




# DISASTER RESPONSE AND CONTINGENCY PLANS:

A Guide for Caribbean Red Cross  
National Societies

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Disaster Response and Contingency Plans: A Guide for Caribbean Red Cross National Societies  
12/2014

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**Strategy 2020 is guiding the actions of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** throughout this decade. It defines three strategic aims and three enabling actions for the IFRC and its member National Societies in order to achieve a common vision: To inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The strategic aims of Strategy 2020 are:

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

The enabling actions to deliver our Strategic Aims are:

1. Build strong National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
2. Pursue humanitarian diplomacy to prevent and reduce vulnerability in a globalized world.
3. Function effectively as the International Federation.

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## Acronyms

ADRA	Adventist Disaster Response Agency
BPI	Better Programming Initiative
CADRIIM	Caribbean Red Cross Disaster Risk Management Reference Centre
CBDM	Community Based Disaster Management
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CDM	Caribbean Disaster Management
CDRT	Community Disaster Response Team
CRRO	Caribbean Regional Representation Office (IFRC)
CREC	Regional Reference Centre in Community-Based Education for the Prevention of Disasters
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DFATD	Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Canada
DMIS	Disaster Management Information System
DMRF	Disaster Management Resource Framework
DMU	Disaster Management Unit
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ERU	Emergency Response Unit
EWS	Early Warning System
FACT	Field Assessment and Coordination Team
GIS	Geographical Information Systems

HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
NDO	National Disaster Office
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NIT	National Intervention Team
NS	National Society (Red Cross)
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
OSB	Overseas Branch (Red Cross National Society)
PADRU	Pan American Disaster Response Unit
PMER	Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
PNS	Partner National Society (Red Cross)
RIT	Regional Intervention Team
SAR	Search and Rescue
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCA	Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment
WFP	World Food Programme
WPNS	Well Prepared National Society

## FOREWORD

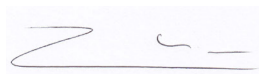
The Caribbean, most of which are Small Island Developing States (SIDS), continues to be extremely vulnerable to hazards due to a combination of multiple geophysical and geological processes and inherent physical conditions, making it one of the most natural hazard prone regions in the world. With this reality, the work of the Red Cross is crucial in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and to enable National Societies to effectively perform its auxiliary role to government. This 'Response and Contingency Planning: A Guide for National Societies of the Caribbean' was developed with the aim of giving Caribbean National Societies a harmonised way of developing response and contingency plans and establish mechanisms to manage national emergencies and is complementary to the 'Regional Contingency Plan for Disaster Response', developed by Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) in 2014 and the 'Contingency Planning Guide' developed by the IFRC in 2012. The need to develop a standardised approach to support National Societies in developing Response and Contingency Plans was identified as a priority to facilitate effective and efficient response to a crisis and/or disaster through internal and external coordination mechanisms

The guide therefore outlines a step-by-step approach to undertake the development of Plans in a more comprehensive yet achievable manner. The Red Cross Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Reference Centre (CADRIM), in close collaboration with the Caribbean Regional Representation Office (CRRO), the Disaster Management Network and PADRU consulted scores of personnel from National Societies (Management, Heads of Departments, other staff and volunteers) in the Caribbean, the Institutional Disaster Preparedness Reference Centre (CREPD), and the Urban Risk and Community Resilience Unit resulting in this contextual Guide.

We hope that you will find this Guide relevant and practical.



Delia Chatoor  
Caribbean Cooperation of the Red Cross (CCORC), President



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Caribbean Red Cross Disaster Management Network, Chair



## Acknowledgements

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## INTRODUCTION

Disaster preparedness and response are fundamental parts of the International Federation of Red Cross's (IFRC) strategy. The evolving world demography poses the challenge of increased vulnerability as evidenced by frequent climate change impacts, new urban risks, growing numbers of violent activity, increased migration, health risks and environmental degradation. These trends coupled with other issues are likely to result in different patterns of vulnerability as they interact in the future. These realities reaffirm the need for the development and use of contextual tools to strengthen the Caribbean region's resilience and more specifically, to enhance the capacity of Red Cross National Societies to prepare for, respond to and assist in the recovery from natural and anthropogenic hazards.

In this regard, in November 2002, the IFRC created the first draft of the guide attempting to synthesize, in one single document, suggestions and tools from the different National Societies (NS). Following a number of open and participative consultations involving more than 15 National Societies and close to 100 persons, the need for a standardised methodology, planning criteria and a common structure was confirmed. As a result, the guide was used across several Central and South American countries which led to its adaptation in the Americas Zone in 2006.

In April 2011, the Red Cross Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Reference Centre identified the need for an updated version of the guide to better reflect the current Caribbean context with the intention for it to be rolled out to National Societies across the region. Recent strategies from both the IFRC (such as Strategy 2020, the 2009-2014 Disaster Management Strategic Framework of the Caribbean Regional Representation Office and the Inter-American Plan (2012-2016) and regional bodies such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) through

its Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and Results Framework 2007-2012 stressed the importance of adequate planning in preparing for disasters. This updated version of the guide, therefore, seeks to incorporate key elements of these strategies. In addition, it has taken important cues from the IFRC's recently revised Contingency Planning Guide.

Further consultations were held and a revised version of the guide was piloted in Barbados and Suriname in 2012.

## **OBJECTIVES AND USE OF THE GUIDE**

The main objectives in the use of the guide are to:

### **1. Improve the quality of the Movement's Humanitarian Action in disaster situations**

It is a practical tool that helps National Societies to develop quality Response and Contingency Plans and to be better prepared to offer suitable humanitarian responses based on the Fundamental Principle of "saving lives with dignity".

### **2. Unify planning and promote the use of a common language**

The Guide proposes a common planning strategy for all National Societies based on three main components:

- Setting the Country's Disaster Risk Management Context (Component 1)
- Defining the Red Cross National Society's Response Plans (Component 2)
- Developing Contingency Plans for Specific Hazards (Component 3)

It also encourages the use of common languages and terminologies, integrating those used by regional members of the Movement with other internationally accepted terminologies and concepts.

### **3. Standardize methodologies for improved planning and coordination within the Movement.**

For quite some time, National Societies within the region had the sole responsibility of managing their needs and developing Contingency Plans, using various methodologies. This guide is based on an analysis and integration of all of these to support improved communication and understanding among National Societies. Thus, the Response and Contingency Plans developed with this methodology will be a reference to facilitate cooperation and actions with other members of the Movement from the region.

### **4. Increase National Society staff and volunteers' capacity for technical analysis and disaster planning.**

This Guide was designed to be a practical, understandable and user-friendly tool for Red Cross staff and volunteers to improve their knowledge, analytical capacities and reflection. It balances technical and practical concepts and acts as a supplementary manual for facilitators using specific activities and templates.

### **5. Be a reference for exchange and coordination between actors**

Communication and coordination within the Movement can be improved through the use of this Guide. It serves as a reference for exchange and coordination with other humanitarian partners and organizations involved in disaster management.

## WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

### Within the Movement:

- Relief Coordinators, Directors, and Technicians from National Societies who are responsible for formulating and implementing response and contingency plans for possible emergencies or disasters.
- Facilitators, Trainers and Instructors from National Societies who are responsible for teaching and training the people involved with the Plans' development or implementation.
- Coordinators, Directors and Technicians responsible for volunteers or other programmatic areas where it is necessary to develop response or contingency plans for possible emergency or disaster situations.
- Workers, Managers or Administrative Personnel from a NS, who are responsible for managing and facilitating the supplies and resources required for the Plans' implementation, e.g. NITs.
- Red Cross Coordinators, Technicians and people responsible for territorial units (departments, subsidiaries, sections, localities, parishes, etc.) where it is necessary to develop response and contingency plans, e.g. IFRC Disaster Management Delegates, RITs.
- Volunteers from different areas of work or different geographic areas, who participate in disaster planning and preparedness processes.

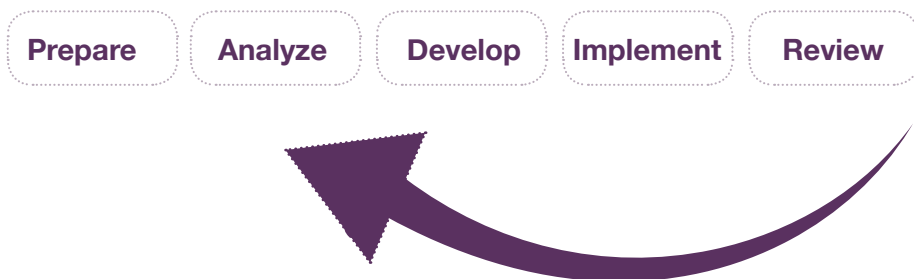
### Outside of the Movement:

- All organizations, institutions or people who work in the humanitarian sector and have the need for,

or responsibility of, planning actions through the development of response or contingency plans, or other similar planning tools, e.g. NDOs, Fire Services, etc.

## STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

In keeping with other IFRC documents, this guide is divided into five main areas which are shown in the diagram below:



# CHAPTER 1 – PREPARE



## Concepts & Planning Framework

The agreement on basic concepts and a common planning framework for National Societies will be the result of a process of joint collaboration, which will also strengthen the Red Cross Movement's vision and actions.

