UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | EMERGENCY HANDBOOK

- Preparedness and Response

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UNHCR Policy on Emergency Preparedness and

Response

04 May 2023

Key points

- The Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response is the principal document regulating UNHCR's engagement in emergencies. Compliance with the Policy is mandatory.
- UNHCR declares an internal emergency when faced with a humanitarian crisis for which the government and/or the Organization lack the capacity on the ground to respond.
- Proactive preparedness is key to a timely and effective response during an emergency.
- To expedite the delivery of life-saving assistance, an emergency declaration introduces simplified procedures in areas such as supply, partnership agreements and human resources.

1. Overview

The overriding priority in any humanitarian response is to save lives and minimize serious harm, through meeting the most urgent humanitarian needs. UNHCR's Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response sets out UNHCR's internal mechanisms for emergency preparedness – such as risk management and contingency planning – and response – including when and how an emergency is declared, coordination arrangements and support mechanisms.

2. Relevance for emergency operations

The Policy establishes the framework for how UNHCR prepares for and responds to emergencies. It applies to all UNHCR staff members and affiliate workforce in the field and at headquarters who are engaged in leading, managing, delivering, overseeing and/or supporting any aspect of emergency preparedness and response. Compliance with the policy is mandatory.

3. Main guidance

UNHCR declares an emergency when two criteria are met. Firstly, there is a humanitarian crisis or disaster which either has caused or threatens to cause new forced displacement, loss of life or other serious harm, or which significantly affects the rights or well-being of displaced and

stateless persons, unless immediate action is taken. Secondly, the humanitarian crisis must demand exceptional measures because current government and UNHCR capacities are inadequate for a predictable and effective response. The declaration of an emergency level is based on a country operation's analysis of the situation, as well as its existing preparedness and response capacity.

Key Principles: The humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality are central to UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response. These are complemented by a set of additional principles including the centrality of protection, state responsibility and humanitarian complementarity, acting on a 'do no harm' and 'no regrets basis', protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, duty of care, diversifying partnerships, solutions and link to development, and environmental sustainability.

Emergency preparedness: Proactive preparedness and early engagement are fundamental for a timely and effective response.

The key to proactive preparedness is strong risk management. All country operations should undertake risk analysis for new or escalated emergencies at least once a year as part of the Annual Risk Review, in line with the Policy for Enterprise Risk Management in UNHCR (access for UNHCR staff only). Operations then determine a ranking of high, medium or low risk for each identified emergency scenario, based on its likelihood and potential impact. The identified emergency risks should be recorded in the Operational Risk Register and continuously monitored.

If there is a high risk of an emergency, country operations must develop a scenario-based contingency plan in collaboration with government counterparts and other partners. The level of engagement of Governments and partners may vary in different operations and contexts. A contingency plan should articulate the response strategy, including required budget, workforce, coordination structures, and thresholds for triggering activation. As part of the contingency planning process, operations should also identify key preparedness measures that would need to be implemented to enable the planned emergency response. These measures and actions can include establishing frame agreements, identifying potential financial service providers, pre-selecting a pool of potential partners through a Call for Expression of Interest, and assessing the potential partners' capacity. The recommended list of preparedness actions is constantly updated by Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) and is available on the DESS Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal (accessible to UNHCR staff only).

In addition to UNHCR's own emergency preparedness, operations contribute to inter-agency preparedness. In refugee situations, UNHCR country operations lead inter-agency contingency planning. In all other situations of forced displacement, including internal displacement caused by conflict and natural hazards, and mixed situations, operations should actively participate in the RC/HC-led processes and lead preparedness for the relevant sectors/clusters.

For more information on emergency preparedness, including risk analysis, contingency planning and inter-agency processes, please refer to the UNHCR Guidance on Emergency Preparedness (UNHCR/OG/2023/02) (accessible to UNHCR staff only).

Natural hazards and climate change: The drivers and impacts of displacement are becoming

increasingly complex and intertwined, especially in the context of climate change. The Policy strengthens the predictability and effectiveness of UNHCR's engagement in emergencies triggered by natural hazards and climate change. In particular, in such situations, it emphasizes the importance of strategic thinking and decision-making in the preparedness phase. The level of involvement in natural hazard-induced crises should be decided based on UNHCR's presence and operational capacity in the country, and expertise compared to other humanitarian actors.

Declaring an emergency: UNHCR may declare one of three emergency levels, depending on the magnitude, complexity and consequences of the humanitarian crisis compared to the existing capacity of the operation(s) and bureau(x) concerned. All emergency declarations expire automatically after 6 months. For a Level 1 emergency, there is no possibility of extension. However, in exceptional circumstances, Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies can be extended for a further three months, up to a maximum of 9 months. See the Comparative Table of UNHCR Emergency Levels for more details.

A single country may have more than one emergency declaration at any given time, if humanitarian crises are geographically or contextually distinct from one another. For example, there may be a refugee influx and an internal displacement situation in different parts of the same country, with both requiring an emergency declaration. Similarly, a humanitarian crisis may require an emergency to be declared in several countries, especially when cross-border displacement is expected.

A UNHCR emergency declaration is distinct from an IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activation. When a Scale-Up is issued, UNHCR must fulfils its commitments as an IASC member and upscale its own coordination and operational response. This may include declaring or extending an internal UNHCR emergency, if deemed appropriate and in line with UNHCR's own Policy.

Coordination: The Policy clarifies country-level coordination mechanisms for refugee and IDP emergencies, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and Refugee Coordination Model, the Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement respectively, and the cluster system. It also clarifies country-level coordination arrangements for mixed situations.

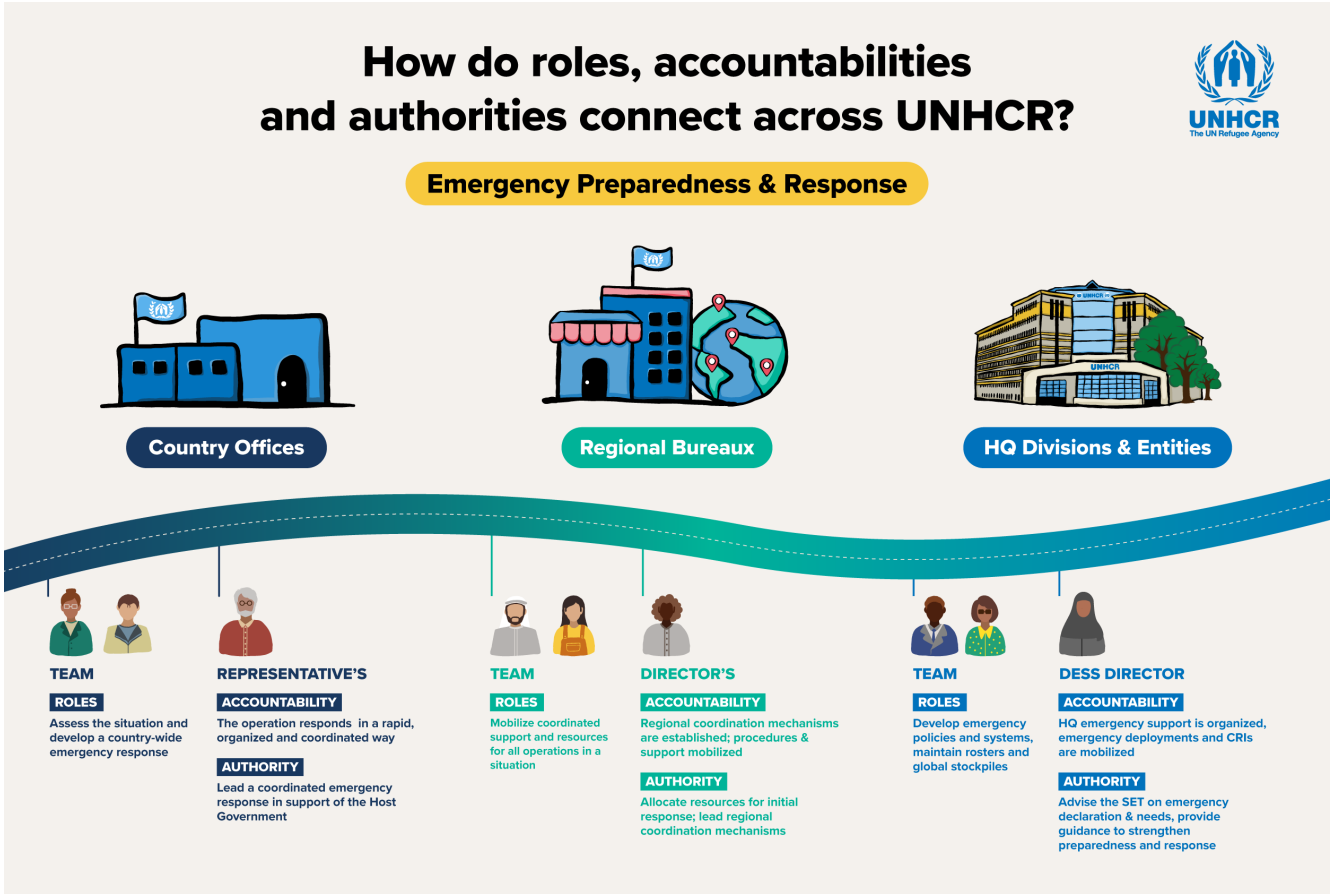
Simplified procedures: The Policy introduces simplified procedures in areas such as supply, partnership agreements and access to financial and human resources – including deployments and staffing. These emergency procedures are applicable to all emergency levels, for the entire duration of an emergency declaration, to expedite the delivery of life-saving protection and assistance.

Once an emergency has been declared, regardless of the emergency level, country operations can also request additional financial resources from the Emergency-reserved Budget. The regional bureau Director has the authority to allocate up to USD 5 million per country. For requests of up to USD 10 million per country, the authority sits with the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations. The maximum amount of allocations is USD 10 million per country, per declared emergency. The allocations are cumulative throughout the emergency declaration, including any extension and change of level.

Additional support instruments: For Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies, additional support is

provided by the regional bureaux and Headquarters. Once a Level 2 or Level 3 emergency is declared, a Senior Level Working Group (SLWG) is convened within two weeks, to ensure that the necessary organizational capacities are in place to support a timely and effective response. Within four weeks, a Joint Senior Level Mission (JSLM) takes place. For Level 3 emergencies, a Real-Time Review is conducted three months after the emergency declaration.

Roles and responsibilities: The Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities in an emergency at country, regional and global level. The Policy empowers and requires country operations to take the lead in emergency preparedness and response, with the support of regional bureaux and HQ divisions and entities.



Post emergency phase

The expiry of an emergency declaration does not necessarily imply that the crisis has come to an end. Rather, it means that preparedness actions are in place or that the operational response has been scaled up and reasonably stabilized, to the extent that additional resources and special procedures are no longer required. It is important to ensure a smooth transition into a regular operational response once the emergency declaration expires. Therefore, from the beginning of an emergency, country operation(s) should begin planning for the post-emergency period.

At the end of the emergency declaration, to ensure continuity of coordination and/or response, country operation(s), regional bureau(x) and DESS, in collaboration with key HQ divisions, review, inter alia: relevant protection and operational strategies, frameworks and leadership arrangements; operational footprint, structure and security. This includes a careful review of

offices and staffing arrangements in line with allocated financial resources and projected funding levels.

