



# Disaster preparedness plan guidance

This guidance document is designed to be used alongside the 'Disaster preparedness plan template'.

## Purpose

- **The purpose** of completing the disaster preparedness plan is to enable Tearfund country teams to think through, in advance of a disaster event, what hazards their context is likely to be exposed to, and begin to plan the kind of disaster response they would like to be engaged in.
- **The end result** of the plan is to provide country teams with a series of activities, or next steps, which they can engage with over the coming year to see their country office and partners better equipped and prepared for future disasters.



## Overview and expectations

Tearfund's disaster preparedness plan is a seven-step process designed at the country organisational level, as opposed to the community level, which enables us to consider questions that are all too often left until after an emergency has occurred. By considering these questions in advance it helps to support quality, timely and effective interventions prior to a disaster event. It also gives country teams the chance to invest in capacity development, which is a key part of disaster risk reduction.

Disaster preparedness planning cannot be a stand-alone piece of work, and it will only be useful if it both draws on and feeds into the other planning and work that we do, such as country strategy development, annual operating plans and safety and security reviews.

In its most basic form, disaster preparedness planning is where we ask ourselves these three basic questions:

- What is most likely to happen in our context? (understanding our context and building our scenario)
- What are we going to do about it? (building our response)
- What can we do ahead of time to get prepared? (building our preparedness plan)

Disaster preparedness planning can be done for a country as a whole on an annual basis, or specifically when the impact of a potential hazard is imminent (eg deteriorating insecurity conditions; hurricane/cyclone seasonal warnings). Every country is required to complete a disaster preparedness plan annually or after the context has changed following a significant event. The level of planning, and preparedness activities, will be greater the closer you get to the arrival of a specific scenario.

Disaster preparedness planning should not be confused with community level disaster risk assessments and planning: it is about how we prepare. Although the participatory processes used in assessing community level risk can be very useful in feeding into the process, disaster preparedness planning is a lot broader, and needs to take into account what Tearfund, its partners, the local government and other actors can and will do to respond to a situation as well as the local community. However, it is important to also think of early actions that can be taken before a disaster strikes in order to mitigate the impact, as this can be part of our humanitarian response to a developing crisis.

Disaster preparedness planning is not only appropriate for fast-onset disasters, but it should be used for any situation that will push a community beyond the threshold of their own independent coping mechanisms. This concept can also be considered for your office's capacity to expand and adapt to new emergency situations.



## Expectation

- A disaster preparedness plan should be developed by country teams for all countries where Tearfund works and should be reviewed annually. However, it is recognised that it may not be necessary to go into as much detail in some contexts as others, but the basic process should be followed in all contexts.
- The humanitarian and resilience team can help with examples of previously completed plans and sample workshop presentations used in other contexts. However, when planning for a workshop, it is important to develop an approach and materials that have been modified for your own context, country operating model and set-up.
- There is no requirement that partners should have disaster preparedness plans in place. This is up to the respective country office to determine. However, where a country responds to a crisis mainly through partnerships, then what those partners do to prepare would form part of our own preparedness planning.
- The preparedness actions and scenarios should be monitored regularly to ensure early actions are taken at the appropriate time.

## Advance considerations

### Approach

- For a country where the risk of a disaster is very small, the process might be a discussion between management and the plan might be a small annex to the country's strategy.
- However, for a country that is prone to many and frequent disasters, the process is likely to be much larger, and is likely to include workshops with partners and any other relevant stakeholders who have a vested interest in Tearfund disaster response.
- The disaster preparedness plan would be more useful with the input of those partners who are likely to respond, should an emergency occur. If partners do input into the process, it is best that senior representatives and decision-makers are engaged in the process. If partners do not input into the process, it is recommended that the final plan is shared with them for their information and feedback before being signed off.
- The purpose of bringing partners and other key stakeholders together is twofold: 1) to create greater awareness of the risks and hazards faced in the context, agreeing in advance the aspirations for response, and 2) to better inform the response plans of Tearfund by understanding the capacities and plans of partners.
- The template is designed to follow the seven steps. Section A (assessing your context) can be completed prior to any gathering or discussion and can be reviewed together, either as a country team or in a workshop space, to check the assumptions being made.
- An ideal time to develop your disaster preparedness plan is on completion of your country strategy or mid-term review, or after a disaster event has taken place. You can draw on your existing country resources, such as the country strategy and annual operating plan, and any learning reviews or evaluations following disaster events.