A process of developing a National Society's disaster plan will include the following components:

Component 1 - Setting the Country's Disaster Risk Management Context

Component 2 - Defining the Red Cross National Society's Response Plans

Component 3 - Developing Contingency Plans for Specific Hazards

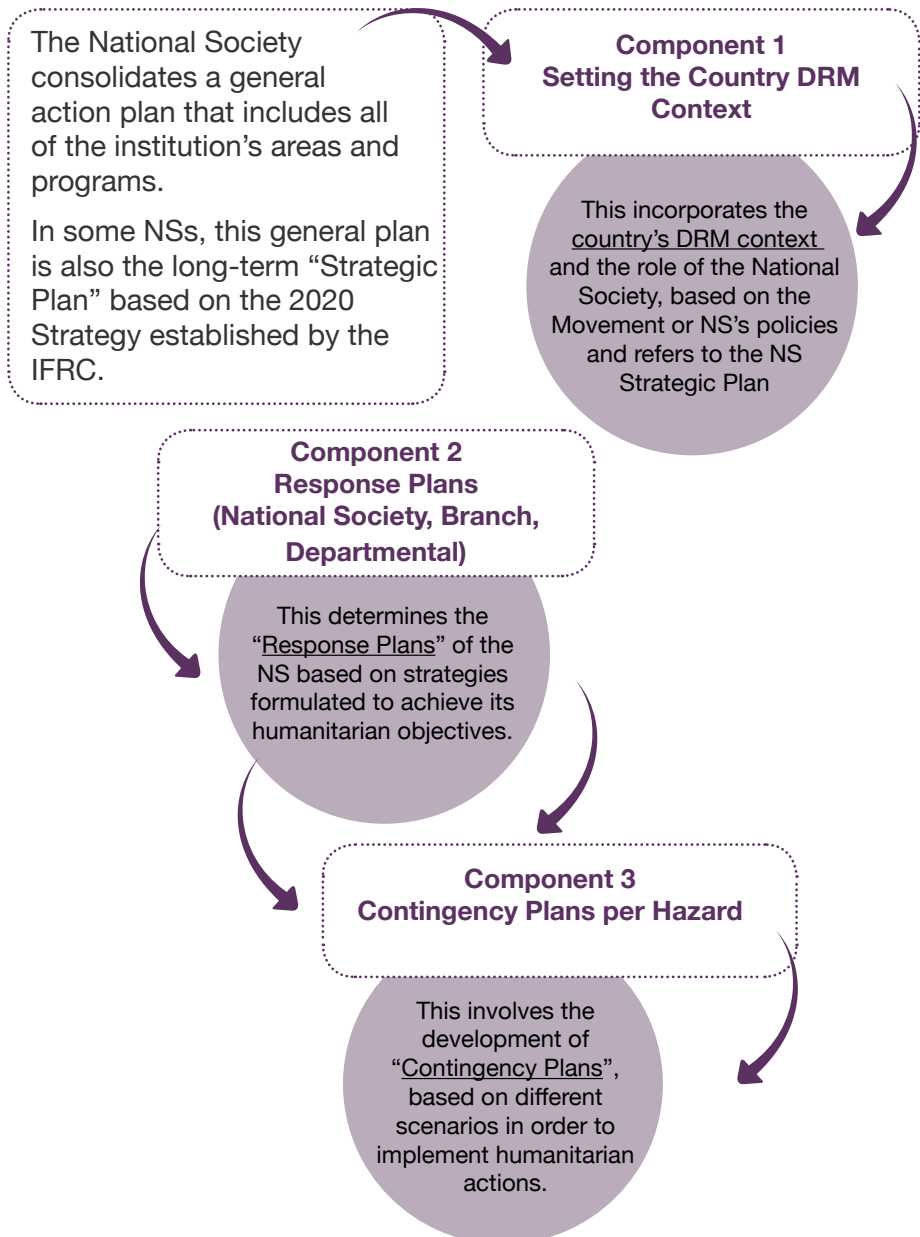
Planning within the NS is an activity that should be on-going to achieve an efficient and adequate level of organization in the three above mentioned levels for possible disaster situations. The plan's development, in any of the three levels, is related to and should complement the other two levels, and the Plan implemented by the NS should be integrated and based on references from the National Disaster Plan.

All National Societies, no matter their size or level of development, face risk situations, which need to be considered; therefore this guide should not be interpreted as a complex tool that is only for "highly developed" National Societies.

While recognizing the uniqueness of each National Society, their way of working, and organizational culture, it is important to understand that to function as a "Network" and be the "force of Humanity" there needs to be an agreement regarding minimum frameworks of understanding and working together. It is important that Contingency Planning furthers the steps towards a common language and planning framework.



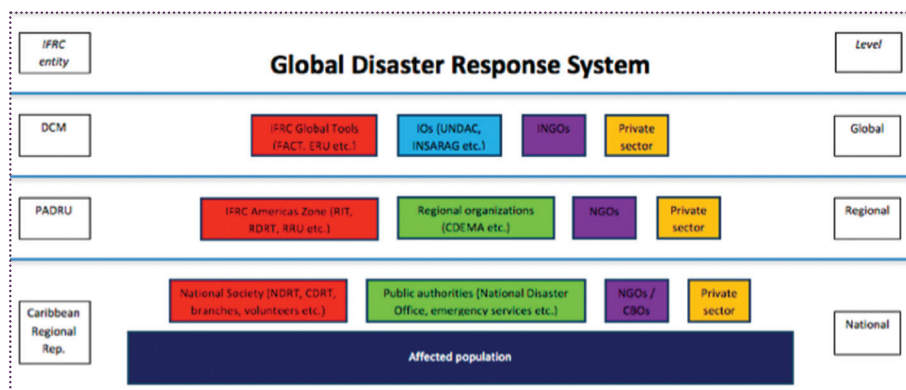
## National Society Planning Framework



## Red Cross Disaster Response System

The International Federation of Red Cross Societies disaster response model integrates the following components:

- Red Cross National Societies (NS)
- Regional Intervention Teams (RIT)
- The Regional Representation Office
- The Pan-American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU)
- Emergency Response Units (ERU)
- Disaster and Crisis Management Department, Geneva
- Key national stakeholders/partners e.g. CBOs, NGOs and Government



## PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL SOCIETIES

National Societies, within their national planning framework, identify the DRM context of the country, which is the first component of planning and defines the general reference for humanitarian actions for potential disasters. This is based on the country's National Disaster Plan and contains programming components for Risk Management, Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery.

The second component of planning involves defining the National Society's (NS) "Response Plan" (RP), which is specifically developed for the NS's intervention once a disaster has occurred. Depending on the size, needs, and organizational structure of the NS, it can have one or various Response Plans per country and at different levels – e.g. National or Branch.

The third component of planning is "Developing Contingency Plans for Specific Hazards" and is defined within the Response Plan for specific events based on various disaster impact scenarios.

The following table establishes the characteristics of each component of the planning framework.

Component	Plan	Characteristics
I	<b>Country's National Disaster Plan (NDP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutes the first component of disaster planning within a country. This process usually involves National Societies and other agencies involved in disaster management.</li> <li>• Establishes the administrative and policy base for forming Response and Contingency Plans.</li> <li>• Integrates programming aspects and plans for all phases of a disaster (Risk Management, Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Rehabilitation).</li> <li>• The country's National Disaster Plan is integrated within the National Society's Strategic Plan or its General Humanitarian Action Plan.</li> <li>• It is the National Society's reference for integrated disaster management.</li> </ul>
II	<b>National Society Response Plan (RP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutes the second component of disaster planning for the National Society.</li> <li>• Integrates official and validated information from the country on scenarios of specific threats.</li> <li>• Defines, in general, the National Society's Response Strategy for humanitarian actions according to the conditions of risk in the institutional framework and the country's inter-institutional references for disasters.</li> <li>• It is the reference for all personnel responsible for Relief Plans, Programs and Projects in the National Society.</li> <li>• A National Society can have one or various Response Plans depending on its needs and organizational structure.</li> </ul>
III	<b>Contingency Plans per Hazard Contingency Plans per Hazard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitutes the third component of disaster planning for the National Society.</li> <li>• They are always linked to a specific event.</li> <li>• They establish operational procedures for direct humanitarian actions such as stabilizing an affected population, rescue, pre-hospital attention, shelter, food support or other needs.</li> <li>• They establish protocols for specific actions for operational personnel to facilitate the development of safe and efficient humanitarian actions at all moments and under all circumstances as part of the National Society's response.</li> <li>• They are the direct reference for the National Society's operating personnel.</li> </ul>

## The Importance of Response and Contingency Planning

High magnitude, multiple, natural, anthropogenic, or technological events are threats for vulnerable populations in practically all countries. Planning response and contingency actions is one of the fundamental aspects of the international humanitarian context. Each plan developed at the national or local level constitutes a key element for an efficient response to possible emergencies.

Red Cross' principles, mission and commitment to people and populations affected by disasters, together with an ever-increasing complexity, forces us to be organized to be able to provide an appropriate and quality response. A planned and organized humanitarian response by National Societies represents a quality alternative to support and relieve the suffering of communities affected by disasters.

## What are Response and Contingency Plans?

Response and contingency plans are essential tools for a National Society to prioritize zones and areas of work, organize and optimize the use of resources, coordinate with partners, predict future situations and be better prepared for possible disastrous events.



## Two main ideas should be highlighted.

- The plans, as a culmination of a process of analysis and response planning, allow us to strengthen our preparedness and capacity to respond to disasters.
- A plan is the only efficient way for a NS to respond to a disaster situation in a manner which is of greatest help to the vulnerable or affected.

## When are Response and Contingency Plans Needed?

Response Plans are necessary, in all countries at various levels, and should be promoted and consolidated by all National Societies according to the threats, frequency and complexity of the disasters. Depending on the country's size and context, these Plans and their implementation process can differ. A National Society can have more than one Response Plan according to the needs of the NS and different geographical environments (E.g. National Plan, Departmental Plan, Local Plan, etc.)

- Contingency Plans are needed in most of the countries and are recommended for responding to specific threats or scenarios within a specific context. For some countries, however, due to its context, size, and characteristics, the Response Plan is a sufficient tool for the National Society and it does not need to develop Contingency Plans per scenario or event.

## Who Should Participate in the Development of the Plans?

Plans should be developed with input and support from various people (Governing Board Members, Managers or Presidents, technicians, volunteers, administrative personnel, doctors, etc.) from different levels in the NS, (National Headquarters, Subsidiaries, Branches etc.).

It is also important to involve other actors such as public institutions, social organizations, authorities, and NGOs, with whom the Red Cross cooperates, coordinates and works.

## What is the Difference between the Response Plan and the Contingency Plan?

The Response Plan is the tool that defines the institution's overall action framework for a particular geographic and temporal environment (e.g. during a disaster). As a broader framework, it can incorporate a number of Contingency Plans depending on the quantity and magnitude of events and the complexity of the geographical context

The Contingency Plan is a tool created for a specific phenomenon or event (e.g. Warming phenomenon in the Pacific, Hurricanes, Earthquakes, Droughts, etc.) and is usually linked to a previously defined scenario.

