Organizational Preparedness Framework:
For Protection in Humanitarian and Fragile Settings

This publication is part of a suite of EngenderHealth policies, procedures, and frameworks that govern our operations. These materials are grounded in principles of intersectionality and feminist accountability and governance. Colleagues from across our global and country offices collaborated with the Centre for Transnational Development and Collaboration in developing these materials.

Framework ownership: Tonee Mwangi, Vice President of Finance and Administration, is the primary owner of this framework.

Framework issuance and revision dates: This framework was published in July 2022. EngenderHealth will update this policy every three years.

Applicability: This framework applies to all staff, associates, and partners.

EngenderHealth

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Introduction

EngenderHealth is a nonprofit organization aiming to contribute to a gender-equal world where all people achieve their sexual and reproductive health and rights through implementing high-quality, gender-equitable programs that advance sexual and reproductive health and rights. EngenderHealth's programs extend across Africa and Asia and, as some of our work is carried out in humanitarian and fragile settings, this framework seeks to ensure that EngenderHealth is safeguarded as an organization and that it prioritizes personnel safety, security, and wellbeing while working in response to emergencies, risks, and disasters.

We define organizational preparedness as an ongoing process of ensuring that we are actively planning for emergencies, risks, and disasters—as an organization and as a team—in humanitarian and fragile settings and at the global level. This document lays out EngenderHealth's approaches, processes, and tools for ensuring we are prepared to identify, mitigate, and respond to potential risks at organizational, country, and project levels while operating in humanitarian and fragile contexts. This framework applies to the global suppot level, as we believe that emergencies, disasters, and risks can occur anywhere in the world; however, extra measures are applicable in fragile and humanitarian settings, where emergencies may be more imminent.

We define humanitarian contexts as areas, countries, and regions that have witnessed and/or are witnessing humanitarian crises—either as continuous or single events—which threaten the health, safety, and/or well-being of a community or communities. We understand fragile settings as areas, countries, and regions that are prone to experiencing or at the verge of a humanitarian crisis. Our definition of a humanitarian crisis includes conflicts and wars, economic collapses, famines, natural disasters, and pandemics and epidemics. As EngenderHealth has expanded into fragile and humanitarian contexts, it has become important to develop operational guidelines and plans for responding to emergencies and for better protecting our personnel, assets, and communities. This framework aims to address the specific needs of fragile and humanitarian settings, as we recognize that these settings require us to be organizationally prepared to respond to emergencies as they arise.

In preparing this framework, we relied on recommendations, lessons learned, and tools offered by several humanitarian and development actors operating in fragile and humanitarian settings, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Refugee Agency, and the World Health Organization. Resources we consulted in developing this framework include:

- A Strategic Framework for Emergency Preparedness
- Common Framework for Preparedness
- Emergency Response Preparedness Risk Analysis and Monitoring, Minimum Preparedness, Advanced Preparedness, and Contingency Planning
- Handbook for RCs [Resident Coordinators] and HCs [Humanitarian Coordinators] on Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters
- Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies
- Towards Better Humanitarian Donorship

