

# UNHCR GUIDANCE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

2023





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## 1. Introduction

The importance of preparedness is widely recognized within the humanitarian system. 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.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Purpose

This guidance provides a practical framework to support effective operationalisation and implementation of the Emergency Policy. While the Emergency Policy provides the overarching framework, the guidance is a tool that will assist UNHCR staff members and affiliate workforce (hereinafter referred to as “personnel”) in fulfilling their responsibilities under the Emergency Policy, as relates to preparedness measures.

This guidance focuses on preparing 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 how UNHCR will incorporate preparedness in its emergency response strategies and risk-informed programming. It reaffirms existing standards, and highlights practical measures that personnel can take to enable UNHCR to respond promptly and operate effectively in emergencies. This guidance supersedes and replaces the UNHCR Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies (PPRE) and the UNHCR Preparedness Package for IDP Emergencies (PPIE).

## 3. Scope

This guidance has been primarily designed for use by UNHCR personnel in country operations, regional bureaux and headquarters (hereinafter “HQ”) divisions and entities who are engaged in leading, managing, delivering, overseeing and/or supporting any aspect of emergency preparedness and response. It provides practical guidance on how UNHCR 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. It is also designed to be used in collaboration with all relevant actors, including governments, the UN, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other partners involved in preparing for a response to potential displacement.

This guidance focuses on preparing 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.

The main areas covered in this guidance include:

- (i) Leadership and coordination in emergency preparedness
- (ii) Emergency risk analysis and monitoring – mandatory for all operations
- (iii) Contingency Planning and Implementation of Preparedness Actions - only for operations that face high risk(s) of a new or escalated emergency
- (iv) Level 1 Emergency declaration

## 4. Rationale

[UNHCR's Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response](#) (hereinafter the "Emergency Policy") establishes the framework for UNHCR's engagement in emergency preparedness and response, based on its mandate and inter-agency commitments, including as a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

The Emergency Policy affirms that preparedness and early engagement are fundamental to UNHCR being a predictable lead and a reliable partner in humanitarian crises. UNHCR must contribute to the delivery of protection, humanitarian assistance and durable solutions for persons of concern affected by humanitarian crises, arising from armed conflict, violence and human rights violations, hazardous climate and other environmental events and conditions.

UNHCR Representatives are responsible for ensuring its implementation and leading UNHCR preparedness efforts at the country level. Regional bureau(x), in collaboration with Division of Emergency Security and Supply (DESS), shall oversee and support the preparedness level of country operations, ensure coordination between the relevant country operations and other regional bureau(x) in situations involving several countries or regions, and review the scenario-based contingency plans as appropriate.

This guidance reflects [UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2022-2026](#) which affirm, as a key organizational goal, that UNHCR will work to anticipate, prepare for and respond to emergencies, and when they occur, will respond rapidly and stay the course to ensure that people are safe from harm, their fundamental rights are respected, and that they can meet their needs. It supports the implementation of UNHCR's commitments under its Emergency Policy, and is aligned with the [Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement](#) (hereinafter “IDP Policy”) and [UNHCR's Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#). The drivers and impacts of displacement are intertwined and complex, especially in the context of climate change. UNHCR's Strategic Framework for Climate Action commits the organisation to strengthen its preparedness to be a reliable and decisive partner in disaster<sup>2</sup> response, alongside national, local and other humanitarian actors.

It is aligned with the [Policy for Enterprise Risk Management in UNHCR](#) (hereinafter “ERM Policy”) which requires all operations to undertake emergency risk analysis for potential, new and/or escalated emergencies at least once a year as part of the annual risk review.

It is consistent with established principles and frameworks on preparedness and builds on and further operationalises related content in the [Practical Guidance for UNHCR Staff on IDP Protection in the Context of Disasters and the Adverse Effects of Climate Change](#), and the [Guidance Package for UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement](#). It is consistent with inter-agency approaches to preparedness, specifically the [IASC's Emergency Response Preparedness](#) (hereinafter “IASC ERP”) approach, which advises agencies how to fulfil their IASC-designated cluster responsibilities during a multi-partner response led by the

### KEY MESSAGE

The pursuit of solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons, and other persons of concern shall be embedded in all emergency preparedness and response activities from the onset.

<sup>1</sup> See OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP [Return on Investment in Emergency Preparedness: Phase 2 of a United Nations inter-agency project to develop a toolkit for the humanitarian community](#).

<sup>2</sup> A “disaster” is defined as the seriously disruptive impact of a variety of hazards, including the adverse effects of climate change, acting alone or in combination, on exposed and vulnerable populations and their assets. See: Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction ([A/71/644](#) and [A/71/644/Corr.1](#)).

UN Resident Coordinator (RC)/Humanitarian Coordinator(HC). Basing itself on the IASC ERP approach, the guidance highlights key dimensions of UNHCR's work within inter-agency preparedness efforts in the context of situations of internal displacement.

Finally, it is also guided by the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#), the [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#), and the [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSDCF\)](#) which remains an important instrument for planning and implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

## 5. Definitions

Emergency preparedness refers to actions and measures introduced before the onset of an emergency that improve the effectiveness, efficiency, timeliness and accountability of emergency responses to save lives and provide protection.

[UNHCR's Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response](#) (hereinafter the "Emergency Policy") defines an "emergency" as any humanitarian situation which either (i) has caused or threatens to cause new forced displacement, loss of life and/or other serious harm; or (ii) significantly affects the rights or well-being of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless persons, returnees and other persons of concern, unless immediate and appropriate action is taken; and (iii) which demands exceptional measures because current government and UNHCR capacities at country and/or regional levels are inadequate for a predictable, timely and effective response. The overriding priority in any humanitarian response is to save lives and minimize serious harm through meeting the most urgent humanitarian needs.

## 6. Guidance on Key Roles and Responsibilities

The following sets out the roles and responsibilities of country operations, regional bureaux and HQ divisions/entities for emergency preparedness, in line with the Emergency Policy:

### 1. The country **Representative** is responsible for:

- a. Ensuring strategic and operational coherence throughout the country, including through active participation in inter-agency fora such as the UNCT/HCT;
- b. Leading risk analysis to identify and manage emergency risks on a continuous basis, and escalating high risks to the regional bureau and DESS as required;
- c. Developing a multi-stakeholder contingency plan for UNHCR's populations of concern in case of high risk(s) of a new or escalated emergency, and a post-emergency transition plan when required;
- d. Leading timely emergency preparedness and response, including ensuring protection and humanitarian assistance for refugees, IDPs, stateless persons, returnees and other persons of concern, based on assessed needs;
- e. Coordinating the overall refugee response, including multi-stakeholder plans and appeals;
- f. Ensuring regular monitoring throughout an emergency, which together with political, situational and data analysis provides the basis for corrective programming and feeds further planning and implementation processes;
- g. Mobilizing resources and partnerships to ensure an effective response to humanitarian needs and, if required, escalating the need for additional resources to the regional bureau;
- h. Ensuring the necessary capacity to collect operational data and effectively share information and products with external audiences, thereby establishing UNHCR as a trusted source of information about and for persons of concern;

#### KEY MESSAGES

UNHCR recognises that consistent delivery of an effective and timely emergency response is a shared corporate priority at country, regional and HQ level.

Country operations are to lead and coordinate humanitarian and other partners in line with UNHCR's mandated role in refugee situations; and its inter-agency commitments as a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

Country operations are empowered, and required to be proactive, in preparing for and responding to emergencies based on sound situational risk analysis and monitoring.

Country operations will undertake emergency risk analysis for new or escalated emergencies and determine a ranking of high, medium, or low for each risk based on the likelihood and impact of an agreed emergency scenario. When an operation identifies a high risk, it must develop a scenario-based contingency plan.

It is good practice for the Representative in the country office or multi-country office to designate emergency focal point(s) to support with the operationalization of the Emergency Policy and Preparedness Guidance and to communicate agreed responsibilities with the concerned regional bureau and HQ entities. Emergency focal points typically have the roles as outlined in **Annex 1: Table of suggested roles and responsibilities of emergency focal points at regional and country level**.

### 2. The regional bureau **Director** is responsible for:

- a. Overseeing country operations' emergency risk analysis, monitoring and preparedness level and, in collaboration with DESS and other HQ divisions, providing multi-functional support for the implementation of preparedness in country operations;
- b. Harmonizing emergency risk analysis within the region, and participating in regional preparedness initiatives organized with DESS;
- c. Establishing and supporting regional/HQ coordination modalities for emergencies, including activating and co-chairing Emergency Cells. Ensuring timely and well-coordinated support to and between country operations, with other regional bureaux and HQ divisions;
- d. In collaboration with HQ divisions, supporting country operations to implement and monitor relevant strategies, programmes and projects by providing guidance, capacity development, technical expertise, strategic advice and any other form of support required, including deployment of technical experts (e.g., on PSEA, GBV, shelter, settlement, child protection and education) to country operations;
- e. Maintaining clear and timely communication and sharing of key information with country operations, DESS and other relevant HQ divisions at all stages of the emergency;
- f. Allocating resources to country operations<sup>3</sup> and facilitating and supporting the timely mobilization of additional financial, material and human resources to meet the established emergency preparedness and response needs, including for the post-emergency phase.

