency plan must take into account different levels of preparedness. Consideration should therefore be given to the following:

- What resources are already available and in what quantities, for how many people and for how long?
- How can community resources and capacities be strengthened and increased?
- Which staff and volunteers can be brought in from other programmes during an emergency?
- What resources will be needed that are not currently available?
- What plans exist for procuring required resources?
- What plans and preparations exist for receiving and managing international assistance?

Summary of steps for analysis of hazards, vulnerabilities and risks

1. **Review secondary data** – including studies and analyses of hazards and threats, vulnerabilities and risks prepared by technical or scientific institutions, universities and/or other organizations with a presence in the area (see Risk reference framework above).
2. Ensure that the institution has the **technical capacity** and appropriate experience to carry out the risk analysis required for the disaster response or contingency plan. To help with this, collaboration could be established with technical/scientific institutions and universities. Sister societies and the IFRC can often provide technical support and share reference tools.
3. Carry out an **analysis of hazards**, starting with available information on past emergencies, and taking into account probability, frequency, location, magnitude and potential impact. Do not rely only on historical data. Expertise from external agencies may be useful in understanding these factors.
4. Analyse the **vulnerability** level of those exposed to a potential hazard or threat. Support this, when possible, with indicators measuring the five main components of vulnerability: livelihood, well-being, self-protection, social protection and government protection.
5. Carry out a **risk analysis**, combining hazards/threats and vulnerabilities. Create maps highlighting areas at risk. Define and prioritize geographic zones to assist with the development of possible scenarios.

A good risk analysis may require resources and technical capacity not available within the Red Cross Red Crescent. To achieve a realistic analysis, it is important to seek advice from and collaborate with governmental technical agencies, scientific institutions, universities and other specialized organizations

The 'Well-prepared National Societies' (WPNS) assessment tool can help also in identifying the existing capacities and resources of a National Society.

7. Developing scenarios

The previous sections of this chapter on 'analyse' focus on the development of scenarios. All contingency planning is based on a scenario of some sort, i.e., an informed guess of what the potential disaster might look like. The word scenario derives from 'scene' – in effect, it is like storytelling.

For the purposes of contingency planning, the more accurate the scenario, the better prepared the organization is likely to be. As with all such exercises, however, there are opportunity costs in developing long and complicated scenarios – the most important part of the exercise is not the scenario, but the plan! Sometimes it is tempting to become so involved in developing a good scenario that it is possible to forget the real goal – a plan, and a set of actions that allow an organization to be prepared.

As we have seen from previous sections of this chapter, an organization's response to a disaster is defined by the hazard itself, the way that impacts on the

vulnerability of the population and the capacity and resources the organization has to respond to need. The three elements that define our scenario then are:

- hazard
- vulnerability
- capacity and resource.

There are several methods for developing scenarios and an excellent resource for those wishing to examine this in depth is Richard Choularton's review of practice.⁷ For the purposes of this guide, we recommend using the very simple formula of best case, most likely and worst case. This is used by the UN in their annual appeal process and has the advantage of forcing organizations to think of scenarios that might be beyond their agencies' immediate capacities.

Whilst capacity and resource are important variables in defining the response, they should not limit the thinking of what might be. In imagining the extent of a disaster, it is important to 'think the unthinkable'. For example, what will happen if, as so tragically happened in the 2010 Haiti Earthquake, government is heavily affected including emergency medical and rescue services?

Some of the most important elements for developing a scenario are:

- numbers of people affected
- priority humanitarian needs (this usually changes with time)
- demographics, vulnerability
- geography, access, logistical considerations
- scale of the response (community, government, aid agencies)
- functioning of markets, socio-political dimensions, resources.

Figure 7: Example of the best/most likely/worst-case scenario tool reproduced from Choularton

Scenario	Drought	Flood	Earthquakes
Best	No drought	Normal seasonal flooding	Earthquakes measuring 4.5 on the Richter Scale causing some minor damage in rural areas
Middle or most likely	Moderate drought affecting one part of the country	Major flood affecting 100,000 people	Earthquakes measuring 6.5 on the Richter Scale causing some major damage in rural areas, including some medium-sized towns
Worst	Severe drought affecting large areas of the country	Extreme flood affecting 1,000,000 including people in the capital city	Earthquakes measuring 8.0 on the Richter Scale with an epicentre in a major city causing catastrophic damage

Whether a National Society develops all three scenarios – best, most likely and worst – depends on time and resources available. In practice, the two most important are 'most likely' and 'worst case'. If the point of planning is to ensure that routines, structures and capacities are in place should a disaster happen, then a (relatively) safe theory is that capacity to respond to the most likely scenario will also cover the best-case scenario.

⁷ Choularton, R (2007). *Contingency planning and humanitarian action: a review of practice*. ODI, London, UK.

Another way of thinking about the best/most likely/worst-case scenario is in terms of the levels of the organization that can respond. Table 1 (below) illustrates this.

Table 1: Which level of the organization can respond to which scenario?

Scenario	Level
Best case	Branch
Most likely case	National
Worst case	International (zone and global)

This type of planning can help identify actions at each level and also the potential triggers for alerting the next level, and preparation actions.

Whilst this simple method can help in the majority of cases, Choularton outlines several other ways to develop more complex scenarios. The summary table below shows these in brief. For a more detailed description the guide can be found at the web link mentioned above (see page 5).

Figure 8: Some other scenario-building methods and their advantages

Approach	Advantages	Best use
Best, most likely and worst case approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a basis for planning for different scales of problem • Easy to understand and discuss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for a single situation • When scenario development involves many actors
Augmentation approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for planning for situations which increase in magnitude over time • Easy to build plans which allow expansion of operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement situations (Internally displaced persons and refugees)
Timeline approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows planners to adapt operations over time while a crisis evolves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When rapid-onset crises occur, response needs can change very rapidly in the initial days and weeks
Operationally representative approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for a greater focus on operations • Can be used to develop more flexible plans • Can be used to identify preparedness actions that help in multiple situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situations that are difficult to predict

There is an art in creating scenarios that are sufficient for good planning but not too time-consuming and difficult. The best are reliable, without being too detailed or too complicated.

3. Develop

This chapter sets out the detailed process of writing a contingency plan⁸, and outlines some of the key components⁹.

- **Introduction**
- **Strategy, goal and objectives: This will normally be about the number of people involved and what areas of response are required technically and geographically**
- **Activation of the plan**
- **Management: Internal management structure, human resources (including volunteers), assessment, logistics, communications, resource mobilization (including the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund – DREF), media and information**
- **Coordination: Movement (including international and regional disaster-management tools), government, external. Includes humanitarian reform and cluster responsibilities**
- **Quality and accountability: Standards; principles of response.**

1. Introduction

Contingency planning has three components: an estimate of what is going to happen, a plan based on this estimate looking at what the response should be, and a series of actions to help be prepared. This chapter looks at the second part of the formula – **what the organization is going to do in response to the disaster**. At the simplest level, this sets out who is going to do what, when and where, and what they will need to enable them to do this.

2. Strategy, goal and objectives

As with any programme or project, the starting point is deciding what you want to achieve. What are the needs to be addressed, and what can the IFRC do to address these needs? What are the range of approaches to be adopted – direct implementation, partnership, advocacy; how will the balance of efforts and focus change as the needs and response evolves? What will the IFRC do in the first week of the disaster, in the relief phase and beyond that into recovery? How much external capacity and resource will the National Society have to call on from Movement partners globally?

⁸ Please refer to Annex 1 for a sample of a contingency plan format.

⁹ Please also refer to the workshop package that accompanies this guide which can be found at <https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/our-federation/secretariat-offices/asia-pacific/what-we-do/disaster-management/disaster-management-planning/contingency-planning/>

Standard programme and project planning often tends to divide these questions into a hierarchy or ranking order, starting with the broad strategy and goals, breaking these down into a series of separate objectives and from there into a set of activities. This is usually based on a 'logical framework' and has more recently developed into 'results-based management'.

In most cases your national government has overall responsibility for disaster response. It is therefore important to define what the Red Cross Red Crescent's role will be – in particular, how it will participate and then coordinate within the sector, especially with the local community and others providing support.

For the purposes of contingency planning, some of the most important decisions and theories will be based on the scale of the response and the areas of intervention technically, geographically and over time.

The key to these decisions and assumptions will be the scale of the predicted response, as this will dictate the 'standing capacity' required, i.e., what is necessary to achieve a long-term solution. Even if it is not possible to maintain this capacity, it will almost certainly affect the initial focus of the real response. A good example of an overall objective is shown below, from the inter-agency contingency plan of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2009:

The overall objective of the contingency plan is to create a standing capacity of the IASC Country Team to support national response in the event of a major flood or typhoon by **providing safe water and sanitation, basic healthcare, food and access to education to 25,000 of the worst-affected families for at least three months.**

This objective clearly sets out the number of beneficiaries to be served and the areas in which IASC agencies aim to intervene.