## Timeframe

- The process of meeting and discussing together is just as important as the creation of the final disaster preparedness plan.
- We have outlined the objectives of each of the seven steps in the process. These can be followed in order and you can either pre-populate some of the content and then discuss it, or develop the content together.
- The time requirement of the workshop depends on numbers participating and whether you want to spend time discussing with each partner their respective preparedness plans and response ambitions.
- Provided partners and the country office spend time reviewing all of the supporting documents to the preparedness planning process, including strategies and annual plans, workshops can take three to four days. Or, you could have focused country team time spread over a few afternoons, which would likely take one to two days without a workshop.
- It is expected that teams will finish the process with a completed draft disaster preparedness plan which can be reviewed and updated annually or whenever there is a significant change in the context.

## Cost

- Country teams are expected to cover the cost of the development of the plan.
- In addition to the cost of undertaking the process, there are two other budget implications that you will need to consider. Firstly, the implication on your organisational budget and the budget for the proposed preparedness activities. Activities identified under the preparedness plan would need to be actioned as soon as possible, and where possible these costs should be included in the normal organisational annual budget, such as supporting partners by adding 2% of project costs into identified preparedness actions. Consider the cost of the action versus the risk reduction impact it will have – this will help you define what to prioritise.
- The other implication on the budgeting process will be for the potential activities under the response plan. It is important to review country budgets to understand where flexibility may be possible, and to develop relationships with local donors or funding mechanisms.

## Follow-up

- There is an expectation that this disaster preparedness plan is reviewed regularly, alongside the specific actions in the preparedness plan which should be reviewed on a quarterly/semi-annual basis to ensure actions and plans are still relevant and owned.
- The final disaster preparedness plan should be shared with your respective region, as well as the Humanitarian and Resilience Team ([hart@tearfund.org](mailto:hart@tearfund.org)).



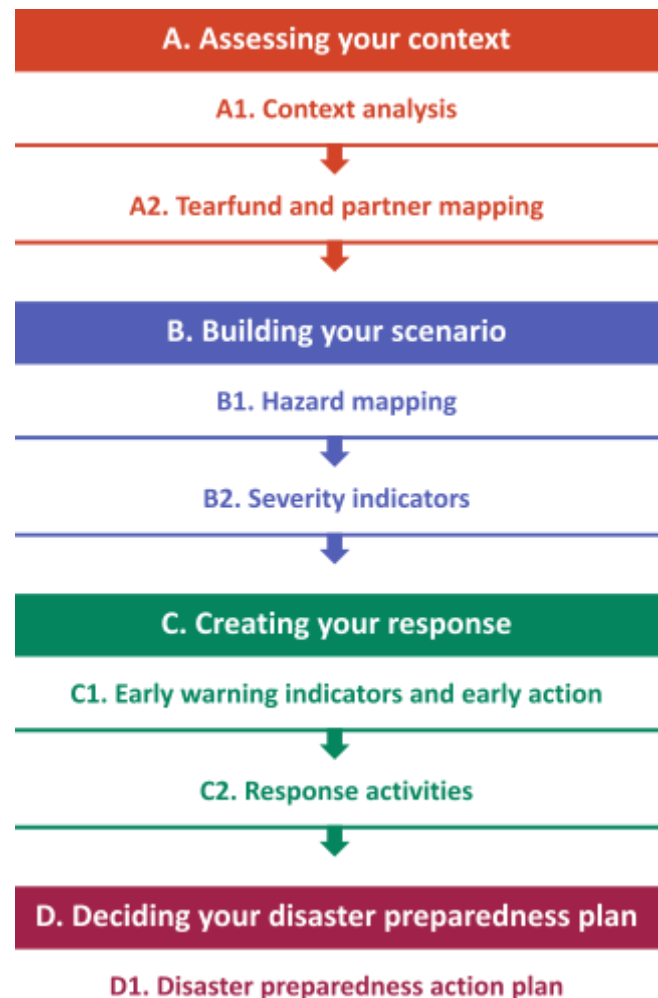
## Writing your plan

It is recommended that following through the step-by-step process guidance provided within this document will help country teams to write their country plans.