4. Policies, Guidelines and Useful Links

UNHCR/HCP/2023/01 Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response

Annexes

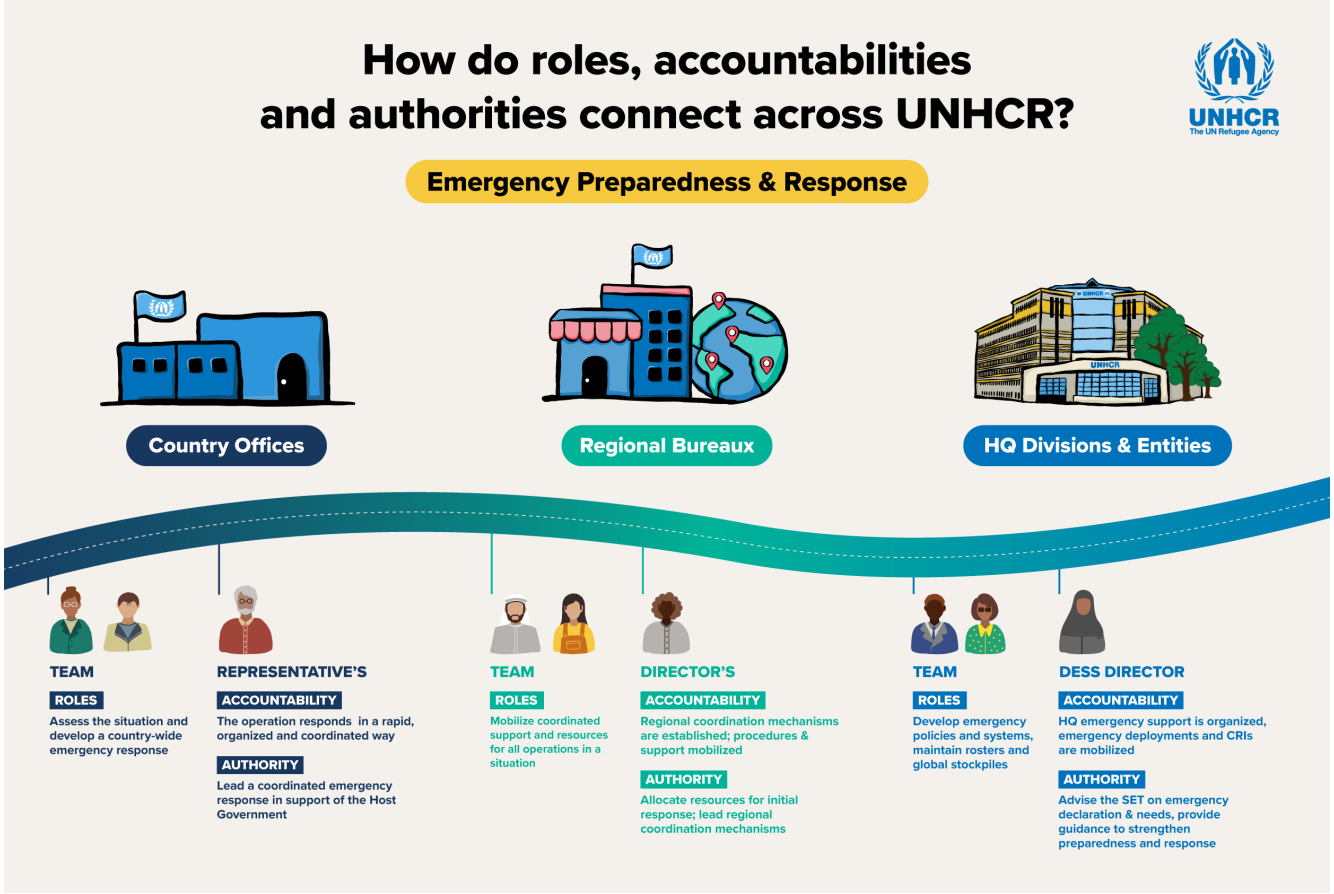
Comparative Table of UNHCR Emergency Levels

5. Learning and field practices

Overview of Key Simplifications and New Elements in the Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response

Emergency Management FAQs

Emergency Management in UNHCR course (accessible to UNHCR workforce only)



6. Links

Refugee Coordination Model (RCM)

7. Main contacts

For guidance and advice on the Policy, or on emergency preparedness and response more generally, please contact HQEMHAND@unhcr.org

Emergency Preparedness

26 September 2025

Key points

- Country operations should anticipate, prepare for and respond to emergencies, and when they occur, respond rapidly and stay the course to ensure that people are safe from harm, their fundamental rights are respected, and their needs are met.

- Country operations should systematically perform risk analysis for emergencies, regularly monitor the evolution of risks that may lead to an emergency and develop agency-specific scenario-based contingency plans.

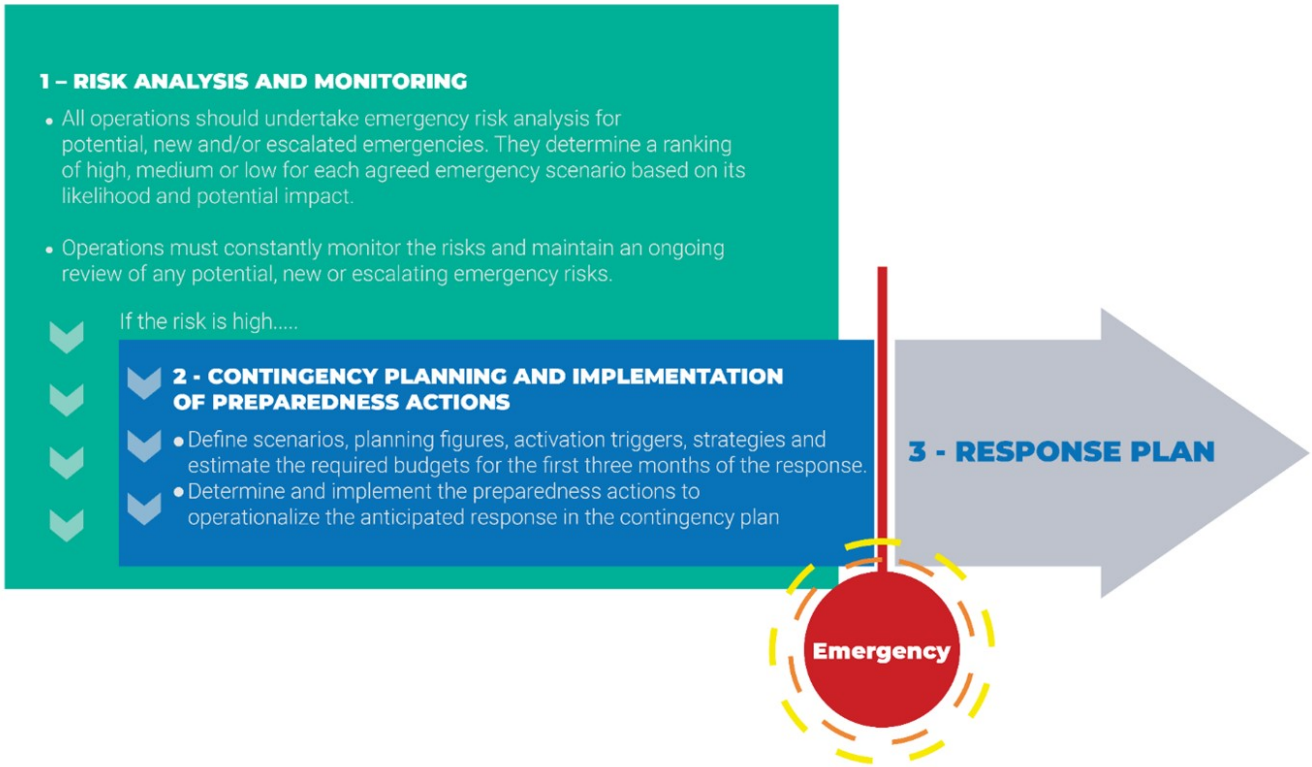
1. Overview

This entry focuses on guiding operations to prepare for all anticipated humanitarian emergencies in which UNHCR may engage, whether triggered by armed conflict, violence and human rights violations, and/or natural hazards, climate change and other environmental events and conditions. It describes key emergency preparedness activities:

1. Emergency risk analysis and monitoring (UNHCR internal link) for new and/or escalated emergencies

2. Contingency planning (UNHCR internal link) and implementation of preparedness actions – especially for operations that face high risk(s) of a new or escalated emergency

Building Blocks of Emergency Preparedness



2. Relevance for emergency operations

Emergency preparedness refers to actions and measures introduced before the onset of an emergency to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, timeliness and accountability of emergency responses to save lives and provide protection. When humanitarian actors invest in preparedness measures for an imminent or anticipated humanitarian crisis, they help mitigate suffering by ensuring timely responses to address the urgent - often life-saving - and immediate needs in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

UNHCR's Guidance on Emergency Preparedness (UNHCR-OG-2023-02) provides a practical framework to support effective operationalisation and implementation of the UNHCR Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response (UNHCR/HCP/2023/01). While the Emergency Policy provides the overarching framework, the guidance is a tool that will assist UNHCR staff members and affiliate workforce in fulfilling their responsibilities under the Emergency Policy, as relates to preparedness measures.

This entry summarizes key points of the Guidance on Emergency Preparedness.

3. Main guidance

1. **Emergency risk analysis and monitoring**

The key to proactive preparedness is strong risk management. Emergency risk analysis is the comprehensive process of identifying, ranking, and recording emergency risks, followed by monitoring emergency risks - on which contingency planning is based. This should be conducted through a workshop and involve a multi-functional team. Senior management and all key international and national personnel involved in planning and decision-making should participate, and if the operation has multiple offices, the risk review should include personnel from all locations.

All country operations must undertake emergency risk analysis based on likelihood and impact for new or escalated emergencies. Given the sometimes unpredictable nature of emergency events and the essential need for emergency preparedness, operations must constantly monitor the risks and maintain an ongoing review of any potential, new or escalating emergency risks.

Follow the four Steps of Emergency Risk analysis and Monitoring

The risk ranking matrix provides the definition of likelihood and impact for emergency risks, as well as how to determine the risk level.

Risk ranking matrix for emergency risk

RISK RANKING	IMPACT: Existing emergency response capacities (UNHCR, Government, other UN agencies, NGOs and host communities) to respond to the predicted scenario and the projected additional people in need of humanitarian assistance.				
LIKELIHOOD: Estimated probability that the scenario will occur in the next 12 months	Emergency response capacity of the government is sufficient to cover the needs.	The inter-agency response capacity in the country is sufficient to cover the needs that the government cannot meet.	New resources (up to 30% of current operations) are needed to cover needs. Support from the Regional Bureau may not be required.	New resources (Between 31% and 79% of current operations) are needed to cover needs. Support from the Regional Bureau is required.	New resources (Over 80% of current operations) are needed to cover needs. Support from Regional Bureau and Headquarters is required.
Score	1. Insignificant	2. Minor	3. Moderate	4. Major	5. Disastrous
51-100% (5. Very high)	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
31-50% (4. High)	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
16- 30% (3. Medium)	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
6-15% (2. Low)	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
0- 5% (1. Very low)	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM

UNHCR maintains a global overview of emergency risks on the [Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal](#) (UNHCR internal link).

Useful Tools for Emergency Risk Analysis (UNHCR internal link)

- **Kobo Risk Analysis Tool** guides country operations through the process of hazard identification, scenario identification and risk ranking. It aims to help operations structure the risk analysis process and develop scenarios for contingency planning.
- **Risk Management Tool for Emergencies** provides examples of risk causes, events, proactive and reactive treatments for country operations when recording emergency risks in the Enterprise Risk Management's operational risk register.

For more information on UNHCR's roles in risk analysis in refugee, internal displacement, mixed situation and mixed movements, see Guidance on Emergency Preparedness and Response.

2. **Contingency planning and implementation of preparedness actions**

Contingency planning will ensure a timely and effective response when an emergency occurs. In line with the Emergency Policy, country operations that face **high risk(s)** of a new or escalated emergency **should develop a scenario-based contingency plan(s)** in collaboration with government
counterparts and other partners. The development of a contingency plan is strongly recommended when the risk level is determined to be medium.

This is applicable in all situations (refugee, IDP, mixed situations and mixed movements). For more information on UNHCR's roles in contingency planning in refugee, internal displacement, mixed situation and mixed movements, see Guidance on Emergency Preparedness and Response.

A scenario-based contingency plan states the actions that need to be taken, by whom, where, and with what **immediately available resources** during the **initial** emergency response (first three months), should a specific risk scenario occur and once pre-identified activating triggers are met. The contingency plan should reflect UNHCR's **operational** and **coordination** responsibilities and objectives and result in the following:

- A clear, practical, scenario-based response strategy reflecting agreement between UNHCR, the government and other partners;
- An overview of resources required to respond to the **high-risk scenario** for the first three months of the response, and who/ how these resources will be provided;
- An understanding of when and how to activate the contingency plan (based on the agreed triggers and risk monitoring);
- Increased preparedness levels through the implementation of preparedness actions;
- A timely response towards the protection of forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

As part of contingency planning, country operations need to identify key preparedness actions that will be implemented to enable the planned emergency response. The List of Preparedness Actions provided in the Guidance is organised by functional area reflecting UNHCR's mandated role in refugee situations, and UNHCR's cluster leadership accountability in internal displacement situations, alongside its operational engagement in IDP situations.

Useful Tools for contingency planning (UNHCR internal link)

- Library of contingency plans
- SOPs for contingency planning

4. Policies, Guidelines and Useful Links

UNHCR Guidance on Emergency Preparedness, 2023

Annexes

Annex 7 List of Preparedness Actions

Note on Risk Ranking for Emergency Risks.pdf

Contingency plan template 2023 English.docx

5. Links

Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal (accessible to UNHCR staff only)

6. Main contacts

Emergency Preparedness Unit in the Division of Emergency and Programme Support (DEPS)

hqepr@unhcr.org

Business Continuity Planning

04 May 2022

Key points

- BCP is an essential planning tool that reduces operational uncertainty and risk. UNHCR expects Representatives to prepare BCPs before an emergency starts, especially where the security situation is volatile.
- The process of preparing a BCP can be as important as the BCP itself because it makes staff conscious of how to respond in an emergency. Involve partners, persons of concern, and different functional units: they should actively contribute when BCPs are drafted.
- Test the plan, or elements of it, before full scale implementation.

1. Overview

UNHCR documents speak of ‘Business Continuity Plans' (BCPs), ‘Business Continuity Resilience Planning' (BCRP), and ‘Continuity of Operations Planning' (COOP). In this Handbook, ‘business continuity planning' covers all three. It refers to the preparation of plans and related management processes that enable UNHCR to maintain critical processes (for the delivery of essential services or products) after a disruptive event. A BCP is a roadmap that enables an operation to continue in adverse conditions (for example, after disruption due to natural or man-made hazards).
A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is a plan for how an office will **continue its most critical functions in the event of a disruption, be it natural, manmade or medical**.