Figure 9: The most relevant Red Cross Red Crescent service-delivery sectors (see Annex 2)

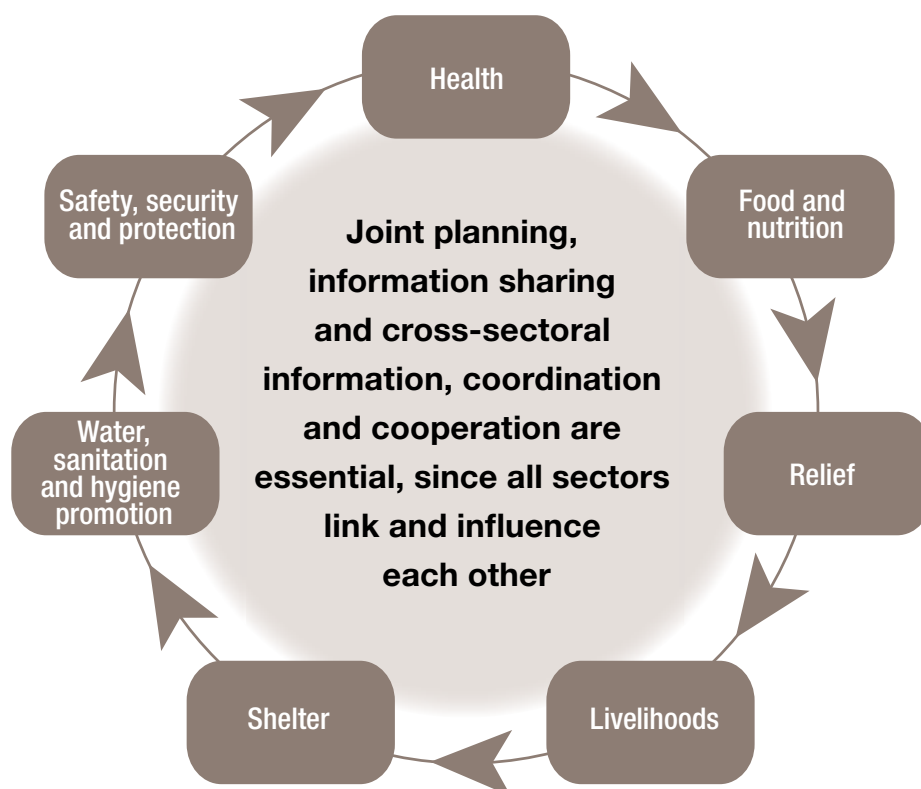
<p>Another area of operational strategy that is good to set out (or at least have carefully considered) in advance of a disaster is the broad types of intervention over time. For example, in its 2008 floods contingency plan the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society aims to be involved in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rapid assessment 2. Evacuation, rescue and first aid 3. Relief distribution 4. Recovery 5. Coordination 	<p>Often it is helpful to think about 'phases'.</p> <p>For example, the contingency plan of the Armenian Red Cross sets out actions in the first 24 hours, actions in the first week, and actions beyond the first week.</p> <p>Broadly, these phases can be thought of as immediate, relief and recovery although there are many variations on this formula.</p> <p>Of course needs will also evolve during this process, as will the role of the Red Cross Red Crescent. A good strategy will aim to anticipate the changing needs and role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency assessment • Rescue and medical assistance • Health services • Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion • Food and nutrition • Relief • Shelter • Cash interventions • Restoring family links • Protection, safety and security • Disasters laws/Legal checklist • Logistics and transport • IT and telecommunications • Communication and reporting • Monitoring and evaluation
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Sector responsibilities

In addition to thinking about the scale of the response, and the broad types of intervention over time, it is useful to consider in some detail the technical areas of response. Sector roles will vary from one National Society to another (see Figure 9).

While it is vital to ensure that all of these sectors are specifically addressed in the planning process, actual service delivery (by National Societies, the IFRC and external partners) will ultimately need to respond to individual and community needs in a holistic manner, drawing on the different sectors to provide relevant, appropriate and effective assistance. Primary focus should be placed on strengthening community capacities for relief and recovery, and establishing good cooperation among assisting agencies to ensure that all significant gaps are being addressed.

Figure 10: How the technical response areas link together



Cash-based approaches including recovery

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has become increasingly involved in cash transfer programming, mainly in recovery activities but also, more often, in relief operations. As with relief efforts, thinking ahead about what this might involve will allow National Societies to respond to recovery needs faster and better. All of the evidence shows that recovery starts early following a disaster – sometimes within the first few days – as people seek to rebuild shelter or start earning money.

Cash-based approaches have been proven to be excellent tools in recovery, and increasingly in relief. They allow people to choose what they need and so are an effective and efficient way of meeting multiple and diverse needs, whether that be to buy food, to prevent the sale of a productive asset or to continue to pay healthcare and school fees. Some simple preparation can be of great benefit in starting such programmes quickly; e.g., pre-arrangements with banks or mobile telephone companies (see also box "Questions to ask about early-warning systems" on p.39 of this guide). A new IFRC guide on recovery programming and cash-based approaches is available from the IFRC's secretariat.¹⁰

Disaster-management continuum

It is important that the entities involved in disaster management (e.g., response, preparedness for response, mitigation, risk reduction, etc.) are seen as being connected in contingency planning. As relief activities decrease, recovery and risk-reduction activities (disaster preparedness and mitigation) will increase. All of these elements of disaster management must support each other and none can be successfully implemented on their own.

3. Activation of the plan

Almost as essential as knowing what you are going to do in a response, is to know when you are going to do it. This small but important detail is crucial, and can save hours or even days. Every plan should have a small section outlining how the plan is to be activated, when and by whom.

4. Management

Management structure

In an emergency it is vital to know who is going to do what. The clearer the responsibilities and the decision-making processes are, the more likely a response will be effective.

National Societies and IFRC zones and delegations should aim to agree as much of this in advance as is practical. A brief description of the structure of the National Society, with relevant responsibilities and authority in the event of an emergency, is useful here. Important aspects of management to consider are:

- Who is responsible for authorizing or triggering a response and at what level?
- Who will be responsible for the overall operation?
- Who will manage the day-to-day operation (it may be the same person)?
- How will geographical and technical units be organized?
- What will the volunteer policy be?
- How will Movement coordination be managed?

An essential aspect of the management structure will be 'coordination' – with government, other relevant authorities, aid agencies and within the Movement. These latter aspects of coordination are covered in more detail later in this chapter.

¹⁰ See also International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Cash Transfer Programming Guidelines: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/PageFiles/52611/109000-CASHGUIDELINES-EN.pdf> and also ODI report produced in partnership with IFRC and CaLP: www.odihpn.org/report.asp?id=3218.

Human resources

Management, technical, logistical and administrative staff are vital to any response. Volunteers are the backbone of all Red Cross Red Crescent responses. Human resource capacity and management needs to be thought through clearly in advance. A common mistake in emergency response is failure to 'scale up' quickly enough. Very fast expansions of teams and organizations can also lead to chaos and confusion unless the proper systems and approaches are in place. For example, if the stated goal of the response strategy is to serve 30,000 families with first aid, clean water, shelter and relief items, then this will mean having enough first-aid teams, water engineers and shelter experts to manage this scale of response. Management, logistics and administration staff will also need to be in place.

A good plan should identify what resources are already available, what the additional needs might be and where any additional capacity would come from.

Assessment

In most cases, a comprehensive needs assessment should be done immediately after an emergency, and updated throughout the response and recovery phases. The needs assessment must be well planned and organized if it is to be effective.

It is important to know if sufficient staff and/or volunteers would be available to do an immediate emergency assessment. It is also necessary to ensure that staff and volunteers have been properly trained, so that common criteria, standards and indicators are used during assessments. Ideally, local volunteers in the most disaster-prone areas should be trained to carry out immediate damage and needs assessments. The guidelines for emergency assessment, published by the IFRC, as well as the Sphere standards available from the IFRC's secretariat and on FedNet, should be used for this purpose.

When planning for an emergency needs assessment at local, community or regional level, it is necessary to identify:

- Who is responsible for the assessment and when will it be carried out (e.g., immediately, after three days, two weeks, etc.)? Assessment teams should be made up of persons having various functions, and include specialists from several sectors.
- What information is required at each stage of the emergency?
- How and where will response teams be formed and trained?
- Is there a standard format for collecting data, and if so, is it readily available?
- What standards are being used to measure the severity of the emergency?
- What elements have been included in the assessment to facilitate early recovery?
- How will the impact of humanitarian aid be determined?
- How will beneficiary communities be involved in the process?

Programmes will be more effective and realistic if a reliable and comprehensive assessment has been done.

Logistics and transport

It is likely that transport of numerous staff, as well as large quantities of humanitarian aid and equipment, will be needed in a disaster. Therefore, logistics and transport issues are crucial to a successful response operation. The

following aspects of logistics and transport should be considered in national, regional or global-level planning:

- What are the principal and alternative aid delivery routes to anticipated disaster areas and affected populations?
- Where are available seaports and airports located, including relevant information concerning capacity and procedures?
- Have transportation modes (e.g., road, railway, air, etc.) and issues such as availability and cost been specified?
- What is the availability of fuel depots and service stations, and are there likely to be any limitations?
- What are the available stocks and what supplies will need to be immediately sourced?
- Have agreements been developed with suppliers to speed up the procurement process?
- Has adequate warehousing been identified? Are there stock control systems that can be quickly put in place?
- What level of cooperation exists with the governmental office or ministry responsible for customs clearance of incoming goods? Has agreement been reached with appropriate governmental structures to ensure priority conditions are provided for the import of humanitarian aid?

IT and telecommunications

Continuous and effective communications between the various components of the Movement are vital to the success of any emergency operation. For radio communications, it is essential to list the relevant radio frequencies in the disaster-response or contingency plan. The plan should also specify who will manage, maintain and control access to the radio equipment. The following should be considered when planning nationally, regionally or globally:

- What is the national communications infrastructure (connectivity, types of telecommunications, coverage, etc.)?
- What is the national legislation with regard to the use and importation of various types of IT and telecommunications equipment – particularly in an emergency situation?
- What communications equipment do you anticipate needing (such as mobile phones/mobile internet, radios, satellite telephones/bgan/v-sat)?
- Have radio frequencies and channels been identified and agreed?

Resource mobilization

In the first hours of an emergency it is important to secure resources so the rest of the plan can be put into action. The Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a powerful tool for enabling response action and should be immediately considered. The IFRC's DREF represents a pool of un-earmarked money that can be used to guarantee immediate funding in response to emergencies. The fund is managed by the IFRC's secretariat and is a valuable part of the organization's overall disaster response capacity.