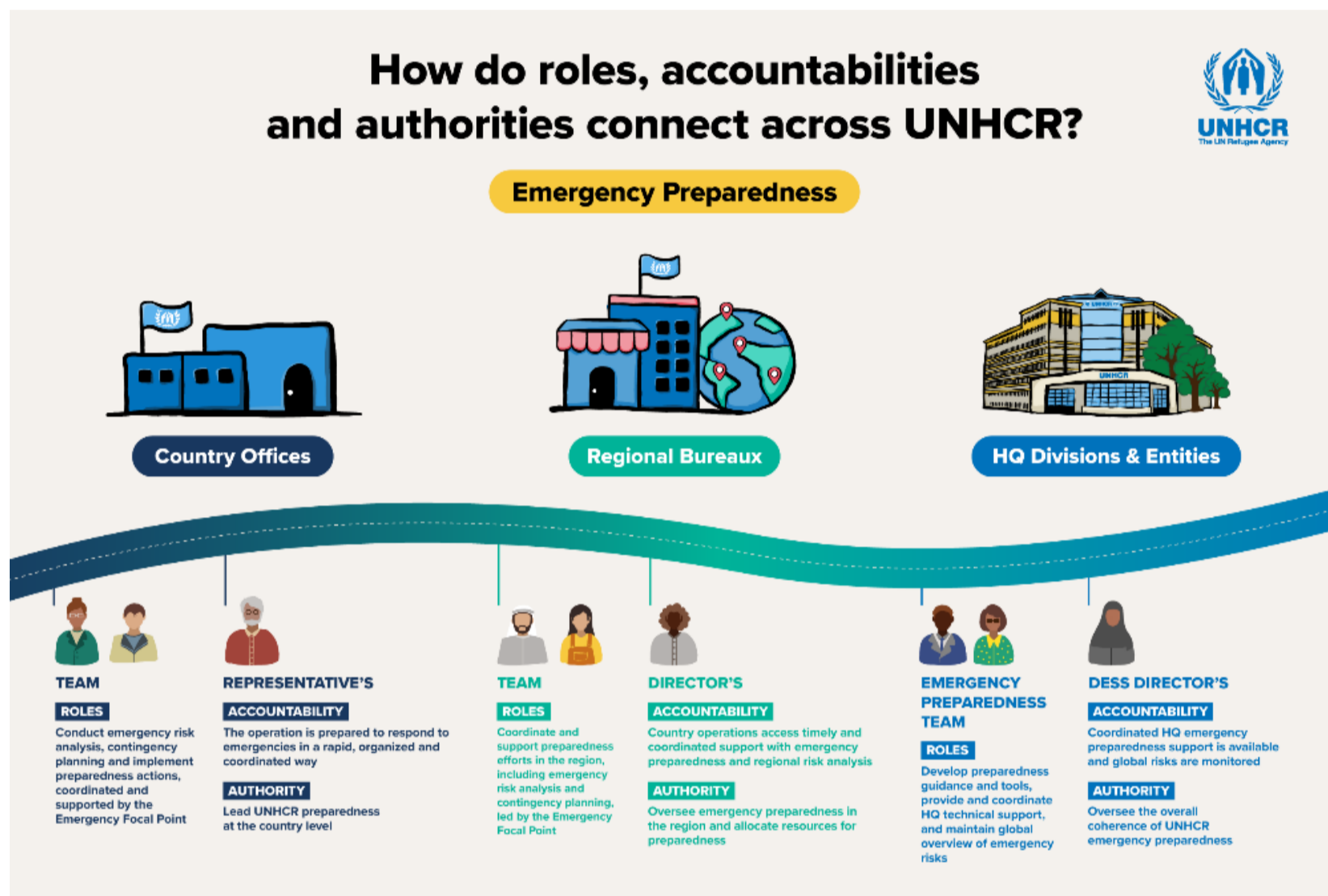
It is good practice for the regional bureau Director to designate emergency focal point(s) to support the operationalization of the Emergency Policy and the Emergency Preparedness Guidance. Emergency focal points typically have the roles as outlined in **Annex 1: Table of suggested roles and responsibilities of emergency focal points at regional and country level**.

<sup>3</sup> The regional bureau Director has the authority to allocate resources for emergencies within the corresponding region under the [RAE](#).

**HQ divisions** provide institutional coherence at the global level, and functional guidance and operational support to the bureaux. HQ division Directors are responsible for ensuring that UNHCR is prepared and able to respond quickly and effectively, in collaboration with other actors, to any emergency. In light of the central role of DESS, their leadership is being highlighted in this guidance. Additional information on the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of other divisions can be found in the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities (RAAs) table listed at the end of this section.

**DESS is responsible for:**

- g. Ensuring overall coherence of UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response.
- h. Providing proactive and timely operational support, guidance and oversight to country operations, regional bureaux and HQ divisions in relation to emergency preparedness and response processes, supply chain management, and the security of UNHCR personnel and persons of concern.
- i. Coordinating with all HQ divisions to ensure effective support to the regional bureaux and country operations.
- j. Undertaking global horizon scanning for new and escalated emergencies, supporting risk analysis across regions, including on security trends, and providing direct security advice.
- k. At global level, maintaining regular interactions with its UN HQ counterparts, most notably the IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG), the Inter-Agency Preparedness, Early and Readiness Group and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, especially the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).



## 7. Leadership and Coordination in Emergency Preparedness

UNHCR agency-specific preparedness is closely aligned with inter-agency coordination mechanisms. The Emergency Policy requires country operations to lead and coordinate with humanitarian agencies in line with UNHCR's mandated role in refugee situations and to engage as cluster lead (if activated) and/or operational agency in inter-agency responses to internal displacement. In line with the Policy, country operations must ensure the participation and contribution of a wide range of stakeholders, with governments in the lead whenever possible, in order to anticipate comprehensive responses that build on national systems and capacity, in line with the commitments made within the framework of the GCR<sup>4</sup> and the IASC cluster system.

### KEY MESSAGE

UNHCR recognises, supports, and facilitates the fundamental role and primary responsibility of Governments in emergency preparedness and response.

### 7.1 Coordination of Emergency Preparedness in Refugee Situations

In refugee situations, country operations lead inter-agency contingency planning, jointly with governments wherever possible (including local authorities and relevant departments) in close partnership with other UN agencies, development institutions, local, national and international NGOs, refugees already in country, and other relevant stakeholders including the private sector (where appropriate), ensuring proactive anticipation, preparedness and response coordination using the [Refugee Coordination Model](#) (RCM) and the [Updated Refugee Coordination Guidance](#)<sup>5</sup>.

The inclusion of donors at all phases of preparedness helps to ensure that preparedness and early action are adequately understood, supported and funded (where needed). It is essential to consult potential host communities and cooperate with networks of local NGOs and private sector actors because they have invaluable inside knowledge of the cultural, socio-economic and power dynamics in local communities,

The RCM sets out the framework for leading and coordinating refugee operations, based on UNHCR's shared duty to refugees, an integrated humanitarian vision, and UNHCR's core responsibilities. The RCM's key components include leadership by the Representative, a multi-sectoral approach embedded in protection objectives set by a Refugee Protection Group, and assistance provided through multi-agency sectoral coordination. When the potential refugee influx has a regional dimension, and when a Regional Refugee Coordinator (RRC) is appointed, the RRC also assumes accountability for adequate preparedness.

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 52-53.

<sup>5</sup> Including through developing Refugee Response Plan (RRP) where appropriate.



and their well-developed support networks make them important operational allies during a refugee emergency response. Adopting an inclusive approach from the preparedness phase will foster ownership and cooperation during an emergency.

## 7.2 Coordination of Emergency Preparedness in all other situations of forced displacement

In the early stages of preparedness in all other situations of forced displacement, including conflict and natural hazard-induced internal displacement, and mixed situations<sup>6</sup>, country operations should:

- Discuss and confirm leadership for relevant working groups, sectors, clusters (if activated) arrangements within UNCT/HCT in line with the global agreed arrangements;
- Actively participate in the RC/HC-led inter-agency processes and lead relevant sector/cluster preparedness, including through the Emergency Response Preparedness approach<sup>7</sup> and other relevant modalities;
- Ensure UNHCR's lead coordination role and accountability for refugee situations; and
- Contribute to the development of evidence-based resource mobilization instruments for anticipatory and early action.

### 7.2.1 Coordination of Emergency Preparedness in IDP Situations

Both UNHCR's Emergency Policy and the IDP Policy include preparedness as a key phase of UNHCR's action.

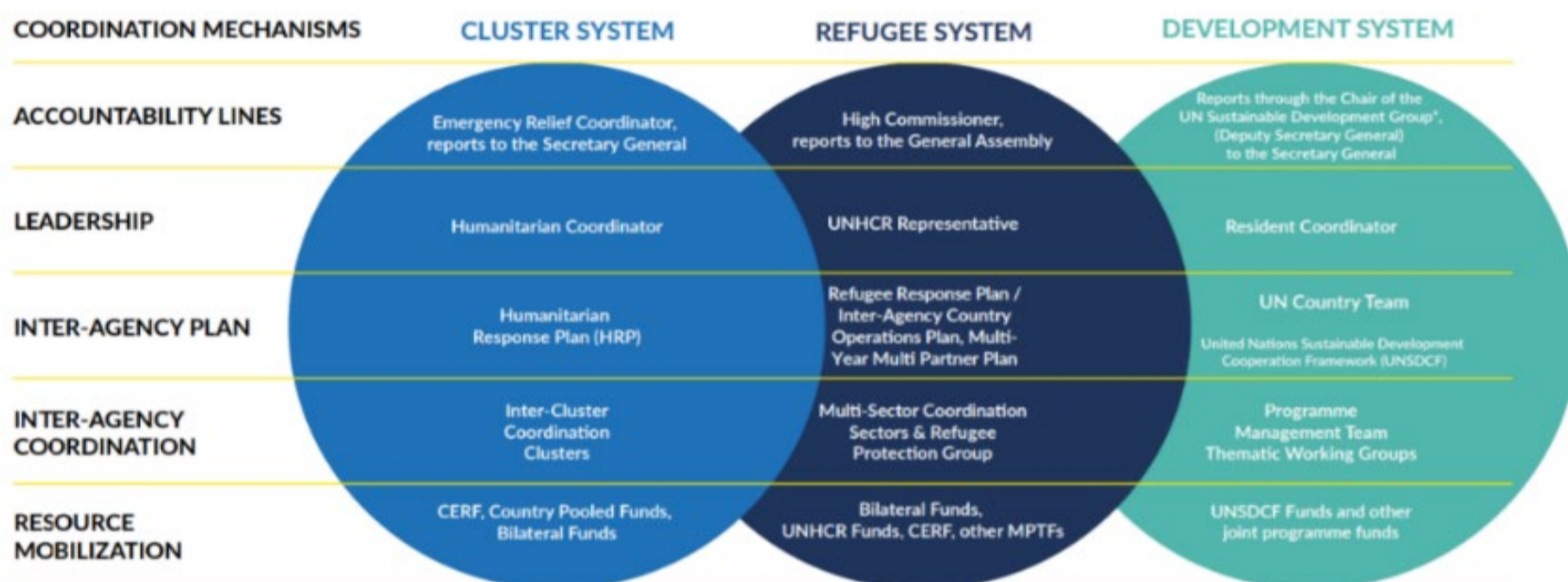
In line with UNHCR's IDP Policy and its accompanying Guidance Package, UNHCR should apply its protection expertise and to engage in and actively contribute to inter-agency preparedness measures in countries prone to conflict, violence or disaster-induced displacement, including displacement linked to environmental degradation and climate change.<sup>8</sup>

UNHCR should contribute to inter-agency contingency planning processes and fulfil its cluster leadership responsibilities in accordance with the IASC Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) approach. In the IASC ERP approach, the decision to prepare a contingency plan is normally agreed within the UNCT/HCT. It is a participatory exercise involving sectors/clusters (if clusters have been activated) as well as key operational agencies, who are assigned responsibilities and deadlines to draft various sections of the plan.

In the absence of system-wide interagency preparedness effort, UNHCR can initiate preparedness efforts.

Where the country operation has identified a high risk of a new or escalated emergency, UNHCR must prepare a scenario-based **agency-specific** contingency plan for a three-month response strategy in addition to contributing to the inter-agency contingency planning process.

#### Commitment to accepted inter-agency mechanisms



### 7.2.2 Coordination of Emergencies in Mixed Situations

**Mixed Situation (IDP and refugee):** Where refugee and IDP situations occur side by side or in close proximity, [the 2014 Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note](#), which outlines the role and responsibilities of the UNHCR Representative and Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator is applicable. The OCHA/UNHCR mixed situation agreement is practical: where IDPs/affected populations and refugees reside in the same locations, joint meetings can be held on common protection and sectoral themes. The High Commissioner and/or the Emergency Relief Coordinator can take decisions on using clusters and/or sectors, based on recommendations from the field and taking into account capacity, optimal efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>9</sup>

**Mixed Movements of Refugees and Migrants:** The [UNHCR-IOM Framework of Engagement June 2022](#) and the [2019 Joint Letter from IOM and UNHCR](#) reiterate the distinct roles and coordination responsibilities of IOM and UNHCR to enable an effective operational response in cases of mixed movement involving refugees and migrants. While refugees and migrants at times move along the same routes, not all movements are mixed. Where those are predominantly composed of refugees, the operational response must be one where UNHCR is able to carry out its mandated lead responsibility. Where caseloads are predominantly composed of migrants, the operational response will be led by IOM. Where the movements are indeed mixed, UNHCR and IOM will seek to achieve effective co-leadership of the response and establish adequate coordination mechanisms inclusive of other relevant stakeholders, at country, regional or route-based levels. Such situations may arise as a result of an acute emergency requiring immediate coordination, or in the context of existing or slow onset developments with population movements building over time. UNHCR and IOM have also agreed to continue working together for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced

<sup>6</sup> See: [Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations – Coordination in Practice, 24 April 2014](#).