This process is linear and it is recommended that you work through the guidance systematically, using the templates and tools provided.

The guidance is designed to be used as a participatory tool, feeding information from a range of team members and senior managers in partner organisations, where appropriate.

We recommend that you write up your discussions as soon as possible, so that your final plan captures the different discussions and priorities within the team and partners. This is particularly important if you conduct a workshop. Allocate a scribe for the sessions so that information is captured in real time rather than at the end of the workshop, when there is a higher risk that key discussion points will have been forgotten.





## A. Assessing your context

In order for the disaster preparedness plan to be relevant and useful to you, it must be contextualised. You know your context, the norms, patterns, rhythms and relationships of your country and region. Through discussions with your country team and partners, you can begin to develop a picture of the specific, contextual landscape in order to plan for and mitigate the specific risks you may face.

### A1: Context analysis

#### Objective

This section is to help you think through your current context and all the different influences that affect your country (politics, economics, social, technological, legal and environmental). By analysing these areas with the lens of disaster preparedness, it will inform your response plans and the limits or opportunities for you to work alongside others in the event of a disaster. You are likely to have thought through quite a lot of this information when you completed your country strategy and other country office documents (eg safety and security plans). Do use that information and copy over what is relevant when considering your context.

**The primary purpose of this section is to identify clearly the contextual information that will have the most direct impact on your disaster preparedness planning.**

#### Process:

- The contextual analysis is designed to be most useful at a country level: think about what information is important for preparing and responding to a disaster.
- We have used the PESTLE format which allows us to think through how a plan or response might be impacted by the political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental considerations of the context.
- Ensure you consider the broad existing capacities, vulnerabilities and risks at a countrywide level.
- If security is a particular hazard, it is important to consider a more thorough situational analysis, including the types of security and types/locations of violence.

We have included three specific questions that will help with understanding your context.

#### 1. Who are the main stakeholders (most influential) in the country?

This question is asking you to think about who the different local stakeholders are: this can be at the community level and at a government or regional level. Consider how national and local decisions are made and the broad demographics of your country. Who are the main groups of individuals and how do they relate to each other? Consider political groups and factions. Who are the main international groups who influence your context? Is there a UN presence in your country? Who are the main economic actors involved in your country?



**2. Which local institutions, or systems within government or civil society, might help you to prepare for and respond to a disaster event?**

This question is asking you to think about how disasters currently get managed or coordinated in your context? Is there a specific government department for disasters? Does your country welcome international assistance? Who already responds in the event of a disaster, such as charities, aid agencies or the UN?

**3. What are the main security concerns within your context and how might security impact any disaster response activities?**

This question is asking you to think about how security is managed in your context. Is there a clear and understandable judicial system? What laws are in place in your context? Consider the basic social contract between the state/government and its citizens. How is dissent received and managed? What is the relationship between different groups in your context? Is disagreement expressed democratically or is there likely to be violence? What are patterns of migration like in your context? What are the regional security dynamics?

Answering these questions gives a deeper understanding of your context and can help provide some considerations for when it comes to response and preparedness planning.

## A2: Tearfund and partner mapping

### Objective

This section is to help you think through your current country office and partner capacities and their areas of technical expertise eg WASH, church and community transformation, self help groups and cash etc.

The primary purpose of this section is to provide a clear understanding of the current geographical and sectoral coverage of your context by Tearfund offices, programmes and partners.

**We recommend that you add a map(s) to show areas covered by Tearfund and partners.** This information will enable you as a team to see where future response activities are most likely to take place. It will also help you consider, as part of your preparedness planning, if you would like to explore additional geographical areas to engage with, depending on the level of need in those areas.