Business Continuity Planning is one of the eight critical components of the Organizational Resilience Management System (ORM), a UN-wide comprehensive system to "**improve the capacity of UN Agencies, Funds, programmes and Organizations to effectively manage the risks of disruptive events**", by ensuring "**health, safety and security and well-being of personnel**", and maintaining "**the continuity of critical processes and capacity to implement mandates and programmes**".

A Business continuity plan must address the threats most likely to affect the functioning of a UNHCR office. Threats of highest impact are typically identified in the corporate risk register completed by all UNHCR operations and in Security Risk Management (SRM) documents developed at country level.
All scenarios that could affect any aspect of UNHCR operations (e.g. programmes, human resources, infrastructure, information technology, telecommunications) should be considered, including both internal and external, safety and security incidents (e.g. fires, floods, earthquakes, conflicts, civil unrest, mass protests).
The ultimate aim of Business Continuity Planning is to address the threats to ensure UNHCR objectives (i.e. the protection and assistance to Persons of Concern) can be achieved, when due to exceptional circumstances, such as office closure or damage, relocation or evacuation of staff for security reasons the achievement of the objectives are at stake. Another example is the disruption of UNHCR work during COVID-19, when staff is forced to work from home or multiple staff members are sick.

Business Continuity Planning increases UNHCR resilience in the face of potential disruptions to the agency's ability to operate during crises and emergencies. Business Continuity plans cover all UNHCR offices and staff.
The main objectives of UNHCR's Business Continuity Plans are to:

- Ensure the safety of UNHCR staff, premises and assets.
- Maintain critical UNHCR programmes and operations.
- Ensure UNHCR is able to deliver a swift and effective response during periods of crises.

UNHCR's ability to respond swiftly in a crisis, maintaining critical operations or restoring them as soon as possible, is key to maintaining credibility in the eyes of partners and stakeholders. Business continuity plans bring together all procedures,

measures, information, assets and tools necessary for each UNHCR office to achieve the above objectives.

2. Main guidance

Underlying policies, principles and/or standards

UN Policy on the Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS), CEB/2014/HLCM/17/Rev.1, 2021
Policy for Enterprise Risk Management in UNHCR, HCP/2020/2

Good practice recommendations

The following steps are essential when developing an effective BCP.

One: Assemble a business continuity planning team. A multi-disciplinary team coordinates business continuity planning activities before and after a BCP has been activated. Before activation, it develops and updates the BCP, and leads related exercises and training. Led by the Representative or Head of Office, the team should include representatives from the following departments **inter alia**:

- Security.
- Programme.
- Protection and essential services to Persons of Concern
- Finance/Administration / human resources.
- Supply.
- Information Technology.
- Communications.

Members should be experienced international and national staff members who have the capacity to implement critical programme and protection activities through a disruption.

Two: Identify critical processes. Critical functions, processes and services that need to be maintained during periods of crisis must be identified beforehand. Which programme activities must be continued to fulfil UNHCR's overall mission? The office should consider the criticality of each programme and activity for which it is responsible under the Operations Plan (OP). In high risk situations, the UN Country Team (UNCT) may conduct a Programme Criticality (PC) exercise to determine which programme activities will be prioritized following a serious disruption, and how each will be sustained. [See the Entry on Programme Criticality.]

Identification of critical operations should be based on criteria including:

- **Maintenance of essential protection, wellbeing and other services to refugees.**
- **Critical liaison with the national and local authorities, national commission for**

refugees, host government and other partners, UN or else.
- **Enabling and support functions such as supply, logistics, communications and security.**

In high to very high security risk countries, pre-identification of some critical activities and programmes may have been conducted through joint UN programme criticality assessments. In other settings, it is recommended that a similar methodology be applied to pre-identify and agree on critical services.

As well as listing critical functions, the Business Continuity Plan should provide information on:

- The minimum number of qualified staff required to continue the critical programmes/activities, and their roles and responsibilities. This staff needs to be identified, briefed or trained beforehand on the functions they will perform.
- The minimum resources, including funds and assets, needed to accomplish these functions, such as office, alternative meeting room space and/or ability to work from home, information technology materials, communications systems, vehicles. These resources should be identified beforehand and clearly listed in the BCP.
- The addresses of back-up locations and description of available facilities (workstations, IT, communications equipment, etc.). Additionally, a list of assets that need to be transferred to the back-up location should be provided;
- Pre-arrangements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with identified partners or private sector to facilitate UNHCR's rapid access to additional assets, tools and spaces necessary to implement the BCP (office space in UN Agencies, Funds, Programmes and Organizations, or in hotels, additional transport and accommodation, internet connectivity solutions, etc.).

Finally, these should be identified as being either:

- Critical and need to be maintained in the location (at office or alternate location, or residence).
- Critical and can be relocated or performed remotely, be it in the country or abroad.

In the case of SARS-CoV-2 (or COVID-19), operations will also focus on the ability of staff members fulfilling critical functions to perform these tasks from home as teleworking may become a recommended measure.

Personnel. Following a serious disruption, international staff may need to be moved out of the area. A National Staff Plan should determine which staff are vital to the delivery of each essential programme activity. A National Staff Plan should:

- Designate a senior national staff member to take overall charge.
- Take measures to protect the safety and security of national staff.
- Make arrangements for payment of salaries and expenses.
- Determine how logistical support requirements will be met.
- Establish communication protocols and related equipment requirements.

Facilities. Does the activity require facilities (offices, staff accommodation, warehouses, etc.)? Plan alternative facilities or work modalities. Consider a variety of options.

Logistics and suppliers. What transport and equipment does the activity require? Make plans for emergency sourcing, pre-positioning and take other steps to meet key supply needs.

Partners. Does the activity rely on partners or other actors? In the event of a serious disruption, are they likely to be in a position to continue their work or to carry out activities implemented by UNHCR? Planning assumptions should be checked with partners and other actors.

Communications. What systems and equipment does the activity require? Consider this question alongside plans for alternative work locations and methods.

Information Technology (IT). What systems, services, data and equipment does the activity require? Note that BCPs are separate from, though related to IT Disaster Recovery Plans and Major Incident Management Processes.

Note: While BCPs are separate from other plans such as Security Plan, Critical Incident Management **Plan, IT Disaster Recovery Plan, Mass Casualty Incident Response Plan, Emergency Communications Plan,** Medical Evacuation **Plan, etc; It is important to ensure all these plans are harmonized and compatible.**

Three: Conduct an impact analysis. When critical processes are disrupted, what will be the effect on programme activities? Estimate effects over time (hours, days, months, etc.) and use the information to prioritize your response actions.

Four: Identify critical process alternatives. If processes critical to the performance of an activity are disrupted, what alternatives are available? For every critical process, identify at least one viable alternative.

Considerations for practical implementation

The Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS), in collaboration with the Enterprise Risk Management team (ERM), the Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM) and the Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications (DIST), has developed and launched an online BCP Power Application in 2020 to facilitate mandatory Business Continuity Planning (BCP) at all field levels.
All Country Operations, Multi-Country Offices and Regional Bureaus are requested to update their Business Continuity Plans, at least annually, using the new tool**.** This online tool simplifies Business Continuity Planning and offers a more user-friendly interface to enter, edit and view data, and supports management analysis and oversight. Managers will be able to more readily review existing critical tasks, how and to whom critical tasks have been assigned and enter additional information related to emergency, security and records management.
As with previous efforts to update and centralize Business Continuity Plans, each operation is to designate a BCP focal point. Regional teams with whom this tool is shared today can now provide user rights to these country focal points in order to allow access. Users of the Power App will thus

be granted specific access profiles to allow the fulfilment of their respective tasks and update existing BCPs developed under a different modality in May 2020. Likewise, as was done previously, each Regional Bureau should identify a multifunctional BCP team to review country submissions and provide feedback on entries and inform HQ about compliance at the regional level.

Resources and partnerships

- Business continuity planning should be done by a multidisciplinary BCP Team including representatives from operational sections, security, administration, programmes, protection, ICT, and supply. The senior manager in the operation must be familiar with and must ultimately approve the BCP.
- Partners include appropriate counterparts in the host government and other humanitarian or development agencies, local community leaders, and programme beneficiaries. When partners business are involved in BCP and BCP training, it can enrich the process, generate insights and a better understanding of security problems, and raise the quality of BCP to everyone's benefit.

Performance Indicators

- Plan available (harmonized with other internal and UN-wide plans)
- Coordinated structure established (includes all relevant entities)
- Joint risk register including protection, programme, security, medical and BC risks is available
- Regular maintenance, exercise and review

3. Policies, Guidelines and Useful Links

4. Links

BCP Power App

5. Main contacts

Access to the BCP Power App is to be requested to the Regional Multi-functional Teams or to the Field Security Service at HQFS00@unhcr.org with "BCP Access Request" in the title of the email.

Emergency Response Preparedness approach (IASC)

18 May 2020

Key points

- The ERP is the IASC-endorsed framework for preparedness for IDP situations, natural disasters and other non-refugee emergencies. At country level, in support of the host Government, these preparedness efforts are led by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) or the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC).
- Efforts to prepare for potential refugee emergencies (influxes) in support of the host Government, on the other hand, are always led by the UNHCR Representative, with the involvement of members of the UN Country Team (UNCT) or Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). In such case, the Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies (PPRE) provides the framework.
- ERP focuses on situations in which the scale of a potential emergency requires the concerted action of a number of agencies and organizations.
- Real-time and continuous risk analysis and early warning by HCTs are vital to emergency preparedness and trigger related preparedness actions.

1. Overview

Note. This Entry reflects the 'BETA version' of the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) approach, which the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience released for field testing in 2015. It does not necessarily reflect the final version that will be issued.

The aim of Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) is to optimise the speed and volume of critical assistance delivered immediately after the onset of a humanitarian emergency. It provides practical guidance to assist inter-agency country teams (including UN agencies, international organizations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs) when they collectively prepare to respond to potential emergencies with appropriate humanitarian assistance and protection.

ERP is primarily applicable to inter-agency preparedness for natural disasters and internal displacement (IDP) situations. In potential refugee crises (where the identified emergency risk

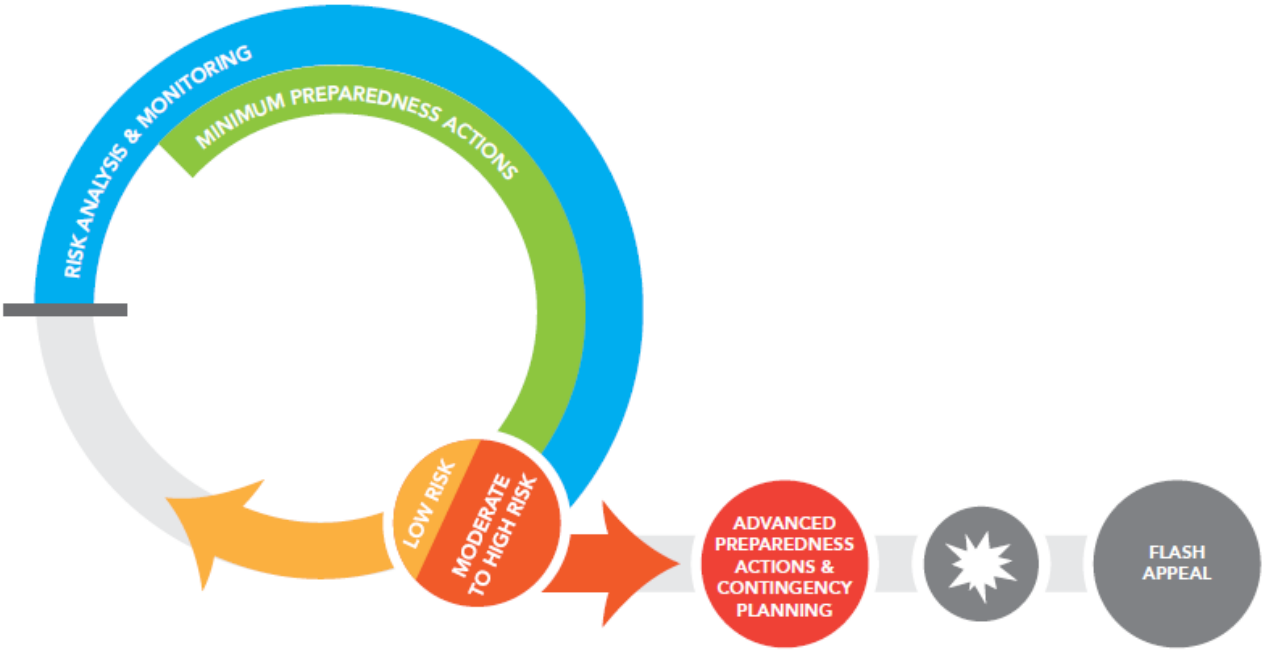
specifically relates to the possibility of a refugee emergency), the Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies (PPRE), which uses the same approach as the ERP, should be used as a toolkit and for guidance.

ERP outlines how the international humanitarian community can organize itself to support and complement national Government action. The guidelines are premised on the understanding that Governments hold the primary responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance to women, girls, boys and men, and sub-groups of the population in need, in line with General Assembly Resolution 46/182, which affirms: ‘Each State has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence, the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory'.