<sup>7</sup> [IASC Emergency Response Preparedness Guidelines, July 2015](#).

<sup>8</sup> See [Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement UNHCR/HCP/2019/1](#).

<sup>9</sup> [A more complete overview of inter-agency mechanisms can be found in UNHCR's IDP Policy Guidance Note on Inter-Agency Coordination Arrangements, p. 11](#).

persons, where both organisations play a critical role jointly with Member States and humanitarian partners. This commitment equally extends to the area of climate change and disaster displacement.

## 8. Operationalizing Emergency Preparedness

### 1 Emergency Risk Analysis and Monitoring – mandatory for all operations

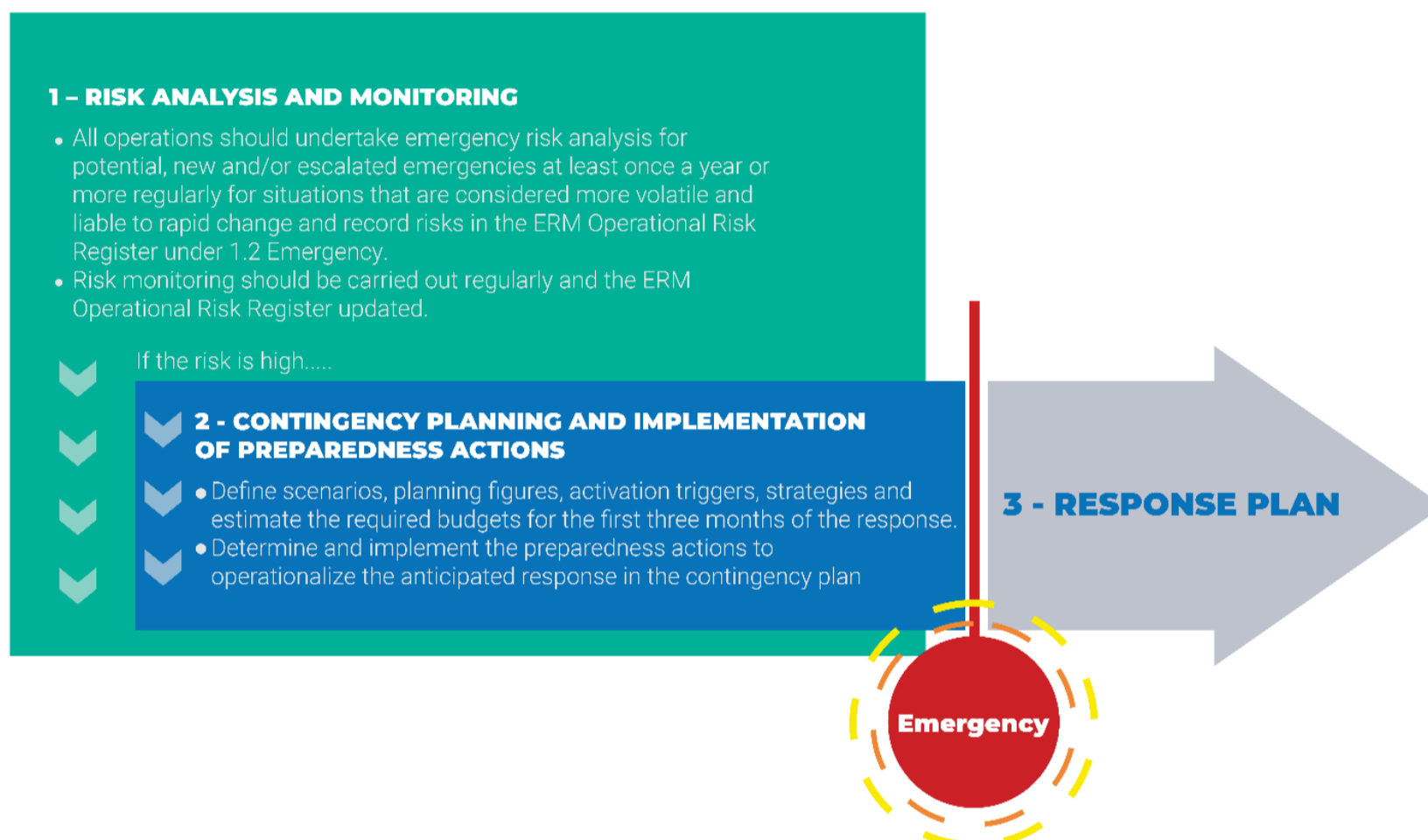
Systematic analysis of emergency risks helps an operation to decide what preparedness actions are required in each context. All country operations must undertake emergency risk analysis for new or escalated emergencies at least once a year within the Annual Risk Review. They determine a ranking of high, medium or low for each agreed emergency scenario based on its likelihood and potential impact. 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, and ensure that the risks are captured and kept up to date under the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)'s Operational Risk Register.

### 2 Contingency Planning and Implementation of Preparedness Actions - only for operations that face high risk(s) of a new or escalated emergency

Developing a contingency plan is **mandatory** when the risk level is determined to be **high**. The Preparedness Actions listed within the contingency plan are a set of activities that every country team should implement to improve overall preparedness. Though not mandatory, the development of a contingency plan is strongly recommended when the risk level is determined to be medium.

These activities are applicable in all situations (refugee, IDP, mixed situations and movements).

#### Building Blocks of Emergency Preparedness



**Emergencies brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards**

Preparedness, informed by climate-related and environmental risk knowledge, is critical to coordinated, predictable, timely and protection-centred responses. The level of UNHCR's involvement in natural hazard-induced crises is based on its presence, added-value operational capacity, and/or expertise, compared to other humanitarian actors.

[The Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability 2022-2025](#) aims to strengthen environmental considerations in UNHCR's operational responses from preparedness to protection and solutions. The strategy recognizes the urgent action required in three major areas: 1) **Prepare and respond**; 2) **Respond and deliver**; 3) **Supply and deliver**.

Under the **Prepare and Respond** area UNHCR is expected to ensure:

- 1) UNHCR's risk analysis, early warning and preparedness incorporate climate-related and other hazards that may lead to an increase in humanitarian needs and displacement.
- 2) Stronger collaboration and sharing of knowledge on preparedness, early warning and early action through participation in coordination mechanisms and specialised networks and initiatives, including at local, regional and global level.
- 3) In collaboration with government counterparts and other partners, UNHCR will lead inter-agency risk analysis and multi-sectoral preparedness and response to emergencies brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards affecting refugees. In non-refugee contexts, including disaster situations, both as a cluster(s) lead and as an operational agency, UNHCR – as a member of the UN Country Team (UNCT) / Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) – will make sure that specific protection and displacement-related concerns are addressed as early as possible during the preparedness phase and in the humanitarian response.<sup>10</sup>
- 4) The integration of protection and displacement considerations within the national disaster risk reduction and risk management policies, strategies and adaptation plans for early warning, preparedness, response and recovery.
- 5) Working together with its stand-by partners, UNHCR will deploy specialized technical capacities such as settlement planning, shelter, energy, environment, hydrogeology and disaster risk management, to country operations to support environmentally friendly and sustainable preparedness, response and solutions, and to contribute to national and regional DRR plans
- 6) Emergency training includes protection interventions informed by climate risks and impacts.

**OCHA facilitated anticipatory action pilots**

*Anticipatory action is defined as acting ahead of predicted hazardous events to prevent or reduce acute humanitarian impacts before they fully unfold. Hazards that can be addressed through anticipatory action include drought, floods and cyclones, among others. OCHA-facilitated anticipatory action pilots have 3 key components: 1. Trigger/Parameters for action 2. Pre-agreed activities 3. Pre-committed financing. UNHCR is participating in several pilots, primarily in Africa.*

*For more information on OCHA-facilitated anticipatory action pilots, including framework and guidance, see [OCHA Anticipatory Action Toolkit](#).*

**Emergency Risk Analysis and Monitoring**

An **emergency risk** is defined as a risk arising from external events which are likely to trigger UNHCR to declare an emergency. This includes scenarios caused by events such as armed conflict, intercommunal violence, electoral violence, civil unrest, epidemics, pandemics and/or natural and environmental hazards – either alone or in combination. The scenarios are expected to result in new or escalated displacement and/or significantly increased humanitarian needs, exceeding current preparedness and response capacity. (See [UNHCR Risk Categories 1.2 Emergency](#))

Emergency risk analysis at country level is a multi-stakeholder process and can be conducted through different fora, depending on the coordination mechanisms and structures in the country. Depending on contexts and situations, the UNHCR-specific and the inter-agency risk analysis processes can be mutually reinforcing. While highlighting the complementary aspects of these processes, the following elements of this Guidance focus explicitly on the UNHCR-specific risk analysis. **Annex 2 provides an overview of external processes and fora related to risk analysis and UNHCR's contributions to inter-agency risk analysis and monitoring.**

**UNHCR ROLE IN EMERGENCY RISK ANALYSIS IN DIFFERENT DISPLACEMENT SCENARIOS**

Emergency Risk Analysis in Refugee Situations	Emergency Risk Analysis in IDP Situations <sup>11</sup>	Emergency Risk Analysis in Mixed Situations/Movements
<p>In line with the RCM and <a href="#">Global Compact on Refugees</a><sup>12</sup>, UNHCR country operations lead emergency risk analysis for a new or escalated refugee emergency (i.e., new refugee influx, significant increase in humanitarian needs as result of refugees further affected by a natural hazard, or other factors).</p> <p>UNHCR's internal risk analysis will trigger the risk discussion with relevant stakeholders such as the government (including relevant line ministries and local authorities), refugees already in the country, host communities, UN agencies, development actors, local, national and international NGOs, private sector and other relevant stakeholders. The risk will be recorded in the ERM Operational Risk Register.</p> <p>Representatives will keep the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) informed of any new high emergency risks identified. In case refugees are affected by natural hazards, UNHCR operations will advocate for national preparedness and disaster platforms to take into account emergency risks affecting refugees and emergency risks of new refugee influxes.</p> <p>UNHCR operations should proactively share their risk analysis with the regional bureaux and operations in the neighbouring countries. The regional bureaux should coordinate emergency risk analysis at the regional level.</p>	<p>In line with the <a href="#">IASC guidance for Emergency Response Preparedness</a>, UNHCR works with Humanitarian Coordinators and within the Humanitarian Country Teams in its capacity as a cluster lead agency. UNHCR contributes to inter-agency emergency risk analysis with its expertise in protection, shelter/NFI and CCCM, field presence and context and community knowledge, and ensures that sound risk analysis, carried out together with partners, drives its own organizational preparedness.</p> <p>Once the emergency risk scenario is agreed upon at inter-agency level, UNHCR will use it as a basis to develop its own scenario and assess the impact of the risk scenario <b>on its own response capacity</b>. UNHCR operations will record the risk in the ERM Operational Risk Register.</p> <p>Where no emergency risk analysis has been developed or adopted at inter-agency level, UNHCR will proactively undertake (<b>internal</b>) emergency risk analysis and record the risk in the ERM Operational Risk Register.</p> <p><b>Annex 3 includes an overview of UNHCR roles and actions in risk analysis and contingency planning in IDP situations .</b></p>	<p>In mixed situations involving refugees and IDPs, UNHCR operations should undertake emergency risk analysis for both refugee and IDP situations as indicated under <b>Emergency Risk Analysis in Refugee Situations</b> and <b>Emergency Risk Analysis in IDP Situations</b>.</p> <p>In mixed movements involving refugees and migrants, UNHCR operations should undertake emergency risk analysis as indicated under <b>Emergency Risk Analysis in Refugee Situations</b>. This internal risk analysis will trigger a joint emergency risk analysis with IOM (in line with the <a href="#">UNHCR-IOM Framework of Engagement June 2022</a>) and joint engagement with Government, UN, and civil society partners to ensure coordinated analysis and planning.</p>

<sup>10</sup> [Practical Guidance for UNHCR Staff on IDP Protection in the Context of Disasters and the Adverse Effects of Climate Change](#).

