

**Global Protection Cluster**

**GUIDANCE FOR THE  
FIELD PROTECTION  
CLUSTERS AND AORS  
ON PREPAREDNESS FOR  
PROTECTION IN THE  
CONTEXT OF CLIMATE  
CHANGE AND DISASTERS**



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# ACRONYMS



AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AA	Anticipatory Action
AoR	Areas of Responsibility
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FPC	Field Protection Clusters
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GPC	Global Protection Cluster
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDP-N	Humanitarian Development Peace – Nexus
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
IRL	International Refugee Law
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation



# FOREWORD



From displaced Syrians suffering with conflict and drought, and herders in the Sahel facing unprecedented scarcity of pasture, to millions escaping extreme weather in the coastal areas of Bangladesh or those at risk of losing the very land they live on in parts of the Pacific, climate change is compounding protection risks and driving displacement. While climate change is impacting communities everywhere, resilience and the ability to stay safe are not the same for all. Without protective actions, women, children, persons with disability, the elderly and other minority groups are left behind risking displacement, trafficking, and economic hardship.

As protection actors we must see ourselves as front and center in terms of understanding how climate change and disasters are shaping the realities of those we work with, and the related responses needed to strengthen rights and advance solutions in accordance with international law.

This Guidance is meant to serve as the go-to reference document for Field Protection Clusters and AoRs as well as other protection partners when it comes to thinking about and addressing the connections between protection, climate change and disasters. It provides straightforward information and advice on what it means to prepare for and implement impactful protection-related programmes, policies, and advocacy in integrated ways in response to disasters and climate change. It also provides links and reference points to wider analytical frameworks and tools. Ultimately, this Guidance is for each and every one of us in the protection sector. Regardless of where we are working, climate change simply does not respect the neat distinctions we have made in the humanitarian sector: increasingly climate change and disasters are either contributing to or driving the spectrum of protection risks, be it amidst a disaster response or a conflict-driven emergency setting or a context of fragility.

And ultimately, I see this Guidance as providing us with the opportunity and impetus to use this moment to actually integrate protection efforts more fully across the range of humanitarian interventions, to advance our relationships and collaboration with development actors and those specializing in disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation, to build more equitable partnerships with local actors who have an intimate understanding of how protection and climate are overlapping and to truly build connections with local authorities and other duty bearers who may otherwise have little interest in protection on its own.

Treating protection as core to climate change and disasters is a step in the right direction both in terms of ensuring integrated and impactful protection outcomes as well as moving forward with the needed breaking down of silos. Ultimately, it is about placing the person experiencing protection risks, be they coming from climate change, conflict, disaster or, as is likely, a devastating mix of all three, at the center of our collective efforts.

I hope this Guidance will be a valuable tool in support of our shared efforts in this direction for the years to come.

**William S. Chemaly,**  
Global Protection Cluster Coordinator



# 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT



This Guidance document is intended to enable those working in Field Protection Clusters (FPC) to have access to guidance and related tools and reference material that will enable them to consider protection issues and to prepare and implement appropriate responses in relation to the impact's climate change and disasters. In the context of this guidance the term disaster is used to describe events which are primarily not related to conflict or security, but arise because of the impact of the occurrence of a natural hazard. However, the term natural disaster is not used as it is recognised that a natural hazard only becomes a disaster as a result of people living in vulnerable positions and locations.

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) is committed to ensuring that FPC, Areas of Responsibility (AoRs) and wider partners are also prioritizing protection risks in the context of climate change and disasters to avoid protection gaps that would negatively affect vulnerable communities through ensuring appropriate preparedness measures. This is further outlined in the [GPC's Strategic Framework 2020-2024](#) in which it commits to meet the challenges to make protection actions contextually appropriate and complementary. This includes the importance of joint analysis to achieve effective and appropriate protection outcomes especially in mixed, climate response and situations affected by violence.

In this document the protection risks faced, and underlying principles and frameworks are outlined and practical considerations for preparedness and planning are then highlighted and discussed. Where possible examples drawn from best practice are used to illustrate key points. In the annex attached to the document a series of checklists and other tools are provided which aim to assist those designing and implementing interventions and programmes. Throughout the document extensive use is made of hyperlinks which, in electronic versions of the Guidance, enable the user to access further reading and background information on specific issues if they wish to do so.

A Toolkit also accompanies this Guidance Note. It contains additional resources to support field protection clusters in planning and implementing activities and in training, capacity building and advocacy. Available toolkit contents are flagged within the document using the symbols below.