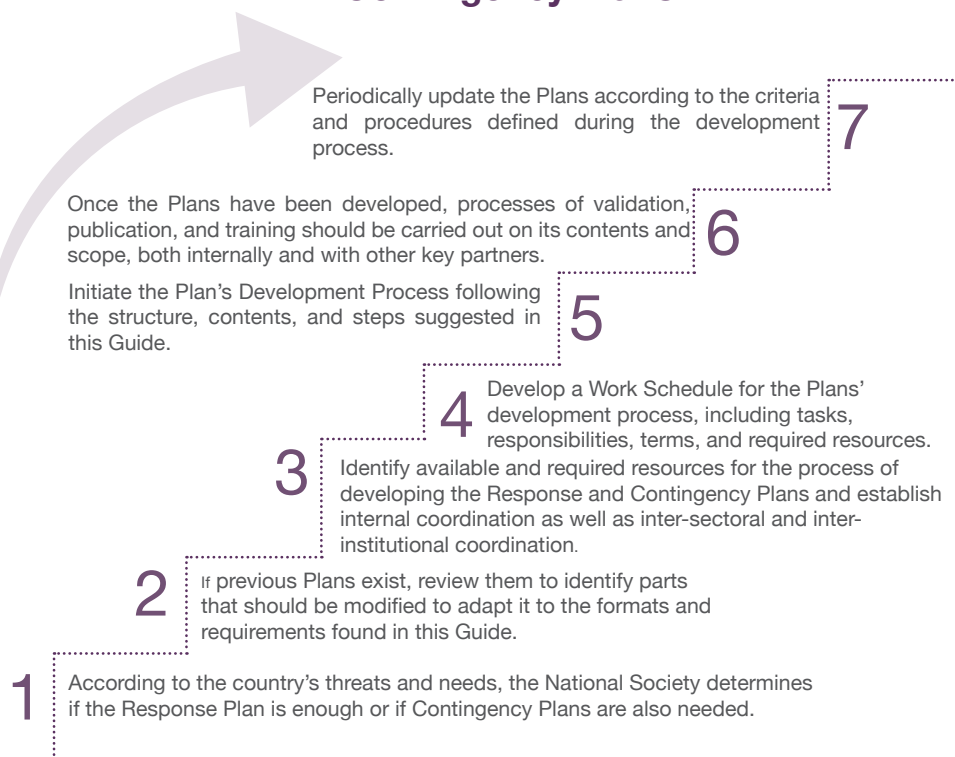
MAIN DIFFERENCES	
Response Plan	Contingency Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is an on-going process linked to the institution's existence but should be revised and updated periodically as required.</li> <li>• Its geographical coverage is usually national or is determined by the institution's activities or programs.</li> <li>• It is the framework within which Contingency Plans are defined.</li> <li>• The Response Plan is the referential framework for the NS for possible disasters.</li> <li>• It involves actions that are taken before, during, and after potential risk or disaster situations that affect the population and are recognized in the international framework as Reduction, Response and Recovery.</li> <li>• It has a general focus, with an emphasis on institutional strategies and policies defined for humanitarian actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duration is determined by the existence or time span of the event or scenario for which it has been created and is often between 1 month and 1 year. It needs to be updated according to possible secondary hazards affecting the contingency plan</li> <li>• Is linked to phases: before, during and after impact</li> <li>• Its geographical coverage is determined by the event or scenario's scope and magnitude, normally limited to identified regions or localities.</li> <li>• It is defined within the Response Plan framework previously formulated and adopted by the institution.</li> <li>• It is only needed in situations of risk or impact that are often temporary, with a defined or known duration, and is activated only when needed.</li> <li>• It involves actions taken from the moment of impact of a determined event.</li> <li>• Its terms and contents are specific, with an emphasis on security, operational procedures, required logistics, and defining responsibilities in the field.</li> </ul>

## Key Considerations for the Development of Plans

In developing the Response/Contingency Plan, the process of development is as important, if not more important, than the final product. The final result will be of a higher quality and more valid if it is developed as a process according to local context and needs. Successful development of plans should consider the three key areas which involve focus on the process, format of the document and its content. Some indicators are highlighted in the table below:

<b>Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planning process is open, participative and involves different levels and actors.</li> <li>• There is knowledge and experience input by key people in the institution.</li> <li>• There is participation at all NS levels (including Executive Boards, Volunteers, Financial Services, Administration, Human Resources, Logistics etc.)</li> <li>• Plans from other institutions and organizations are considered.</li> <li>• Generates a sense of ownership</li> <li>• Fixed duration based on a concrete schedule with defined responsibilities involving all resources that are deemed necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>Format</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete without too many details (details can be included as annexes)</li> <li>• Simple and appropriate language.</li> <li>• Balance between text, photos, drawings, and diagrams.</li> <li>• Presented as a tool that allows for easy management by sections.</li> <li>• The structure establishes levels of importance and prioritizes contents.</li> <li>• It is easy to understand and update</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance between being fixed yet flexible.</li> <li>• The reference framework defines “What”, “Who”, and “When”</li> <li>• Considers both internal and external capacities and resources</li> <li>• Identifies the limitations and scope of the Plan</li> <li>• Identifies and prioritizes main risk/response scenarios</li> <li>• Establishes the necessary logistical support and management actions within the NS</li> <li>• Clearly defines the policy and strategy for NS actions</li> <li>• Incorporates criteria and indicators for its activation</li> <li>• Incorporates protocols for action, with well-defined roles and responsibilities for the immediate post-disaster days.</li> <li>• It complements plans from other institutions and organizations.</li> <li>• Identifies other priority areas of preparedness and institutional capacity strengthening.</li> <li>• Defines adequate updating procedures</li> </ul>

## Main steps for Developing Response and Contingency Plans



## Structure and Contents of Plans

The structure and contents of the Plans should be defined according to the needs of each National Society. However, each Plan should contain the minimum amount of information that allows for quick decision making and clearly defines the available resources, steps to follow, and roles and responsibilities of all in the event of an emergency.

In developing the plan, information from different sources can be incorporated, but all information must be **trustworthy** and of high **quality** and have a **purpose** or **objective** within the **plan**. If there are doubts as to the usefulness or quality of the information, it should not be included.

Annex 1 & 2 are recommended formats for Response and Contingency Plans when using this guide and Workshop Activity Pack.



## **CHAPTER 2 - ANALYZE**

For a sound context analysis, select information that is most relevant to the Plan's objectives. It should be of help to better understand the context in which the Plan is being developed.

It should not be lengthy but still contain relevant information that will help a reader with no knowledge of the context to understand the most important aspects of a country, region, or particular place. It should provide a complete and balanced analysis that combines political, economic, social and cultural aspects, among others.

- Sources of information should be trustworthy, updated, relevant and referenced (indicate the source from which it was gathered).
- A security analysis that allows the National Society to determine risk levels and action protocols should be incorporated in the context analysis.
- If the context analysis is well researched, it represents a very valuable piece of information for people who are not familiar with the place where the disaster occurred.

### **Key Documents/References Can Include:**

- The Country's National Development Plan
- Statistical data
- National Emergency Act
- Regional Disaster Management (DM) reports e.g. from CDEMA, IFRC, ECHO, UN
- CDM Strategy
- IFRC DM Strategy for the Caribbean
- Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Reports

# Steps for the Context Analysis

1

Following the suggested orientation table, determine the areas to be included in the context analysis and incorporate others, if necessary, according to the needs of the National Society.

2

For each area of analysis, review secondary information from strategic documents, other Plans, Studies from other institutions, etc. This allows us to identify information that needs to be located from other sources.

3

Verify the origin, reliability, and date of the information selected to determine its validity and relevance especially when it deals with sensitive information or is of subjective nature for the plan

4

Analyze each selected area and ensure that the level of detail and depth allows for decision making and defining strategies.

5

Periodically update contextual information following the updating procedures developed in the plan.

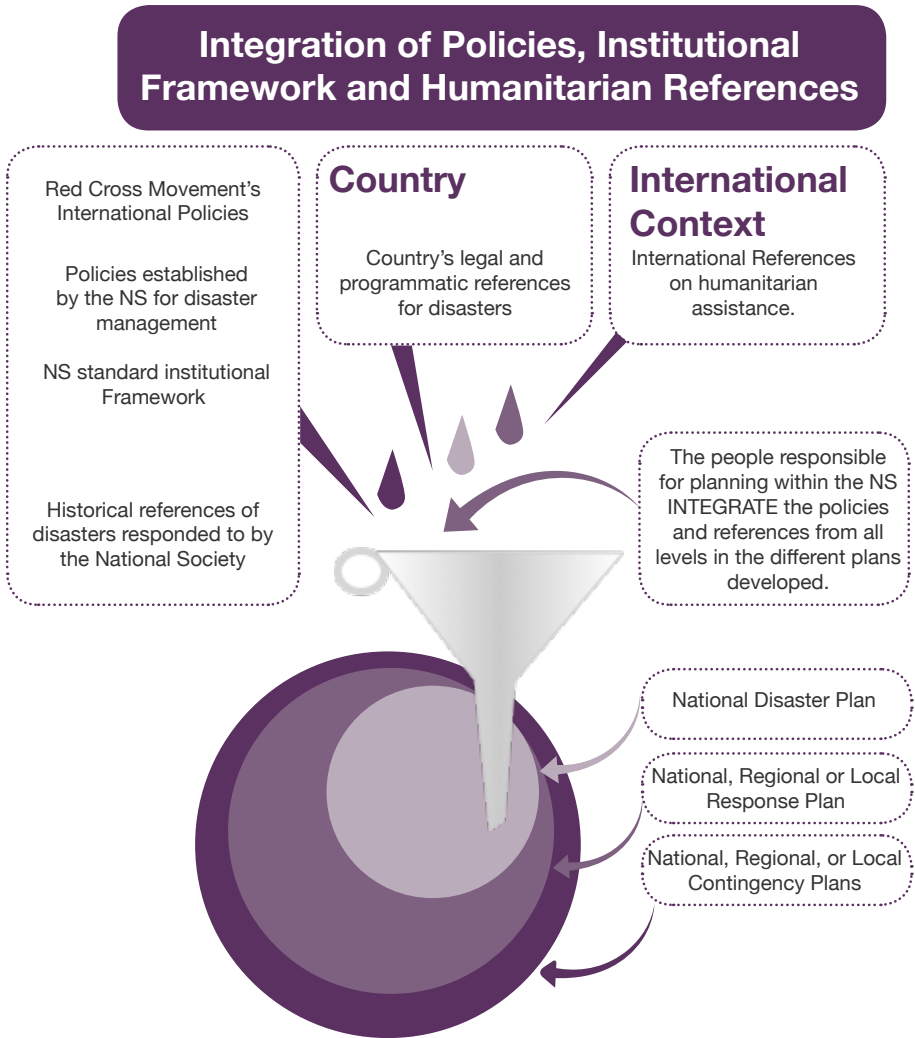
The following table provides a guide to identify the most relevant content and areas for analysis:

Areas for Context Analysis	Contents
Geographical (Maps) spatial location)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location, climate, topography, infrastructure, bordering Countries</li> </ul>
Political – Administrative System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization and analysis of the main state powers (executive, legislative and judicial)</li> <li>Administrative and political organization of the State</li> <li>Laws relating to organization (administrative decentralization, citizen participation, territorial decentralization, etc.)</li> </ul>
Socio-political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most relevant political groups</li> <li>Affiliations and Political Practices</li> <li>Stability of current government</li> <li>Main governmental policies (Health, Disaster, and Security)</li> <li>Internal tension within social groups</li> </ul>
Socio-Economic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main micro and macro-economic indicators</li> <li>Poverty levels</li> <li>Composition of social groups</li> <li>Demographic data (ethnic groups, sex, rural, urban, etc.)</li> <li>Family composition</li> <li>Access to Basic Services (Education and Health)</li> </ul>
Analysis of Disaster Reduction Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific legal framework for disaster reduction</li> <li>Country's organization and coordination mechanisms for disaster reduction</li> <li>Main Institutions responsible for disaster reduction</li> <li>Special programs or projects</li> </ul>
Socio-cultural Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of ethnic, linguistic, and social compositions</li> <li>Religions and Beliefs, Customs and Traditions</li> <li>Power structures, social and community organization</li> <li>Communities mental health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
Analysis of the most Vulnerable Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infants, Women, Seniors, Handicapped</li> <li>Specific ethnic groups</li> <li>Social (including migrants) and political groups</li> </ul>
Security Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Background and Analysis of current or potential social or political conflicts</li> <li>Risk Analysis for populations and institutions.</li> </ul>

## **Integrating Institutional Policies and Frameworks**

While a National Society's humanitarian actions can take place in special circumstances, they usually occur within the framework from which the NS develops its programs, projects, and usual activities. For this reason, humanitarian actions should concur with the policies, strategies, standards and norms regarding disaster reduction, which have been adopted by the NS or have been determined by the legal framework and the relevant authorities from the county, region or locality. To ensure that these aspects are properly integrated, they should be identified and analysed during the Plans' development process.