When initial information from a disaster-stricken country indicates that resources from partner National Societies and other donors will be required to meet the needs of the people and of the host National Society, an emergency appeal may be launched. This can be based on the initial assessment and/or information available, as well as on disaster and response history of the given country and overall knowledge of the type of disaster. The initial appeal is often preliminary and is followed by updates within days or weeks, when more information becomes available directly from the field.

Media and information

The importance of public communication cannot be stressed enough. To enable the IFRC to act as the focal point for information about a disaster, National Societies should immediately inform the organization of any major disaster, the extent of damage incurred and what direct action is being taken. Timely input to the Disaster-Management Information Systems (DMIS) must be made to alert the wider disaster-management community, particularly if the scale of an emergency requires international assistance.

The mapping section within the IFRC secretariat's Disaster and Crisis Management Department can quickly produce maps to assist in the disaster-response or contingency planning process. These can be made available through the DMIS for sharing with National Societies and Red Cross Red Crescent disaster managers. Geographical information systems (GIS) mapping and satellite imagery is also a resource that should be explored with government, academic and scientific community partners.

Questions to consider when developing national, regional or global plans include:

- What will the public information strategy be?
- Can the current staff handle the likely influx of journalists and anticipated media demands, or should additional staff be recruited?
- Can the current staff provide timely inputs for information bulletins, operational reports and appeals to donors or should reporting staff be recruited?
- How should media relations be coordinated?
- What will the information strategy be for the target population – within the International Red Cross Red and Crescent Movement? For donors? For other agencies?

5. Coordination

Coordination is key to successful disaster response, and is essential in enabling the scaling-up of resources. Coordination takes place at different levels and in various forms. Good coordination is crucial for combining resources effectively and efficiently, in order to assist the disaster-affected more rapidly with a well-organized operation. For the Red Cross Red Crescent, the two main areas of coordination are internal (within the Movement) and external.

The Movement's Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief outlines responsibilities with regard to coordination. The main points to consider are:

- It is the National Societies' auxiliary role and therefore obligation to coordinate with government.
- Red Cross Red Crescent – at both national and international levels – should consider assistance being provided by other national and international organizations.
- National Societies may have to respond to disasters that are beyond their capacities, and should therefore make preparations for receiving and managing international assistance provided by the IFRC.
- National Societies should make agreements on future mutual assistance in the event of disaster, with sister societies from neighbouring countries.

- The IFRC shall endeavour to negotiate pre-disaster agreements with National Societies from the most disaster-prone countries, aimed at enhancing national disaster-preparedness activities.

Internal (Movement) coordination

The key responsibilities for coordination within the Movement in international disasters are outlined in the IFRC's constitution, the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief and the Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures. It is very important in contingency planning to consider the role of any given component of the Movement for different disaster scenarios and to refer to the relevant policy and/or agreements as a guide.

Although no two disasters are the same, there are common scenarios that will require putting in place specific coordination mechanisms to manage the international response. The two scenarios described below also apply to regional (cross-border) disasters:

- A natural disaster occurs in a non-conflict area and is beyond the capacity of the affected National Society. The Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief is the guiding policy to be followed to enable an effective response by the IFRC and its members. The Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures should be followed concerning coordination responsibilities.
- A natural disaster occurs in a conflict area where ICRC is operational. The Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures are to be followed to determine who is responsible for carrying out disaster response/emergency relief and what action is to be taken regarding coordination with other Movement partners. Where the IFRC has responsibility, the Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief acts as the guiding policy.

IFRC Preparedness and Response Tools

Some of the key and better-known preparedness and response tools of the IFRC are listed below:

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)

This facility provides emergency funding to support National Societies in relief operations. DREF allocations are provided to start-up operations in major disasters and are reimbursed when sufficient funding has been received. Allocations may be made as grants to provide support to smaller or less-visible emergencies, or in preparedness for potential disasters.

Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRT)

These teams are made up of highly qualified disaster-management and technical experts in different areas of humanitarian work drawn from National Societies. They are selected and trained to Federation standards to be an additional response for National Societies facing emergencies and in need of additional, expert human resource (activated on request).

Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT)

This team consists of a core group of experienced disaster managers from the National Societies and the IFRC. They are on call to be mobilized within 12 to 24 hours' notice for two to four weeks anywhere in the world to assist National Societies with major emergency responses.

Emergency Response Units (ERU)

Each ERU forms a standardized 'package' of staff and equipment held by National Societies, ready to be called on at short notice at times of disaster. Currently these units include logistics, relief, IT and telecommunications, water and sanitation, basic healthcare and referral hospital. The ERUs are self-sufficient for one month and can be deployed for up to four months.

Disaster Management Information System (DMIS)

This is the main IFRC information management platform for disasters. Data on coordination, delivery of relief assistance, beneficiary involvement, marketing and external relations, monitoring and evaluation is posted in real-time.

Better Programming Initiative (BPI)

This is an impact assessment tool developed by the IFRC and adapted from the Local Capacities for Peace Project. It aims to support local capacities for recovery and reconciliation in communities affected by violence.

The Well-Prepared National Society (WPNS)

The WPNS is a global checklist for disaster preparedness in a Red Cross and Red Crescent country context. National Societies use it to assess and plan capacity building in disaster preparedness. It offers an international baseline and gives opportunities for benchmarking and comparison on a regional and global level.

Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA)

This is a basic process used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies in relation to disaster management. The nature of VCA is flexible and needs to be used in line with the objectives that a National Society has for undertaking an assessment.

National Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanisms

The NDPRM guidelines are aimed towards enabling the National Societies to better: a) develop their capacity in disaster preparedness and response, b) ensure that their work meets a global set of disaster preparedness and response standards and c) coordinate their approaches with other National Societies and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Response Preparedness Matrix

The response preparedness matrix, which is a work in progress, provides disaster-management practitioners with a consolidated list of response preparedness priorities at different levels and explores the linkages in order to put an efficient preparedness mechanism in place.

A number of coordination activities apply to both the most likely and worst-case scenarios mentioned above and should be included in disaster-response and contingency planning, to enable a consistent Red Cross Red Crescent response:

- Coordination meetings – plan to hold regular meetings with Movement partners to determine activities and roles
- Identification of Red Cross Red Crescent resources and competencies
- Information management – information-sharing on disaster impact, assessment and needs through input into the DMIS
- Communication means – plan for continuous information and communication flow
- Movement coordination frameworks – plan for strategic and operational coordination
- Partnership agreements – identify existing agreements; determine additional agreements required to meet needs
- Legal status agreements – specify the legal status of the National Society and the IFRC delegation in the country
- Movement coordinators – operational tools such as DREF, FACT, ERU and DMIS
- Training and orientation – ensure individuals react appropriately in the given situation according to coordinated roles.

The above bullet-point items are explained in greater detail in the IFRC Handbook – Coordination of International Disaster Response, 2007.

External coordination

In contingency planning, it is also necessary to take account of the capacities and resources of institutions and organizations external to the Movement. Their presence and responsibilities in certain sectors or geographical areas are highly relevant to the disaster-response or contingency plan.

These agencies or institutions can be categorized into three broad groups, according to their mission, role and area of responsibility:

- national governmental institutions (e.g., civil defence, ministry of health, national disaster-management offices, military, etc.)
- national or international NGOs (e.g., CARE, Oxfam, MSF, faith-based, etc.)
- multilateral and/or bilateral cooperation organizations (e.g., UN agencies, the IOM, ECHO, ASEAN, USAID, DFID, international/regional military, etc.). The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is the UN-mandated organization for coordination in such situations.

It is not necessary to carry out an exhaustive analysis of each of these groups, but rather to indicate which may potentially have an important role during the response to a disaster. The table below provides a list of institutions and organizations to take into consideration.

Figure 11: Types of organizations to consider in coordination arrangements

Type of institution	Examples
Governmental coordination and disaster-response entities (both in the affected country and in other countries)	Emergency management services/civil protection. Most countries have a national response committee, task force or council with which the Red Cross Red Crescent should seek to engage and coordinate. An affected country's military will, in many cases, play an active role.
Relief and rescue organizations (both in the affected country and in other countries)	Fire and ambulance services, police, national military, search and rescue groups, etc.
Relevant ministries whose areas of responsibility coincide with National Society programmes	Ministries of health, education and the interior, meteorological and geological offices, etc.
Inter-governmental and regional organizations for coordination in emergency interventions	NATO, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), etc.
UN agencies with programmes or activities in the prioritized areas or those with which the Movement has a history of collaboration	UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, WHO, UNDP, OCHA, etc.
National NGOs with a presence and programmes in a particular area	NGOs specialized in health, food security, shelter, water and sanitation, etc.
NGOs with similar or complementary missions or programmes to those of the National Society, and with common donors or a history of close cooperation	OXFAM, Save the Children, CARITAS, CARE, MSF, etc.
Projects with a significant impact in areas prioritized by the response/contingency plan	World Bank, IADB, etc.
Other public or private organizations of relevance	Academic and research centres.

United Nations partners

To ensure that international resources are used in the best possible way to benefit disaster-affected populations, the IFRC must actively engage in international coordination. Since 1994, the IFRC has had observer status at the UN General Assembly. At field level, this has resulted in active collaboration with UN partners during emergency-response operations. The current model in this

regard is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) country teams. These teams are composed of NGOs, the Red Cross Red Crescent and UN agencies, and make up the forum where these organizations meet to agree on preparedness and response.

The UN plays a major role in the coordination of international response during emergencies. It is therefore essential for the Red Cross Red Crescent to coordinate with UN agencies, whilst taking into account the specific mandate and principles of the Movement. It is important to be aware of how UN partners work, in implementing disaster-response or contingency plans at the local, regional or global levels. Ideally, National Societies and IFRC delegations should have working relationships with UN agencies in their country or, at least, clear awareness of the scope of their work. It is worth noting that the IFRC has an increasing number of agreements in place with individual UN agencies within various sectors of humanitarian response.