		Checklist		Groupwork
		Infographic		Analytical Tool
		Sample documents		Video or audio clip



## 2. DEFINITIONS, FRAMEWORKS, AND ISSUES



### 2.1. Definitions and frameworks

Several key terms are often used when discussing climate change and disasters. It is important to establish a working definition of them to ensure clarity and a shared understanding. In this document definitions used by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the [UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction \(UNDRR\)](#) UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction are used and highlighted below.



**Climate Change:** The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as a “change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to climate variability observed over comparable time periods” (Source: [UNFCCC Article 1](#)). There is growing evidence that the climate is changing at a more rapid pace than has been earlier predicted<sup>1</sup> and that the frequency and severity of climate-related hazards and events are rising. A compilation of climate change-related facts put together by the World Meteorological Organisation can be found [here](#).



**Hazard:** 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, induced by human activity and choices or, as is often the case, by a combination of factors. Examples of combined hazards include environmental degradation and climate change. Hazards may be single, consecutive, or combined and characterized by factors such as location, intensity or magnitude, frequency, and probability.



**Disaster:** Defined as a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability, and capacity, leading to human, material, economic and environmental losses, and impacts. The effect of a disaster can be immediate and localized, but is often widespread and could last for a long period of time. The effect may test or exceed the capacity of a community or society to cope using its own resources and a need for external assistance. Two commonly used terms to describe types of disasters include: (a) **Slow onset**, defined as an event that emerges gradually over time. Slow-onset disasters could be associated with, e.g., drought, desertification and sea-level rise or loss of soil fertility and recurring crop failure. (b) **Sudden onset**, triggered by a hazardous event that emerges quickly. Sudden-onset disasters could be associated with events such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flash floods, chemical explosions, critical infrastructure failure or major transport accidents. It is important to note that the term “natural” disaster should be avoided. Natural hazards become disasters due to other, human related, dynamics, actions (or inactions) that affect vulnerability<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [State of the Global Climate 2020, World Meteorological Organization 2021](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Time to say goodbye to “natural” disasters | PreventionWeb](#)





**Vulnerability:** In DRR, vulnerability describes the conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets, or systems to the impacts of hazards. In Protection Analysis, vulnerability is described as “certain characteristics or circumstances of an individual or group, or their surrounding physical environment, which diminish ability to anticipate, cope with, resist, or recover from the impact of a threat. People differ in their exposure to a threat depending on their social group, gender, ethnicity, age, and other factors. In both definitions and uses vulnerability is not a fixed or static criteria and will change and evolve depending on the context.



**Risk:** In DRR, terminology risk is defined as the potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets which could occur to a system, society, or a community in a specific period, determined in terms of probability as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and capacity. In the Protection Analytical Framework, risk is defined as actual or potential exposure of an affected population to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation. A link can be drawn between the two in terms of the importance both definitions attach to the social and economic contexts in which risks occur and are perceived.



**Resilience:** This is defined as “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management”<sup>3</sup>. Building resilience is likely to involve measures that support the capacity of individuals, communities, and government (at different levels) to withstand and deal with hazard events in ways relevant to their context.



**Adaptation:** Adaptation can be defined as “an adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities”. This definition is drawn from one used by the UNFCCC, but can equally apply to responses to non climate-related hazards. Adaptation can occur through the implementation of deliberate plans or may be more spontaneous in reaction to events. Examples might include measures such as crop and livelihood diversification or community-based disaster risk reduction. From a protection perspective, it is always important to consider the impact of adaptation strategies on protection risks.



**Defining Protection:** The [Inter Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\)](#) defines protection as “all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. International Human Rights Law (IHRL), International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and International Refugee Law (IRL)” When this was agreed in 2013 it was intended to be comprehensive in scope in terms of both its legal frameworks and the types and scope of strategies likely to be required in response to challenges faced.



**Centrality of Protection:** The 2016 [IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action](#) also emphasises the centrality of protection emphasising that this encompasses efforts across all sectors and requires meaningful engagement with a range of affected persons and duty bearers to ensure that protection risks are identified and responded to. Comprehensive engagement and ongoing assessment enable responses to be made that address immediate needs, but are also able to promote and enhance preparedness and prevent and mitigate actual and potential protection risks. To achieve this, action to reduce protection risk is required by a broad range of stakeholders at different levels and with different roles and responsibilities. The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) has

<sup>3</sup> As used by UNDRR



a fundamental role to play in ensuring that protection informs decision making and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is responsible for sharing analysis and information and for prioritising and contributing to collective efforts.