A good integration of the most relevant policies and strategies within the Plan provides a solid base from which the NS can build its response strategies and actions, according to the events and scenarios.



## RECORDING THE HISTORY OF RESPONSE TO DISASTERS

The historical reference of the disaster events in which the NS carried out humanitarian actions provides valuable information which helps to better define disaster scenarios and their correlating strategies. Information should be collected from the last 5 years with special attention given to significant disaster events (from the point of view of forming response plans) within that time-frame.

Reviewing the National Society's role and operations in past events allows us to identify what worked and what needs to be improved, as well as extract the main lessons learned and aspects that need to be considered for future responses. A historical registry of NS responses should not be a complex and excessively detailed database, but needs to contain relevant and useful information for future actions.

### Important Things to Note:

1. All plans formed by the NS should include the policies and references necessary for relating the established humanitarian objectives with the Red Cross Movement's international standards, as well as other organizations committed to the assistance and recovery of affected people.
2. The people within National Societies responsible for the area of relief should have a thorough knowledge of IFRC policies for disaster situations, as well as NS policies regarding the legal references for each country and international humanitarian references.
3. The references included in the different plans regarding policies, regulations, norms, standards, and humanitarian references should explicitly cite the document, source, and location of the information to facilitate consultation from the people who will implement the plans in crises.

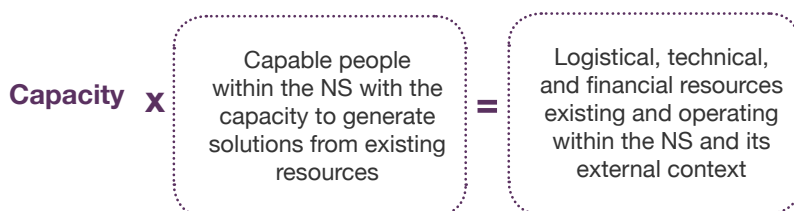
## Resource & Capacity Analysis

### Difference Between Capacities and Resources

It is important not to confuse capacity with resource. Resources are usually tangible, easy to identify and count, and make up a part of the capacity. Capacity, on the other hand, is not as easy to identify as it includes the potential, behaviour, attitudes and practices of individuals as well as institutional, which should be appropriately developed and strengthened.

In a NS response plan framework, it is essential to identify not only the resources but also the existing capacities, which are not always visible but can make a difference in the disaster response.

The response Capacity can be expressed as the result of synergistically correlating the management of capabilities and its potential to provide solutions from resources and the sum of the existing and operational resources.



### Key Elements for Identifying Resources & Capacities

Identifying resources and analysing capacities are two of the most important steps for developing Contingency Plans, as this analysis provides the basis for strategically strengthening existing capabilities and the diverse thematic areas related to the final humanitarian action. Thus the information obtained



about resources and capacity should be trustworthy and of quality, which allows us to optimize the use of what is available and identify the main weaknesses or gaps.

Any identification of capacities and resources should consider types of resources, levels of analysis, internal and external capacities, potential future resources and ensure that information is up-to-date.

## **Differentiate Between the Types of Resources and Level of Analysis**

The identification should include an analysis that differentiates between capabilities, materials (also referred to as logistics) economic or financial and the total capacity will be the combination of all of these.

A differentiation should also be made regarding the localization and environment of resource management, to allow for a better identification of the areas that have gaps and needs for strengthening for future responses.

## **Identifying Internal and External Capacities**

While the identification of internal resources are priority, we should not forget that there are other organizations and entities that 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 orientate our strategies, coordinate actions and arrive at collaboration agreements. This will also allow us to optimize our resources that are normally limited and need to be prioritized.

## **How to Incorporate Potential Future Resources**

While it is true that existing resources and capacities are the

only ones that we can count on 100%, 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 allow us to have additional resources once a disaster has occurred.

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

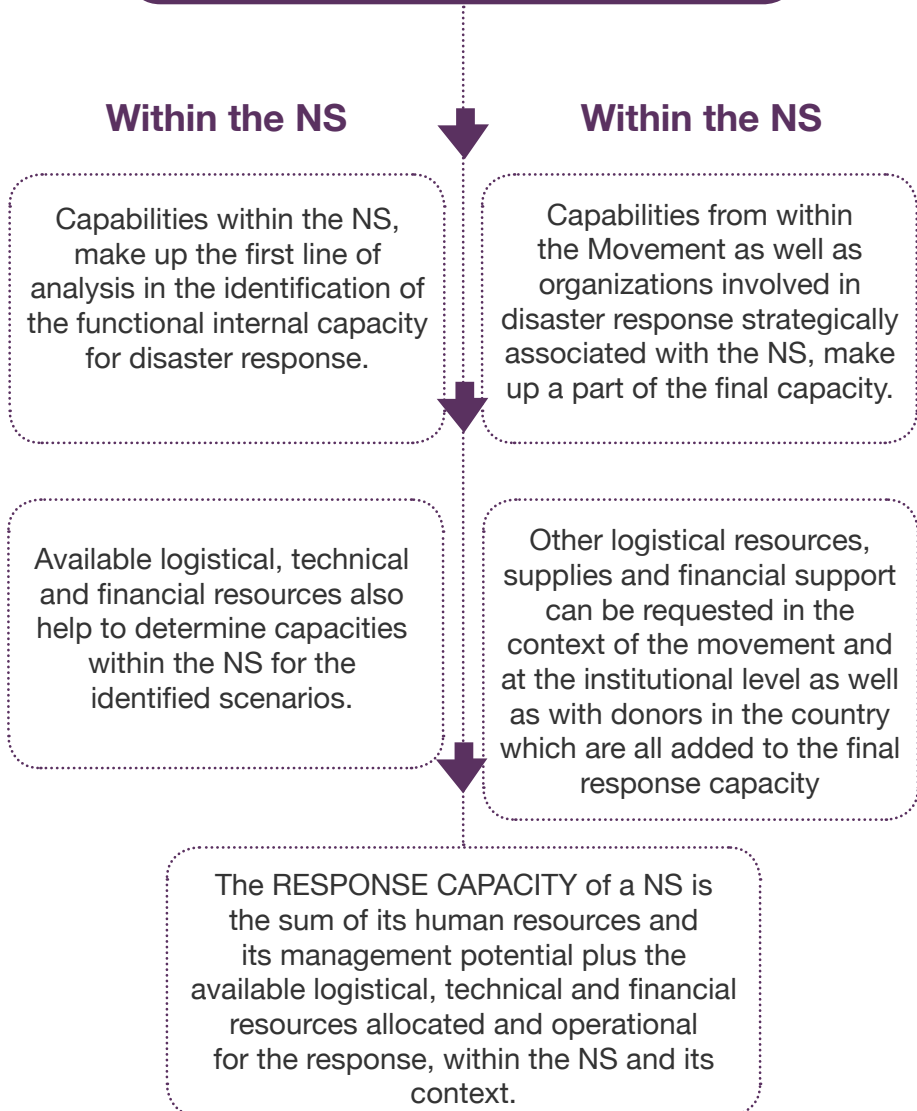
This allows us to be better prepared and define strategies for adaptation and institutional growth (Scale-up) if the volume of expected resources needed for a particular event exceeds predictions. (e.g. Hurricane Ivan in Grenada and the December 2013 floods in the Eastern Caribbean)

## **Ensure that the Information is Up-to-Date**

It often happens that the registry of Capabilities of personnel or inventories of equipment and logistic resources are not updated, thus, it is important to ensure that the information that is being counted on represents the reality and is up to date. It could happen that the registry of volunteers does not reflect the reality e.g. volunteers that are no longer active and are still on the registry and new volunteers have not yet been included. Or certain equipment or materials that are in storage or warehouses that have not been maintained and have deteriorated could be registered as in good condition.

In the case that we know that the official registries are not updated, we must ensure that key people who have the most updated information participate in the identification process.

## Analysis of a National Society's Response Capacity



## **Tools for Identification: SWOT Analysis, Matrices & Checklists**

A simple tool that is commonly used to determine capacities and identifies gaps and aspects that need improving is the SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), which as its name suggests, identifies the existing Strengths and Weaknesses of a particular setting, which can be an institution, process, project, etc. and links them to the Threats and Opportunities, as both the strengths and weaknesses can be associated with a particular threat or opportunity depending on how it is managed.

For Response and Contingency Plans, the SWOT analysis is applied at the institutional level and has a double use: on one hand it values the capacity of the institutions and organizations that are key actors in disaster response, such as governmental agencies, national and international NGOs, UN Agencies, etc. and on the other hand identifies internal and external areas or aspects that need to be improved and concretise actions for their improvement.

It is recommended to use matrices/tables and checklists which allow for easy interpretation, establish rapid comparisons, ensure that the most relevant information is included and identify gaps with greater ease.

The “Tools” section at the end of this chapter provides models of tables and matrices that can be used.