Scope of Application

This framework is an organizational asset applicable to all EngenderHealth's personnel and country programs, offices, operations, and sites. Implementation of this framework is the responsibility of all personnel, as part of our duty of care and accountabilities to one another and to the communities we serve.
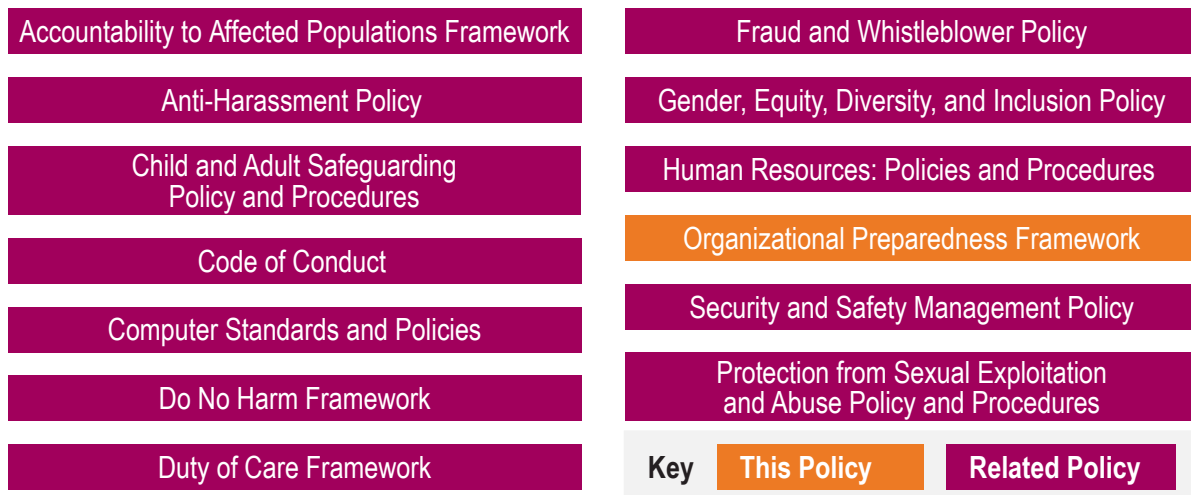
The Director of Internal Audit and Enterprise Risk Management is responsible for disseminating this framework; the human resources department will support introduction of the framework to new personnel. Adherence to this framework is monitored by:

- At the organizational level: Vice President of Programs
- At the global office level: Director of Internal Audit and Enterprise Risk Management
- At the country office level: Country Representatives
- At the project level: Chief of Party, Project Director, Project Manager (as applicable)

The Framework

This framework is a component of a larger suite of policy and procedures, which includes our Accountability to Affected Populations Framework, Duty of Care Framework, and Security and Safety Management Policy (see Figure 1). The framework is part of our organizational commitment to accountability toward our stakeholders, partners, communities, and personnel. This document lays out EngenderHealth's preparedness checklists, components, and processes and procedures.

Figure 1. Key EngenderHealth Policies and Procedures

Accountability to Affected Populations Framework	Fraud and Whistleblower Policy
Anti-Harassment Policy	Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Human Resources: Policies and Procedures
Code of Conduct	Organizational Preparedness Framework
Computer Standards and Policies	Security and Safety Management Policy
Do No Harm Framework	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy and Procedures
Duty of Care Framework	Key This Policy Related Policy

Preparedness Process

EngenderHealth's organizational preparedness process (see Figure 2) consists of: (1) annual emergency preparedness planning meetings, during which minimum preparedness actions (MPAs) are reviewed, assessed, and updated; (2) ongoing implementation of MPAs; (3) ongoing risk analysis, monitoring, and ranking; and (4) development of advanced preparedness actions and contingency plans for high-risk concerns. To address unanticipated emergencies, EngenderHealth employs an incident management procedure. Details for all these elements are included in this framework.
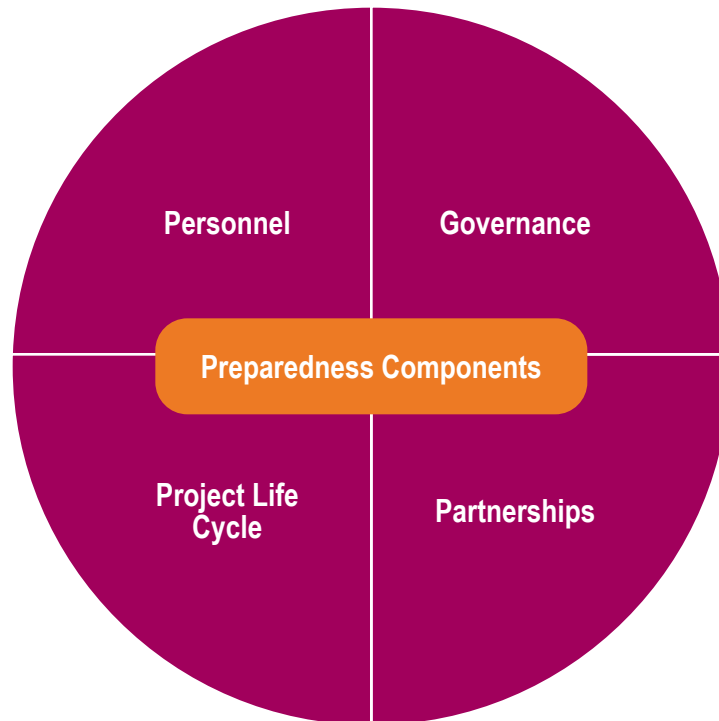
Figure 2. Organizational Preparedness Process

Preparedness Components

There are four main components of this framework: (1) personnel, (2) governance, (3) project life cycle, and (4) partnerships (see Figure 3). Each component is an organizational asset, to which attention is given at the organizational level and at the country office level, particularly in humanitarian and fragile settings.