This section can be pre-populated by Tearfund and local partners prior to a workshop to save on time. We have suggested some information that partners could collect before a workshop so that a richer, more fruitful discussion can take place collectively when you all come together.



## B. Building your scenario

This is where you begin to **build the most likely hazard impact scenario for your context**.

This is intended to help you think through what has happened in your country before. What risks or hazards is your country most likely to be impacted by?

### B1: Hazard mapping

#### Objective

This section is to help you think through the **most likely hazards** that could affect your context. Think about their likelihood and impact, as well as the consequences of the hazard in terms of how it will affect people's lives and livelihoods. Consider who is most vulnerable and those most at risk.

We have provided a hazard mapping table which you can begin to populate with the hazards that are most present in your context. Then, choose where to place them on the axis of likelihood and impact. Refer to the country strategy to see what may have already been identified as the most common hazards in your country. Do you agree with what it says? Is it still relevant?

This is a good activity to conduct as a group. Take time for everyone to reflect and write down their top three hazards on individual sticky notes and place them on the table where they think is appropriate. For example, you may have 'political violence' as a hazard – you think it is 'likely' to happen but the impact may be 'low'.

Review the hazards each of you have selected and discuss which are the most important for you to develop specific scenarios for. You may have many different hazards to choose from. Pick the **top three** that are likely to be the most impactful, or disruptive, to your context and most likely to happen.

#### A summary table has been provided for you to reflect on the following:

**Likely effects on people's lives and livelihoods: what is the likely impact (number of people affected)? What are the likely needs?**

- These reflections are approximate. We recognise this is an imaginary scenario you are creating, however you will have a sense of scale and possible household numbers/regions affected from your reflections of previous experiences. Take this opportunity to write down your most likely scenario as it will then help you shape your potential response and preparedness plans.

**Locations: which locations will be most affected (will it impact the whole country or certain regions)?**

- Your experience to date will help you reflect on which areas of the country are the most exposed or at risk to each hazard scenario. It is unlikely that the whole country will be impacted by the hazard in the same way. Think through which areas may need the most support, even if you are not present in those locations: it is a helpful exercise for you to see where the need is likely to be greatest.





**Groups at risk: who is most at risk and how are they, or the services they rely on, vulnerable to the hazard?**

- This is a chance to reflect on who in the affected community will most likely be at risk of a higher level of impact from the hazard. It's helpful to think through who might be most affected by each scenario: would it be pregnant women and young children, the elderly or those with mobility problems? You can also start to think about how you would find out more information about the locations. Who has information on those most at risk? How can you build relationships with those communities and ask them what specific groups may need additional support?

**Capacities (local, government, etc) to anticipate and respond:**

- This is an opportunity to consider what existing capacities are present in the affected locations. Does Tearfund, or your partners, have a presence in the most vulnerable locations? Who else might respond in those locations if there is a disaster? What are the local capacities and skills? And what assets and buildings are available to be adapted in the event of the disaster?
- Your country strategy includes the identified hazards that your organisation will respond to. Consider what capacity and expertise your country team and partners have to respond to these hazards.

**Process:**

- If your country is susceptible to multiple hazards, we would recommend you focus on a limited number for your disaster preparedness planning process, choosing a maximum of three.
- This process could gather information from a wide range of different sources including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Participatory assessment of likely scenarios, possibly as part of a hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessment such as PADR (Participatory assessment of disaster risk).
  - Research likely scenarios identified by other organisations, government and UN departments, possibly in their own contingency or response plans.
  - Historical information on past disasters, their frequency and impact (websites such as AON Risk Services, FEWS-Net, USGS and Tropical Storm Risk can provide a lot of historical data).
  - Using a risk analysis tool to determine using 'likelihood' and 'impact' levels.



## B2: Severity indicators

### How severe is the impact of the hazard likely to be?

#### Objective

In this section, we want you to consider the scale of the impact the hazard may have on your context, as well as its potential severity.

Now that you have identified the three most likely hazards for your context, this section will help you think through how severe the impact of the hazard is likely to be (scale and size). Through discussion with your country team you will have experiences of what has happened before and the scale of impact in previous disasters. Use those reflections as a guide to help you make a broad prediction of the impact of each hazard for the purposes of planning a response.