<sup>11</sup> This applies to conflict and natural hazard-induced internal displacement.

<sup>12</sup> [Paragraph 52 and 53](#).



DESS will ensure coordination amongst bureaux in situations affecting countries in different regions.		
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**KEY MESSAGE**

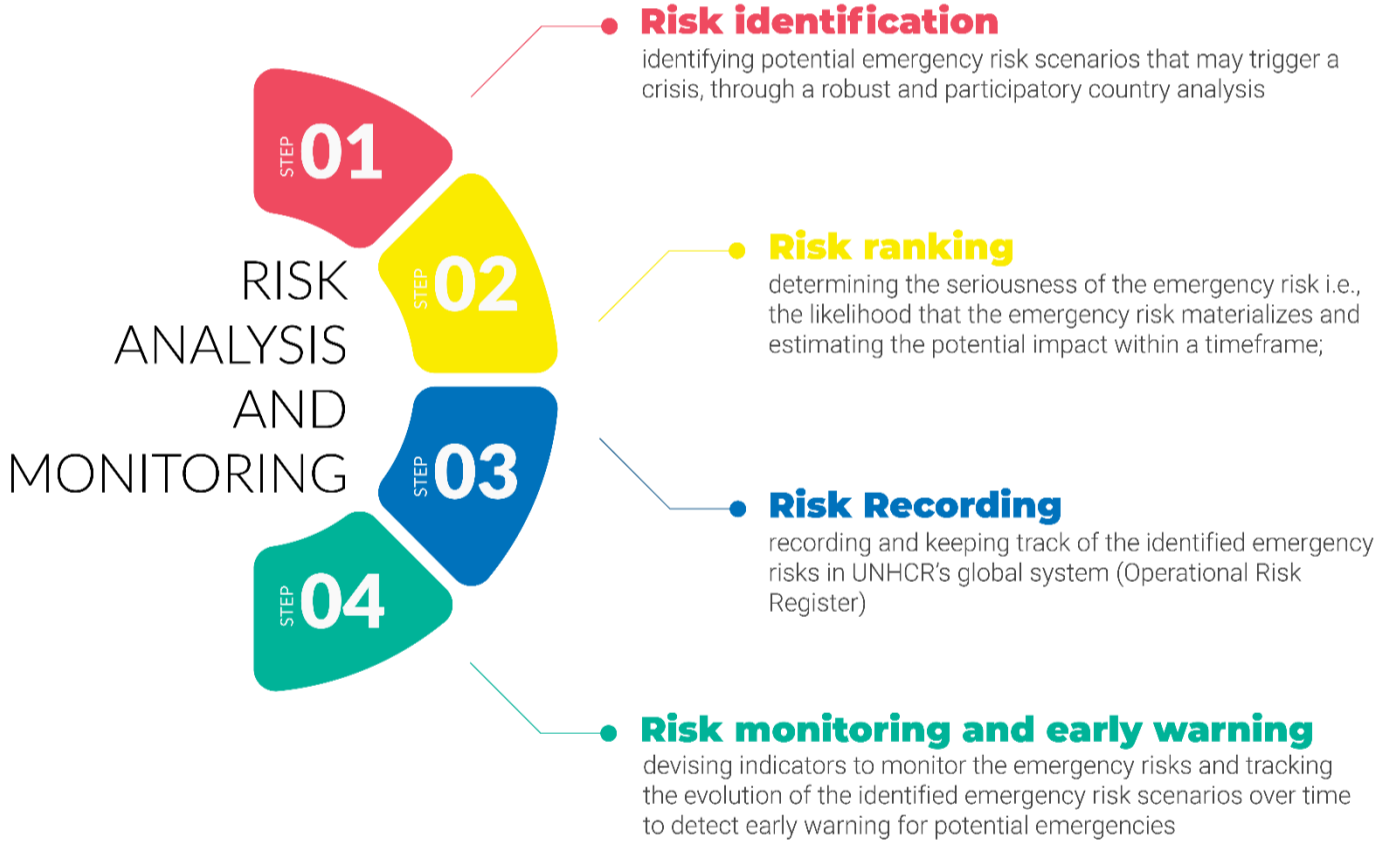
For countries with very limited or no UNHCR presence, proactive risk analysis and any follow-up preparedness activities including contingency planning should be supported and/ or carried out by the Multi Country Office (MCO) or the regional bureau if the country does not fall under any MCOs.

The regional bureau will also undertake emergency risk analysis for any complex situation that simultaneously impacts several countries in the region – or beyond, including countries where UNHCR has no or limited presence. To maintain global oversight of emergency risks, DESS will support the review and assessment of emergency risks, conduct regular exchanges with regional bureaux on potential high-risk situations, and share information gathered through internal horizon scanning<sup>13</sup> and from the IASC Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness (EWEAR) group<sup>14</sup>.

**8.1.1 Emergency Risk Analysis: A Four-Step Process and Outcome**

**Emergency risk analysis** is the comprehensive process of identifying, ranking, and recording emergency risks in the Operational Risk Register, followed by monitoring emergency risks - on which contingency planning is based. In line with UNHCR’s Policy on Enterprise Risk Management and the Emergency Policy, **all country operations must undertake emergency risk analysis for new and/or escalated emergencies at least once a year** as part of the annual risk review. 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.

**Emergency Risk Analysis Steps**



**Step 1: Risk Identification**

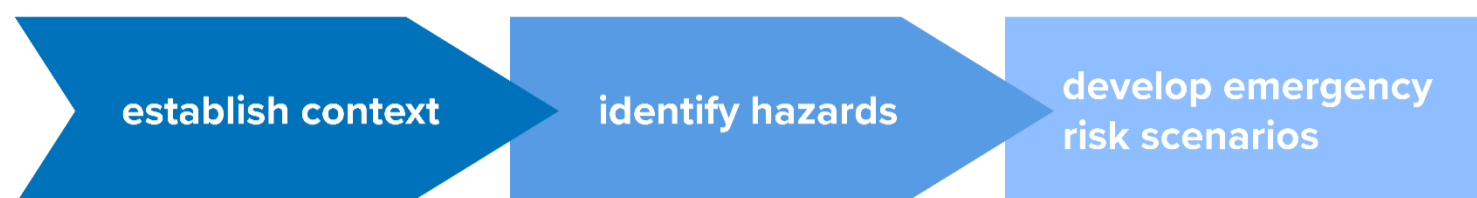
**Emergency risk identification** is the process of finding, recognising and describing emergency risks. It involves three steps: establishing context, identifying hazards and developing emergency risk scenarios. Data and information can be available either internally to UNHCR (situational analysis, Operational Risk Register) or from inter-agency mechanisms and other actors (UN Common Country Analysis, DRR platforms, UNCTs and HCTs etc.).

WHY?	WHO?	WHEN?	WHERE?	HOW?
To identify emergency risk scenarios.	UNHCR together with Government, key partners, persons of concern in country, and host communities as	At least once a year as part of the Annual Risk Review, or more regularly for situations that are	At country level with coordinated inputs from field, country, regional and HQ levels.	Involve partners who can contribute expertise and knowledge. Document potential scenarios.

<sup>13</sup> Horizon scanning is a systematic examination and analysis of information to identify trends and detect early warning signs of emerging or escalated emergencies. DESS conducts global horizon scanning, based on available public and internal information and consultation with regional bureaux, and produces monthly report. Upon request, DESS also supports in drafting a featured report for a specific situation.

<sup>14</sup> DESS represents UNHCR in the IASC EWEAR analyst group which holds global horizon scanning calls every month and produces monthly early warning report. The report highlights the most serious new emerging or escalated risks where a significant increase in humanitarian needs is projected during the next six months and where additional inter-agency preparedness action may be required. The reports can be found on [DESS Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal](#).

	appropriate. Internally, a multi-functional team conducts the risk identification and ranking.	considered more volatile and liable to rapid change.		Organize or facilitate a workshop to share findings, validate scenarios, and jointly rank risks. Use risk ranking to decide which scenario to prioritise for preparedness.
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**i) Establish context:** Emergency risk identification starts with establishing the country operational context. This includes the regional context, as well as assessing if there is a possibility of a refugee influx from or outflux to a neighbouring country. This identification process should include consultations with operations in neighbouring countries.

**ii) Identify hazards:** Once the operational context is established, country operations identify hazards. Hazard identification is the process of finding, listing, and characterizing hazards. A hazard is a “process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation.” Hazards may be natural, or induced by human activity and choices, such as conflict and political instability, or as is often the case, by a combination of factors. Hazards are characterized by factors such as location, intensity or magnitude, frequency, and probability.

The categories of hazards listed below help to structure risk identification logically; the different categories of hazards are not mutually exclusive. Most of the hazard categories listed have the potential to trigger forced displacement or a significant increase in humanitarian needs where UNHCR may launch an emergency response.