Figure 3. Organizational Preparedness Framework Components

Organizational Preparedness Checklists

EngenderHealth is committed to adopting MPAs for each of the four components, which must always be in place, regardless of the level of risk identified. These MPAs, listed in checklist form, are monitored and completed at various intervals: annually at the organizational level, quarterly at the country office level, and at the start of every project.

Personnel

EngenderHealth considers its personnel (staff members, including permanent and seasonal employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and board members) an indispensable organizational asset. Therefore, the following MPAs cover personnel physical safety as well as emotional and psychological wellbeing.

Table 1. Personnel MPAs

Action	Staff Responsible	Timing
Ensure all personnel at the global support level participate in emergency preparedness planning workshops	Director of Internal Audit and Enterprise Risk Management	Annually
Ensure all country office personnel participate in country emergency preparedness planning workshops	Country Representatives; Director of Internal Audit and Enterprise Risk Management	Quarterly
Ensure all project personnel participate in project emergency preparedness planning workshops	Country Representatives; Chiefs of Party/Project Directors/Project Managers	Project Start-Up
Ensure all personnel have access to country-specific security policies and protocols	Director of International Human Resources (HR); Line Managers	Annually
Ensure all personnel have access to organizational policies, including this framework	Awards and Compliance Manager; Director of International HR	Upon Hire and Annually
Ensure all personnel are aware of and can access complaints and feedback mechanisms	Director of International HR	Upon Hire and Annually
Ensure all personnel are familiar with the organization's governance structures and decision-making processes	Awards and Compliance Manager; Director of International HR	Upon Hire and Annually
Ensure all personnel are familiar with the organization's monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning frameworks and have access to learning opportunities	Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Focal Points; Director of International HR	Annually
Ensure all personnel are familiar with organization's procurement processes	Awards and Compliance Manager; Director of International HR	Upon Hire and Annually
Ensure all personnel are aware of the organization's partnership portfolio	Awards and Compliance Manager; Associate Director of International Finance	Upon Hire and Annually
Ensure all personnel have access to the organization's budgets, financial processes, and spending information	Associate Director of International Finance	Ongoing

Organizational Preparedness Framework

Action	Staff Responsible	Timing
Ensure personnel deploying to fragile and humanitarian contexts are trained to use alternative communications equipment, such as satellite radios and encrypted communication devices	Awards and Compliance Manager	Upon Deployment
Ensure all personnel are aware of the organization's in-country legal status and registration	Awards and Compliance Manager; Director of International HR	Ongoing
Ensure all personnel have access to working spaces	Country Representatives	As Needed
Ensure all personnel have access to regular country office meetings to share concerns, barriers, and challenges	Country Representatives	Bi-Weekly
Ensure all personnel are aware of the organization's data management and protection policies	Senior Director of Technical Leadership; Associate Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning; M&E Focal Points	Ongoing
Ensure all personnel understand how to access emergency funds	Director of International HR; Country Senior Management Team	Ongoing
Ensure psychosocial and mental health support is available for personnel	Director of International HR; Country Senior Management Team	As Needed
Ensure personnel deploying to fragile and humanitarian contexts receive hostile environment awareness training *Note: Include this training, such as First Option Safety Consultants' Hostile Environment Training, in budgets for all fragile and humanitarian contexts.*	Director of International HR	Upon Deployment
Ensure all personnel have access to an organizational mentor of their choice	Director of International HR; Country Senior Management Team	Ongoing
Ensure all personnel are offered professional development and capacity strengthening opportunities	Director of International HR; Country Senior Management Team	Ongoing
Ensure personnel can access shelter and accommodations in cases of emergencies, displacement, and evacuation	Director of International HR	As Needed

Governance

Governance plays a major role in EngenderHealth's overall preparedness. We ensure that governance is flexible to accommodate for the needs of fragile and humanitarian settings. In this framework, EngenderHealth defines governance as the systems in place to operate the organization—such as policies, procedures, processes, decision-making mechanisms, and organizational structure. This includes the organization's policies and operations related to financial management, recruitment, HR management, and procurement.