Humanitarian reform and the cluster system

Since 2005, a major reform has taken place in the way in which international humanitarian assistance is coordinated. The most critical part of this change is the 'cluster' system, whereby operational agencies – mostly the UN but also the IFRC and NGOs – take on responsibility for the coordination of key sectors of humanitarian response. The following table, reproduced from www.humanitarianreform.org, sets out the situation for the principal global cluster groups at the date of writing.

Table 2: Principal global cluster groups at publication date (these are subject to frequent change)

Cluster	Coordinator(s)
Camp coordination and camp management	UNHCR, IOM
Early recovery	UNDP
Education	UNICEF, Save the Children
Emergency shelter	UNHCR, IFRC
Emergency telecommunications	WFP
Food security	WFP, FAO
Health	WHO
Logistics	WFP
Nutrition	UNICEF
Protection	UNHCR, UN-HABITAT, UNMAS, IDLO, UNDP
Water, sanitation and hygiene	UNICEF

These global clusters, together with their partners, are supposed to provide the following types of support to strengthen field response:

- technical surge capacity (e.g., camp management and coordination staff, early recovery advisors, logistics response teams, health emergency and assessment response teams)

- trained experts to lead cluster coordination at the field level
- increased stockpiles, some pre-positioned within regions (e.g., emergency shelter materials)
- standardized technical tools, including for information management
- agreement on common methods and formats for needs assessments, monitoring, and benchmarking
- best practices and lessons learned from field tests.

It is important to note that while the IFRC has clearly not taken on all of the obligations of the cluster system, it will nevertheless be expected to lead on shelter issues where the response is of a certain scale. National Societies, delegations and zones need to factor this into contingency planning.¹¹

Pre-existing agreements

The IFRC's secretariat works closely with its member National Societies and with the ICRC; it also collaborates on behalf of its membership with many other organizations, in order to carry out the IFRC's work more effectively. For example, the IFRC's secretariat has developed working agreements with a wide range of international partners, focusing on the priorities set out in Strategy 2010 (i.e., disaster preparedness, disaster response, health and care in the community, and the promotion of principles and values). The following link shows the current active agreements within all core areas at the regional and global levels: <http://procurement.ifrc.org/en/frameworkagreements/Pages/Introduction.aspx>.

Cross-border coordination

Sometimes risks or disasters are not restricted to one country, or may impact on another due to factors such as proximity or historical links. In developing a contingency plan, it is important to contact and involve National Society or delegation counterparts in neighbouring countries. Plans should include cross-border analyses of political events and their potential impact on the population, as well as the identification of particular vulnerabilities in border areas. Consider various scenarios (e.g., most likely, worst possible), and carry out simulations for cross-border response.

In cases of civil unrest, it is essential to take into account any security implications and plan accordingly to ensure the safety of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers and staff during the response phase. Clear communication lines between countries and within the National Society should be set out in the plans, and necessary telecommunications compatibility should be ensured in advance.

Regional and international coordination

The IFRC has the responsibility of establishing and maintaining contacts with relevant regional entities. These could include regional offices of ECHO, regional development banks (IADB, Asian Development Bank, etc.), and regional entities (e.g., ASEAN, African Union, CEPREDENAC, etc.). This should be done as part of an overall coordination policy to ensure contacts are in place and can be called upon when the National Society or delegation is preparing a disaster-response or contingency plan. The IASC's Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines have been specifically created to help in developing inter-agency contingency plans and should be used when doing so.

¹¹ More information about how the IFRC is doing its role as organizer of the Shelter Cluster can be found at: www.sheltercluster.org and on FedNet: <https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources-and-services/disasters/shelter/>.

Coordination within the Movement should also take place at this level when creating contingency plans. It is essential that international and regional support is linked and provides mutual back-up. Also, this must be in line with a National Society's own plans, so that such support provides added value and does not get in the way of the national response during emergencies.

6. Quality and accountability

These guidelines aim to provide advice and suggestions to help disaster managers produce contingency plans of high quality, relevance and usefulness. This is not only because disaster response falls within the mandate of National Societies; it is also an obligation to the people most in need of Red Cross Red Crescent assistance and whose lives depend on it during times of crisis.

There are several quality and accountability initiatives

- Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP)
- Code of Conduct
- Sphere
- People in Aid Code
- Quality Compass
- Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP)
- Emergency Capacity Building (ECB) Project's Good Enough Guide

Contingency plans need to include a commitment towards a defined and measurable level of competence and delivery. There is a need to understand the effective use of quality and accountability tools and beneficiary participation is critical in all stages of programming. A lack of time or ignorance of standards is not an excuse for neglecting quality and accountability issues.

Accountability implies that affected populations must be involved in the planning, implementing and evaluating of disaster-preparedness, response and recovery efforts. In specific terms, accountability can be achieved through transparency, participation, evaluation and complaints management. Accountability also means that there are standards to which individuals and organizations can be held accountable.

Broadly, Red Cross Red Crescent organizations can be accountable to the following (depending on context and legal framework):

- the affected population
- the community more widely
- government and local authorities
- governance of the National Society including staff and volunteers
- the wider Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- donors
- the humanitarian sector.

Standards and accountability, Issues to remember in disaster response

Assessment

Include questions of access, awareness and understanding about the fundamental principles, Sphere, the code of conduct, the Seville Agreement, and gender and broader protection issues in the initial assessment. Plan programme activities accordingly, with a view to promoting and improving these aspects.

Access to information

Obtain enough handbooks of the various tools and guidelines, so that people have access to the information when they need it. Translate any of these tools into local languages to further their understanding and use.

Training

Conduct basic and refresher training for existing staff using materials available in local languages. Arrange training on these tools for any new staff and volunteers.

Advocacy

Communicate the need to follow the standards and the importance of the fundamental principles, the code of conduct, the Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures and the Principles and Rules for Disaster Relief within the Red Cross Red Crescent, as well as the government and other local partners. Document and report on work with tools such as Sphere, in order to demonstrate their application and encourage further donor support.

Monitoring

Monitor observance of standards and principles and identify areas that need further work. Note that the indicators from the 'Characteristics of a Well-prepared National Society' (WPNS), Sphere and the principles in the code of conduct can be used within a project-monitoring plan.

Evaluation

Evaluate adherence to WPNS, Sphere standards and the code of conduct, and identify lessons learned and areas for future improvement. The Sphere project website provides some good examples on how to use the code of conduct in project evaluation.

Monitoring and evaluation

Once initial assistance has been provided to the affected population, it is essential to ensure that aid has reached beneficiaries as planned, that it has had the predicted impact and that no unmet needs have been missed. Monitoring and evaluating implementation of the plan of action – both the response as a whole, and individual programmes – is a key part of disaster response and an important accountability mechanism. The following should be taken into account when creating contingency plans at the national, regional or global levels:

- What level of monitoring and evaluation will be needed?
- Which areas will need monitoring within each sector?
- What tools will be necessary to carry out monitoring and evaluation (e.g., forms, checklists, reporting formats, etc.)?
- How will issues arising from monitoring and evaluation be addressed?
- How will the necessary staff and volunteers be identified and trained?
- How will beneficiary communities be involved throughout the process?

4. Implement

- **Introduction**
- **Preparedness gap analysis and action plans**
- **Standard operating procedures (SOP)**
- **Early warning, alert systems and triggers**
- **Logistics and programme readiness**
- **Human resources**
- **Resource mobilization**
- **Training and simulation**
- **Linkages and communications**

1. Introduction

Contingency planning is about being prepared. These guidelines have explored how to think about what to be prepared for, and how to plan so that a possible response can be more effective. This chapter looks at how certain parts of that plan could be put into place immediately, answering the third question posed at the beginning, 'What can we do ahead of time to get prepared?' This is also often dependent on a 'gap analysis', or 'preparedness gap analysis'.

One of the best ways of testing a plan is to try it out. This is covered under simulation later in this chapter. It is worth pointing out in the introduction that people learn by doing – reading plans that consist of hundreds of pages is often very overwhelming, so having a role play or practice – where people get to see what they have to do – is often fun, and people will remember much better what they have to do. Practising the plan, whether in a complicated way or just in a 'table top' exercise, **will help organizations and communities understand its main elements, and will help planners see what works and what doesn't.**

2. Preparedness gap analysis and action plans

Having developed our scenarios, and put together a plan about what we might do in these scenarios, it is necessary to ensure we are prepared to deliver the plan! This means – as much as possible, resources allowing – having the right structures, people, equipment and agreements in place. Knowing what we will do is half the battle – having the people and the equipment in place to do it is the other half. Whilst this may sound too difficult, in fact quite often National

Societies will have much of the capacity needed. Sometimes it is simply a question of identifying what we have, how we will use it and then we can work out what else is needed. This can be called a 'gap analysis'. Annex 3 gives a useful format for carrying this out (the Well-Prepared National Society exercise is another) but, at its simplest, it is about having an inventory of your resources and matching these to the ones needed to carry out the plan.

Preparedness Gap Analysis = Required Preparedness Measure – Existing Preparedness Capacity

The preparedness gap analysis should result in a preparedness 'action plan' that sets out what needs to be done to be ready to respond. This action plan should be separate to the contingency plan, or perhaps an annex. Where possible, this should have a checklist of actions for those in key positions within the National Society to implement. Some of the elements of the action plan are set out below.

3. Standard operating procedures (SOP)

These are a set of standard procedures that 'operationalize' the contingency plan when it is triggered. The purpose of SOPs is to ensure that certain tasks are carried out in a specific way by key people or units in the event of the disaster actually happening. SOPs are a way to make sure that tasks specified in the contingency plan are carried out quickly and according to pre-agreed criteria. SOPs are the link between plans and the actual operational response. In other words, SOPs specify the way in which individuals or units are to carry out their functions under the plan – e.g., alerting and mobilizing national disaster-response teams (NDRT), deploying assessment teams and carrying out the assessment process. The SOPs set out what should be done, how it should be done, who is responsible for implementing what, and specifies available resources.