## **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 differentiated which can integrate the most important actors at the moment of a humanitarian response:

- Internal Institutional Capacities and Resources
- External Institutional Capacities and Resources
- Agreements with Other Partners (MoUs)
- Community Capacities and Resources

## Internal Institutional Capacities and Resources: National Society and Movement

Internal capacities and resources are all those that the different members of the Movement have assigned or can send to the territorial area defined in the Response/Contingency Plan for the identified priorities or Scenarios. These can be grouped into the following categories to facilitate analysis:

Different Actors within the Movement and where they are located:

<b>Operating National Society and Overseas Branches (OSBs) in some National Societies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Headquarters</li> <li>• Branches, Sections, etc.</li> <li>• Branches in high risk zones</li> </ul>
<b>Participating National Societies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With country presence</li> <li>• Without country presence</li> <li>• With conventions and bilateral agreements</li> </ul>
<b>IFRC Secretariat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caribbean Regional Representation Office</li> <li>• Americas Zone Office</li> <li>• PIRAC (Plate-forme d'Intervention Régionale Amériques Caraïbes)</li> <li>• Geneva</li> </ul>
<b>ICRC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With country presence</li> <li>• Without country presence</li> </ul>

## External Institutional Capacities and Resources

These are the capacities and resources from other institutions and organizations outside of the Red Cross Movement that have responsibilities and the presence or will to act in the geographical area defined in the Response/Contingency Plan. According to their mission, role and area of responsibility, they can be categorized into three broad groups: **Governmental Institutions** (Civil Defence, Ministry of Health, Mayoralty), national or international **Non-Governmental organizations** (CARE, OXFAM, etc) and **Multilateral and/or Bilateral Cooperation Organizations** (UN Agencies, IADB, 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 Response.

The following table provides a list of institutions and organizations that are recommended to be considered in the analysis:

Type of Institution	Examples
Governmental Coordination Organizations Responsible for Disaster Response.	NDO
Intergovernmental Organizations for Coordination in Disaster Relief / Risk Reduction.	CDEMA
Relief and Rescue Organizations	SAR Groups, Fire fighters, Police, Defence Force
Government Ministries whose responsibility coincides with the National Society's areas of work and service.	Ministries of Health, Education, Home Affairs, Social Development
United Nations agencies that have programs or actions in the prioritized zones/scenarios or those with which the Red Cross has a history or collaboration agreements.	UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, OCHA
National Non-Governmental Organizations with presence and important programs in a particular area.	Health NGOs, Food Security, Specialized in Shelter, Water and Sanitation
Non-Governmental Organizations that have a similar or complementary mission or programs to those of the National Society, who have common donors or have a close relationship.	OXFAM, ADRA SAVE THE CHILDREN CARITAS, CRS CARE, etc.
Projects or Interventions that have a large impact in a zone or region prioritized by the Response/Contingency Plan.	World Bank Projects, IADB
Other public or private organizations that have significant relevant and presence in a context or particular geographic area.	

## **Coordination and Collaboration: Agreements with Other Partners**

With the aim of strengthening its mission and quality of service, National Societies and other Movement members often have close collaboration and coordination agreements with Institutions, NGOs and organizations from the local, national, and regional levels. The scope, contents and areas of collaboration of the agreements, whether formal or not, need to be incorporated into our Response/Contingency Plans as they deal with important elements that directly influence our capacity and resources at the time of the Response. This information can be reflected in a simple manner

## **USEFUL INFORMATION**

### **Community Capacities and Resources: VCA**

The Red Cross has its own methodology/tool for analyzing capacities and resources at the community level, which is the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA). This tool not only identifies the capacities but also does a complete analysis of vulnerabilities, threats, and risks within a particular community.

A VCA will not be carried out with communities during the Response/Contingency development process, as they involve long term participative processes and they serve different needs. While a VCA analysis can represent an important input to be incorporated in the Plans, it should not be confused with the analysis of capacities and resources for the Response Plan, which should incorporate institutional or organizational elements from levels other than the community.

## Important Things to Note

- The Capacities and Resource Analysis allows us to identify GAPS and NEEDS before the occurrence of a disaster.
- A good identification of the capacities and resources has a much greater importance in very localized, isolated, or hard to access geographical areas.
- The analysis helps us to identify opportunities for alliances, collaboration, or relationships with new partners to optimize our own capacity and resources.
- The analysis of community capacities has a special relevance to the Plans linked to very particular contexts (ex: Caribbean Islands) or to Scenarios in geographical areas of difficult access, which can become isolated.
- A good identification of the capacities, possibilities and resources of others allows us to better optimize our resources and determine our VALUE ADDED.

## Risk Analysis: Threats and Vulnerabilities

There are many instruments and methodologies that can be used by each National Society to analyze the Threats, Vulnerabilities and Risks associated with different disasters. A quality risk analysis requires resources and technical capacity that is not always found within a National Society. Thus it is important to seek advice and collaborate with governmental technical-scientific institutions, universities, and other specialized organizations to obtain an analysis that corresponds to the needs of the plan. The information collected can be complemented with direct observations on the behavior and potency of threats that have not yet been fully documented.

For the organization preparing the response and contingency plan for a specific threat, the NS only needs to know information about the location, incidence, and the possible predictions on the behavior of the threat for a determined



time. Very detailed information on the threat is not required for the plan.

Risk Maps, created in a participative manner in places and communities where the National Society has developed processes and projects with the VCA methodology (assessment of vulnerabilities and capacities), constitute an especially valuable input for the development of response and contingency plans for well-identified geographic zones and micro-regions of limited size (Departments, Municipalities, Districts, Parishes, etc.)

# Steps for analysis of Risk, Threats and Vulnerabilities

1

VERIFY the existence of previous studies or analysis of threats, vulnerabilities and risks written by technical –scientific institutions, universities, or other organizations with a presence in the territory.

2

Ensure that the institution has the **TECHNICAL CAPACITY** and appropriate experience to carry out the risk analysis required for the Plan.

To facilitate this, collaboration agreements with technical-scientific institutions, universities, etc, can be established.

3

Carry out the **ANALYSIS OF THREATS** starting with available information on past events and considering the probability of the occurrence, magnitude of the damages, and the impact on the territory.

4

Analyze the **VULNERABILITY** level of the elements exposed to a potential threat by supporting the analysis, when possible, with indicators that measure the main vulnerabilities; social, economic, physical, institutional, organizational, political, educational, cultural, etc.

5

Carry out the **RISK ANALYSIS**, combining the threats and vulnerabilities, and create risk **MAPS**, to define and prioritize geographic zones, which will be a fundamental tool and input for developing and prioritizing scenarios.

## Risk Methodology and Analysis Framework

The NS risk analysis for possible disasters can be based on the identification of threats (Natural, Man-made, and/or Technological), as well as on the identification of vulnerable conditions of exposed populations and community infrastructure. The identification of a specific risk is derived from the analysis of the relationship between the threats and conditions of vulnerability of a region or territory.

The international community has adopted the following equation according to the Risk Management framework:

$$\text{Risk} = (\text{Hazard} \times \text{Vulnerability}) / \text{Capacity}$$

The interpretation of this equation is: “the Risk of a disaster is the result of the Threats and their relationship to vulnerable people or populations”.

It is important to highlight that this is not just a “mathematical equation” in which specific numeric values are replaced or included. It is a suggested methodology to interpret the dynamic behaviour of a potential threat, as well a community’s conditions of preparedness and response, through the identification and analysis of its vulnerability.

## Definition of a Reference Framework for Risk

Before starting an analysis of threats and/or vulnerabilities, each National Society should define a reference framework for risk known as a risk register, which should include, at minimum, the following aspects:

Concept	Analysis of Threats	Analysis of Vulnerability
Geographical Unit of Analysis	Country Region/Departments District/Municipality Parish Community/Neighbourhood	Population Sector Community Family Individual
Chronological	Time frame and incidence of the threats. E.g.: months, years, every five-years, decades, etc.	Period in which to analyse the vulnerable factors within a defined group. Dates of the information used and analysed
Framework	Most important threats in the geographic zones: flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts, epidemics, erosion Variations in the period of recurrence due to environmental or climate change	Specific conditions of exposure and vulnerability. E.g. Physical, Economic, Social, Organizational, Institutional, Educational, Cultural, Psychological etc.
Events/ Areas of Analysis	Probability of occurrence Possible impact and territorial coverage Magnitude of damages and losses Percentage of the population affected Others (e.g. secondary hazards that might lead to epidemics, floods in shelter areas etc.)	Economic: family earnings, unemployment rate Social: life expectancy, access to health services, education, infrastructure, sanitation Organizational: existence of committees and response plans, early warning systems Physical: Shelters, location and quality of structures and dwellings
Indicators of Measurement	Probability of occurrence Possible impact and territorial coverage Magnitude of damages and losses Percentage of the population affected Others (e.g. secondary hazards that might lead to epidemics, floods in shelter areas etc.)	Low, Medium, High Other means of measurement
Values and Range of Measurement	Improbable, possible , or imminent Other methods of measurement	

## Analysis of Threats: Probability of Occurrence

Probability of occurrence refers to the possibility that a particular disaster (hurricane, earthquake, drought, etc.) will take place within a particular period. The majority of events have established periods in which the disaster occurs with a maximum or minimum intensity. It is usually expressed in a percentage of probability and the main source of information is a country or region's registry of historical events.

Proposed Timeframe	Event/Threat
From 1 month up to 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter Periods</li> <li>• Flooding and seasonal slides</li> <li>• Forest Fires</li> </ul>
Between 1 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hurricanes, Storms</li> <li>• El Niño and la Niña phenomenon</li> <li>• Cyclical Flooding and droughts</li> </ul>
Periods of more than 5 years E.g. 10, 30 and 50 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthquakes and Tsunamis</li> <li>• Volcanic Eruptions</li> </ul>

The probability of a particular threat occurring can generally be established by qualifying three variables:

- **Improbable:** Threats which due to their characteristics cannot occur in a particular region (example - a tsunami in a country's interior, a slide in flat ground, or hurricanes in countries far away from the equatorial line).
- **Possible:** The threat has presented itself at least once, within a particular period, in a locality or region - for which

its return presence cannot be disregarded.

- Imminent: The threat will be present in a short time frame, which will affirm the historical registry and scientific predictions.

## **Analysis of Vulnerabilities: Vulnerability Assessment**

To establish the risk of possible disasters, it is necessary to identify and consider the vulnerability of a population or system exposed to the influence of particular threats. Vulnerability analysis can be as detailed and exhaustive provided that the information is updated and from reliable sources.

The community VCA process will be a very important input for the Plans for localized threats or well-defined regions, zones, and localities.