Hazard Category	Hazard Description
<b>Armed Conflict</b>	<p>Armed confrontation between two or more parties that resort to the use of force. Two types of armed conflicts are identified:</p> <p><b>International armed conflict:</b> situations in which one or more States resort to armed force against another State.</p> <p><b>Non-international armed conflict:</b> situations in which protracted armed confrontations take place between States and non-State armed groups, or between non-State armed groups. To qualify as a non-international armed conflict rather than an internal disturbance, the hostilities must reach a minimum level of intensity, and non-State armed groups involved in the conflict must possess a minimum level of organization and capacity to sustain coordinated military operations.</p>
<b>Internal disturbances and tensions</b>	<p>Situations within a State that do not meet the criteria and thresholds of armed conflicts. These may include:</p> <p><b>Inter-communal violence:</b> fighting between groups along different ethnic or communal lines that lack conventional military capacity and have relatively weak hierarchical organization.</p> <p><b>Electoral violence:</b> violence levied by political actors with the aim of influencing the process and/or outcome of elections. This can happen throughout the electoral cycle and be perpetrated by both State and non-State actors. Examples include violent protests before, during and/or after elections, attacks on polling stations, intimidation of voters, violence against candidates and political parties.</p> <p><b>Human rights violations:</b> these violations are determined by their character and magnitude. They involve violations of the right to life, liberty, security, freedom from torture, and acts of discrimination (on grounds of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, political opinion, real or perceived association to a social or political group, etc.).</p> <p><b>Civil unrest:</b> this includes protests/demonstrations, strikes and riots, especially when these lead to destruction of assets and properties, violent clashes or when law enforcement responds with disproportionate use of force.</p> <p><b>Political instability:</b> Political instability is often characterized by frequent changes of government (such as through a coup, revolution, political assassinations, and wars) and long-standing tensions between political actors. It is regularly associated with weak rule of law and impunity that causes a State to violate human rights, and/or reduces the capacity of the State to prevent or halt human rights violations.</p>
<b>Economic deterioration</b>	<p>Atypical and significant economic deterioration is often caused by other hazards (such as armed conflict and natural hazard-induced displacement) and can worsen other hazards (such as civil unrest and political instability), although they do not directly trigger internal displacement. These may include:</p> <p><b>Significant price increases:</b> significant and atypical (non-seasonal) consumer price increases (especially hyper-inflation) of essential goods and services.</p> <p><b>Significant income losses:</b> Significant and atypical (non-seasonal) falls in wages or income opportunities. The losses may be of subsistence income or profits from household production.</p>
<b>Natural and environmental hazards</b>	<p>Natural hazards may lead to disasters that create new displacement, and/or significant increase in humanitarian needs exceeding the response capacity. These may include:</p> <p><b>Hydrometeorological hazards:</b> floods, cyclones, droughts, heatwaves, avalanches.</p> <p><b>Geophysical hazards:</b> earthquake, volcanic eruption, tsunami, landslides,</p> <p><b>Biological hazards:</b> epidemics, pandemics, insect infestations.</p> <p><b>Environmental hazards:</b> These hazards can originate from environmental degradation or physical or chemical pollution in the air, water and soil. Examples include soil degradation, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, salinization and sea-level rise.</p>



<b>Technological hazards</b>	<p>These hazards originate from technological or industrial conditions, dangerous procedures, infrastructure failures or specific human activities. Examples include industrial pollution, nuclear radiation, toxic wastes, dam failures, transport accidents, factory explosions, fires and chemical spills. Technological hazards also may arise directly as a result of the impacts of a natural hazard event.</p>
<b>Sudden and major deterioration of asylum conditions</b>	<p>This hazard is only applicable in emergencies involving refugee movements. It refers to the sudden and major deterioration of asylum conditions that is expected to result in significant movements of refugees and asylum-seekers and increases in humanitarian needs. Some causes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premature cessation of status</li> <li>• Policy changes</li> <li>• Change of government</li> </ul>

**iii) Develop emergency risk scenarios:** Based on the analysis of the identified hazards, country operations should develop two or more emergency risk scenarios. An emergency risk scenario provides an explanation of how the identified hazards might lead to displacement or an increase in humanitarian needs during the next 12 months, and the triggers that would lead to it unfolding. Monitoring these triggers is essentially the early warning component of the process.

**A scenario should describe 1) forward-looking assumptions about future events and 2) their projected humanitarian impact**

Key factors to consider for **forward-looking assumptions**:

- Hazard evolution trend: quantitative (e.g. surge in number of violent incidents in the past months), and qualitative (e.g. emergence of new actors in conflict, shift of alliance, geographic spill-over)
- Possible direction of change (e.g. increase, decrease, status quo)
- Causal relationships between hazards: map causal relationships to better understand the interconnectedness between hazards (e.g. drought leading to more intercommunal violence over resources, coup leading to sanctions and economic deterioration)
- Triggers: Important upcoming events, conditions and/or processes that could change the course of the current situation (e.g. announcement of election results, peace talks, key political appointment)
- Seasonal forecasts for natural hazard related events (e.g., below-average rainfall, above-average cyclone season)

Key factors to consider for **projected humanitarian impact**:

- Categories of population most likely to be affected and most risk-prone areas
- Risk exposure, vulnerability and resilience (e.g. coping capacities) of communities potentially affected
- Past displacement patterns and routes (e.g. How many people were displaced last time when violence of the anticipated scale occurred? Where could the displaced population go and through which border crossing? What were the demographic of the previous displaced population? Was similar past displacement temporary? Will the newly displaced be absorbed into host community without needing humanitarian assistance?)

**Sources for analysis**

Comprehensive emergency risk identification requires conducting extensive research into secondary data. Sources of information that may help to identify the hazard(s) and build the scenario(s) include:

- UN Common Country Analysis (CCA)
- Existing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) platforms for countries prone to natural hazard-induced emergencies
- Existing research on conflict analysis and early warning
- Existing risk analysis developed by national authorities
- Data on the country of origin and on populated places close to the border
- Historical information on displacement routes and trends
- Information shared between country operations, especially for the risk of refugee influx
- Interviews with refugees or asylum seekers already in the country of asylum
- Information from the media, academics, researchers, and other publications
- Key informant interviews with national or local actors, including NGOs and communities

**Step 2: Risk Ranking**

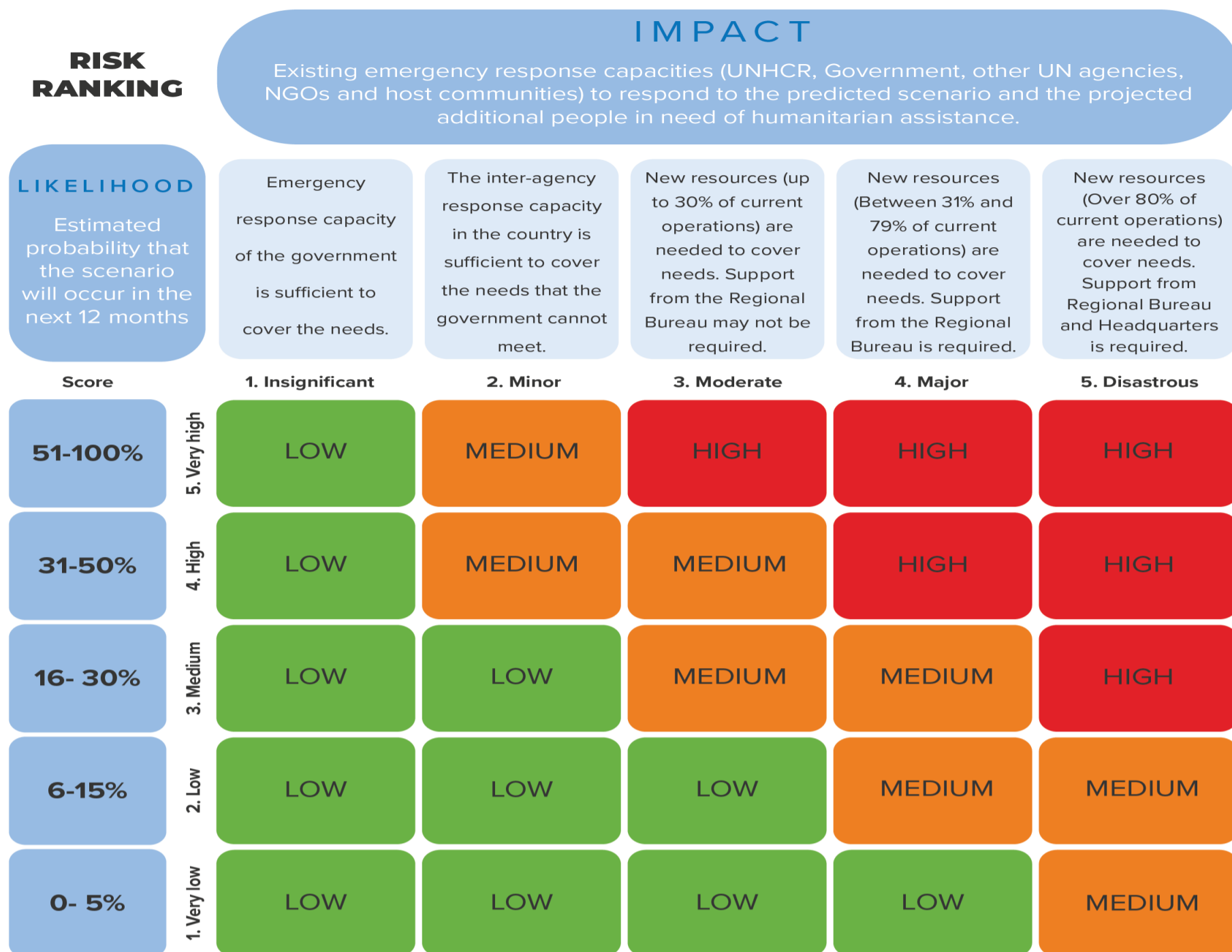
WHY?	WHO?	WHEN?	WHERE?	HOW?
To take stock of the likelihood and impact of different scenarios and to decide risk level, and which scenario to use for contingency planning, if needed.	UNHCR together with Government, key partners, persons of concern in country, and host communities as appropriate. Internally, a multi-functional team conducts the risk identification and ranking.	At least once a year as part of the Annual Risk Review, or more regularly for situations that are considered more volatile and liable to rapid change.	At country level with coordinated inputs from field, country, regional and HQ levels.	Involve partners who can contribute expertise and knowledge. Document potential scenarios. Organize or facilitate a workshop to share findings, validate scenarios, and jointly rank risks. Use risk ranking to decide which scenario to prioritise for preparedness.

To understand the potential of various hazards to produce consequences that might trigger an emergency, operations rank each emergency scenario identified according to its likelihood and potential impact.

- The **likelihood** is the estimated possibility that a scenario may occur within the next year.
- The **impact** measures 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.

Operations rank each scenario based on a scale from 1 to 5 for its impact and likelihood. An overall emergency risk ranking of high, medium or low is calculated by combining the impact and likelihood ratings. The below risk ranking matrix shows how likelihood, impact and the overall risk level are calculated (See **Annex 4 for example of a risk ranking table**).





**Likelihood** is measured on a continuous scale from 0% to 100%, where 50% is not a neutral condition but represents the threshold for an event that is more likely to occur than not. Therefore, if believed to be above 50% likelihood, a scenario is considered very likely.

**The impact** measures 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, including:

- Characteristics of the area(s) that may receive arrivals (geographical, urban, rural, security, etc.).
- Impacts on host communities (their capacity and willingness to host arrivals).
- Accessibility and logistics (roads, warehouses, ports, airports).
- Existing infrastructures for reception and service provision (hospitals, schools, services for persons with specific needs, referral mechanisms).
- Presence of emergency response capacity at local and national level (government, NGOs, UN).

Emergency risks with a potentially high impact are often of great concern even when the likelihood is very low, but a frequent low impact risk can have large cumulative or long-term consequences. Examples of such an emergency risk include flooding, when the impact of a one-off event may not be disastrous, but the repetition of the event over a prolonged period exhausts the existing coping capacities and may lead to protracted displacement or chronic humanitarian needs. Both kinds of risks need to be analysed and monitored.