Table 2. Governance MPAs

Action	Staff Responsible	Timing
Ensure organizational governance information (including the organization's organigram) is shared externally and internally	Awards and Compliance Manager	Annually
Maintain legal registration and/or legal standing in countries where we operate	Awards and Compliance Manager	Ongoing
Ensure organization-wide procedures are flexible and country-specific procedures are available	Director of International HR; Associate Director of International Finance	Annually
Monitor rapid recruitment and induction processes closely	Director of International HR	Upon Hire and Annually
Ensure flexibility in procurement processes, particularly in countries where urgent needs may emerge	Director of International HR; Associate Director of International Finance	As needed
Update organizational structures and organigrams regularly	Director of International HR	Monthly
Ensure financial policies and procedures do not hinder access to emergency funds	Associate Director of International Finance	Quarterly
Establish and maintain open lines of communications with senior management	Country Representatives	Ongoing
Ensure personnel details (such as addresses, emergency contacts, and phone numbers) are current and available to relevant personnel	Director of International HR	Upon Hire and Annually

Action	Staff Responsible	Timing
Ensure organizational budgets cover costs associated with preparedness, emergency expenses, and contingency plans	Country Representatives; Associate Director of International Finance	Annually
Assign focal points in each country office	Country Representatives; Director of International HR	Monthly
Deliver preparedness orientation during onboarding	Director of International HR	Upon Hire and Annually
Incorporate safeguarding measures into recruitment and hiring processes	Director of International HR	Upon Hire and Annually
Establish and maintain safe communications protocols, emergency funds, and other resources to mitigate potential risk	Director of Internal Audit and Enterprise Risk Management	Ongoing
Develop data protection and handling policies and mechanisms	Senior Director of Technical Leadership; Associate Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning; M&E Focal Points	Annually
Communicate policy and procedure updates to all relevant stakeholders	Director of International HR	Annually and As Needed
Develop and update security and safety management policies at organizational and country levels *Note: The DRC Safety and Security Management Plan can serve as a basis for country-specific plans.*	Director of Internal Audit and Enterprise Risk Management	Annually or Quarterly
Maintain a centralized, current database of country office details, including information related to staff, projects, funders, equipment and supplies, location, and facility capacities	Director of International HR	Ongoing
Maintain a centralized, current database of key external contacts	Director of International HR	Ongoing

Project Life Cycle

In this framework, we define project life cycle as the process through which projects are designed and implemented. This includes: (1) needs assessment and evidence gathering, (2) project design and planning, (3) project implementation and activities, and (4) project monitoring, evaluation, and learning. As EngenderHealth operates in fragile and humanitarian settings, the impl projects themselves can result in risks and threats to staff and stakeholders; for this reason, we pay special attention to our preparedness in our project life cycles.

Table 3. Project Life Cycle MPAs

Action	Staff Responsible	Timing
Assess project-associated risks at the organizational level, using the Risk Assessment Matrix and Do No Harm Framework	Senior Director of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)	Project Start-Up and Quarterly
Develop project risk mitigation strategies at the organizational level using the Do No Harm Framework	Senior Director of GESI	Project Start-Up and Quarterly
Assess project risks at the country level using the Risk Assessment Matrix	Country Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion (GYSI) Focal Points; Regional Advisor for GYSI; Senior Director of GESI	Quarterly
Develop project risk mitigation strategies at the country level using the Do No Harm Framework	Country GYSI Focal Points; Regional Advisor for GYSI; Senior Director of GESI	Quarterly
Assess risks associated with carrying out research and needs assessments	Senior Director of GESI; Senior Director of Technical Leadership; Associate Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	As Needed
Develop risk mitigation strategies for carrying out research and needs assessments	Senior Director of GESI; Senior Director of Technical Leadership; Associate Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	As Needed
Assess risks associated with project activities (such as workshops, trainings, and awareness raising campaigns) using the Risk Assessment Matrix	Country GYSI Focal Points; Regional Advisor for GYSI; Senior Director of GESI	Project Start-Up
Develop risk mitigation strategies for project activities using the Do No Harm Framework	Country GYSI Focal Points; Regional Advisor for GYSI; Senior Director of GESI	Project Start-Up