If a particular context requires a more detailed and precise vulnerability analysis, identify groups of indicators for each area of vulnerability that can give us different values to define the total vulnerability. The following table provides some examples:

Areas of Analysis	Examples of Indicators
Physical Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of the means of communication</li> <li>• Presence of public infrastructure and shelters.</li> <li>• Presence/accessibility to evacuation routes in the event of a disaster.</li> <li>• Quality of dwelling construction</li> <li>• Distance of dwellings or population nucleus to identified threats.</li> </ul>
Organizational Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of Early Warning Systems</li> <li>• Existence of Response Plans and Teams</li> <li>• Presence of Development Projects, NGOs.</li> <li>• Existence and functionality of community organisations, social groups, etc.</li> <li>• Potential impact on human resources</li> </ul>
Institutional Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of assistance from relief entities such as the Red Cross, Fire Department, Police, Civil Defence Commission in the territory.</li> <li>• Human Resources dedicated to response in the territory</li> <li>• Financial Resources dedicated to preparedness and response in the territory.</li> <li>• Awareness and political will from the local authorities towards disaster reduction.</li> <li>• Institutions' supplies and equipment.</li> <li>• Sectors with a permanent presence in the territory</li> </ul>
Social Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of community access to basic services such as potable water, sanitation, and health.</li> <li>• Level of social cohesion toward the presence of different ethnic groups, family disintegration, etc.</li> <li>• Access to education.</li> <li>• Existence of most vulnerable groups: disabled, children, single mothers, and the elderly – access to services?</li> </ul>
Economic Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family income level</li> <li>• Unemployment rates</li> <li>• Levels of extreme poverty</li> </ul>

A simple way of defining the vulnerability levels for a specific geographical unit or zone is by using the categories of HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW, as explained in the table below:

Vulnerability	Characteristics
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People generally recognize a particular threat and are informed about its dynamics and possible activation in the particular period</li> <li>• There are high organizational and response capacities for a possible emergency or disaster, which can cause severe affectation</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the community exposed to threats cannot easily identify them, there is a minimum level of organization and response capacity to confront them if they activate.</li> </ul>
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The communities and people exposed to the threats may have knowledge about them but do not know about the warning and preparedness actions that they should implement.</li> <li>• The community or population exposed to a particular threat has insufficient response capacity or resilience.</li> </ul>



## Characterizing the Risk of Disaster

While the reference “values” obtained for the threats and vulnerable conditions are generally qualitative considerations, this does not mean that they cannot be established as a valid concept for the risk of possible disasters, which serves as a base for the plan’s consolidation and for decision-making.

The following matrix facilitates the characterization of risk according to the estimated values of threat and vulnerability for the person undertaking the planning in the field.

Threat of Impact		Low	Medium	High
	Improbable			
	Probable			
	Imminent			

## Risk of Impact

Risk of impact refers to the magnitude, damages and effects that a threat can have on a particular territorial unit (municipality, subsidiary, region, department or country).

Each event, according to its characteristics, can potentially cause a determined level of impact. This is the sum of the damages to infrastructure, injuries, and the general impact to the system of networks and services exposed to its influence. There is a general range of three values to characterize the risk of potential impact that a threat can cause, which are described in the table below.

Potential Impact	Characteristics
Low	Threats of a low magnitude with damages in a limited area and low potential of causing damages to people or infrastructure.
Medium	Threats with damages in geographical zones, which could affect vital networks and services, with the possibility of short-term recovery using local resources and capacity.
High	Threats with a large potential to cause multiple damages to infrastructure and services in exposed communities./Threats with severe damages which require external attention and resources to manage the emergency situation.

## Important Things to Note

1. Use existing studies and analysis of threats, vulnerabilities, and risk from reliable sources if they contain sufficient information for the National Society's Plans.
2. The Risk Analysis should be carried out with the participation of people with experience, knowledge and expertise to conceptualize the threats and vulnerabilities.
3. Each NS can establish their own methodology to assess threats, vulnerability, and risk and design scales and ranges of reference according to the country's institutional focus.
4. Risk maps and information from places where the Red Cross has developed Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) processes are inputs that the NS should consider for the risk analysis of these zones and later definitions of scenarios.
5. Threat, vulnerability, or risk maps are a valuable planning tool for decision makers within the NS and essential input for defining disaster scenarios.

## **CHAPTER 3 - DEVELOP**

## How to Define Objectives

An objective is generally the statement of “what” is hoped to be achieved, in a determined quantity and time. Objective Statements should provide the reader with a structured and precise idea of the defined objective (what), how much (quantity) and (when) it is to occur.

Plans can incorporate a General Objective and various Specific Objectives which define its priorities and areas of action.

The General Objective is a Statement that should clearly define the aims of the Plan. The Objective Statement should answer the questions: Who?, What?, How?, When?, Where?, and they should incorporate the following aspects:

Values, principles, policies, institutional strategies, and humanitarian references

- Objectives of the plan relating to the thematic areas of humanitarian assistance
- Who in the NS will be involved in defining the objectives
- Which NS resources will be involved
- Time and places covered by the plan

The Specific Objectives should refer to priorities and aspects that will be prioritized, improved, and strengthened within the plan to enable the National Society to offer an efficient and quality humanitarian response. This includes aspects such as:

- Identifying Risks and Scenarios

- Decision Making
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Coordination Aspects
- Identifying Resources and Capacities
- Distinctive areas and strategies for institutional actions
- Prioritizing vulnerable groups using (beneficiary selection criteria, protection issues, logistical issues in case of security situation worsens)

## Identifying Limitations or Possible Critical Factors

The identification of limitations allows us to design action strategies and policies within the PLAN that are better adapted to the realities, while identifying weaknesses and aspects that need to be improved upon to be later incorporated into the design of the preparedness and capacity building strategies. Limitations to the plan are factors, either internal or external, that restrict the scope, coverage and degree of fulfilment of the Response and Contingency Plans.

Internal factors usually refer to institutional aspects related to the reality, capacity and available resources within the National Society and the Movement. Internal limitations can be overcome.

External factors are conditions that exist in the context of developing the Plan and are more difficult to overcome as their solutions often depend on other actors.

The main areas of analysis for identifying limitations to the Plan are:

Internal Limiting Factors to the Response Plan	External Limiting Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Human Resources</b> (Number of workers and volunteers - profiles, training, availability, PMER capacity)</li> <li>• <b>Institutional Presence and Coverage</b> (Number of subsidiaries- credibility, recognition)</li> <li>• <b>Logistical Means</b> (Transportation, IT/ telecommunications, warehouses, handling of fatalities etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Availability of Funds</b> (Within the NS, Government, other members of the Movement)</li> <li>• <b>Coordination with other Partners</b> (Inter-institutional Relations)</li> <li>• <b>Characteristics of services offered</b> (Quality, opportunity)</li> <li>• <b>Relations with other members of the Movement.</b> (PNS, IFRC, ICRC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Affected Infrastructure.</b> (Highways, bridges, aqueducts)</li> <li>• <b>Means of Transportation.</b> (Availability of aerial, marine, or land transportation, cost of fleets)</li> <li>• <b>Country's political administrative organization.</b> (Legislation, political will, institutional and state organization)</li> <li>• <b>Community coordination and organization.</b> (Leaders, attitude of affected population)</li> <li>• <b>Security and Public Order.</b> (Internal conflict, delinquency, restricted mobility, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Coverage and Quality of Telecommunication Networks.</b> (Repeaters, Cellular Telephones, other means, etc)</li> <li>• <b>Topography, Orography and Natural Barriers.</b> (Mountainous zones, Rivers, Isolated zones, Islands etc)</li> <li>• <b>Climate</b></li> </ul>

## Defining the Response Strategy

Defining a Response Strategy requires establishing specific humanitarian objectives and priorities for sectors of intervention. Certain elements need to be identified and linked to define the thematic areas or sectors of intervention so that the humanitarian action responds efficiently to the

urgent needs of the population exposed to a particular threat or affected by a disaster.

The general strategy is related to a “comparative advantage”, which means achieving a larger quantity and a better quality with the same resources. This “advantage” is achieved by using NS resources and capacities to achieve a better and more opportune benefit for the affected population.

Defining a Response Strategy is a means of considering and opting for the best alternative for implementing and developing the required humanitarian actions and effectively using available NS institutional capacities and resources. The strategy will be defined through a series of criteria (shown in the table below) which will aid in determining the scale of the response:

According to the Movement's principles and global strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Fundamental Principles.</li> <li>• Strategy 2020</li> <li>• Institutional policies defined and adopted by the National Society for humanitarian assistance.</li> </ul>
According to previously identified possible scenarios of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined scenarios that are considered high priority due to anticipated impact (e.g. earthquakes, volcanoes or hydro-meteorological or climatic conditions).</li> <li>• Areas likely to be significantly affected</li> <li>• Specific vulnerabilities of the population and vital infrastructure (aqueducts, hospitals, roads, schools, etc.)</li> </ul>
According to the NS's capacity and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of the National Society department responsible for disaster management programs and activities (prevention, preparation, relief, recovery)</li> <li>• Prepositioned supplies and logistical resources /Available NS infrastructure including telecommunications, warehouses, vehicles and structures that can be used</li> <li>• Areas of specialization where the NS has an “added value”</li> </ul>
According to the coordination and complimentary actions with other National Societies, Institutions or sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International cooperation projects and programs between the NS and other countries/agencies with the aim of preparing, attending to or helping the recovery of affected communities.</li> <li>• Coordination/Collaboration agreements with other partners, institutions, NGOs and organizations should be at the local, national and regional levels.</li> </ul>

## Components of the Response Strategy

The Response Strategy will be made up by the sectors and thematic areas of intervention, which have been prioritized according to the criteria explained above. The following table explains the components required for each Intervention Sector:

Operational Objectives	For each sector of intervention, formulate one or more objective which describes the aim, scope, and coverage that the humanitarian action will have. (see the example of formulating objectives)
Description of actions	Mention and explain the actions and activities that will be developed providing details that are especially relevant for implementation.
Coverage and Scope of the intervention	Using maps and statistics (where possible) define the coverage of the actions, detailing geographical areas, target groups, quantity and quality of the assistance provided.
Required Resources	List the capabilities, financial and logistical resources required to develop the predicted humanitarian actions.



## Steps for Defining the Response Strategy

ONE	TWO	TREE
Collect and analyze existing information on impact scenarios	According to the scenarios and NS policies, establish which humanitarian actions will be implemented in the event of a disaster	Formulate the Response Strategy, stressing the thematic areas and operative actions to be developed by the NS
Remember that the information obtained should be official and validated.	Keep in mind that when establishing response actions that involve the NS, this implies directly consulting the people in charge of the areas and programs.	Don't forget to refine the adopted strategies with numbers that clearly reflect the scope and institutional capacity of each action.

## Scope and Coverage of the Plan

The plan should clearly define its coverage and scope.

Coverage refers to the geographic area or areas that will be covered by the plan, including Departments, Municipalities, Zones, Regions, Communities, etc. If any places merit special priority, they should also be mentioned.

Scope refers to the type of actions or services that the Institution plans to provide. It is important to detail the type of attention, coverage of populations, and National Society's distinctive areas of work in a given context. The Plan should also define the scope of the intended participation and coordination with other institutions or partners.

Identifying, analyzing, and overcoming internal limitations are challenges that will ensure efficient implementation of the Plan.

Defining the plan's coverage and scope limits the expectations that could arise regarding the humanitarian assistance provided by the Red Cross and is useful for other institutions to define their response plans and strategies in similar or complementary sectors.