ERP is a tool:

- To develop a common understanding of risks and a system to monitor those risks, ensuring that early action is taken when required.
- To establish a minimum level of multi-hazard preparedness.
- To take additional action, including the development of a contingency plans for specific risks that can be used as the basis of a Preliminary Response Plan to meet the differentiated needs of an affected population in the first 3-4 weeks of a humanitarian emergency.

The IASC Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience has developed the ERP, with UNHCR involvement. It replaces the ‘Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance' that were prepared in 2001 and updated in 2007.



2. Relevance for emergency operations

Emergency preparedness aims to ensure that the strategic direction and required building blocks for an eventual response are in place. Experience has shown that starting the delivery of emergency aid, especially at scale, takes significant lead time. By undertaking preparedness measures, operations front load preparatory actions before a crisis occurs. Preparedness includes: a context analysis, planning, gap identification, partnership development and coordination, and perhaps resource pre-positioning. Good emergency preparedness lays the foundation of an emergency response.

Some of the three main ERP components are triggered by specified levels of risk, as shown in the table below.

Component	When and Who?	Purpose
Risk analysis and monitoring (multi-hazard).	◦ All the time at regular intervals ◦ By UN Country Teams (UNCTs) or Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs), led by the Resident Coordinator (RC) or Humanitarian Coordinator (HC).	To identify potential hazards and monitor indicators related to those hazards

ERP Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPAs).	◦ Ongoing all the time. ◦ By UNCTs and/or HCTs, and by clusters, if in place.	To maintain standard minimum preparedness and lay the foundation for emergency readiness.
ERP Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs) and ERP contingency planning.	◦ In situations of medium and high risk (risk score higher than 8). ◦ By UNCTs and/or HCTs, and by clusters if in place.	To increase the preparedness level to emergency readiness.

3. Main guidance

Underlying process – how does this work?

ERP is a continuous process, divided into three key elements:

- Risk analysis and monitoring.
- Minimum preparedness actions (MPAs).
- Advanced preparedness actions (APAs) and contingency planning.

The approach is:

- Led by a Resident Coordinator (RC) or Humanitarian Coordinator (HC).
- Managed by the UN Country Team (UNCT) or Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).
- Supported by an inter-cluster/sector coordination group and clusters/sectors, if clusters and sectors are in place.
- Inclusive of a broad range of actors, including at sub-national level.
- Supports national authorities, who have primary responsibility for affected people.

Context	Accountability

In countries where IASC humanitarian coordination structures are in place.	The HC, working with the HCT and country level clusters/sectors, should lead the ERP process, and ensure coherence in the HCT as well as with national structures. Coordination is led by UNHCR in refugee contexts (the Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies applies) and by WHO in public health emergencies.
In countries where IASC humanitarian coordination structures are not in place.	The RC should establish an inter-agency humanitarian country team, and work with this team and national authorities to implement the ERP. The RC should encourage the input and participation of NGOs, including women's organisations active in the country, to ensure that their humanitarian capacities and expertise are recognized, and that they can contribute fully. In-country coordination mechanisms may need to be expanded for this purpose.

The extent of involvement of national and subnational authorities depends on the context. In all situations, ERP should be based on knowledge of the planning, capacities and systems of national and local authorities. This should be complemented with a knowledge of the underlying inequalities and vulnerabilities influencing the risk susceptibility and resilience of women, men and their communities in a given context, and guided by the principles of neutrality and impartiality.

The ERP approach has three inter-related levels of action:

Inter-agency	Sector/cluster	Organization-specific
Builds an over-arching framework to guide the collective action of all potential humanitarian responders.	Defines how agencies will work to achieve sector-specific objectives together.	Describes how the organization's response will be delivered **Note**. The ERP approach does not define the form of agency-level planning

Overview of the three main components of the ERP

(a) Risk analysis and monitoring (multi-hazard)
A clear, shared understanding of the risks that may trigger a crisis significant enough to require a

coordinated humanitarian response is fundamental to the entire ERP process. Analysis informs planning while monitoring ensures that the process is responsive to emerging risks. The risk analysis process identifies hazards that could trigger a crisis and ranks them by impact and likelihood. The risk ranking determines whether thresholds are low, medium, or high. Development of a contingency plan (see 'Advanced Preparedness Actions and contingency planning' below) is recommended when it is determined that risk thresholds are 'medium' or higher.

In parallel, risk monitoring should be undertaken, using indicators identified as part of the risk analysis process. Monitoring provides early warning of emerging risks that in turn makes it possible to take early action (adapting the contingency plan, for example, or where possible taking action that will mitigate the impact of an emerging risk).

(b) ERP Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPAs)
ERP MPAs are a set of activities that every UNCT must implement to establish a minimum level of emergency preparedness within a country. ERP MPAs are not risk or scenario-specific and usually do not require significant additional resources. They include risk monitoring, the establishment of coordination and management arrangements, preparation of joint needs assessments, monitoring, information management, and establishment of operational capacity and arrangements to deliver critical relief assistance and protection. Their implementation makes a fundamental difference to the quality of an eventual response and makes it possible to respond flexibly to different types of emergency.

(c) ERP Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs) and ERP contingency planning
APAs and contingency planning are two sets of complementary activities that should be initiated together to plan for specific risks when risk analysis and monitoring indicate that the risk of an emergency occurring is 'medium' or higher.

ERP APAs are designed to increase the readiness of an HCT to respond to specific risks. Unlike ERP MPAs, ERP APAs are risk-specific. They build on ERP MPAs already in place. The ERP APA checklist (see Annex III) includes essential preparedness actions that complement and support the contingency planning process.

A contingency plan sets out the initial response strategy and operational plan for meeting humanitarian needs during the first three to four weeks of an emergency. A contingency plan sets out what might happen and what might be needed, actions that will need to be taken, resources that will be required, and gaps that will need to be filled.

UNHCR's role and accountabilities

As a member of the UNCT and HCT, UNHCR fully participates in ERP. With respect to preparedness for IDP situations and natural disasters, UNHCR contributes to preparedness efforts led by the RC and/or HC. As part of an overall preparedness plan, UNHCR leads the preparedness efforts of the three clusters which the agency leads (the Protection cluster, the Shelter cluster, and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management cluster). The extent of this engagement will depend on whether these cluster responses are a priority for preparedness, and whether clusters

have been formally activated in the country.

Considerations for UNHCR's engagement at country level

- The ERP should be practical. It should focus on needs, what is in place, and how to bridge the gaps; and how the country team can reach affected people to provide assistance. In other words, it is a process of asking and answering critical operational questions. Risk analysis and monitoring are the key to dynamic and responsive preparedness.
- The ERP should be flexible. Country teams should prioritise actions in light of capacity in the country to undertake preparedness.
- The ERP should be participatory. Planning is most effective when all those who will be required to work together are engaged in the process from the start.
- Strategic leadership by the RC or HC, and a commitment by agencies at country level to make staff and resources available to support the process, are vital to ERP success, which depends on each and every member of the country team.

Annexes

Emergency Response Preparedness July 2015

4. Links

ReliefWeb Response

5. Main contacts

UNHCR Emergency Services, Division for Emergency Security and Supply (DESS). At: hqemhand@unhcr.org

Emergency Response Preparedness - Risk analysis and monitoring – multi-hazard (IASC)

15 October 2018

Key points

- Inter-agency country teams must collectively undertake regular risk analysis and risk

monitoring led by the RC or HC.

- The risk ranking determines the type of preparedness actions that should be taken.
- When the risk for a particular hazard is ‘medium' or ‘high', ERP Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs) and ERP contingency planning must be undertaken.
- When the identified risk is a refugee influx, UNHCR leads preparedness efforts and the inter-agency framework that applies is the Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies (PPRE).

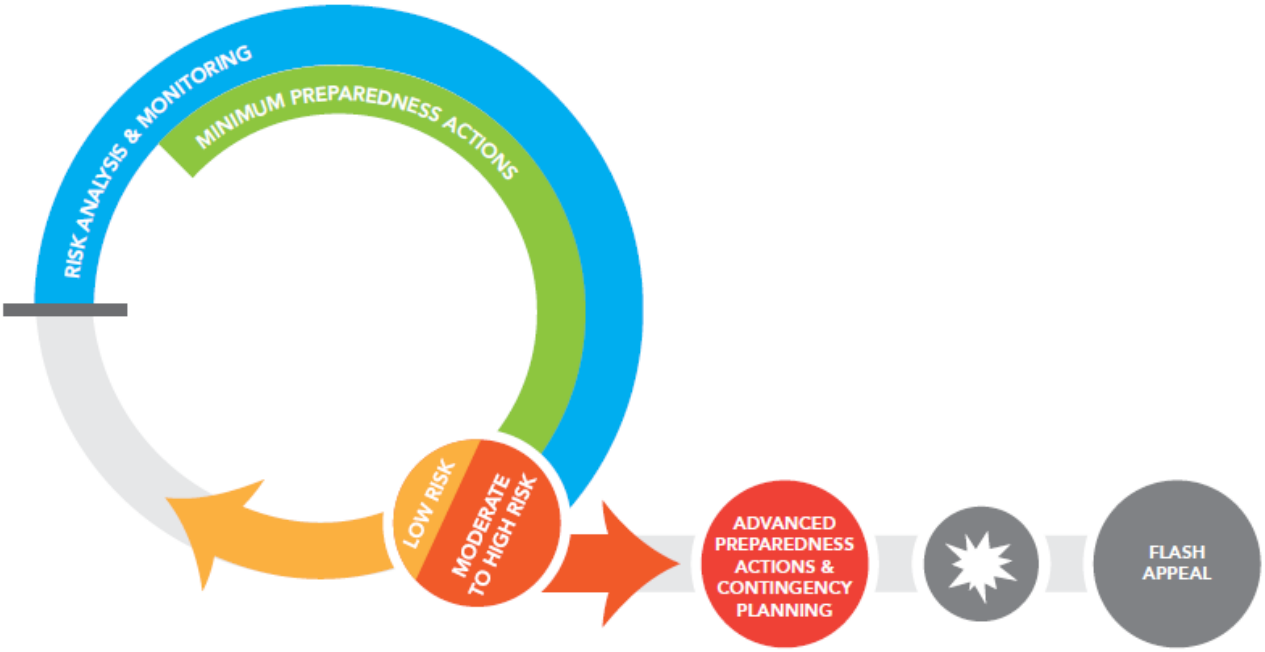
1. Overview

Note. This guidance forms part of the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) approach. In its current form, it reflects the "BETA" version of the ERP, which the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience released for field testing in 2015. The final version of the ERP may look different, once released.

Obtaining a clear shared understanding of risks that may trigger a crisis significant enough to require a coordinated humanitarian response is fundamental to the entire ERP process. At country level, analysis informs planning while monitoring ensures that the process is responsive to emerging risks. The risk analysis process identifies hazards that could trigger a crisis and ranks them by impact and likelihood. Risk ranking determines whether thresholds are ‘low', ‘medium', or ‘high'. When risks rise to ‘medium' or above, it is recommended to develop a contingency plan.

At global level, IASC partners collaborate twice a year to develop an Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) report, which is submitted to the IASC Emergency Directors Group and concerned partners. The EWEA report draws on risk analysis and monitoring carried out at country level. It creates a shared understanding of global risks in the six months that follow, and recommends preparedness actions that should be taken. At global level, UNHCR participates in the EWEA process through the Division for Emergency Security and Supply (DESS) Emergency Services at HQ.

Terms
Hazard: A natural or man-made phenomenon that has negative humanitarian consequences.
Likelihood: The probability of a hazard occurring.
Impact: The humanitarian consequences of a hazard, if it occurs.
Risk: An attribute of a hazard, representing the combination of likelihood and impact.
Risk analysis: The process of determining the likelihood and impact of a hazard in a defined period, and consequently the risk that it presents.
Alert: A short term, high certainty notice that a hazard is likely to occur imminently, providing a scenario for short term (‘no regrets') early action.



2. Relevance for emergency operations

The first step of ERP is to assess risks faced by all sections of the country's population that might require a coordinated humanitarian response. Risk analysis is an essential component of ERP, because it provides a shared understanding of risks that could require a humanitarian response and prioritizes them. All risks ranked ‘medium' or higher need to be monitored to ensure that planning is responsive to changes in the risk context of the country.

3. Main guidance

Underlying process – how does this work?

Step 1. Risk analysis
a) Risk analysis begins by identifying potential hazards that may affect the country. For the purpose of ERP, the focus is placed on the following five threat categories that have potential humanitarian consequences:
1. Natural hazards that are hydro-meteorological (floods, landslides, storms, droughts) or geophysical (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis).
2. Armed conflicts and civil unrest.
3. Epidemics and pandemics.
4. Drastic changes in the socio-economic environment, such as a surge in prices of essential goods, restrictive government legislation such as export and import bans, or serious human rights violations.
5. Environmental hazards (industrial accidents, severe pollution).

b) Once hazards have been identified, they are ranked twice on a scale of 1 to 5. They are ranked once in terms of their perceived impact and once for likelihood of occurrence. Multiplying both variables provides a number that indicates the gravity (low, medium or high) of the risk in question. The table ‘Impact and likelihood scales' below provides guidance on how to assess impact and likelihood and rate gravity. When a risk has been ranked, it should be entered into the Country Risk Graph (see ERP, Annex I) that forms the basis of a country's risk profile.