Action	Staff Responsible	Timing
Assess risks of monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities and data collection mechanisms	Senior Director of Technical Leadership; Associate Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning; M&E Focal Points	Project Start-Up
Develop risk mitigation strategies for monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities and data collection mechanisms	Senior Director of Technical Leadership; Associate Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning; M&E Focal Points	Project Start-Up
Establish and maintain project data protection, management, and handling processes and procedures	Senior Director of Technical Leadership; Associate Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning; M&E Focal Points	Annually
Ensure all project personnel are aware of potential project and project activity risks	Country GYSI Focal Points; Regional Advisor for GYSI; Senior Director of GESI; Chiefs of Party/Project Directors/ Project Managers; Country Representatives	Ongoing
Ensure all project personnel are aware of potential context-related risks	Country GYSI Focal Points; Regional Advisor for GYSI; Senior Director of GESI; Chiefs of Party/Project Directors/ Project Managers; Country Representatives	Ongoing

Partnerships

EngenderHealth considers partnerships a key component of its organizational preparedness. Partners are a resource that, like personnel and other community members, need to be safeguarded and prepared.

Table 4. Partnerships MPAs

Action	Staff Responsible	Timing
Maintain and regularly update the organization's partnership portfolio in a centralized database	Business Development (BD) Director	Quarterly
Form partnerships with medical service providers at global and country levels	BD Director; Country Teams; Global Technical Team	Project Start-Up

Organizational Preparedness Framework

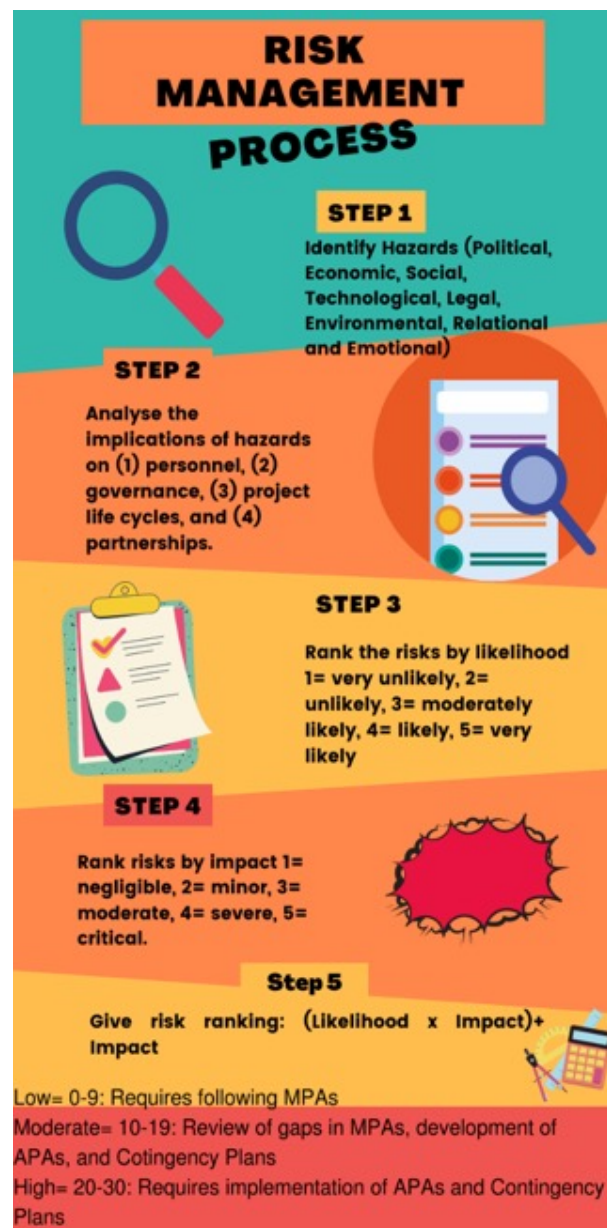| Action	Staff Responsible	Timing
Form partnerships with sexual and reproductive health providers at global and country levels	BD Director; Global Technical Team; Country Teams	Project Start-Up
Form partnerships with psychosocial and mental health support providers at global and country levels	Director of International HR; Country Teams	Project Start-Up
Form partnerships with legal services providers at global and country levels	Awards and Compliance Manager; Country Teams	Project Start-Up
Form in-country partnerships with accommodation and shelter providers	Director of International HR; Country Teams	Project Start-Up
Form in-country partnerships with security service providers	Director of International HR; Country Teams	Project Start-Up
Form partnerships with journalists and media platforms at global and country levels	Country Teams; Communications Manager	Project Start-Up
Form in-country partnerships with local organization, including women's rights organizations	Country GYSI Focal Points; Regional Advisor for GYSI; Senior Director of GESI; Country Teams	Project Start-Up
Assess potential partners' security, safety, and protection mechanisms	Awards and Compliance Manager; BD Director	Project Start-Up and Quarterly
Integrate risk assessments into partnerships	Awards and Compliance Manager; BD Director	Project Start-Up
Regulate partnerships through memoranda of understanding and partnership agreements	Awards and Compliance Manager; BD Director	Project Start-Up
Maintain partners' profiles, including assigned focal points and service offerings, in a centralized database	BD Director	Project Start-Up and Quarterly
Ensure partners and EngenderHealth both have access to complaints mechanisms	Director of International HR	Ongoing