This process will help you plan your response more effectively and efficiently according to the anticipated scale of the event. We have drafted a series of severity indicators based on the most common disaster events – do use these and adjust them for your context.

**Using your experience to date and your understanding of the context, choose which indicators you think are most appropriate.**

In the linked document, we have used the language of ‘stressed, moderate and severe conditions’ – this is taken from the INFORM severity index (see next page<sup>1</sup>) that you may have used as part of your country strategy process.

We recommend that you choose the most likely indicators from the linked document to your context, or adapt the indicators based on your specific context.

<sup>1</sup> <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Severity/Methodology>



Severity score	INFORM severity index										
Dimensions	Impact of the crisis				Conditions of people affected		Complexity of the crisis				
Categories	Geographical		Human		People in need	Concentration of conditions	Society and safety		Operating environment		
Components	Affected area	People in the affected area	People affected	People affected by categories	Extreme		Social cohesion	Rule of law	Safety and security safety	Diversity of groups affected	Humanitarian access
				Severe							
				Moderate							
				Stressed							
				None/minimal							

Adapted from an original graphic by the European Commission

**Process:**

- Use the table to write clear and concise indicators which monitor the severity of the impact.

**Supporting documents:**

- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – Severity indicators



## C. Creating your response

Now that you have identified the most likely hazards that could impact your context and your anticipated scale of impact, you can begin to think through some of the early warning indicators that may (or may not) happen to alert you to the arrival of the hazard. There may be some early action activities that you can do at this pre-crisis stage that could mitigate (reduce) the impact of the hazard when it does occur.

**C1** focuses on these early warning indicators and possible early action activities **before** the hazard impacts your context.

**C2** focuses on the response activities you would like to implement once the hazard has impacted your context.

### C1: Early warning indicators and early action

#### Objective

This section is designed to help you think through the early indicators that provide a **warning** that a hazard is about to have an impact on your context.

For some disasters (mainly slow-onset) there may be early indicators that provide warning that a hazard is about to have an impact. These early warnings should act as prompts, both for early action activities and response preparedness planning.

The intention of responding early is to mitigate the impact of a disaster and reduce vulnerability and exposure of communities to hazards. We have drafted a series of EWEA indicators based on the most common disaster events. Do use these and adjust them for your context.

Monitoring for early warning indicators is an important part of anticipation before a hazard becomes a disaster. Observing early warning indicators gives an opportunity for early action activities to take place before the disaster is fully realised.



### Process:

- Using the hazards and scenarios already identified, consider what indicators might be useful in helping to define and determine possible early action activities.
- Early warning indicators are very important in helping to mitigate the impact of a hazard. They are important for building into existing programming and should be monitored regularly and carefully for signs of potential future risks.
- Use the table to write clear indicators with accompanying early action activities in either the days or months prior to the event, based on the most likely scenario.
- Early action activities can be actions for communities and Tearfund or partners to take in order to lessen the impact of the disaster.

### Supporting documents:

- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – Early warning indicators and anticipatory actions
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – C1: Early warning indicators and early action guidance questions



## C2: Response activities

### Objective

This section is to help you think through how you would like to respond in the event of your hazard scenario impacting your context. **This can be aspirational!** The table is also designed to help identify where there are gaps between your response aspirations and your current office/partner capacity. This should inform the final section of this plan where you develop your disaster preparedness actions.

We recommend that you prepare for a response that is most likely as opposed to worst- or best-case scenario.

Tearfund has a number of resources that are designed to be used at the point of a disaster or just before it. Do take the time to review Tearfund's environmental risk assessment resources, which will help you think through the possible environmental impact of any humanitarian response. We also recommend you familiarise yourself with Tearfund's needs assessment tools which give an indication of the breadth of questions you may need to ask the affected community at the point of disaster.

### Process:

- Use the table to consider the what, where, when and how of your response, working through the Tearfund office and/or partners.
- Write out the specific topline activities you would like to do in the response (what kind of programming do you anticipate doing?)
- Use the table to highlight where there is likely to be a need for extra resources, staff, training or additional geographical sites to be established in the event of this disaster. This is to help you begin to think through the gaps between your anticipated response plan and the current reality of your office and partner capacity.