To the extent possible, national authorities and other national actors should be engaged in the risk analysis process to ensure that understanding of risk is shared. Past risk analyses by national authorities, humanitarian or development agencies, and local or international research institutions, should be considered and taken into account.

Impact and likelihood scales

Impact	Likelihood
Negligible (1) Minor additional humanitarian impact. Government capacity is sufficient to deal with the situation.	**Very unlikely (1)** A remote chance of an event occuring in the current year (0-5%). For example, seasonal hazards that happened no more than once in the last twenty years.
Minor (2) Minor additional humanitarian impact. Current country level inter-agency resources are sufficient to cover needs that the Government cannot meet.	**Unlikely (2)** The event has a low chance of occurring in the current year (5-15%). For example, seasonal hazards that happened up to three times in the last twenty years.
Moderate (3) Moderate additional humanitarian impact. New resources (up to 30% of current operations) are needed to cover needs that the Government cannot meet. Regional support is not required.	**Moderately likely (3)** The event has a viable chance of occurring in the current year (15-30%). For example, seasonal hazards that happened two or three times in the last ten years, or once or twice in the last five years.

Severe (4) Substantive additional humanitarian impact. New resources (up to 50% of current operations) are needed to cover needs that Government cannot meet. Regional support is required.	**Likely (4)** The event has a significant chance of occurring in the current year (30-50%). For example, seasonal hazards that happen every second or third year, or happened twice in the last five years.
Critical (5) Massive additional humanitarian impact. New resources (over 80% of current operations) are needed to cover needs that Government cannot meet. L3-scale emergency.	**Very Likely (5)** The event has a positive chance of occurring (over 50%). For example, seasonal hazards that happened three or more times in the last five years, or five or more times in the last ten years.

Risk = Impact x Likelihood
Low: 1–7 **Medium: 8-14** **High: 15-25**

Step 2. Risk monitoring

A risk monitoring mechanism should be applied to all hazards that have been identified in the risk analysis. ERP focuses on specifics: on indicators monitored in relation to risks identified. The indicators are analysed individually or collectively for tipping points that trigger decision-making. Monitoring the indicators through available early warning mechanisms and tools enables the UN Country Team (UNCT) or Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to decide whether a risk has reached a threshold that requires an increased level of preparedness.

a) Risk monitoring should be indicator-based and should follow a regular, structured process. Each risk in the ERP risk profile should be assigned a set of indicators. At least one person or entity should be tasked to monitor the indicators for each hazard.

Indicators should be checked on a scheduled basis. Timing will depend on the availability of new information, the nature of the hazard being monitored, and the trend of the risk. If a risk is rising, for example, indicators should be checked more frequently.

b) For risk monitoring purposes, hazards in the risk graph are divided into three categories. This is important for determining when a hazard poses a risk that requires additional preparedness.

The categories are:

- Seasonal hazards (such as floods, cyclones or drought) that pose a risk at regular, predictable times in the year.
- Evolving hazards (such as armed conflicts, serious human rights violations, economic hazards, and pandemics) that pose risks that change irregularly over time.
- Static hazards (such as earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis) that pose the same level of risk all the time, but the moment of their occurrence is impossible to predict.

Each category requires a different method for determining if and when additional action is necessary.

Seasonal hazards
These hazards (floods, cyclones, drought) have a regular cycle. With respect to seasonal hazards, the key objective is to ensure that Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs) are implemented, and contingency plans (CPs) updated, before the seasonal or scheduled hazard occurs.

Key questions
1. When in the year do seasonal hazards occur, and how much advance notice is required to implement APAs and the CP?
2. Which seasonal hazard poses the highest risk?
3. What sources will be used to trigger short term alerts of imminent hazard events?

With respect to each seasonal hazard that ranks 10 or higher on the risk graph, set a specific action date one to two months before it is due to occur. The date should align with the plans of national authorities (where applicable). APAs and CPs should be implemented or reviewed on the action date.

With respect to droughts, which can be predicted with a relatively high degree of confidence (following low rainfall), it may be preferable to implement programmatic responses rather than develop APAs and a CP.

Evolving hazards
The levels of risk associated with these hazards (armed conflict, serious human rights violations, economic hazards, pandemics) change irregularly over time. Their evolution should be monitored to identify the tipping points when risk increases.

Some evolving hazards (such as electoral violence) tend to occur at predictable intervals and may be managed more easily by following the guidance for seasonal risks.

Key questions
1. Ahead of time: what resources are available to monitor evolving hazards?
2. Periodically: is there a viable possibility that a hazard will need a coordinated international response in the next two months?

Static hazards
These hazards (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis) pose the same level of risk

consistently over time, but, though they rank as high-risk, the exact timing of their occurrence is impossible to anticipate. For this reason, it is usually impossible to monitor risks of this type.

c) Indicators will vary according to the hazard being monitored. The ideal indicator is an event that always precedes a hazard event, and never occurs at another time. Unfortunately, such indicators are rarely found, but the principle is important. Indicator events that happen frequently, regardless of whether or not a hazard event subsequently occurs, are of no use. Generic guidance with regard to indicators for evolving hazards covered by the ERP is available in Annex II, and in selected information sources at global level. In many cases local sources, including national services, will be most useful. The generic indicator guidance should be used to identify context-specific indicators for each hazard in a risk profile.

Country teams should regularly review the risk that each evolving hazard poses; this should be an agenda point at UNCT/HCT meetings. The objective is to decide whether or not it is necessary to implement APAs and develop a specific contingency plan.

Reporting risk and highlighting early warning
When a UNCT or HCT starts to develop or reviews APAs and contingency plans, a brief communication should be sent, collectively to the OCHA Regional Office and by agencies to their respective regional offices or HQ. The information will go to the Emergency Directors Group (EDG) and possibly the IASC Task Team for Preparedness and Resilience for appropriate follow-up action and support. In consultation with HCTs, the EDG, supported by an inter-agency group of experts, monitors situations and suggests preparedness actions for specific risks.

This communication should include:

- A description of the hazard.
- The best available estimate of the level of risk the hazard poses.
- Planned actions to increase readiness.
- The assistance needed to ensure readiness.

Implementing risk analysis and monitoring by the UNCT or HCT
Key questions
1. Who is responsible for monitoring each risk?
2. How will those responsible communicate changes in hazard context to the UNCT or HCT?
3. What indicators will be monitored, with what frequency? What information source(s) will feed the monitoring process?

Step 1. Hazard identification
The UNCT and/or HCT should initiate a process to identify potential hazards that may affect the country. Where possible and where appropriate, the UNCT or HCT should invite Government partners and other stakeholders (academics, technical experts, representatives of local communities) to participate in hazard identification processes. Examples and guidance on hazard identification is available at: ReliefWeb - Informing humanitarians worldwide

Step 2. Risk ranking
When all hazards have been identified, they should be ranked in order of perceived impact and

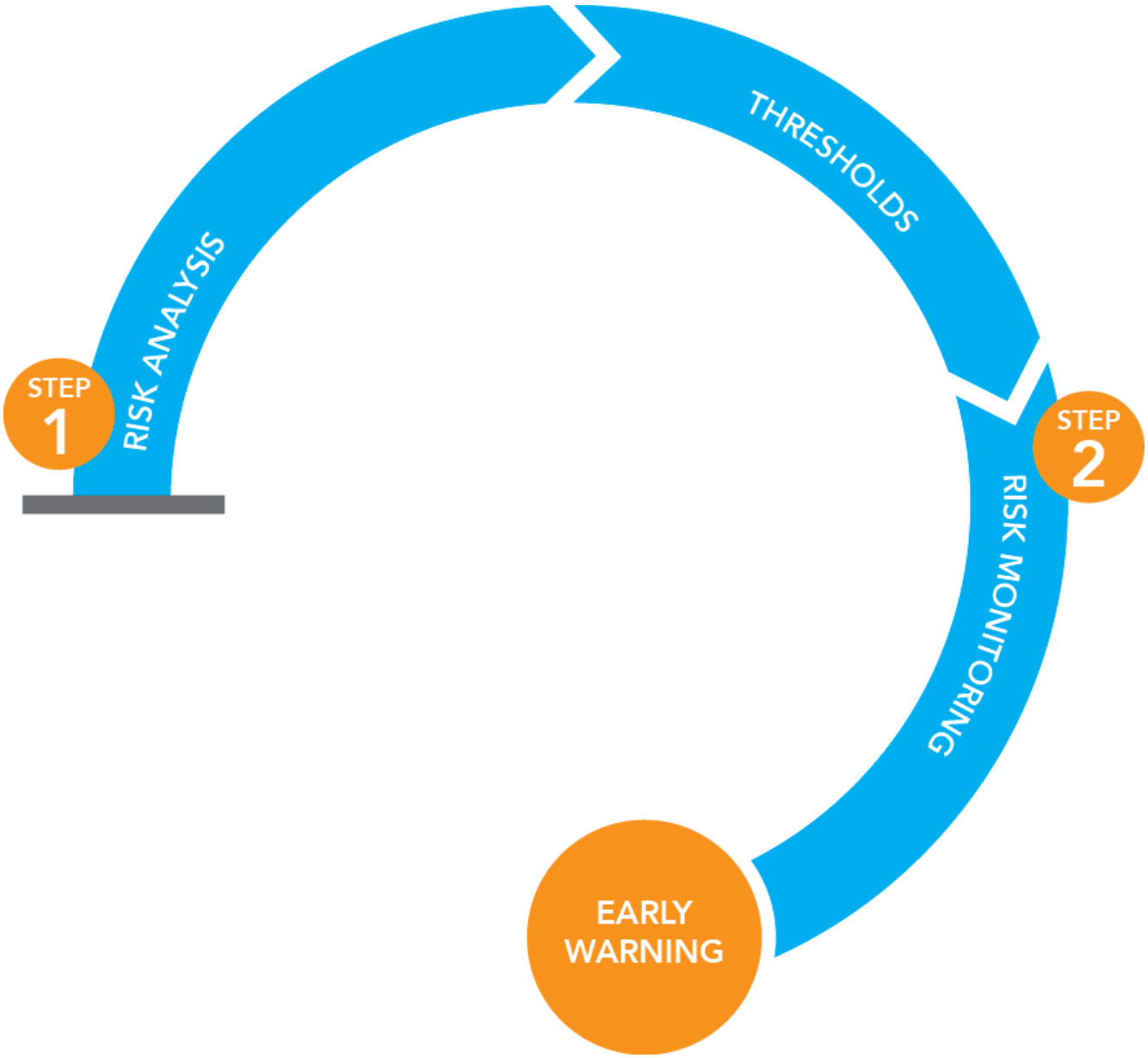
likelihood of occurrence. Risk = impact x likelihood. Risks should be ranked from low to high using the risk graph in Annex I. Further examples and guidance are available at: ReliefWeb - Informing humanitarians worldwide

Step 3. Defining thresholds

The UNCT or HCT should use the risk ranking to define risk thresholds and decide whether additional preparedness actions need to be taken (for example implementation of APAs and development of contingency plans). The UNCT or HCT is advised to take additional preparedness action when the level of risk reaches a score of 10 or higher.

Step 4. Risk Monitoring

A risk monitoring mechanism should be established to track all hazards identified. Particular attention should be given to hazards with a risk ranking score of 10 or higher. Monitoring updates should be a standing item on the UNCT or HCT agenda. Risk monitoring is one of the ERP Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPAs).



UNHCR’s role and accountabilities

UNHCR country offices participate in inter-agency risk analysis and risk monitoring, led by the Resident Coordinator (RC) or Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). They contribute analysis to this process whenever appropriate. They regularly report the results of this process to regional bureaux and to DESS Emergency Services. They should alert UNHCR offices in neighbouring countries when identified hazards might lead to refugee outflows.

In the case of ‘risk analysis and monitoring – refugee emergencies' (when a refugee influx may occur in a country), the UNHCR Representative leads the analysis process in consultation with UNHCR regional bureaux and UNHCR offices in neighbouring countries.

Annexes

Emergency Response Preparedness July 2015

4. Links

The site is currently down - Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSnet, dro... World Meteorological Organisation (WMO, seasonal forecasts)

5. Main contacts

UNHCR Division for Emergency Security and Supply (DESS), Emergency Services. At: hqemhand@unhcr.org

Emergency Response Preparedness - Minimum Preparedness Actions (IASC)

18 May 2020

Key points

- ERP MPAs, led by the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) or Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), are implemented by UNCTs or HCTs regardless of the level of risk.
- MPAs are a reversed engineered approach. Having determined the core elements of a successful response, they work backwards to identify what preparedness actions are needed to achieve those outcomes.
- Although every crisis is different, initial critical relief needs tend to be very similar: it is therefore possible to develop a standard relief package in advance.

1. Overview

Note. This guidance forms part of the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) approach. In its current form, it reflects the "BETA" version of the ERP, which the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience released for field testing in 2015. The final version of the ERP may look different, once

released.

Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPAs) are a set of activities that every UN Country Team (UNCT) or Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) must implement to establish a minimum level of emergency preparedness within a country. MPAs are not risk or scenario-specific and can usually be accomplished without significant additional resources. They include risk monitoring, establishment of coordination and management arrangements, preparation of joint needs assessments, monitoring, information management, and establishment of operational capacity and arrangements to deliver critical relief assistance and protection. Their implementation makes a fundamental difference to the quality of an eventual response and makes it possible to respond flexibly to different types of emergency.

ERP MPAs are structured along the below categories.

a) Risk monitoring
The MPA checklist outlines key actions that should be taken to ensure that risks are monitored regularly so that preparedness efforts are alert to emerging or developing risks.

b) Coordination and management arrangements
Clearly defined coordination and accountability mechanisms are critical to an effective humanitarian response. A clear understanding of roles and responsibilities enables individuals, teams and organizations to establish working relationships that can make all the difference during a crisis. It is also critical to establish appropriate linkages with Government counterparts and other key partners. MPAs under this section identify key activities for ensuring a coherent coordination system in the event of an emergency.

c) Needs assessment, information management, and response monitoring arrangements
A coordinated needs assessment, that prioritizes the needs of women, men, girls and boys and sub-groups of the population, lays the foundation for a coherent and efficient humanitarian response. It is also critical to establish a system for response monitoring. Response monitoring establishes systems and procedures that measure who receives aid (disaggregated by sex and age), what aid is delivered to them, and what results are achieved. It is underpinned by information management, which is a systematic process of collecting, processing, verifying, and analysing sex- and age- disaggregated data and information, and disseminating relevant information to humanitarian stakeholders, affected populations, and other interested parties. MPAs under this section identify key activities that need to be undertaken ahead of time to ensure these arrangements can be implemented in an emergency.

d) Operational capacity and arrangements to deliver relief and protection
The ability to respond in the immediate aftermath of an emergency depends on the level of operational readiness in place. Experience shows that in most emergencies there is an initial assistance gap because major response operations take on average at least three to four weeks to reach full capacity. Operational preparedness aims to reduce this gap to the extent possible and indicates the minimum level of readiness that should be in place to deliver humanitarian assistance and protection in a principled and accountable manner. This section is aimed

primarily at sectors/clusters. The MPA checklist includes actions to identify: the response capacity of sector/cluster partners, including national capacity (Government, local NGOs, and the private sector); the availability and location of critical relief items; and systems for procurement, transportation and distribution of critical relief items.

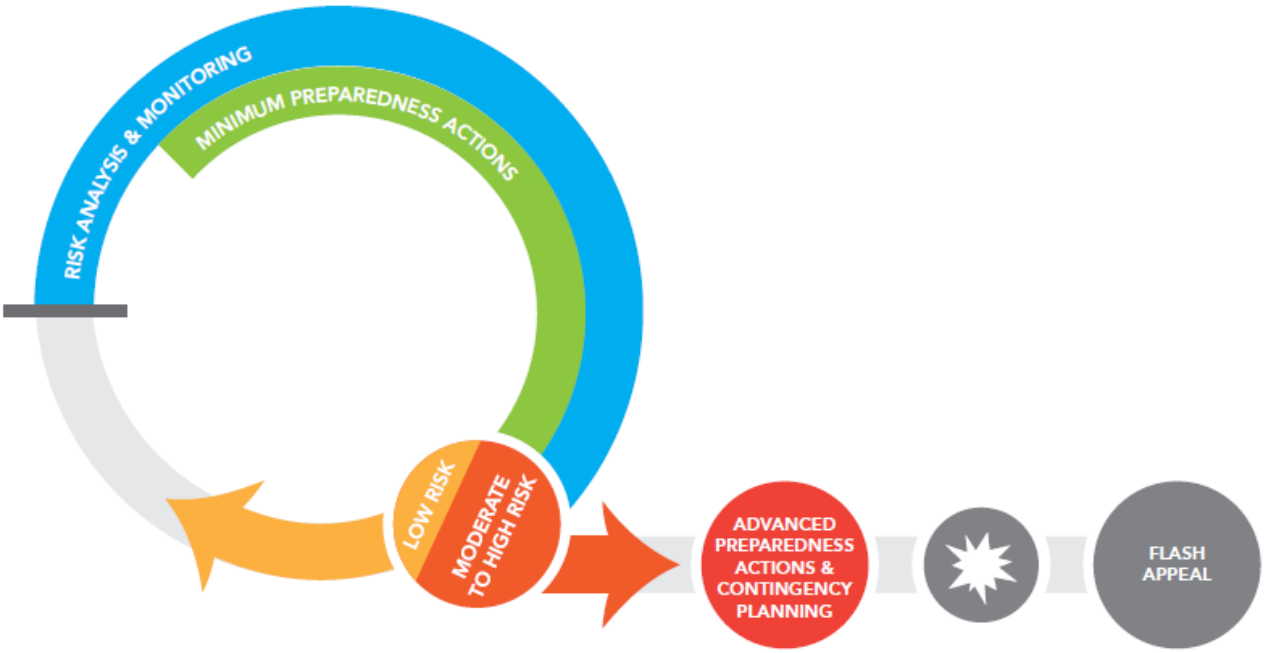
Key questions
1. Have all relevant actors in the specific cluster/sector been identified, including the private sector, and is their capacity known and mapped?

2. Are all partners aware of the key principles for humanitarian response?

- The centrality of protection.
- Accountability to affected populations, including effective two-way communication with affected communities.
- Humanitarian principles.
- Full mainstreaming of gender equality in humanitarian programmes.

3. Has due consideration been given to the suitable contents of a basic emergency relief package (taking cultural or gender equality implications or preferences into account), including the possible use of cash transfers and vouchers?

4. Have basic supply chain requirements been considered (the location of relief stocks, suppliers, logistics, etc.)?

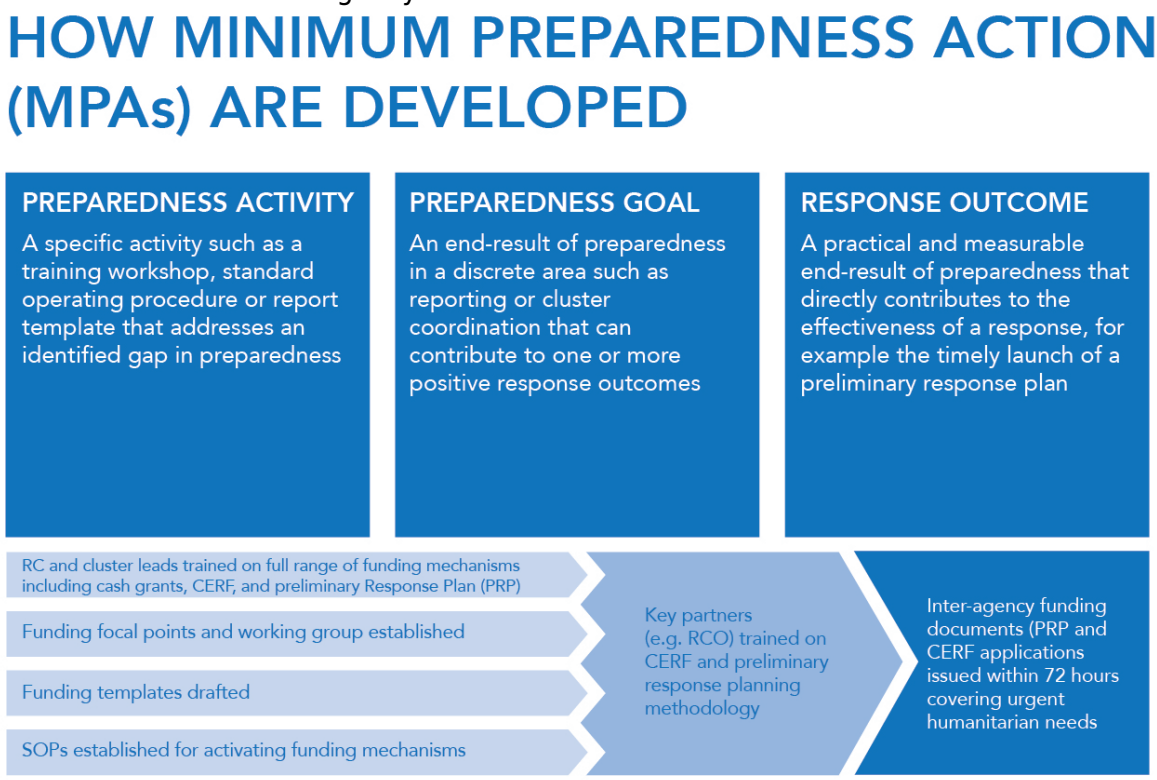


2. Relevance for emergency operations

MPAs represent a set of core preparedness activities that need to be undertaken to achieve positive outcomes in the initial emergency response phase. Some MPAs may take longer to implement (understanding local shelter options and practices, for example). Others require more continuous effort (risk monitoring, or updating contact lists). MPAs also promote more effective coordination between humanitarian actors that takes into account the perspective of affected populations through situation (baseline) and needs analysis.

The purpose of MPAs is:

- To establish a standard of minimum emergency preparedness, enabling the UNCT or HCT to maintain and measure its level of response readiness.
- To lay the foundation for a rapid build-up of emergency readiness, should a risk become imminent.
- To reach a level of basic operational readiness, so that it is possible to respond to a sudden-onset emergency.



3. Main guidance

Underlying process – how does this work?

ERP MPAs are an ongoing set of activities and should be scheduled into the UNCT and/or HCT work plan. It is recommended that MPAs are reviewed and updated at least once a year, or when risk analysis and monitoring indicate an emerging risk, or when there is a significant turnover of core agency staff.

Step 1. Context and gap analysis
As a first step the UNCT or HCT should undertake a gap analysis to establish the current level of preparedness. An ERP process includes key questions (see attached) to guide UNCTs/HCTs as they implement the MPA checklist. These questions assist the UNCT/HCT or sector/cluster to identify and discuss gaps in preparedness. They are designed to gather essential background information and help to identify special requirements and operational constraints.

Step 2. Prioritization
Based on the output of the gap analysis, the UNCT or HCT should prioritise the most pressing MPAs, to be implemented first. All country teams have constraints on their capacity to implement preparedness. It is therefore essential to ensure that the prioritisation process has the backing and buy-in of all those involved in implementing MPAs.

Step 3. Implementation
The UNCT or HCT should develop a work plan to implement the MPAs, based on agreed prioritization. The MPA checklist (see attachment) serves as a guide for this process.

Step 4. Recording actions taken
It is very important to record accountabilities, deadlines and actions, so that the UNCT or HCT can clearly monitor the level of minimum preparedness that has been achieved. The MPA templates (see attachment) can be used for this purpose.

UNHCR’s role and accountabilities

As a member of the UNCT and HCT, UNHCR participates fully in ERP. With respect to preparedness for IDP situations and natural disasters, UNHCR contributes to preparedness efforts led by the RC and/or HC.

ERP is primarily applicable to inter-agency preparedness for natural disasters and internal displacement (IDP) situations. For potential refugee crises (where the identified emergency risk specifically relates to the possibility of a refugee emergency), UNHCR leads preparedness efforts with partners and the Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies (PPRE), which uses the same approach as the ERP, should be used as a toolkit and for guidance.

Annexes

ERP MPA checklist template (draft)

Emergency Response Preparedness July 2015

4. Links

ReliefWeb Response

5. Main contacts

UNHCR Division for Emergency Security and Supply (DESS), Emergency Services. At: hqemhand@unhcr.org.

Emergency Response Preparedness - Advanced Preparedness Actions (IASC)

18 May 2020

Key points

- ERP APAs are an inter-agency tool designed to achieve a state of emergency readiness.
- Their implementation is triggered and led by the RC or HC in the concerned country, with the participation of UNCT or HCT members.
- APAs must be implemented when the risk level is ‘medium' or higher.
- ERP APAs are always implemented in conjunction with ERP contingency planning.

1. Overview

Note. This guidance forms part of the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) approach. In its current form, it reflects the "BETA" version of the ERP, which the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience released for field testing in 2015. The final version of the ERP may look different, once released.

ERP Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs) are designed to guide a Humanitarian Country Team

(HCT) to an advanced level of readiness to respond to a specific risk. Unlike MPAs, APAs are risk-specific. They build on MPAs already in place. The APA checklist includes essential preparedness actions which, though they are not specifically linked to the development of a contingency plan, complement and support the contingency planning process. ERP APAs are always implemented in conjunction with ERP contingency planning.