SOPs must:

- be simple and easy to understand (preferably in a checklist format)
- be able to stand on their own
- clearly indicate how a task is to be done, who is responsible for ensuring that it is done and who actually performs it
- be approved and distributed within the organization, and used in training
- include the use of flow charts to help in visualizing the entire body of response-related SOPs or the specific SOPs relating to a particular sector.

SOPs should specify the responsibilities and contact details of:

- the emergency response focal point
- team members at each operational level and individuals in charge of:
 - activating response services
 - communicating with headquarters
 - managing external relations and appeals for external aid (including governmental, international and funds from the public)
 - communicating with the media
 - coordinating and liaising with other agencies and services
 - managing administrative work.

4. Early warning, alert systems and triggers

Closely linked to SOPs is early warning. If SOPs are the practical actions to be taken as soon as there is notification of a disaster, then it is imperative to get good information quickly about the incidence of disaster.

The contingency planning process should determine how the population is to be warned of emergencies, and identify those responsible for notifying others. Systems should be put into place in coordination with organizations that monitor disasters (e.g., governmental, meteorological, scientific and other) to ensure that Red Cross Red Crescent branches, offices and delegations are on their notification and activation lists. In addition, there are a number of meteorological and earthquake centres which monitor and report on disasters. The IFRC's DMIS provides links to some of these global monitoring centres.

Questions to ask about early-warning systems

- Has the National Society developed an early-warning procedure with meteorological, geological or other scientific institutions with expertise in the area?
- Has the IFRC established an early-warning procedure with regional meteorological, geological or other scientific institutions?
- Has the National Society and IFRC office or regional delegation established a procedure to provide information to the DMIS?
- Have the local Red Cross Red Crescent branches established early-warning information procedures with their national headquarters?

In cases where the authorities do not have adequate systems in place to notify the public of an impending disaster, the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society may set up local networks to both receive and act on warnings, thereby raising community awareness of potential risks and appropriate actions.

5. Logistics and programme readiness

To be ready to respond in the first hours following a disaster it is vital to have functioning logistics. This means supplies need to be mobilized or sourced, transport needs to be arranged, and IT and communications need to be in place. In implementing the plan, there are actions that can be taken in advance. These include:

- sourcing and storage of standby stocks
- identification and preparation of adequate warehousing and stock control measures
- pre-agreements with suppliers put in place and market analysis
- readiness of vehicles and fleets
- preparation and storage of rapid deployment equipment
- readiness of IT and communications equipment.

The degree to which these actions can be carried out will of course depend on the resources available. The IFRC keeps stocks in regional zones that can also be rapidly accessed in times of acute emergency (e.g., in Panama, Kuala Lumpur and Dubai).

Another important aspect of programme readiness is **business continuity planning**, enabling the National Society to continue functioning. Global guidelines on this can be obtained from the IFRC's secretariat.

Cash-based approaches and contingency planning

Preparing for cash-based programming is a good example of practical actions that can be taken ahead of time to get prepared which do not cost a lot of money. Cash transfers are increasingly becoming the tool of choice for early recovery and have been used very successfully in some relief situations too.

Harvey P. and Bailey S., in their Good Practice Review of cash transfer programming in emergencies, outline a number of measures that can be taken in advance to prepare for this kind of work – “pre-established mechanisms in place for delivering cash”. These range from the straightforward to the more complicated. A list of some of these in order of ease is shown below:

- discussions with banks, mobile phone companies, cash-carrying companies, insurance companies or other possible partners
- draft agreements with banks and local traders
- design of vouchers and beneficiary cards in advance
- a coordinated response strategy between central and local governments, donors and implementing agencies.

6. Human resources

In the previous chapter we have already identified human resources as one of the critical elements of a timely response. Being able to get the right people in place quickly for the response is key. Many National Societies have implemented innovative surge arrangements to ensure the correct technical and administrative staff can be mobilized at short notice. In developing the contingency plan it will be obvious where key staff needs are; actions to fill these gaps can range from rosters to agreements with partners to maintaining standing emergency teams such as the NDRT.

7. Resource mobilization

Securing resources for contingency planning can be difficult; securing resources for putting the plans into action even more so. Nevertheless, limited resources are available from within the IFRC (the DREF has been used for contingency planning), as well as from external donors such as ECHO. Even without significant resources, it is worth planning, because even some basic actions can help in the event of actual response (e.g., just having a list of the correct phone numbers within the list of key contacts can make a major difference at times of emergencies!). Similarly, there are actions that can be taken that are not very

expensive, such as setting up pre-agreements with suppliers and transporters, customs arrangements and volunteer training.

Examples of some preparedness actions

- Provide xxx supplies and xxx equipment (such as xxx) for all health centres in districts that are most vulnerable to cholera to ensure that a standing treatment capacity of 5,000 cases is in place.
- Purchase additional stocks of food commodities (e.g., maize, vegetable oil, etc.) as a contingency stock for immediate distribution.
- Map the locations of nutrition rehabilitation centres and supplementary feeding centres and general food distribution points in all flood-prone areas.
- Obtain additional seeds and agricultural inputs as a contingency stock for immediate distribution in case of flooding.
- Identify, stock and pre-position tents and other items for flood-prone areas for community and household use.
- Identify and upgrade the existing capacity of water and sanitation structures in areas likely to temporarily host displaced people.
- Procure school materials, as well as teaching and learning kits, for rapid distribution.
- Upgrade or modify the logistics centre in xxx and improve the roof conditions of the warehouse.
- Install a back-up generator for telecommunications system in case of electricity failure.

8. Training and simulation

Training and awareness of disaster-response and contingency plans

The contingency planning process will be effective only if those who provide response services and those who receive assistance know what to do and what to expect before, during and after an emergency. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies involved in response operations need to inform people in high-risk areas about official disaster-response plans. They also need to educate the population about basic measures they can take to reduce the impact of a potential disaster.

The disaster-response or contingency plan should:

- Identify disaster-preparedness measures that can be taken at individual and community levels.
- Specify how the local population will be notified in the event of an emergency, and ways in which people can volunteer to support the response.
- Tap into local knowledge and include this information in community preparedness and disaster-response plans (this is what makes the Red Cross Red Crescent a truly community-based volunteer organization).

It is family, neighbours and members of the local community who are always the first to arrive on the scene when a disaster occurs. For this reason, educating those whose lives or homes might be at risk during a disaster is a critical part of disaster-response and contingency planning, as is the recruitment and retention of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers. Such education or awareness-raising may take the forms described below.

Public awareness, education and training

Through a variety of public education programmes, those threatened by a potential disaster will learn about what to expect and what they will be asked to do, or how they may participate in times of emergency. At the same time, those conducting public education programmes should also gather feedback from the local population about potential problems or gaps that may exist in the plan. The community has a natural understanding of its own risks, resources and capacities. In the field of disaster management, it is important to remember that education is a two-way process. For example, if a group does not fully understand the warning sequences in a particular plan, then these may require adjustment or reworking.

Specific disaster-response training

Training should be designed for an adult population, specifically focusing on Red Cross Red Crescent disaster-response training for both staff and volunteers. Some National Societies offer training in specific sectors such as damage or needs assessment, shelter, relief, community-based disaster-preparedness, emergency healthcare, etc. Many of these training sources can be found on FedNet, under the disaster-management resources framework. Training courses might also target other community-based organizations likely to provide critical services in the event of a disaster, even if that is not their current mandate. Training a pool of local outreach workers in high-risk areas will help to ensure that larger segments of the population have the relevant skills and information to act as immediate-response providers, prior to or during an emergency.

It is important to link or connect all training within the Movement, in order to ensure coordinated scaling-up from a local to a global level. For example, national disaster-response team (NDRT) training complements regional disaster-response team (RDRT) training, which in turn complements global training initiatives for emergency response units (ERU) or field assessment and coordination teams (FACT). This ensures continuity and a basic common understanding of how each one fits into the system, and how the various parts of the disaster-management system all fit together.

Finally, it must be stressed that training cannot be a one-time event. Refresher courses for volunteers, National Society staff, managers and delegates are essential.

Exercises and simulations

The only way to know if a response or contingency plan can work is to put it into action, evaluate it and revise it, as appropriate. This can be done in one of two ways:

1. Response exercises or simulations
2. An after-action review of the plan's implementation following an actual emergency.

Response exercises provide an excellent opportunity to review the strengths and weaknesses of a plan. They do not necessarily need to include all actors, and can be undertaken as table-top exercises (e.g., for decision-makers and planners). After-action reviews provide a good way to learn helpful lessons. Lessons can then be incorporated into a revised disaster-response plan.

Emergency response simulations or rehearsals are a way to test the assumptions and procedures of a disaster-response or contingency plan. Situations as similar as possible to the scenarios predicted by the plans should be re-created through training exercises and simulations. Participants should be encouraged to play the roles and act out functions as established for them by the disaster-response or contingency plan.

Training exercises and simulations should reveal the strengths and weaknesses of a plan. Ideally, they should be system-wide and include all components that would be involved in an actual disaster situation (e.g., National Societies, governmental agencies, NGOs and other groups). Table-top exercises, which test procedures, as well as the reactions of decision-makers and planners, are also valid and important.

Most training exercises and simulations cannot show the full dynamics and chaos of a real disaster-response operation and participants may engage in simulations only half-heartedly. However, these should not be used as excuses for avoiding the need to test the plan. This is the best way to see if the disaster-response or contingency plan is effective.

Training exercises and simulations are useful ways of keeping plans fresh, especially during extended disaster-free periods, and should be followed up with discussions on ways to update and modify plans in order to improve them.