## Important Things to Note

1. The formulation of plans must reflect the objectives and be based on the Standard thematic lines for humanitarian assistance implemented by the Movement.
2. The objectives should be viable and feasible for the National Society given its response capacity.
3. The implementation of each plan, both within the National Society and the external context, requires an analysis and determination of the limitations.
4. Limitations detected should be managed in advance to ensure that they do not create obstacles when either developing or activating the plan.
5. The scope and coverage of the plan should be established to precisely define the National Society's actions both within the plan and in the country's institutional and public context.

## Principle Sectors for Intervention

It is important to ensure that all sectors are addressed during the development of the response strategy. Although the specific technical areas focused on will vary with each NS, each sector will require attention, support and coordination between the NS, IFRC and external partners. Modalities such as cash transfer programming should be explored to further complement the sectors during the relief phase of disaster operations. The figure below highlights the various technical response areas and how they are linked together.



## **Building Disaster Scenarios Selection and Prioritization**

A scenario is a chain of events that could occur at any moment, in a particular place creating the basis for predictions or hypothesis for planning.

From this definition, we can extract three key words that will give us the guidelines to select and prioritize scenarios: Events, Hypothesis and Planning.

Disaster scenarios are always related to fairly catastrophic events that can occur in a particular geographic area and time frame. Before materializing, the events are considered Threats, which is the probability that they will materialize in a particular moment and place. This is why the knowledge and analysis of Threats and Vulnerabilities is essential for defining disaster scenarios.

A scenario is mainly a hypothesis, which means that there is no guarantee that it will take place at the predicted time or place. The quantity and quality of the information on the threats and vulnerabilities, the understanding of the context, and our experience and intuition will determine the degree to which the scenarios developed approximate reality. In most cases, however, the scenario does not occur as it was defined in the planning, and on many occasions, it occurs in a completely different form than predicted.

Therefore the most relevant part of the process is the opportunity for improved planning. When developing and prioritizing Scenarios, we should be aware of our strengths and weaknesses, identify gaps, have a better understanding of our context, and plan resources and other series of actions that will help us to improve our preparedness and response strategies.

Some important criteria that should be considered when selecting and prioritizing scenarios are shown in the diagram below:

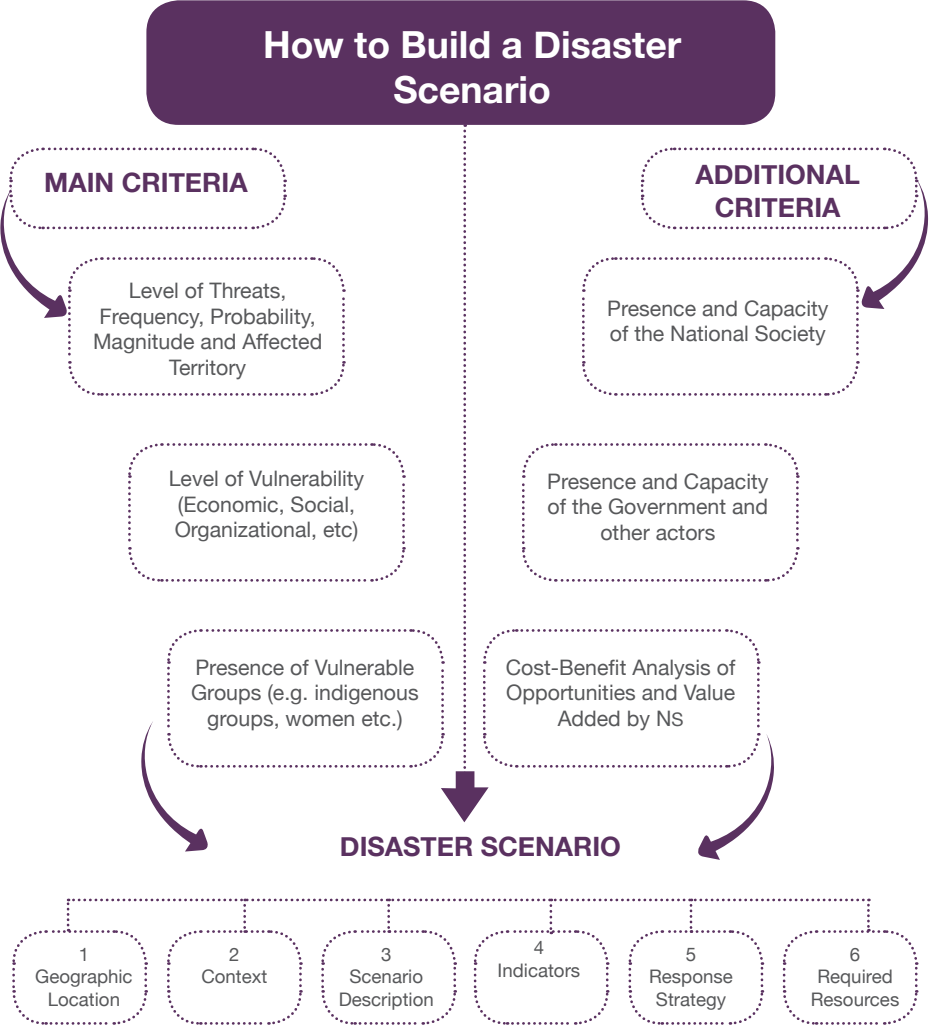
## How Much Criteria Should Be Prepared?

While there is no standard regarding the number of scenarios, the number should be limited, as each one needs to have its own contingency plan. Thus, based on the suggested criteria, priority should be given to the scenarios with the most probability of occurrence within the particular planning period or to those that are predicted to have the largest magnitude or cause the most damage to the population and goods.

## What Should Be Included in a Scenario?

A Scenario provides important information on a probable disaster situation that can be used for decision making and to define response strategies. Therefore the information included in the scenario should be clear, relevant, and useful for offering an efficient and quality response appropriate for a particular context. A disaster scenario should include AT LEAST the following 6 aspects:

#	Concept	Contents
1	Geographic Location of the threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas with probable impact (parishes, communities, etc.)</li> <li>• Socio-demographic data of the zone</li> <li>• Means of access</li> <li>• Map of the location with an adequate scale</li> </ul>
2	Historical context of threats and disasters that have occurred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical background of threats</li> <li>• Details about the threat (duration, recurrence, related threats)</li> <li>• Local customs and cultures</li> <li>• Socio-political Context</li> <li>• Previous Experiences</li> </ul>
3	General Description of the Scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predicted number of people affected</li> <li>• Predicted magnitude and damages</li> <li>• Most significant issues predicted (food, shelter, health)</li> <li>• Vulnerable groups affected</li> </ul>
4	Indicators for understanding the level of severity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of territory and people affected</li> <li>• Local reaction and capacity</li> <li>• Damages to vital systems</li> <li>• Overall behaviour of the population</li> </ul>
5	Response Strategy foreseen for the Scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority sectors</li> <li>• Scope of the response – which level of the organization can respond to the scenario?</li> <li>• Limitations on humanitarian actions</li> <li>• NS Priorities in humanitarian assistance</li> </ul>
6	Required Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human, logistical and financial resources</li> <li>• Resources for Personal Welfare</li> </ul>



## Important Things to Note

- A scenario is the hypothesis of a probable disaster event. in reality it can be similar or different from what was initially predicted.
- The scenarios defined by a NS are aimed at strengthening its response capacity according to the resulting affectation caused by a specific threats.
- Developing scenarios is an important exercise as it helps us to think and develop our capacity and prepares us to respond to a specific event.
- Previous experiences (historical memory) and our intuition will help our scenario to be the closest as possible to what will actually happen.
- The scenario's description should provide relevant information with enough detail for planning and decision making.
- Scenario development requires good planning but does not have to be too time-consuming or difficult. The best scenarios are reliable without being too detailed or complicated.

## **CHAPTER 4 - IMPLEMENT**



## Developing Response Protocols and Standard Operating Procedures

Oftentimes the terms “protocol” and “procedure” are used to mean the same thing. This Guide differentiates the terms according to the institutional planning framework and the concepts used by many of the countries in the region.

Response Protocols are work agreements that define the division of roles and responsibilities and facilitate coordination between different institutions and partners with the aim of improving the quality of the disaster response. They are generally the result of processes of training, exchange and inter-institutional collaboration.

Operating Procedures are a detailed sequence of steps or actions defined to respond, with greater efficiency and more effectively, to a previously identified situation or scenario.

The Protocols and Procedures are complementary. While it is not always essential, the majority of Procedures are linked to one or various Protocols, giving them greater clarity and definition.

The development of Protocols and Procedures within the Response and Contingency Plans, before a disaster strikes, is crucial to ensure an appropriate and quality response. There is almost no time for normal processes of decision making and actions at the time of an emergency. The steps, tasks, functions and responsibilities of all of the partners, both internal and external, should already be clear.

Protocols and Procedures should be simple, containing the least amount of steps or indicators to achieve the desired outcome. They should be clear, using formats, language and codes that can be easily understood by readers.

The development process should ensure the participation of key people, who have a high degree of understanding and knowledge of their application. Sometimes, the contents of the Protocols or Procedures may not be sufficient and may require training and application for the people who will use them.

# Steps for Developing Protocols and Procedures

1

Decide what are the priority protocols and procedures according to the scenarios and National Society or Affiliate's needs and create a list of priorities.

2

Review to see if the recommended models require adaptation or special changes based on the context and identified needs.

3

Develop the basic process of prioritized Protocols and Procedures involving key people with direct responsibility for decision making and operations, following the guide for suggested content.

4

Verify and ensure that people with specific responsibilities in the protocols and procedures list are familiar with and understand the steps and tasks that they need to carry out.

5

Update protocols and procedures and develop new ones according to the National Society's context, priorities, needs and capacities.

## Protocols and Procedures to be Included in the Plan

In a National Society's Response and Contingency Plans, protocols should define the roles, responsibilities and tasks within the National Society or branch and with the different members of the Movement who could intervene in an identified scenario. Some of the protocols can be based on previous bilateral or multilateral agreements at the local, regional, or international level. The following table summarizes some of the Protocols that are recommended for development:

Type of Protocol	Aim
Donor Relations	Determine the division of roles and leadership among the NS, PNS, Secretariat, and ICRC relating to external donors such as ECHO, USAID, etc.
Operational Coordination	Under the leadership of the ONS, determine zones and areas for intervention for the different members of the Movement
Response Management and Decision Making	Within the NS, determine the management and decision making model for the emergency.
Roles and Responsibilities within the NS.	Identify the principal tasks and responsibilities of the key people and areas within the NS

## Procedures

Standard Operating Procedures are developed for different levels and sectors and can become numerous depending on the complexity and needs of a scenario and the size and internal demand of the National Society or Branch. To facilitate the decision on which Procedures to include, it is advisable to divide them into two broad groups: Principal Procedures and Additional Procedures

Principal procedures include the minimum procedures essential for every Response/Contingency Plan. Normally this should include procedures that are related to aspects such as: the Declaration of Alert Levels, Emergency Management, Decision Making, Security Management and other themes that the National Society considers priority.