Risk Ranking Guide

In this ranking guide, we define risks as the likelihood harm will result from a hazard, while we define a hazard as a factor that could potentially cause harm. This definition allows for more comprehensive and intersectional risk monitoring, analysis, and mitigation. The first step of risk management is identifying hazards. The next step is to analyze those hazards based on the risks they pose in relation to the components of this framework (personnel, governance, project life cycle, and partnerships). Next, we rank risks by their likelihood and impact, and use that ranking to determine further action, as follows: **Low = 0–9:** follow MPAs, **Moderate = 10–19:** review gaps in MPAs and develop advanced preparedness actions and contingency plans, and **High = 20–30:** implement advanced preparedness actions and contingency plans. (See Figure 4.)

We classify hazards into eight categories, listed in order of frequency below.

- **Political:** political coups, armed conflicts, and human rights violations
- **Economic:** economic inflation, fluctuating currency exchange rates, high unemployment rates, and high levels of poverty
- **Social:** unwelcoming social attitudes and behaviors, traditional gender roles, social stigma against minority communities, and social violence
- **Technological:** cyber harassment, cyber attacks, cyber smear campaigns, and software or hardware malfunctions
- **Legal:** discriminatory legal frameworks and unjust judiciary systems, military, and emergency laws
- **Environmental:** cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, epidemics, floods, pandemics, and pollution
- **Relational:** harm that may result from the organization's relationships to stakeholders, such as dissatisfied employees, funders, governments, and partner organizations
- **Emotional:** staff burnout, mental health fatigue, context-induced anxiety, excess workload, and other stress and pressure

Figure 4. Risk Management Process

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

STEP 1
Identify Hazards (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental, Relational and Emotional)

STEP 2
Analyse the implications of hazards on (1) personnel, (2) governance, (3) project life cycles, and (4) partnerships.

STEP 3
Rank the risks by likelihood 1= very unlikely, 2= unlikely, 3= moderately likely, 4= likely, 5= very likely

STEP 4
Rank risks by impact 1= negligible, 2= minor, 3= moderate, 4= severe, 5= critical.