9. Linkages and communications

Disaster information management requires specific skills and methods. National Societies, regional delegations and the IFRC's secretariat should establish information management procedures within their disaster-response and contingency plans in the following five areas:

1. Public information – relates to the local, national, regional and international media. A preparedness plan should include this aspect, as well as consider possible demands for multilingual spokespersons and the implications of time zone differences.
2. Operational information – essential for effective decision-making and should be managed by the emergency operations centre (EOC).
3. Internal information – sharing aims to ensure an adequate flow of information to all employees and volunteers on specific issues of relevance and concern related to the emergency operation.
4. Reporting – requirements must be respected and promoted at national, regional and international levels as a means of accountability. The reporting process should be well planned, with updates provided on a regular basis.
5. Institutional communication – should enhance coordination within the National Society, between the IFRC actors and within the Movement, as well as with other agencies.

Sharing and exchanging information with representatives of other agencies is crucial during emergencies. The plan should specify how communication will take place and by which form of media (e.g., e-mail, radio, fax, telephone, in person, at coordination meetings, etc.). This also applies to internal Red Cross Red Crescent communication at field level (within the National Society and/or with sub-offices), international level (communicating with the IFRC's secretariat in Geneva) and with partner National Societies already in the country.

Many governments have an emergency or national disaster operations centre, task force or coordination group, which receives disaster alert and activation notifications in which the Red Cross Red Crescent is included. We recommend appointing someone to liaise actively with these entities for coordination and communication purposes.

Previous disaster-response operations have noted a failure to share assessment information; this has led to duplicated or incomplete information being used. Disaster planning should stress the importance of information-sharing at all levels, and in particular strengthen mechanisms for sharing assessment information both within the Movement and with other partners.

Past experience has also shown that media-relevant information originating from field sources varies widely in quality. One practical solution is to provide field teams with an emergency media kit to enable them to collect quality digital and audio data. Plans should also include methods for sharing information on Red Cross and Red Crescent activities with the affected communities, in order to broaden their own awareness of and access to humanitarian assistance.

National Societies should identify someone (in addition to the public relations officer) who will be in charge of sharing information with the media. This person should have the necessary experience and contacts with government, local businesses and social organizations. National Society management and/or the IFRC's head of delegation should determine who can communicate with the media. Other response team members should refer all communications and public relations issues to this identified point of contact, so as to avoid confusion and ensure consistency of external communications. In addition, standard messages or talking points should be developed, and training provided to key team members about how to communicate these points effectively.

5. Review

- **Updating and evaluating the plan**
- **Evaluating during (real-time) and after the response**

1. Updating and evaluating the plan

Once the first version of the disaster-response or contingency plan has been completed, it is important to determine whether the structure and contents are best suited to actual response capabilities. The previous section outlined the need to test the plans and, if necessary, to make changes. It is also important to recognize that disaster-response or contingency plans may become outdated due to changes in the social, economic and organizational situation.

Information must be updated regularly. This is especially crucial for registries/ lists of staff and their capabilities, or for inventories of equipment and logistics resources. For example, a volunteer database may not reflect the current situation because mapping of Red Cross Red Crescent resources has not been undertaken recently; or registers of stock levels and equipment may not take account of deterioration due to poor maintenance. A system should therefore be established to ensure information is regularly checked and updated.

Keeping the disaster-response or contingency plan current and relevant is a challenging task, but can be achieved by scheduling regular reviews. The plan should specify the frequency of such reviews (e.g., every six months or every year) and the persons responsible for this. Information that requires regular updating includes:

- contact information of emergency response staff and agencies (i.e., phone, mobile and fax numbers, e-mail addresses, etc.)
- logistics transportation plans
- availability of emergency structures
- lists of available resources.

A contingency plan's usefulness can also be evaluated once it has been used in a real-life situation. Evaluations should be made frequently using real data – based on different methodologies, depending on whether the evaluation is carried out during or after a disaster-response operation.

The process of updating procedures outlined in disaster-response and contingency plans can be kept simple. At a minimum, it should include:

Which sections should be updated.

A detailed list of the parts of the plan that must be updated, highlighting the most important contents. Not all elements will need to be updated with the same frequency or in the same way.

When or how frequently to update.

Clearly define the frequency with which each part of the plan should be updated. This will be according to the importance of the information, and the frequency with which it is likely to change. For example, anything referring to resources will change more often than data related to the general context. In general, it is best to update contingency plans much more frequently than disaster-response plans.

How or with which methodology should the plan be updated.

The most appropriate methodology should be chosen according to the part of the plan under consideration. Certain sections can easily be updated by consulting internet pages or institutional and strategic documents, while other sections may require more extensive consultation, evaluation, or training exercises and simulation.

Who has responsibility for updating which section.

Responsibilities for updating different parts of the plan should be divided up, ideally making optimal use of existing organizational resources. Usually, human resource managers update those sections related to capacities, whilst response scenarios and strategies are the responsibility of programme directors or technicians. We strongly recommend that one person be responsible for leading the process through to completion.

What resources are required to update the plan.

If additional resources for updating are required, this should be highlighted and reflected in the National Society's budget.

Registering when changes have been made to the plan.

It is important to maintain a registry of when and who has made any updates to the disaster-response or contingency plan. This list should include the number of copies made and who has received them, since this makes it easier to distribute future updates.

2. Evaluating during (real-time) and after the response

The true test of a plan is in its implementation during actual disaster-response operations. A relief operation tests planning concepts and assumptions. Evaluating an operation is an opportunity to see how well the plan actually deals with operational issues and requirements.

To carry out a real-time evaluation, during a particular event, a person or group of persons are selected to act as 'observers' during the first days of plan implementation. They use pre-established criteria and indicators to evaluate different aspects of the plan in order to reach conclusions, and identify lessons learned and actions necessary for its improvement. This type of evaluation has a special value in emergencies because their scope and complexity (e.g., involving many humanitarian actors, or affecting multiple countries, etc.) require closer observation.

Methods of evaluating operations include: the use of secondary data (reports from similar operations and/or other agencies, newspapers, other evaluations);

interviews (using focus groups, questionnaires, interviews with key staff and beneficiaries); and direct observation. With all methods, key issues are identified and recommendations developed to ensure that future plans and relief operations build on successes and address identified problem areas.

Questions that should be asked during an evaluation include:

- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the disaster-response or contingency plan? How could it be modified or improved?
- What caused the most casualties and damage? What, if anything, can the National Society do to resolve this or prevent it from happening in the future?
- What were the main difficulties in getting assistance to people in need? How could the National Society overcome this in the future?
- How did the warning system work? What improvements are required?
- What mistakes were made? What changes must be made to avoid these in the future?
- What was done well? What steps can be taken to ensure that the National Society will continue to maintain this standard?
- Which supplies were available and which were lacking? How could shortfalls be remedied in the future?
- What was the level and quality of coordination with the National Society and with other external partners? What additional coordination is required? How could this coordination be improved in the future?

Aggressive and thorough follow-up on key issues and recommendations is essential to the success of the evaluation process.

Responsibilities for evaluating contingency plans

National Society contingency plans

National Societies determine the required content and format of their own contingency plans and the process used to evaluate them. National Society leadership should require a formal evaluation of each national and branch-level contingency plan at least every three years; however, the plan should also be evaluated whenever there is a significant change made to it, as well as following any significant disaster-relief operation. The IFRC's disaster-management technical staff can assist in the development, evaluation and review of these plans, as requested. Together with regional delegations, National Societies should evaluate and update their contingency plans every three years.

IFRC contingency plans

The IFRC's secretariat will formally evaluate each regional contingency plan every three years. It will also carry out an annual review to ensure that the plan clearly describes each required element to enable Movement coordination and provide disaster response in an effective and timely manner. This includes the responsibility to evaluate contingency plans for high-risk areas on an annual basis – by way of an exercise with the relevant National Societies or an evaluation based on a large-scale disaster operation. IFRC regional heads of delegation and disaster-management coordinators will be responsible and accountable for ensuring that regional contingency plans are in place.

Annex 1

Contingency plan format

1. Introduction

2. Disaster scenarios

- Hazards and risks
- Vulnerabilities and capacities
- Role, mandate and capacities of the National Society
- Best, most likely and worst-case scenarios
- Risk assumptions

3. Operational plan

- Strategy (e.g., search and rescue, relief, recovery), purpose and objectives (including numbers targeted)
- Areas of intervention (technical and geographical)
- Emergency assessment
- Management structure
- Logistics (movement, procurement)
- IT and communications
- Media and information

4. Coordination

- Movement, including use of international tools (FACT, RDRT, ERU)
- External, including government, UN, donors, NGOs

5. Quality and accountability

- Standards
 - Principles
-

6. Implementing the plan

- Approval of the plan and distribution
- Identification of gaps and areas that require strengthening
- Stocks and logistics
- Human resources, training, simulation, volunteers
- Trigger mechanism
- Resource mobilization
- Review plan

7. Annexes

- Standard operating procedures
- Maps, hazard and risk analysis, VCA
- Scenario-building template
- Organization structure and authority in disasters, disaster-response diagram
- Lists of contacts
- Relevant reference documents (MoUs, etc.)

Annex 2

Sector responsibilities

The basic components for each sector, as relevant to disaster-response and contingency planning, are detailed below. It is also worth noting that the IFRC is committed to the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response – a powerful tool which details standards for the following sectors: water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion; food security and nutrition; shelter, settlement and non-food items; and health action.

1. Emergency assessment

In most cases, a comprehensive needs assessment should be conducted immediately after an emergency, and updated throughout the response and recovery phases. Would sufficient staff and volunteers be available? Ensure that staff and volunteers have been properly trained, so that common criteria, standards and indicators are used during assessments. Ideally, local volunteers in the most disaster-prone areas should be trained to conduct immediate damage and needs assessments. The guidelines for emergency assessment, published by the IFRC, and the Sphere standards, available from the IFRC's secretariat and on FedNet, should be utilized.