ERP APAs divide into the following categories.

a) Risk monitoring
The APA checklist outlines key actions that should be taken to ensure that risks are monitored regularly so that preparedness efforts are alert to emerging or developing risks.

b) Coordination and management arrangements
Clearly defined coordination and accountability mechanisms are critical to an effective humanitarian response. A clear understanding of roles and responsibilities enables individuals, teams and organizations to establish working relationships that can make all the difference during a crisis. It is also critical to establish appropriate linkages with Government counterparts and other key partners. APAs under this section identify key activities for ensuring a coherent coordination system in the event of an emergency.

c) Needs assessment, information management, and response monitoring arrangements
A coordinated needs assessment, that prioritizes the needs of women, men, girls and boys, and sub-groups of the population, lays the foundation for a coherent and efficient humanitarian response. It is also critical to establish a system for response monitoring. Response monitoring establishes systems and procedures that measure who receives aid (disaggregated by sex and age), what aid is delivered to them, and what results are achieved. It is underpinned by information management, which is the systematic process of collecting, processing, verifying, and analysing sex- and age- disaggregated data and information, and disseminating relevant information to humanitarian stakeholders, affected populations, and other interested parties. APAs under this section identify the key activities that need to be undertaken ahead of time to ensure these arrangements can be implemented in an emergency.

d) Operational capacity and arrangements to deliver relief and protection
The ability to respond in the immediate aftermath of an emergency depends on the level of operational readiness in place. Experience shows that in most emergencies there is an initial assistance gap because major response operations on average take at least three to four weeks to reach full capacity. Operational preparedness aims to reduce this gap to the extent possible and indicates the minimum level of readiness that should be in place to deliver humanitarian assistance and protection in a principled and accountable manner. This section is aimed primarily at sectors/clusters. The APA checklist includes actions: to identify the response capacity of sector/cluster partners, including national capacity (Government, local NGOs, and the private sector); the availability and location of critical relief items; and systems for procurement, transportation and distribution of critical relief items.

Key questions

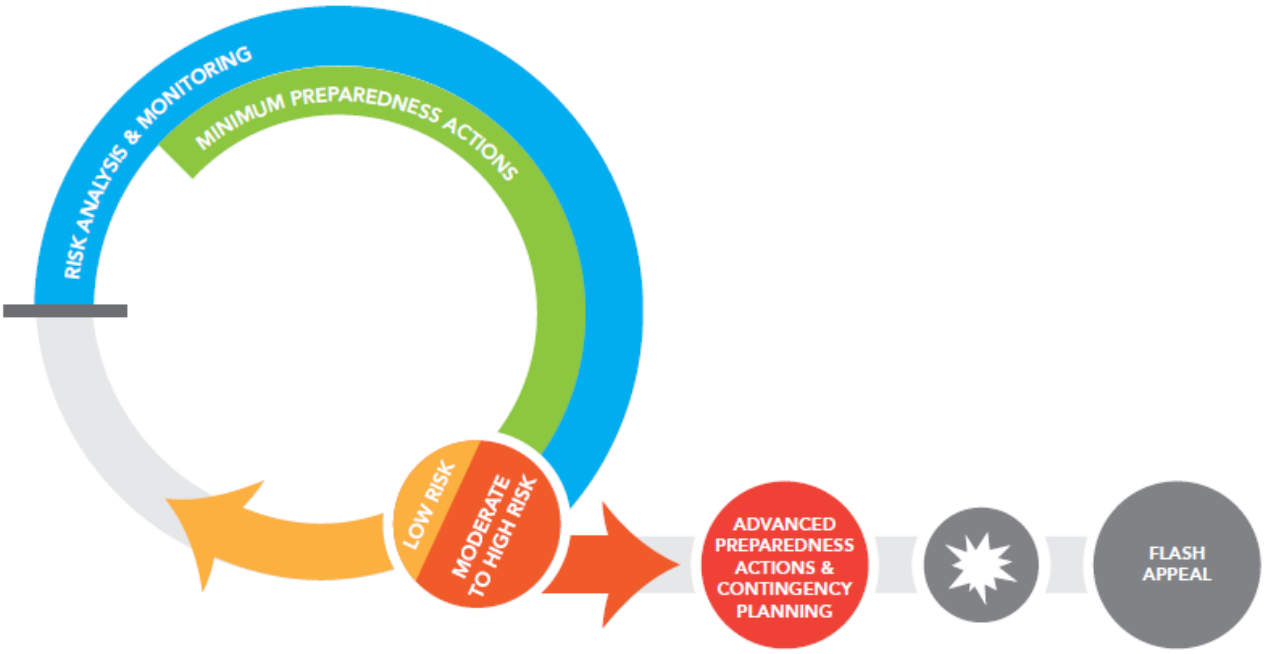
1. Have all relevant actors in the specific cluster/ sector been identified, including the private sector, and is their capacity known and mapped?

2. Are all partners aware of the key principles for humanitarian response including:

- The centrality of protection.
- Accountability to affected populations, including effective two-way communication with affected communities.
- Humanitarian principles.
- Full mainstreaming of gender equality in humanitarian programmes.

3. Has due consideration been given to the suitable contents of a basic emergency relief package (taking cultural or gender equality implications or preferences into account), including the possible use of cash transfers and vouchers?

4. Have basic supply chain requirements been considered (the location of relief stocks, suppliers, logistics, etc.)?

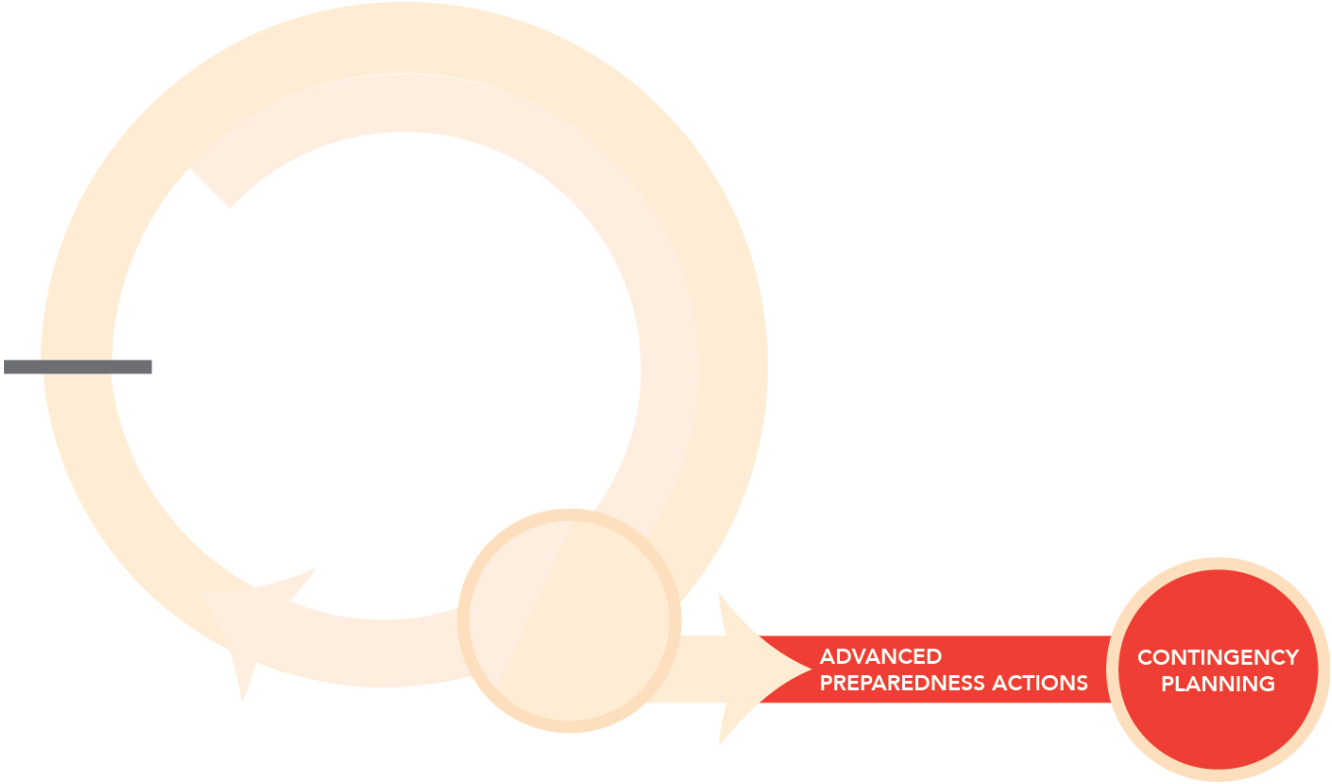


2. Relevance for emergency operations

The IASC system adopts a forward looking ‘no regrets' approach to preparedness action, especially once thresholds identified through risk analysis have been met. This normally occurs when a risk is categorized as ‘medium' or higher (a risk ranking score of 8 or more). See **ERP risk analysis and monitoring**.

APAs have the following objectives:

- To increase the emergency preparedness level of the UN Country Team (UNCT) or Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), in view of the level of risk, to one of emergency readiness.
- To assist the UNCT or HCT and sector/clusters to identify elements that are essential for responding to a potential crisis. The same elements will in turn support preparation of an ERP contingency plan.
- To identify additional resource requirements, both human and financial.
- To feed into emergency preparedness planning by national authorities.



3. Main guidance

Underlying process – how does this work?

The triggering and implementation of ERP APAs and contingency planning should be led by the Resident Coordinator (RC) or Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), with participation by members of the UNCT or HCT. APAs should be reviewed regularly if the risk level remains medium or high for a longer period, or if the hazard that instigated the response worsens.

Step 1. APAs
1.1 Context and gap analysis
As a first step the UNCT or HCT should undertake a gap analysis to establish the current level of preparedness. An ERP includes key questions (see attached) to guide HCTs as they implement the APA checklist. These questions assist the UNCT/HCT or sector/cluster to identify and discuss gaps in preparedness. They are designed to gather essential background information and help to identify special requirements and operational constraints.

1.2 Prioritization

Based on the output of the gap analysis, the UNCT and/or HCT should prioritize the most pressing APAs, to be implemented first. All country teams have constraints on their capacity to implement preparedness. It is therefore essential to ensure that the prioritization process has the backing and buy-in of all those involved in implementing APAs.

1.3 Implementation

The UNCT and/or HCT should develop a work plan to implement the APAs, based on agreed prioritization. The APA checklist (see attachment) serves as a guide for this process.

1.4 Recording actions taken

It is very important to record accountabilities, deadlines and actions taken, so that the UNCT or HCT can clearly monitor the level of minimum preparedness that has been achieved. The APA templates (see attachment) can be used for this purpose.

Step 2. Developing a contingency plan

The UNCT or HCT should establish a work plan and timeline for developing a contingency plan. Accountability and deadlines for completing various section of the plan should be agreed and assigned. Given that the UNCT or HCT, under the leadership of the RC or HC, has overall responsibility for the contingency plan, regular consultation should take place and actions should be guided.

Step 3. Addressing preparedness gaps

Preparedness gaps that are identified during the planning process should be addressed. Again, this should be done in a systematic manner on the basis of accountabilities and deadlines that have been agreed and assigned.

Step 4. Testing the contingency plan

A schedule for regularly testing and reviewing the plan should be agreed. It should be linked to risk monitoring. Tools such as simulations should be used to test the plan.

UNHCR’s role and accountabilities

As a member of the UNCT and HCT, UNHCR fully participates in ERP. With respect to preparedness for IDP situations and natural disasters, UNHCR contributes to preparedness efforts led by the RC or HC.

The ERP is primarily applicable to inter-agency preparedness for natural disasters and internal displacement (IDP) situations. For potential refugee crises (where the identified emergency risk specifically relates to the possibility of a refugee emergency), UNHCR leads preparedness efforts with partners and the Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies (PPRE), which uses the same approach as the ERP, should be used as a toolkit and for guidance. The PPRE includes a specific inter-agency APA checklist for potential refugee crisis.

Annexes

ERP APA checklist template (draft)

Emergency Response Preparedness July 2015

4. Links

ReliefWeb Response

5. Main contacts

Division for Emergency Security and Supply (DESS), Emergency Services. At: hqemhand@unhcr.org.

Emergency Response Preparedness contingency planning (IASC)

18 May 2020

Key points

- ERP contingency planning and ERP Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs) are inter-agency tools designed to achieve a state of emergency readiness for non-refugee emergencies.
- Their implementation is triggered and led by the RC or HC in the country concerned, with the participation of UNCT or HCT members.
- In the case of an anticipated refugee crisis, UNHCR leads inter-agency contingency planning, and the PPRE contingency planning guidance applies.
- Contingency planning must be implemented when the risk level is ‘medium' or higher.
- Throughout the planning process, specific preparedness actions or issues requiring follow-up should be identified and recorded.
- The contingency plan document is not an end in itself; the consultative and inclusive process with all partners is as important. It captures the decisions taken by partners during the planning process.

1. Overview

Note. This guidance forms part of the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) approach. In its current form, it reflects the "BETA" version of the ERP, which the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience released for field testing in 2015. The final version of the ERP may look different, once released.