Emergency risk ranking determines the necessity and frequency of monitoring each identified emergency risk scenario: the higher the emergency risk, the more frequently it needs to be monitored by the country operation and the regional bureau. **When the emergency risk is ranked as high based on combination of likelihood and impact, contingency planning is mandatory.** An [emergency risk analysis tool](#) can assist operations through the hazard identification, scenario development and risk ranking process.

**Step 3: Record the risk in the Operational Risk Register**

WHY?	WHO?	WHEN?	WHERE?	HOW?
To record and keep track of emergency risks in UNHCR's Operational Risk Register.	Risk focal point in the operation, in coordination with emergency focal points, record the emergency risk(s).	At least once a year as part of the Annual Risk Review, or more regularly for situations that are considered more volatile and liable to rapid change.	Enterprise Risk Management's (ERM) Operational Risk Register	Upload the emergency risks in the ERM system.

Emergency events or situations assessed as high risk, in accordance with the ERM policy, must always be included in the Operational Risk Register under risk sub-category 1.2 (Emergency).

Where divergent events occur - or potentially lead to multiple emergencies in one country operation - the concerned operation should assess the risk for each event separately. This is especially the case where the risk level of the events may be different or where the type of emergency (such as conflict, natural hazards, or epidemic) or population profile (refugee, IDP, or mixed) is distinct. Examples of how to frame emergency risks in the Operational Risk Register, including examples of proactive and reactive treatments, can be found in the [Risk Management Tool for Emergencies](#).

Risks related to slow onset events such as sea level rises or desertification that may affect future displacement should be recorded in the risk sub-category 1.4 (Environment & Climate Change). The **sub-category 1.4 (Environment & Climate Change)** looks at risks with long-term implications that are not expected to trigger the declaration of an emergency in the upcoming year.<sup>15</sup>

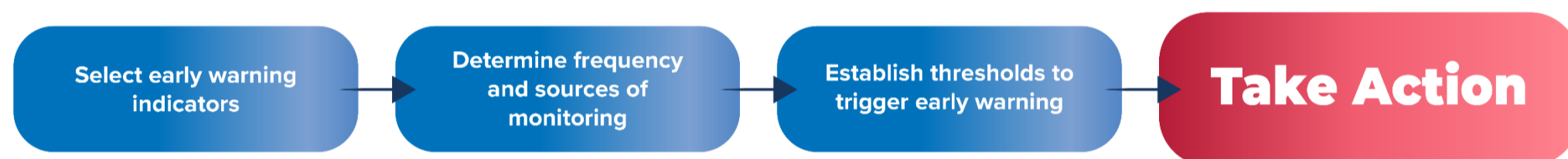
#### Step 4: Risk Monitoring and Early Warning

WHY?	WHO?	WHEN?	WHERE?	HOW?
To track the evolution of risks in case these require additional actions.	UNHCR establishes and leads an inter-agency team as appropriate in the refugee setting; and participates in and contributes to the inter-agency mechanisms under IASC ERP approach for IDP situations.	Once a week, month, or quarterly, depending on the context and indicators.	Monitored at field and country levels. Information is shared with neighbouring countries, regional bureau(x) and HQ.	Select indicators, determine frequency and sources, determine thresholds and actions. Hold periodic consultations with the network of partners to track indicators. Act when thresholds are reached.

Emergency risk monitoring is a necessary and critical component of risk analysis and preparedness. It entails the regular and structured observation of how the estimated likelihood and impact of the identified emergency risk scenarios evolve over time. The aim is to assess whether the emergency risk reaches a level requiring further action.

Every country operation needs to monitor emergency risks regularly, ideally together with key partners. For the refugee emergency risk, risk monitoring is also the responsibility of the receiving country, which will liaise with the country or countries of origin and with the regional bureau(x). Annex 2 details UNHCR's contributions to risk monitoring in an inter-agency context.

#### Emergency Risk Monitoring Process



**Select early warning indicators**<sup>16</sup>: identifying early warning indicators is done in coordination with partners. The choice of indicators will vary according to the type of hazards monitored and availability of reliable sources. To be effective, indicators need to have a direct causal link to the occurrence of a hazard (for example observable events in the country of origin that may trigger cross-border population displacement).

**KEY MESSAGE**  
Selecting indicators and triggers to signal early warning is central to emergency risk monitoring.

**Determine frequency and sources of monitoring**: define how often and by whom each indicator will be monitored and what sources of information will be used. The information sources that support indicators must be trustworthy and likely to remain available into the future.

**Establish thresholds to trigger early warning and action**: when an indicator reaches a certain value (or level) it will trigger an early warning or a specific action. Triggers could be quantitative (e.g., 200% increase in monthly violent incidents), or qualitative (e.g., new reports of troop movements).

**Act when thresholds are reached**: reaching a threshold will trigger an action(s). Actions may be generic, such as 'start contingency planning when the risk level becomes high', or more specific, such as 'conduct an assessment mission to the border' or 'preposition CRIs in anticipation of the influx'.

Annex 4 provides an example of a risk monitoring table.

The frequency of risk monitoring and the determination of thresholds and triggers depend largely on the type of risk. Emergency risks are traditionally categorised through a common classification:

##### 1) By regularity and predictability:

Seasonal hazards	Evolving hazards	Static hazards
Traditionally, seasonal hazards have a regular or cyclical occurrence. They are generally predictable (for example floods, cyclones, drought). Considering the time of occurrence and the expected level of impact of these hazards, they are monitored by a range of specialized entities or national institutions.  Preparedness for seasonal hazards needs to ensure contingency plans are updated and preparedness actions are implemented <b>before</b> the seasonal/scheduled hazard onsets.	Evolving hazards change over time and require regular monitoring (for example armed conflicts, economic deterioration, infectious disease events). In highly volatile situations, the risk assessment may need to be re-conducted during the year, sometimes with frequent re-assessments.  In conflict-prone countries, especially where system-wide humanitarian responses are in place, inter-cluster coordination fora and sub-groups dedicated to risk monitoring and early warning may be established and convey relevant information to the HCT. This is also relevant in protracted crises, where a risk may escalate	Static hazards pose a consistent level of risk over time and may have a very high level of impact but normally do not present predictable trends allowing for regular monitoring and cyclical preparedness (for example earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis).  In countries prone to such hazards, preparedness is generally integrated in national DRR strategies.

<sup>15</sup> For more details on risk categories, see ERM's [Annotated risk categories and sub-categories](#).

<sup>16</sup> Different approaches are used in selecting and monitoring indicators, from data-based models contributing to predictive analytics to qualitative analysis. In conflict scenarios, indicators will often be a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators, linked to the drivers of the conflict. Indicators and respective thresholds/triggers will be agreed amongst humanitarian actors.



in a specific part of the country, triggering national and sub-national preparedness.

2) By the speed of the crisis's onset:

Sudden-onset events	Slow-onset events
Occurring suddenly, with little warning, and can have a high impact on people, through destruction of infrastructures and material resources (e.g., earthquakes, floods, cyclones, mud flows, volcanic eruptions, wildfires).	Occurring over time and slowly eroding the population's capacity to cope with the effects of the hazard. Slow-onset events typically include droughts, environmental degradation, desertification, and deforestation. The level of risk can be monitored over time and predicted with a relatively high level of confidence. Early warning will give humanitarian actors a relatively ample lead-time to organize the response beyond traditional preparedness and reactive measures, prompting early and anticipatory action and support to resilience, including through the direct deployment of funding and resources and the creation of dedicated financial mechanisms.

8.2 Contingency Planning

As per the Emergency Policy, country operations that face **high risk(s)** of a **new or escalated** emergency must develop a **scenario-based contingency plan(s)** in collaboration with government counterparts and other partners<sup>17</sup>. 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 (see chapter 6.1.2 Step 2 Risk Ranking) 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 persons of concern.

**KEY MESSAGE**

Country operations are strongly encouraged to start developing a contingency plan when the risk of a new or escalated emergency is ranked as medium. Time spent in contingency planning should lead to timely and effective intervention when the emergency occurs.

Annex 5 provides the combined contingency plan template.

The affected population (refugee, IDP, mixed situations/movements) envisaged in the scenario will determine UNHCR's role in contingency planning activities, as per the table below.

Contingency Planning in Refugee situations	Contingency Planning in IDP situations	Contingency Planning in Mixed Situations / Movements
<p><b>UNHCR leads inter-agency contingency planning</b></p> <p>In refugee situations, contingency planning should be coordinated by UNHCR and the Government, with the participation of all partners, including local actors. It should be coordinated through a dedicated inter-agency multi-functional team, led by the UNHCR Representative or by the focal point designated by the Representative.</p> <p>Where the government makes its own contingency plans and preparations for a refugee emergency response, UNHCR should lead the inter-agency contingency planning process, ensuring the activities in the plan complement those of the government. UNHCR should also ensure that there is an agency-specific contingency plan.</p> <p>If there is already an inter-agency contingency plan in place for other risks (e.g. internal displacement), the refugee contingency plan should constitute a separate document aligned with and relating to the inter-agency plans.</p>	<p><b>UNHCR operations need to be involved in two contingency planning processes in IDP situations</b></p> <p><b>1. Inter-agency contingency planning:</b></p> <p>UNHCR contributes to inter-agency contingency planning processes in UNCT/HCT and fulfils its cluster leadership responsibilities in accordance with the IASC ERP approach. When the inter-agency process identifies the risk as high, but UNHCR assesses the risk as medium, UNHCR will still engage in the inter-agency contingency planning process, leveraging UNHCR's role as cluster lead agency.<sup>18</sup></p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>2. UNHCR agency-specific contingency planning:</b></p> <p>The UNHCR Representative is responsible for developing the agency-specific contingency plan. It should be drafted by a multi-functional team, led by the UNHCR Representative or by the focal point designated by the Representative.</p> <p>UNHCR will develop its agency-specific contingency plan in line with the goals and content of the inter-agency planning reflecting the agency-specific operational objectives and activities, including the risk scenario and its triggers/indicators, and related IASC ERP objectives (and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) objectives, where an HRP exists).</p> <p>Where no inter-agency contingency plan has been developed or adopted, UNHCR will proactively undertake agency-specific contingency planning, with government counterparts and other agencies where the context permits.</p>	<p><b>Mixed IDP and refugee situations:</b></p> <p>UNHCR contingency planning activities in mixed situations depend on the planned response and geographic locations of IDPs and refugees.</p> <p>In most cases, <b>UNHCR 1) leads inter-agency contingency planning for refugees, 2) contributes to inter-agency contingency planning for IDPs and 3) develops an agency-specific contingency plan for IDPs.</b></p> <p>In some cases, UNHCR operations may opt to develop one agency-specific contingency plan for both populations, in addition to contributing to inter-agency contingency planning for IDPs.</p> <p><b>Mixed movements involving refugees and migrants:</b></p> <p>In mixed movements involving refugees and migrants, <b>UNHCR leads inter-agency contingency planning for refugees.</b></p> <p>Recognizing that refugees and migrants face many common protection risks, threats and needs along commonly used routes, the 2022 UNHCR-IOM Framework of Engagement calls for greater engagement between UNHCR and IOM. In light of the above, <b>country operations should discuss potential scenarios and response plans with IOM to ensure coordinated analysis and planning with relevant stakeholders.</b></p>

<sup>17</sup> The level of engagement of Governments and partners may vary in different operations and contexts.