When planning for an emergency needs assessment at local, community or regional level, it is necessary to identify:

- Who is responsible for the assessment and when will it be carried out (e.g., immediately, after three days, two weeks, etc.)? Assessment teams should be made up of persons having a range of functions, and include specialists from several sectors.
- What information is required at each stage of the emergency?
- How and where will response teams be formed and trained?
- What standards are being used to measure the severity of the emergency?
- What elements have been incorporated into the assessment to facilitate early recovery?
- How will the impact of humanitarian aid be determined?
- Will Better Programming Initiative guidelines be considered?
- How will beneficiary communities be involved in the whole process?

2. Continuity of operations during an emergency

A National Society's ability to function may be directly affected by a disaster (e.g., through damage to its headquarters or other facilities, the injury or death of key staff, etc.). It is therefore essential to plan for continuity of operations, even though this is not a sectoral activity as such. It is important to consider the following:

- selection and set-up of a relocation site able to support the continuation of essential activities
- activation of such a site and/or a crisis management headquarters at branch, National Society or IFRC delegation levels
- deployment of paid and volunteer staff from their normal operating locations
- provision of logistics, IT and telecommunications support by temporary use of non-standard or alternative means.

This section should also take into account the potential impact on other Red Cross Red Crescent services such as health programmes, blood donation, social support, etc. – all of which may also be threatened in the event of a disaster. At times, these services may need to be put on hold, to allow prioritization of other response activities; at other times, these services may be needed more than ever and should be prioritized.

3. Rescue and first aid

Major emergencies and disasters often result in injuries and deaths. Regardless of whether it is focused on the national, regional or global level, the plan should outline:

- What types of injuries and medical needs are likely to result from the scenarios addressed in the plan?
- Is the Red Cross Red Crescent involved in search and rescue operations, and who will be responsible for organizing these?
- How will human remains be handled?
- Who is to organize first aid, temporary ambulances, medical evacuation and hospitalization?
- What registration and distribution systems (for medicines) will be used?

4. Health services

Access to safe water, satisfactory sanitary conditions in shelters, and proper nutrition all help to avoid outbreaks of disease. These issues should be addressed before launching health programmes. The following health and nutrition issues should be considered in disaster-response and contingency planning at the national, regional or global level:

- Who is responsible for health and nutrition needs?
- What is the local healthcare structure and how does it function during emergencies?
- Where can vaccinations for infectious diseases (e.g., measles) be carried out?

- What supplementary feeding requirements (e.g., for children, pregnant and lactating women, etc.) or special feeding programmes may be necessary?
- Which governmental or non-governmental agencies are responsible for healthcare, disease prevention and public health campaigns? What role does the National Society play in this regard?
- Are health protection and nutritional needs different in winter? In what way? What special measures should be considered during a winter emergency?
- How can the problem of overcrowding be solved? How will the problem affect healthcare during and after an emergency?
- What measures should be taken for different population groups (e.g., children, pregnant women, the elderly, disabled, etc.)?
- What medication and medical equipment is available? What additional supplies might be needed and in what quantities?
- Are storage facilities available? If not, what should be done?
- Is there access to psychosocial services? Is there a national policy on this? How can psychosocial issues be best addressed in the cultural and technical context?

5. Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

During an emergency, there is often a lack of safe drinking water, appropriate sanitation facilities and hygiene commodities – all of which may make people more prone to illness or death from water and sanitation-related diseases. Since people can live longer without food than without water, a supply of clean drinking water is a high priority in an emergency.

Sanitation and hygiene promotion play an equally crucial role in the reduction of environmental health risks. Measures should include: disposal of human excreta and solid waste; insect and rodent control; safe hygiene practices; site drainage; and waste water management. The plan should also include provisions for water supply and distribution, sanitation and hygiene promotion during an emergency.

For water, the following should be specified:

- What is the current water source? What quality and quantity of water does it provide, and who are its present users?
- What technical capacities exist?
- Is there a supply and distribution system in place and if so, are water collection points close enough to dwellings?
- Is water treatment necessary? Is it possible? What type of treatment is required?
- What equipment will be required and is there a need for water tanks (if local water sources are not available)?

For sanitation, the following should be specified:

- What is the current defecation practice? Are there any existing sanitation facilities and if so, what is their current state and who is responsible for them (public divisions or private sector)?
- Are people familiar with the construction and use of toilets?
- Should training programmes about good sanitation practices be conducted?

For hygiene promotion, the following should be specified:

- Are people consulted on their water, sanitation and hygiene needs and involved in the design of the response?
- What are the traditional beliefs and practices related to the collection, storage and use of water?
- Do people have enough water storage containers?
- What are the current beliefs and practices (including gender-specific practices) concerning the disposal of excreta?
- Do people have access to materials for anal cleansing?
- Do people have access to soap and wash their hands with soap at key times (e.g., after defecation and before food preparation and meals)?
- Do females of menstruating age have access to materials for menstrual hygiene?
- Is information, education and communication material about hygiene practices available?

6. Food and nutrition

Food provision is aimed at meeting the nutritional needs of an affected population during an emergency. The disaster-preparedness plan should define, calculate and specify how food will be provided in emergencies of differing intensities and impact. During the planning stage, the following questions should be answered for the relevant context (national, regional or global):

- Who is responsible for assessment of food supply needs and coordination of this part of the disaster-response operation?
- What food is available locally, throughout the area and country-wide? What are the capacities of and prices in local markets?
- Which traditional or widely consumed food items are likely to be in short supply?
- What items should the food basket contain?
- What are the calorific requirements for various climates (e.g., in cold, mountainous environments)?
- What basic needs should be met for small children?
- What food distribution systems have been previously used in the local area, district and country?
- How could they be used in an emergency?
- Will the unaffected population living close to the emergency site also be provided with food? (This issue arises when the unaffected population is also highly vulnerable, even under normal circumstances.)
- Who is responsible for communicating with the government and international food donors (e.g., World Food Programme), NGOs and other agencies?
- What are the food storage requirements? What storage facilities are available?

7. Relief

The plan should address in detail the way in which basic immediate emergency needs related to shelter, water and food will be met. Typical non-food items included in such a plan are: soap, blankets, kitchen utensils, water containers and matches. Since situations may vary, the list of essentials should be compiled based on the anticipated needs of the population most likely to be affected

– taking into account cultural diversity, where applicable. The national, regional or global plan should address the following:

- What items will be needed and which of these are available?
- Who will coordinate the negotiation of pre-existing agreements with suppliers for these items?
- To what extent can local markets and organizations assist in the distribution of such goods?
- How can these mechanisms be strengthened to play a bigger role in relief activities?
- What are the local storage capacities and what additional facilities will be required?
- What are the available stock reserves of blankets, water containers, fuel for food preparation, stoves, kitchen utensils, clothing and other essential non-food items?
- What are the targeting, registration and distribution processes? Who is responsible for the management of relief supplies?
- Who is responsible for needs assessment?
- How will a monitoring and evaluation process be ensured?
- How will coordination of quality, quantities and coverage be organized with other agencies?

8. Shelter

In some cases, emergency shelter provision is needed for those whose homes have been destroyed or are unsafe. This may require urgent repair work (including the provision of appropriate tools and locally-used materials), the distribution of tents and tarpaulins for temporary shelter, or sheltering homeless people in public buildings such as schools. The following shelter issues should be considered in disaster-response and contingency planning at the national, regional or global level:

- What is the governmental policy for sheltering a disaster-affected population? Which governmental body is in charge of shelter-related activities?
- What governmental, local and international organizations are active in shelter provision?
- Who is responsible for management and needs assessment relating to shelter?
- Are supplies of tents, construction materials and plastic sheets needed?
- Have sites or buildings for communal shelters been identified for possible large-scale emergency needs?
- How will sites be identified? Are there difficulties related to land ownership? What potential problems may occur within the local community?
- What particular difficulties may arise in various seasons (winter, summer, rainy, etc.)?
- What types of assistance will be needed by those who are sheltered or hosted by relatives or friends (i.e., food aid, heating, cooking, hygiene or water and sanitation supplies)?
- Would the provision of cash be more appropriate to provide people with a choice of options?
- What traditional construction materials are available locally? Does the procurement and use of traditional building materials harm the environment and what materials can be used instead? Remember to make use of what is locally appropriate (i.e., investigating the type of material people already use for housing and how to improve safety in construction).

- What solutions would make the best use of community knowledge, capacities and resources in providing shelter? How will 'safe building' techniques be promoted locally (e.g., community awareness-raising using a 'construction theatre' to display key safe building procedures, such as appropriate foundations, reinforcements, fixings, tie-downs and bracings)?
- How will any risks concerning existing houses and settlements be evaluated? How can the post-disaster stability of housing sites be assessed? How can appropriate settlement planning be ensured to minimize risks? What improvement measures can be taken to minimize future risks associated with housing that needs to be repaired?
- How can technical assistance for reconstruction best support the return of households to their dwellings, when appropriate? Remember that, in many cases, households will wish to return immediately to their damaged or destroyed houses.

9. Restoring family links

One of the priority social-welfare tasks in many relief operations is to quickly initiate a search for missing people and reunite family members. The family is the basic social unit in most societies and plays a key role in meeting personal needs and solving community problems. National Societies responsible for restoring family links should consider the following issues in planning at national level:

- Who is responsible for managing search and reunification activities and who (staff and/or volunteers) will be involved?
- Is the ICRC or host National Society involved?
- How many families may need temporary accommodation?
- What are the cultural norms that may delay reunification activities (e.g., taboos on, or prohibited use of, photography)?
- Which methods or approaches will be used to carry out these activities?
- Which communication methods will be used to reunite family members?
- What other agencies and governmental departments are responsible for these operations? What level of coordination is required?
- At which stage of response should search operations be started? (This normally begins after 24 to 48 hours, since many families manage to locate missing relatives during this period.)
- How will the affected population learn about this service?

10. Protection, safety and security

Preparedness plans should identify who is responsible for the protection, safety and security of the disaster-affected population. This is usually the responsibility of the national government, although other actors may be involved. The plan should also identify the actions to be taken to ensure the security of Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers involved in disaster response. Security is a complex issue and the IFRC has developed appropriate guidelines that are available on FedNet.