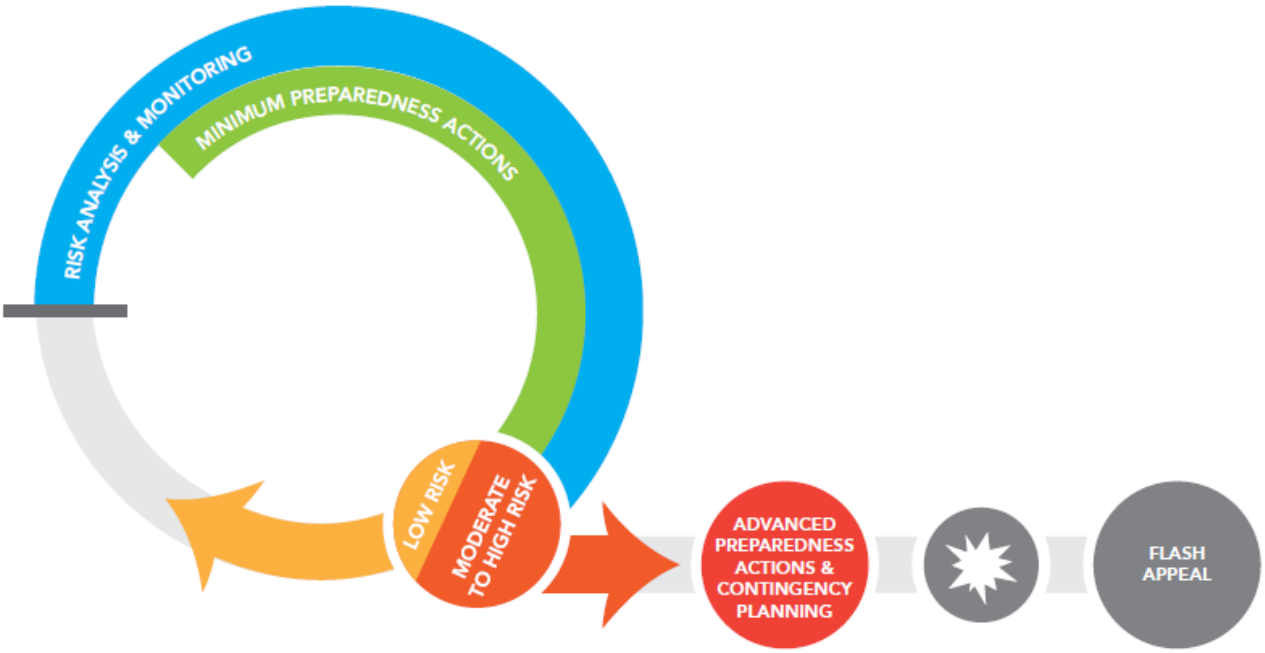
"Contingency planning is a process, in anticipation of potential crises, of developing strategies, arrangements and procedures to address the humanitarian needs of those adversely affected by crises" (Richard Choularton, **Contingency Planning and Humanitarian Action: A Review of Practice**, HPN Network Paper No. 59, March 2007). A contingency plan (CP) sets out the initial response strategy and operational plan to meet critical humanitarian needs during the first three to four weeks of an emergency. It reflects the decisions taken by all partners involved in the planning process. If the emergency occurs, it should seamlessly transform into a Preliminary Response Plan (PRP), as foreseen by the IASC's Humanitarian Programme Cycle.
The ERP contingency planning process, usually led by the Resident Coordinator (RC) or Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) at country level, is primarily applicable to inter-agency preparedness for natural disasters and internal displacement (IDP) situations.

For potential refugee crises (where the identified emergency risk specifically relates to the possibility of a refugee emergency), the Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies (PPRE), which uses the same approach as the ERP, should be used as a toolkit and for guidance. The PPRE contingency planning guidance is specifically tailored to refugee crises. The UNHCR Representative in the country always leads inter-agency contingency planning for refugee situations, in support of the host Government.

Key principles of contingency planning

- Contingency planning should be simple and easy to carry out. The task should not be confined to specialists: all staff likely to be involved in the response should participate. Ownership and understanding are essential when it comes operationalizing a response.
- The contingency plan needs to be specific rather than generic. It is important to link the plan to risk analysis and monitoring, so that the plan is framed on the basis of specific information.
- Contingency plans should use resources efficiently, effectively and equitably to meet humanitarian needs appropriately.
- Contingency planning should be process-driven. Although written plans are important, in the absence of a sound process contingency planning may simply be ignored and end up shelved or filed away unused. The document itself is not the most important. It is the record of a decision-making process undertaken ahead of time that answers questions and assigns accountability.
- Contingency planning should be realistic. A realistic understanding of response capacity is essential for a realistic plan. In many contingency plans, it is assumed that sufficient response capacity exists or that it can swiftly be put in place. However, insufficient effort is made to determine what this entails. As a result, contingency plans can give the

impression that a crisis can be managed when it is likely to far outstrip the response capacity that is available.



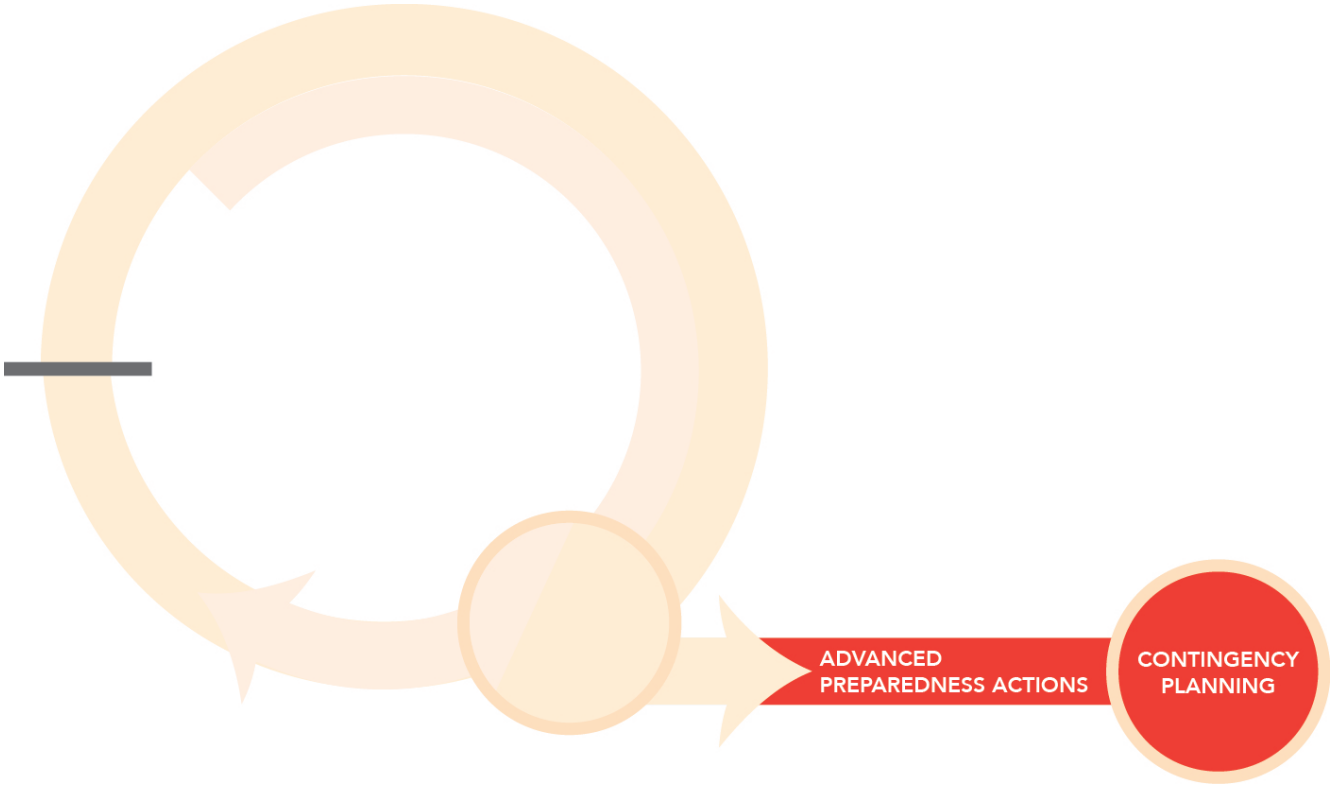
2. Relevance for emergency operations

The IASC system adopts a forward looking ‘no regrets' approach to ERP advanced preparedness actions (APAs) and contingency planning, especially when risk thresholds (identified by risk analysis) have been reached. When a risk is categorized as "medium" or higher (a risk ranking score of 8 or more), ERP APAs and contingency planning must be undertaken. See **ERP risk analysis and monitoring**.

The objectives of a contingency plan are:

- To foster a common understanding among all partners involved of the anticipated scope of the emergency, possible humanitarian needs, and the nature and scope of the planned operational response.
- To explain clearly the sector/cluster response strategy for addressing the imminent needs of the affected population in the first weeks of an emergency.
- To identify specific challenges and gaps in the potential response.
- To communicate anticipated funding requirements.

To support prompt drafting of a Preliminary Response Plan (PRP) if an emergency occurs.



3. Main guidance

Underlying process – how does this work?

The triggering and implementation of ERP contingency planning should be led by the RC or HC, with the participation of members of the UN Country Team (UNCT) or Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). Where the risk level remains ‘medium' or ‘high' for a longer period, or the hazard that instigated the response worsens, it is recommended that contingency plans should be regularly reviewed.

Step 1. ERP Advanced Preparedness Actions (see **ERP Advanced Preparedness Actions**)

Step 2. Developing a contingency plan
The UNCT or HCT should establish a work plan and timeline for development of the plan. Accountability and deadlines for completing various sections of the plan should be agreed and assigned. Given that the UNCT or HCT, under the leadership of the RC or HC, has overall responsibility for the contingency plan, regular consultation should take place and actions should be guided.

Step 3. Addressing preparedness gaps
Preparedness gaps that are identified during the planning process should be addressed. Again this should be undertaken in a systematic manner and accountability and deadlines should be agreed and assigned.

Step 4. Testing the contingency plan
A schedule for regular testing and reviewing of the plan should be agreed. It should be linked to risk monitoring. Tools such as simulations should be used to test the plan.

ERP contingency plan structure. (See also the attached ERP contingency plan template)

(a) **Situation and risk analysis (including gender analysis).** This section provides a summary of what is likely to happen, its likely impact, and the capacity to respond. It also contains the main planning assumptions used to develop the contingency plan.

(b) **Response strategy.** This section outlines what the plan hopes to achieve. Based on the situation and risk analysis, a response strategy is developed. The response strategy contains two main elements. First, objectives are set based on information from the risk analysis. Second, a response or interventions are developed to meet these objectives

(c) **Operational delivery.** While the response strategy defines objectives, this section defines how they will be achieved. Operational delivery defines appropriate interventions and how they will be implemented (for example, by using local NGOs in partnership with local government to distribute relief items), and the steps required (logistics and needs assessments, etc.). This section is presented in the form of **cluster summary plans**, which include an overview of the operational actions needed to meet cluster/sector objectives.

(d) **Coordination and management arrangements.** This section sets out the coordination and management structures that are needed to support the response.

(e) **Operational support arrangements** (common assessment/information management/ response monitoring). This section sets out arrangements for supporting operations. The specific need for operational support will become clear as a CP is developed.

(f) **Preparedness gaps and actions.** This section outlines the preparedness gaps identified during the planning process. Gaps identified should be reviewed and prioritized and responsibilities and timelines for actions to address the gaps should be assigned.

(g) **Funding requirements**. This section should contain two budgets: an indicative budget for the planned response; and a budget for preparedness actions. Preparing indicative budgets has several benefits. First, it gives both HQ and donors a clear indication of what support is likely to be required and the likely scale of the response being planned. Second, it ensures that, if a response is required, time is not lost issuing budgeted response plans.

Maintenance
The contingency planning process does not end with production of a CP. The plan must be reviewed and updated regularly. It is particularly important to review the plan thoroughly when a change in the situation is signalled by risk monitoring, or when the institutional environment alters (following a significant change in membership or leadership of the HCT, for example). Ongoing involvement in CP follow up should be included in the work plans of participating organizations and individuals.

Simple **simulation exercises** are valuable. They familiarize those who will take part in a humanitarian response with the coordination and response mechanisms envisaged in the plan. They also help to test planning assumptions and response systems. Simulations may be used as part of a regular schedule for reviewing and updating the contingency plan.

UNHCR’s role and accountabilities

As a member of the UNCT and HCT, UNHCR participates in ERP contingency planning for natural disaster and IDP situations, led by the RC or HC in the country. UNHCR may also lead the development of cluster plans, if the clusters it leads (Protection, Shelter, Camp Coordination and Camp Management) are foreseen by the CP in question and UNHCR's leadership is appropriate. (In natural disaster situations, IFRC leads shelter cluster activities, and IOM CCCM activities.) A Protection Cluster plan should always be included in ERP contingency plans.

ERP is primarily applicable to inter-agency preparedness for natural disasters and internal displacement (IDP) situations. For potential refugee crises (where the identified emergency risk specifically relates to the possibility of a refugee emergency), UNHCR leads preparedness efforts with partners and the Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies (PPRE), which uses the same approach as the ERP, should be used as a toolkit and for guidance. The PPRE includes specific guidance for inter-agency contingency planning in refugee crises.

Annexes

Emergency Response Preparedness July 2015

ERP Annex X - contingency plan template (draft)

4. Links

ReliefWeb Response

5. Main contacts

UNHCR Division for Emergency Security and Supply (DESS), Emergency Services. At: hqemhand@unhcr.org.