### Supporting documents:

- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – C2: Response activities guidance questions
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – GUIDE – Environmental assessments in humanitarian response
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – TOOL – Environmental assessment questions for humanitarian contexts
- [Tearfund needs assessment in emergencies](#)



## D. Deciding your disaster preparedness plan

You have now identified the likely hazards impacting your context, built scenarios and designed the responses you would like to implement. The next step is to identify the specific actions that need to take place in order to be prepared to respond to these hazards.

### D1: Disaster preparedness action plan

#### Objective

This section is to help you think through the specific actions that you need to take in order to be ready to respond practically in advance of a disaster. This section also helps you to write down the capacity or coverage gaps that have been identified in this document and agree on practical next steps to overcome these gaps – these can be areas that the Tearfund country office or partners need to address.

The table has been split into two sections in order to a) plan for early action activities and b) plan for response activities.

It is important to draft an approximate top-line budget for these preparedness activities **even if you do not have the funds at this stage to carry out the activities**. Try to be as realistic as possible about costs. Once the disaster preparedness plan has been developed, further discussion within the country region can help decide how best to source these funds, or how to prioritise allocating funds for the next financial year.

#### Process:

- This is the final section of the Disaster preparedness plan and this is where all the information you have gathered over sections A–C come together into this summary table.
- Reflect back to the **early warning indicators and early action section in C1**. What were the capacity gaps you identified in that section? Copy those you identified over into the preparedness action plan table and think through the next steps that need to be taken to see this gap covered.
- Reflect back to the **response activities section in C2**. What were the capacity gaps you identified in that section? Copy those you identified into this preparedness action plan table and think through the next steps that need to be taken to see this gap covered.
- Think about who will own each activity or preparedness action. Where does the responsibility sit to get this practical activity moving forward?
- Think about when you need to have this activity completed. When would you like to be ready to deliver against this plan?



- Think about what this is likely to cost. Can we source the training locally (from other responders?) Can we shadow others to learn the skills? Do we need to bring people together to deliver this training (where/how)?
- It's important to reflect at the end of the process and prioritise your next steps. There may be many gaps you have identified in the course of completing this action plan, and not all of them will be able to be focused on at once. What things are really important to you as a country team to move forward with? Who has the energy and capacity to run with them and champion getting those capacity gaps filled?
- It's important to discuss your findings with senior management at the region level, with your humanitarian matrix colleagues and with the relevant global teams who may be able to support you with technical information and training support.
- The usefulness of this final, completed plan is dependent on what is done next with it. The discussions and information gathering alongside colleagues and partners is important, but what happens next will determine how effective the process has been.
- Use the tool to evidence what the gaps are and to advocate for support from the regional and global level. Demonstrating the needs you have identified provides a strong incentive for resource mobilisation. Make the most of this disaster preparedness process!

### Supporting documents:

- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – D1: Disaster preparedness action plan guidance questions





## Next steps

### Discuss annual budgeting for preparedness action plan

Preparedness planning requires investment. This is the responsibility of the country office to allow for funds to be allocated each year, to begin to address the gaps identified in this process.

### Monitoring the disaster preparedness action plan

The template will need to be reviewed on an annual basis, or if the context should go through a significant change as a result of a disaster or regional change.

### When to use the safety and security contingency planning process

Anticipated or rapid onset security incidents, such as pre-election unrest or military action, should be addressed using the safety and security contingency planning process. The safety and security contingency planning resource is specific for incidents as they are happening in real time and not for scenario planning of likely hazards.

### Supporting documents

- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – Disaster preparedness plan template
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – C1: Early warning indicators and early action guidance questions
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – C2: Response activities guidance questions
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – D1: Disaster preparedness action plan guidance questions
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – Severity indicators
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – Early warning indicators and anticipatory actions
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – GUIDE – Environmental assessments in humanitarian response
- Disaster Preparedness Toolkit – TOOL – Environmental assessment questions for humanitarian contexts