Step 5
Give risk ranking: (Likelihood x Impact)+ Impact

Low= 0-9: Requires following MPAs
Moderate= 10-19: Review of gaps in MPAs, development of APAs, and Cotingency Plans
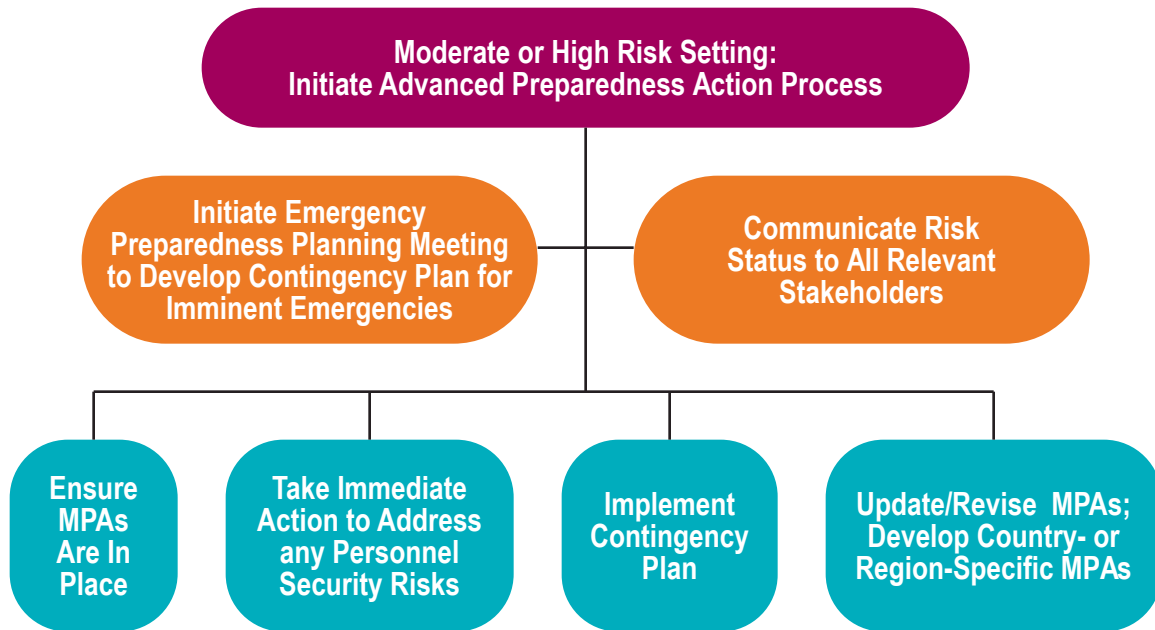High= 20-30: Requires implementation of APAs and Contingency Plans

Advanced Preparedness Actions and Contingency Plans

We determine advanced preparedness actions and contingency plans based on the risks identified. These include actions and commitments that might in some cases conflict with the MPAs. In such cases, standard MPAs might be revised and adapted and country-specific MPAs might be added to the checklist. We have a process for developing advanced preparedness actions and contingency plans (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Advanced Preparedness Actions and Contingency Planning Processes

We also have a checklist to guide the process of developing advanced preparedness actions and contingency plans, which aligns to the four components of this framework.

Table 5. Advanced Preparedness Actions and Contingency Planning Checklist

Actions	Examples
Personnel	
Prioritize personnel's physical safety and security	Provide hospital referrals, shelter linkages, and evacuation plans
Ensure personnel have access to legal support	Facilitate access to lawyers, legal advice, and support in courts
Ensure personnel's basic needs are met	Use emergency funds in cases of displacement

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Actions	Examples
Governance	
Safeguard organizational assets	Address cyber attacks and cyber threats promptly
Ensure human resources procedures do not hinder response actions	Rapidly recruit professionals to provide urgent support
Ensure financial procedures do not hinder response actions	Allow for flexibility in transactions and cash delivery to those in an emergency
Ensure procurement procedures do not hinder response actions	Allow for flexibility in the procurement of goods and services as needed to respond to emergencies
Communicate decisions around risk response transparently	Facilitate collective and individual briefings
Project Life Cycle	
Prioritize safety, security, and well-being of personnel over productivity	Adjust project timelines
Allow project resources to respond to emergencies	Reallocate budget
Secure project data	Relocate data
Partnerships	
Communicate emergencies and emergency response plans to partners	Facilitate individual or collective meetings to jointly plan and act
Reach out to relevant partners for support	Engage hospitals and establish referrals for psychosocial support and other services
Assess risks that could affect partners and communicate those risks to those partners	Facilitate individual partner meetings

Incident Management Procedure

Figure 6. Incident Management Procedure

Incident Occurs

Security Focal Point Informed & Can Contain Incident

no → Country Representative Informed & Can Contain Incident

no → Global Support Office Informed & Can Resolve Incident

no → External Support Engaged & Resolves Incident

yes

Incident Contained & Resolved