IFRC security in the field – including institutional and personal codes of conduct – is based on seven factors:

- acceptance
- identification
- information
- regulations
- personal behaviour
- communication
- protection.

The first two factors above are unique to the Red Cross Red Crescent and deal with:

- (1) Acceptance (both political and operational) of the fundamental principles which guide Red Cross Red Crescent action
- (2) Identification, through recognized use of the Red Cross emblem.

11. Logistics and transport

Emergency-response operations often require transport of numerous staff, and large quantities of humanitarian aid and equipment to the disaster site. Therefore, logistics and transport issues are crucial to a successful response. The following aspects of logistics and transport should be considered in national, regional or global-level planning:

- What are the principal and alternative aid delivery routes to anticipated disaster areas and affected populations?
- Have agreements been developed with suppliers to speed up procurement? Where are available seaports and airports located, including relevant information concerning capacity and procedures?
- What and where are the most appropriate available storage sites?
- Have transportation modes (e.g., road, railway, air, etc.) and issues such as availability and cost been specified?
- Which spare parts may be needed for vehicles? Have preliminary arrangements been made for their supply?
- What is the availability of fuel depots and service stations, clarifying any limitations?
- What level of cooperation exists with the governmental office or ministry responsible for customs clearance of incoming goods? Has agreement been reached with appropriate governmental structures to ensure priority conditions are provided for the import of humanitarian aid?
- What is the probable impact of weather conditions on logistics work?
- Have needs been defined and training conducted for staff or divisions responsible for logistics in an emergency?

12. IT and telecommunications

Continuous and effective communications between the various components of the Movement are vital to the success of any emergency operation. For radio communications, it is essential to list the relevant radio frequencies in the contingency plan. The plan should also specify who will manage, maintain and control access to the radio equipment. The following should be considered when planning nationally, regionally or globally:

- What is the National Society's capacity (connectivity, types of telecommunications, coverage, etc.)?
- What is the national legislation with regard to the use and importation of various types of IT and telecommunications equipment – particularly in an emergency situation?
- What communications equipment do you anticipate needing (such as hand-held radios, satellite telephones, mobile phones, and land lines)? Have radio frequencies and channels been identified and agreed?
- Have radio frequencies been allocated for the IFRC and ICRC in case of disasters?
- Has the International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles programme of Disasters laws (IDRL) been introduced in the country to help in the importation of IT and communications equipment?
- Has this country signed the Tempere Convention?

13. Communication and reporting

The importance of communication cannot be stressed enough. To enable the IFRC to act as the focal point for information about a disaster, National Societies should immediately inform the organization of any major disaster, the extent of damage incurred and what direct action is being undertaken. Timely input to the DMIS is especially important to alert the wider disaster-management community, particularly if the scale of an emergency requires international assistance.

The mapping section within the IFRC secretariat's operations support department can quickly produce maps to assist in the disaster-response or contingency planning process. These can be made available through the DMIS for sharing with National Societies and Red Cross Red Crescent disaster managers.

Geographical information systems (GIS) mapping and satellite imagery is also a resource that should be explored with government, academic and scientific community partners.

Questions to consider when formulating national, regional or global plans include:

- What will the public information strategy be?
- Can the current staff handle the likely influx of journalists and anticipated media demands, or should additional personnel be recruited?
- Can the current staff provide timely inputs for information bulletins, operational reports and appeals to donors or should reporting staff be recruited?
- How should media relations be coordinated?
- What will the information strategy be for the target population – within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement? For donors? For other agencies?

14. Monitoring and evaluation

Once initial assistance has been provided to the affected population, it is essential to ensure that aid has reached beneficiaries as planned, that it has had the anticipated impact and that no unmet needs have been missed. Monitoring and evaluating implementation of the plan of action (both the response as a whole, and individual programmes) is an integral part of disaster response. The following should be taken into account when creating disaster-response and contingency plans at the national, regional or global levels:

- What level of monitoring and evaluation will be needed?
- Which areas will need monitoring within each sector?
- What tools will be necessary to carry out monitoring and evaluation (e.g., forms, checklists, reporting formats, etc.)?
- How will issues arising from monitoring and evaluation be addressed?
- How will the necessary staff and volunteers be identified and trained?
- How will beneficiary communities be involved throughout the process?

Annex 3

Identifying capacities and resources

Identify Internal and External Capacities

While the identification of internal resources is a priority, we should not forget that there are other organizations and entities which often work in the same thematic areas or have a presence in the same geographic zones where we are planning the intervention.

Knowing our resources and capacities will help us to avoid duplicating efforts, better develop our strategies, coordinate actions and arrive at collaboration agreements. This will also allow us to make the best use of our resources that are normally limited and need to be prioritized.

Incorporate Potential Future Resources

While it is true that existing resources and capacities are the only ones that we can count on 100 per cent, from experience with previous disasters we know that depending on the type and magnitude of the event, we can count on partners, donors and coordinating mechanisms that will enable us to have additional resources once a disaster has occurred.

For this to occur, based on past experience, it is necessary to estimate and predict future available resources and capacities for the different scenarios or events.

This allows us to be better prepared and define strategies for adaptation and institutional growth (scale up) if the volume of expected resources needed for a particular event exceeds predictions (e.g., Hurricane Mitch, etc.)

Which capacities and resources should be identified?

There are no magic formulas or complete lists of the capacities and resources that should be identified as they often differ depending on the context and identified scenarios. However, when dealing with the planning of a National Society, four areas can be identified which can integrate the most important actors at the time of a humanitarian response:

- internal institutional capacities and resources
- external institutional capacities and resources
- agreements with other partners
- community capacities and resources.

Internal institutional capacities and resources: National Society and the Movement

Internal capacities and resources are all those that the different members of the Movement, with a presence in the country or not, have assigned or can send to the territorial area defined in the disaster-response or contingency plan for the identified priorities or scenarios. These can be grouped into the following categories to help with analysis:

Host National Society and branches	National headquarters Branches Sub-branches
Participating National Societies	With country presence Without country presence With conventions and bilateral agreements
IFRC's secretariat	Country delegation Regional delegation Zone DM unit Geneva
ICRC	With country presence Without country presence

External institutional capacities and resources: Government and other institutions

These are the capacities and resources from other institutions and organizations outside of the Movement that have responsibilities and the presence or willingness to act in the geographical area defined in the disaster-response or contingency plan. According to their mission, role and area of responsibility, they can be categorized into three broad groups: **governmental institutions** (e.g., Civil Defence, Ministry of Health, Mayoralty, etc), national or international **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** (e.g., CARE, Oxfam, etc.) and **multilateral and/or bilateral cooperation organizations** (e.g., UN agencies, IADB, AECI, USAID, etc.).

It is not necessary to do an exhaustive analysis on each of these groups, but indicate which of these institutions or organizations have, or can, play an important role in the moment of a disaster response. For more information and tools on registering internal as well as external capacities and resources, please refer to module 3 of the contingency planning workshop package.

Annex 4

Standard operating procedures (SOP)

The purpose of developing SOPs is to ensure that certain tasks are carried out in a specific way by key people or units. SOPs are a way to ensure that tasks specified in the disaster-response and contingency plan are carried out quickly and according to pre-agreed criteria. SOPs constitute the link between these plans and the actual operational response.

SOPs must:

- be simple and easy to understand (preferably in checklist format)
- be able to stand on their own
- clearly indicate how a task is to be done, who is responsible for ensuring that it is done and who actually performs it
- be approved and disseminated within the organization, and used in training.

Flow charts can be used to help in visualizing the entire body of response-related SOPs or the specific SOPs relating to a particular sector.

SOPs should, at a minimum, contain the following:

Title: showing what the SOP covers. Example: SOP on establishing a logistics chain.

Date of issue: (e.g., 1 May 2007)

Period of validity: (e.g., 1 May 2007 – 30 April 2009)

To be reviewed by: (e.g., 30 April 2008)

Purpose of the SOP: Example: *In the event of floods in District XX, establish a logistics chain from international ports of arrival to the main warehouse in YY-town in support of relief, shelter, water and sanitation, healthcare, etc.*

Responsible department: (e.g., Logistics section)

Responsible position: (e.g., Head of Logistics section)

Process and decision that will trigger the use of the SOP. Example: *The National Society management – the president, secretary general, head of the disaster-response department or any combination of these, according to National Society rules – decides on the need to respond to the emergency, initial assessment shows which relief items are needed, etc.*

Relations with other entities:

This section must show as necessary:

- coordination needed/expected – internal to the Movement and with external actors (e.g., government, NGO, UN, etc.)
- links to others (what, how and with whom) that ensures the SOP will work
- information and media
- others as appropriate.

Safety and security:

If it is known that safety and/or security issues may arise in carrying out the SOP, these issues must be described and measures to ensure optimum safety and security of personnel and equipment detailed.

Operational activities/tasks:

A Step-by-step description of the activities is needed to implement the SOP – who does what, how and when. Checklists and flow charts can help in this area.

Training/simulating with the SOP:

Example: All logistics staff will attend a two-hour training session on this SOP. An annual one-day exercise on the SOP will be held in June.

Review of the SOP:

Example: A review of this SOP will be carried out no later than March each year and after each operation in which the SOP is activated. The head of the logistics section is responsible for organizing this review and ensuring that its findings are incorporated into the SOP.

Changing circumstances may require modification of the SOP. At a minimum, regular reviews and evaluations must be carried out and the SOP amended accordingly. The frequency with which this should happen is reflected in the section (above) which gives the period of validity of the SOP. In addition to this regular review, an evaluation and if necessary modification of the SOP should take place after each operation in which it is used.

Annexes:

- Checklists
- Contact lists
- Resource lists
- Forms and templates
- Manuals
- Other as necessary

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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