<sup>18</sup> In the IASC ERP approach, the decision to prepare a contingency plan is normally agreed at UNCT/HCT. It, and is a participatory exercise involving sectors/clusters as well as key operational agencies, who are assigned responsibilities and deadlines to draft various sections of the plan.

## Contingency Planning for Emergencies brought on by climate-related and other natural hazards

The level of UNHCR's involvement in natural hazard-induced crises is based on its presence, added-value operational capacity, and/or expertise, compared to other humanitarian actors.

UNHCR – as a member of the UNCT / HCT – should contribute to the UNCT/HCT preparedness and response to emergencies brought on by natural hazards.

If it is anticipated that the natural hazard-induced emergency will significantly affect UNHCR persons of concern, or create new forced displacement, UNHCR should develop contingency plan(s) as set out above under **section 6.2.1**.

Operations and regional bureaux may decide not to undertake agency-specific preparedness efforts, including contingency planning, due to lack of presence, added-value operational capacity and/or expertise. Written justification on such decision can be recorded in the ERM. The decision should be constantly reviewed.

### *Mozambique Example : Preparedness and Contingency Planning*

■ UNHCR maintains a contingency stock of 5,500 core relief items (CRIs), with the capacity to reach around 30,000 people. This enables a quick local response in the event of disaster such as cyclones.

■ UNHCR has achieved the inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs in government contingency planning, ensuring that these groups are represented in official data and subsequent national responses.

■ UNHCR and partners support the Mozambique National Institute of Disaster Management in the operationalization of the Policy and Strategy for the Management of Displaced People by implementing a three-year Action Plan focused on mobilizing and fostering collaboration among government bodies and key stakeholders in the adoption of disaster risk reduction and mitigation measures, responding to emergencies and disasters, and ensuring protection to people displaced across the country.

Annex 6 provides the Standard Operating Procedures for contingency planning.

### 8.2.1. Implementation of Preparedness Actions

As part of contingency planning, country operations identify key preparedness actions that will need to be implemented in order to enable the planned emergency response. These are actions that a country operation implements to enhance the level of preparedness when a scenario is assessed as high risk. These actions can include but are not limited to, establishing frame agreements, pre-positioning Core Relief Items (CRI), pre-selecting a pool of potential partners through a Call for Expression of Interest<sup>19</sup> and assessing and if necessary, strengthening partners' capacity<sup>20</sup>. The thematic areas of preparedness reflect (a) UNHCR's mandated role in refugee situations, and (b) UNHCR's cluster leadership accountability in internal displacement situations, alongside its operational engagement in IDP situations. The preparedness actions selected by a country operation should be achievable in a determined period of time with the current level of resources.

Annex 7 provides a list of preparedness actions, organised by functional area, with the following objectives:

- To be an aide memoire, outlining preparedness actions that may need to be undertaken, according to the context and the situation.
- To give UNHCR country operations a tool that helps them reflect, decide whether a specific action is relevant for its context, and consider other actions that may be required.
- To assist country operations to identify possible gaps in their preparedness.

Country operations should ensure that relevant preparedness actions are included as part of the contingency plan and that a focal point(s), time frame and budget is allocated to each activity.

### 8.2.2 Country-Level contingency planning

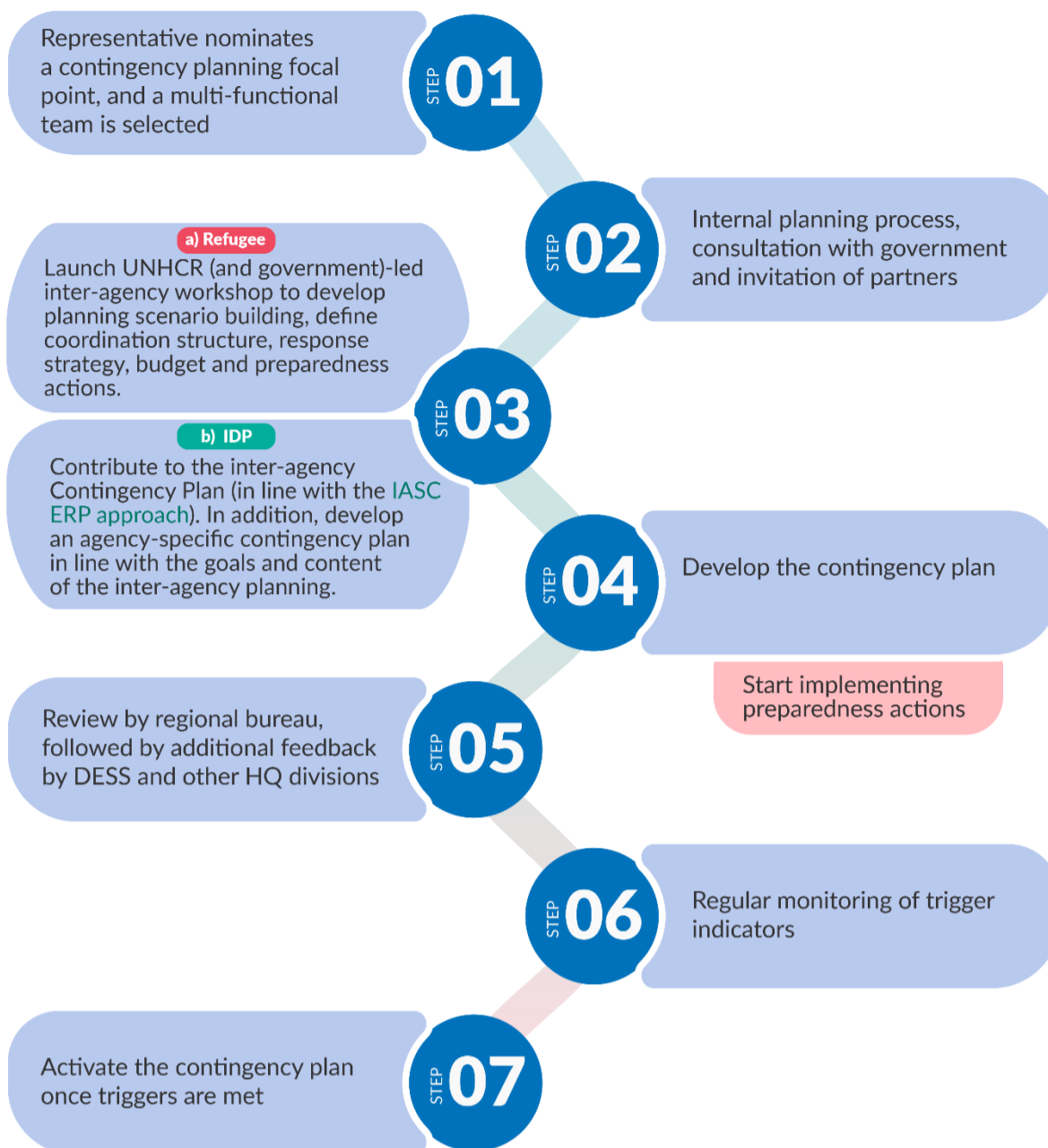
Country-level contingency planning is initiated by the UNHCR Representative in consultation with the regional bureau.

**For high-risk scenarios, contingency planning is mandatory and should be prioritized and initiated immediately when the high risk is identified.** Operations should finalize the contingency plan as soon as possible. Contingency plans will be reviewed by the regional bureau, followed by additional feedback by DESS and other divisions at HQs. When the agreed triggers are met, the Representative will activate the contingency plan in consultation with the regional bureau. Country operations should also make sure the up-to-date contingency plan is uploaded into COMPASS. This can support operations in the review of both the process and the content. As timely contingency planning is crucial for a prompt and effective response and fundraising (including emergency appeals, Humanitarian Response Plan/Refugee Response Plans, etc.), country operations are also encouraged to begin contingency planning for identified medium-risk scenarios.

<sup>19</sup> See: [UNHCR/AI/2021/11 Procedure for the Selection and Retention of Partners for Partnership Agreements](#).

<sup>20</sup> See: [UNHCR/AI/2021/06 Administrative Instruction on Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment](#), and [UNHCR/AI/2018/1 Administrative Instruction on Procurement by Partners under Partnership Agreements \(with Implementing Partnership Management Guidance Note No. 4, Rev. 1\)](#).

## Contingency planning at country level



### 8.2.3 Regional-Level contingency planning

UNHCR regional contingency planning may be done when a crisis developing in one country may lead to an outflow of refugees into more than one receiving country. Not every refugee emergency requires regional contingency planning.

Regional-level contingency planning may be initiated after country-level contingency planning has already begun, as in the case where an emergency scenario gradually grows to include more possible refugee-receiving countries. In this case, regional planning will build on and strengthen existing contingency plans that may already in place in the respective country operations.

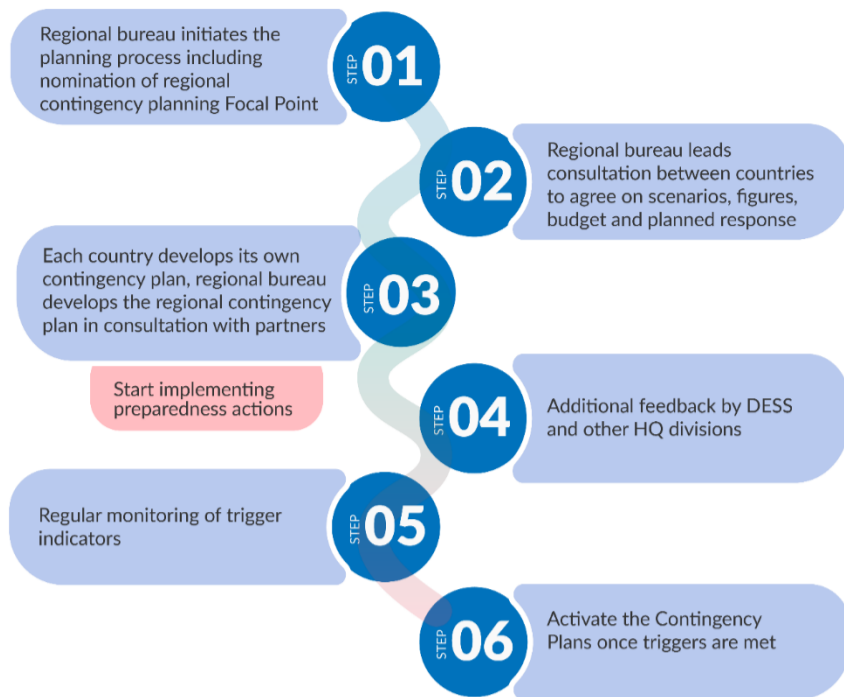
For situations with potential regional implications, regional-level contingency planning may be initiated directly at the regional level to focus attention and to provide guidance for the country-level planners. **Regional contingency planning is initiated by a regional bureau in consultation with or support of DESS.** It may also be useful to coordinate the following key preparedness aspects at regional level:

- Ensure regional-level coordination mechanism is agreed upon.
- Information sharing, to increase understanding of the risk of refugee outflows.
- Coordination of key messages, including protection advocacy messages.
- Prioritization of risks in the region.
- An efficient international response to emergency logistics needs.