Without these procedures, a response cannot be activated nor can immediate actions be taken. Below are some suggestions:

Procedure	Aim	Responsible
Declaration of Levels of Alert	Following established indicators, declare the different institutional alert levels and define the steps to follow with the people responsible.	Governing Council, General Secretariat
Activation of Response	Carry out the strategic, political, or high level decision making process which determines urgent measures for resolving the needs generated by the disaster.	President, National Directors
Activation of Special Procedures	Facilitate the administrative support for the priority intervention sectors required for an appropriate, effective, and efficient Response.	Secretariat or General Management
Activation of the Response or Contingency Plan	Implement the actions in the Contingency Plan, making and directing decisions at all levels of the Response.	Disaster Management Director
Chain of Command and Responsibilities	Structure the chain of command according to levels of alert and define the roles and responsibilities of the executive and operative officers.	President

Security Management	Define indicators to determine security levels according to the risks and detail the steps and measures to be taken according to the established security level.	Disaster Management Director, Other Directors
Information Management and Media	Determine which information should be shared, when, with whom, key messages for media, etc.	Communications focal point
Carry out an Evaluation (DANA)	Define the steps, tasks, objectives, and responsibilities for the Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis	Directors, NITs, RITs,

## Additional Procedures

These are the steps or actions that are not necessary for every country, context, or scenario. They are often more concrete and detailed and each National Society or Branch can develop and add them according to their context, type of scenario or specific needs that have been identified. For example, a NS specialized in Search and Rescue (SAR) should have one or various Procedures on this topic, while another NS, whose main response area is Distribution of Food Aid, will need procedures on purchasing, storage and distribution.

## Important Things to Note

1. Protocols are agreements on roles and responsibilities based on planned coordination with the aim of offering a more efficient and effective Response.
2. Protocols and Procedures are the result of having considered the necessary steps and actions for communication and coordination with internal and external actors before the occurrence of a disaster.

3. Protocols and Procedures are absolutely necessary, as during the emergency we must act quickly. We cannot start then think about the details of what we will do, how we will do it or who will assume the responsibility.
4. While all Procedures are relevant within a Response/Contingency Plan, some are considered fundamental, as without them it is difficult to carry out a rapid and organized Response.
5. When developing Protocols and Procedures, it is important to do a prior analysis of context and needs, following the minimum steps and using models or matrixes that allow us to organize information clearly and precisely.

## **CHAPTER 5 - REVIEW**

## Keeping Plans Relevant

In order for the Response or Contingency Plan to be a dynamic and useful tool that allows us to make appropriate decisions in disaster situations, it is necessary to allot time and resources, not only for its preparation but also for its follow-up, revision and updating. Developing Plans should not be viewed as a static activity with a defined start and finish, but as a cyclical and on-going process integrated in the institution's daily strategies and tasks. There are three concrete actions to ensure that our Plan's contents are updated and are relevant at the time of its implementation:

1. Identifying gaps and needs for capacity strengthening
2. Follow-up and Evaluation of the Plans
3. Updating the Plans

## Identifying Gaps and Undeveloped Capacities

It is normal that in developing our Response and Contingency Plans we identify gaps and undeveloped capacities that could affect the quality of our Plan, thus affecting the type of response that will be provided by following the Plan. These undeveloped capacities could be internal (within the National Society), or external (related to the context and identified scenarios). Normally they will be identified naturally during the Plan's development process, especially in the 1. Disaster Risk Analysis phase, 2. Identification of Capacities, Capabilities and Existing Resources, and 3. Defining of Response Strategies. The SWOT matrixes that have been developed during the Plan and the VCA communities, if existing, will be our main source of information.

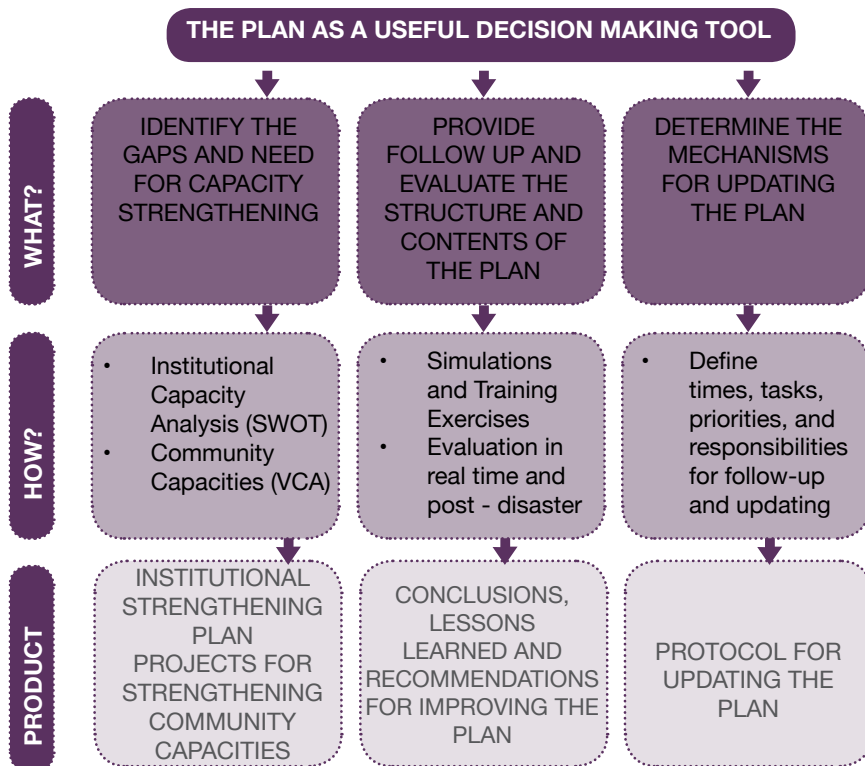
Gaps and undeveloped capacities that have been identified will be grouped as internal (institutional) or external (Community, Authorities, etc.) to give them an order of



priority and determine the short and medium term solutions.

We will have better opportunities to influence the internal undeveloped capacities and we can include them in the National Society's Institutional Capacity Strengthening and Development, if existing, or develop a simple Capacity Building Matrix establishing short, medium and long term priorities along with mechanisms, tasks and necessary resources.

The external undeveloped capacities are often multiple and complex and thus, very difficult to overcome. Therefore it is recommended that National Societies focus their efforts on developing the capacities of the communities affected by disasters by designing preparatory community programs and projects based on the "Vulnerabilities and Capacities Analysis" (VCA). Below is a summary of how to ensure that plans remain relevant:



## Follow-Up and Evaluation of Plans

After finishing the first version of the Response and Contingency Plans, it is important to determine if its structure and contents are the most suited to our response. Thus, it is recommended to test them periodically, along with their lessons and conclusions, to make the appropriate changes.

The best way to verify the plans' validity and usefulness is when they are activated and implemented in real situations, or tested in a simulation. Evaluations should be frequently made with real data using different methodologies, such as the following:

- **Evaluation during the Response:** During a particular event a person or group of persons, (usually external, that have no responsibilities within the plan) are designated to act as "observers". During the first days while the plan is implemented, using pre-established criteria and indicators, the observers will evaluate different aspects of the plan to extract conclusions, lessons, and actions necessary for its improvement. This type of evaluation has a special value in emergencies, and for its size and complexity (many actors, various countries involved, etc.) requires close observation.
- **Evaluation Post-Disaster:** Refers to a final evaluation once the most relevant phase of activation and response has concluded. It is mainly based on the testimony of the principal actors involved in the response and the consequences and objective data as to how the Plan was activated and implemented. The results are often conclusive but sometimes details that should have been observed during the event are missed.

Nevertheless, in most cases, we cannot wait for a determined event or scenario to occur to know if our plan is valid. Thus the need to test emergency preparedness plans by simulating situations as close as possible to the predicted scenarios identified in the plans, through simulation and drill exercises. Regardless of the type of evaluation or exercise

to be developed, the most important things to determine are the conclusions, lessons, and recommendations to improve existing Response and Contingency Plans.

## Updating Plans

To ensure the periodical updating of our plans, there must be clear and appropriate procedures for the National Society. Updating procedures can be very simple but should include at least the following elements:

- Which (Sections to update): A detailed list of the parts of the plan that must be updated, with a recommended timeframe, wherein the most important contents are well defined, as not all are updated with the same frequency or in the same way.
- When (Frequency): clearly define how often each part should be updated. This will be organized by importance of the information and the frequency that the information is susceptible to change. For example, everything referring to resources will change more often than data related to the general context. Contingency Plans should be updated much more frequently than Response Plans.
- How (Methodology): For each part, we should choose the most appropriate methodology. Some elements can be updated easily by consulting Web pages or institutional and strategic documents, while others require consultative processes or processes of evaluation, simulation or training exercises.
- Who (Responsible): Resources existing in the institution should be optimized and responsibilities should be divided for updating different parts. Normally, the capability part is updated through human resources, while the response scenarios and strategies are done by program directors or technicians. It is always recommended that one person is responsible for ensuring the complete fulfilment of the process.

- **With what (Required Resources):** If during the updating process there are additional or missing resources, this situation should be clearly identified so that it can be reflected in the National Society's budgets.
- **Registering Changes:** It is important to have an adequate registry of when, and who did the different Plan updates, as this will help others in their consultative processes.

## **Important Things to Note**

- For a Response or Contingency Plan to be a dynamic tool, it should incorporate elements of institutional preparation and processes for follow-up, evaluation, and updating.
- The Institutional Strengthening Plan should prioritize the most urgent actions to articulate a minimum response for the identified scenarios.
- The VCA is a community diagnostic tool that helps us to define strategies for community preparedness.
- Updating procedures should include clear responsibilities and identify required resources.

## **Annex 1: Response and Contingency Plan Templates and related activities**

Please visit [www.cadrim.org](http://www.cadrim.org) or write us at [cadrim.americas@ifrc.org](mailto:cadrim.americas@ifrc.org) to access this information.

COMMENTS FROM FIELD TEAM:

List Any Other Relevant Information

*(including presence of organizations currently working on CBDRR):*

## Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Proclaimed in Vienna in 1965, the seven Fundamental Principles bond together the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, The International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. They guarantee the continuity of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and its humanitarian work.

### 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

The Movement 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 continue 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

The Movement is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

### Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or one 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.

For more information on this publication, please contact:

**The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
The Red Cross Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Reference Centre  
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