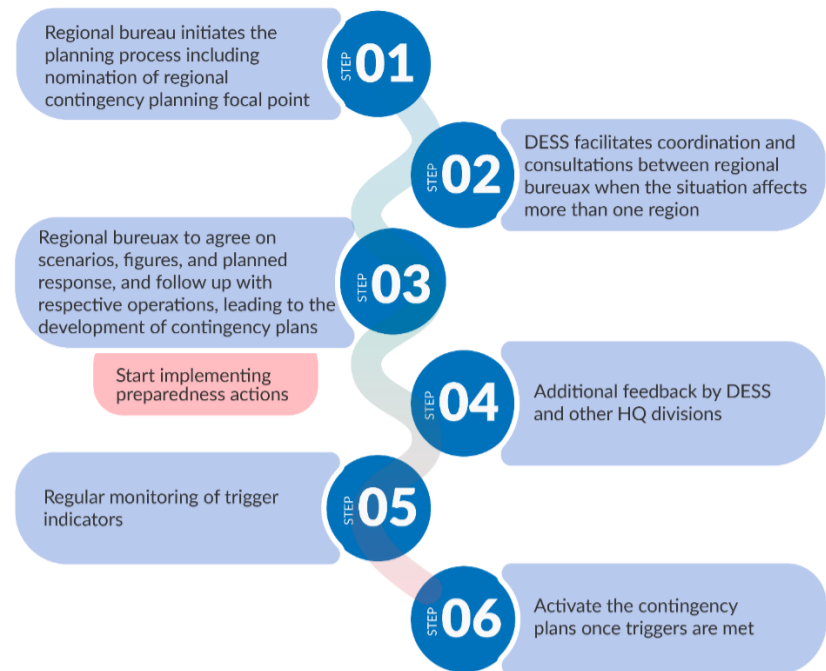
The [standard contingency planning](#) template (**Annex 6**) can be adapted to the regional context. The regional bureau should also make sure the up-to-date contingency plan(s) are uploaded into COMPASS.



## Contingency planning at regional level



## Contingency planning involving more than one bureau



## 9. Level 1 Emergency Declaration: Proactive Preparedness and Initial Response

Operations may need to declare an emergency in order to proactively prepare for a high-risk situation or to implement the initial response. A Level 1 emergency is dedicated for this purpose. More specifically, a Level 1 requires a country operation(s) to enhance preparedness actions due to a high risk of a humanitarian emergency, and/or commence an initial response, while the current capacity of the country operation(s) is insufficient.

### Definition of Emergency Levels

**Level 1 Emergency: Proactive Preparedness and Initial Response.** UNHCR declares a Level 1 emergency when a country operation(s) must enhance preparedness and take anticipatory or early action due to a high risk of a humanitarian emergency, and/or to commence an initial response, while the current capacity of the country operation(s) is insufficient.

**Level 2 Emergency: Stepped-up Regional Bureau Support.** UNHCR declares a Level 2 emergency in a rapidly evolving humanitarian situation when a country operation(s) faces significant gaps in resources, staffing and expertise, and additional support and resources from the relevant regional bureau(x) are vital for the operation(s) to be able to respond and assume an appropriate and effective coordination and operational role.

**Level 3 Emergency: Whole-of-UNHCR Response.** UNHCR declares a Level 3 emergency in an exceptionally serious situation in which the scale, pace, complexity, and consequences of the crisis significantly exceed the existing response capacities of the country operation(s) and relevant regional bureau(x); and thus call for an institutional, whole-of-UNHCR response to prevent the risk of failure to deliver effectively and at scale.

### 9.1. Requesting the emergency declaration

The country operation, through the regional bureau, should provide DESS with a written justification for the emergency declaration and required level, i.e., through a formal e-mail, including:

- a short description of the nature of the (upcoming) crisis and its actual or projected impact on persons of concern, including the expected magnitude of displacement;
- a summary of planned actions;
- information on identified gaps in the operation's resources, preparedness and response capacity, and an outline of the tentative requirements it intends to request if an emergency is declared; and
- confirmation that the Operational Risk Register has been updated under sub-category 1.2 Emergency to reflect the high risk of a new or escalated emergency.

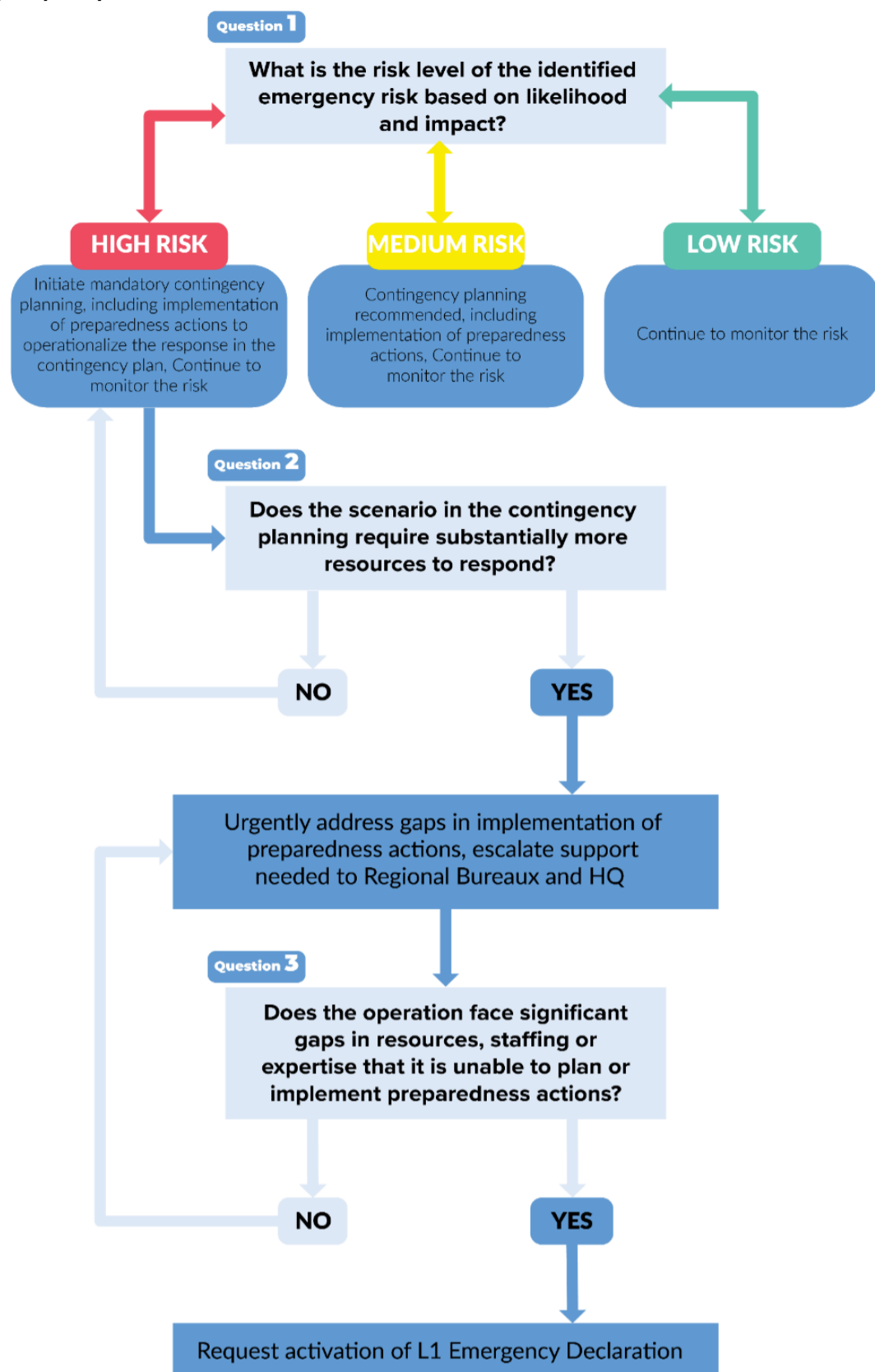
#### KEY MESSAGE

Upon declaration of a UNHCR Emergency Level, regional and central emergency resources (human, financial and material) shall be made available to the concerned country operation.

The country operation is also advised to attach any additional supporting information or documentation on the situation (e.g., response plan and/or contingency plan) that will reduce follow-up requests for additional information.

Once the request has been approved, the AHC-O then declares a Level 1 emergency through a communication to the Senior Management Committee and respective Representative(s). Following the declaration, regional bureaux, DESS and other divisions activate measures to support the country operation(s) concerned. A Level 1 Emergency automatically expires after **six months**, with no possibility of extension. In case of a sudden deterioration in the humanitarian situation once an emergency has been declared, the High Commissioner can increase the level of the emergency (i.e., from Level 1 to Level 2 or Level 3). The Standard Operating Procedures for UNHCR emergency declarations can be found on [Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal](#).

## Emergency Preparedness Workflow



## 10. Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal

DESS maintains the [Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal](#) in coordination with HQ divisions and entities, regional bureaux and country operations. It is an internal repository of resources and guidance, emergency risk management, early warning, preparedness and contingency planning. The portal provides an overview of declared emergencies, operations at high-risk of an emergency, and those “on the watch”. The portal also provides guidance on taking proactive steps including fundraising.

Operations identified as being at high risk of an emergency are added or removed from the list based on the risk analysis carried out by country operations, in consultation with the regional bureaux and DESS where necessary. Corresponding pages provide country-based analysis on triggering events, outlook on impacts and their likelihood, and preparedness levels and gaps.

A high risk(s) of a new or escalated emergency is systematically extracted from the Operational Risk Register and included in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal which is maintained by DESS in close coordination with regional bureau(x).

## 11. Annex

- Annex 1** provides an overview of the suggested roles and responsibilities of emergency focal points regarding emergency risk analysis and contingency planning.
- Annex 2** provides an overview of external processes and fora related to risk analysis, and an overview of UNHCR’s contribution to these processes.
- Annex 3** provides an overview of UNHCR roles and actions in risk analysis and contingency planning in IDP situations.
- Annex 4** provides examples for the risk ranking and risk monitoring exercise
- Annex 5** provides the combined contingency planning template
- Annex 6** provides the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for contingency planning
- Annex 7** provides preparedness actions to support the implementation of the contingency plan.

## 12. ACRONYMS

<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Analysis
<b>CCCM</b>	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
<b>CRI</b>	Core Relief Item
<b>DESS</b>	Division of Emergency, Security and Supply
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>ERM</b>	Enterprise Risk Management
<b>ERP</b>	Emergency Response Preparedness
<b>EWEAR</b>	Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GCR</b>	Global Compact on Refugees
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Team
<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>PSEA</b>	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>RC/HC</b>	Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator
<b>RCM</b>	Refugee Coordination Model
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT/HCT</b>	United Nations Country Team/Humanitarian Country Team
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



**Guidance on Emergency Preparedness**  
**UNHCR/OG/2023/02**  
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