**Protection Mainstreaming:** The 2016 IASC Policy also highlights the importance of mainstreaming protection. It is defined in the IASC policy as “*the process of incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid*” and is an imperative for all humanitarian actors. To mainstream protection, it is important that there is understanding about who is at risk from whom and why. It also involves considering how and where and to whom to refer people for specialised support and services when it is necessary. A short video further explaining protection mainstreaming can be viewed [here](#).



**Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR):** It has been increasingly recognised that managing disasters and reducing their impact is largely dependent on identifying and reducing the underlying drivers of risk which exacerbate hazards, exposure, and vulnerability of both people and systems and in building and addressing capacity<sup>4</sup>. In many situations exposure and conditions of vulnerability are closely related to challenges with economic and urban development, environmental degradation, poverty, and inequality. DRR interventions seek to address or mitigate underlying risk drivers and, where possible, anticipate and prevent disasters from happening. Current approaches to DRR emphasise the importance of a people centred approach to anticipating preventing and responding to disaster risk. Coordinated action on DRR is guided by the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#), which outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action focused on preventing new and reducing existing risks. It also encourages Governments to consider and include displacement risk in their own DRR strategies



**Anticipatory Action:** With rapid improvements and developments in data analysis, modelling and forecasting, the occurrence and impact of many types of hazards and resulting shocks can be predicted with increasing confidence. This has led to growing interest in Anticipatory Action (AA). With its origins in lessons learned from Early Warning Systems (EWS), AA is based on the concept that by combining different analytical approaches, events can be predicted, and their projected humanitarian impact and protection risks proactively mitigated. Objectives of AA interventions include increased operational capacity, reduced response times and costs, reduced humanitarian impact and faster recovery. AA interventions typically combine three elements, (a) a forecast-based trigger built into a clear decision-making process, (b) pre-agreed action plans, (c) pre-arranged finance and associated mechanisms. Given that AA remains a relatively new area of work there is significant interest in identifying and documenting best practice and lessons learned in this area with a dedicated learning platform, the [Anticipation Hub](#) was established to facilitate knowledge exchange and learning on this topic<sup>5</sup>. Working with partners UN OCHA has facilitated the development and resourcing of a number of [AA Pilots](#) in a range of locations and types of hazards which are being closely monitored and evaluated. The term Anticipatory Action and early actions are used by some interchangeably. In this guidance, Anticipatory Actions will be used as per OCHA's model.

<sup>4</sup> In this context capacity refers to “The combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within an organization, community or society to manage and reduce disaster risks and strengthen resilience”. (UNDRR)

<sup>5</sup> The Anticipation Hub contains a significant learning resource related to both AA specifically but also wider climate change / disaster response which could be of significant value to those designing training or capacity building.



		<b>001 Infographic:</b> - <i>Key Definitions for Hazards, Disasters, Vulnerability and Capacity Adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA):</i> Information drawn from a short document using definitions used by UNDRR.
		<b>002 Video or Audio Clip:</b> <i>The Centrality of Protection: What it Means in Practice.</i> <a href="#">The Centrality of Protection: What it Means in Practice</a> . Link to a short video (available in English, Arabic, French and Spanish) discussing the topic and providing practical examples.
		<b>003 Infographic – Sendai Framework Chart:</b> A copy of a chart/graphic which illustrates the Sendai Framework’s targets, priorities, and principles. It is useful to note specific reference to protection in the Sendai Framework’s Guiding Principles.

## 2.2. Climate change and disasters – a protection concern?

Over the past decade an increasing number of people have been affected by natural hazards and related disasters. In 2020 alone, 389 natural disasters were reported to the [Emergency Database \(EM-DAT\)](#) maintained by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED)<sup>6</sup> with a marked increase seen in the overall number of events. Increased frequency and intensity mean that immediate impacts may not only be more severe, but also that there is less opportunity for recovery and a higher probability of negative impacts being compounded and becoming chronic. Impacts are often multiple at both household and national level affecting both service delivery and livelihoods/ food security and health.

Weather-related events have become more frequent and intense over the last few years and seasonal weather cycles more unpredictable. [In their 2021 report the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#) estimated that they were responsible for 98% of all disaster-related displacement in 2020 with intense cyclones, floods, and monsoon rains in parts of Asia and the Pacific, an active Atlantic hurricane season, and extended and heavy rains in parts of the Middle East and Africa. Concurrently, other areas have experienced prolonged dry spells and drought. Rising temperatures increase the risk and intensity of storms, but also increase or shift risk and exposure to other hazards such as disease and fires. Climate change-related sea level rise and increased storm surges have multiple impacts including coastal flooding and erosion, habitat loss and salination.

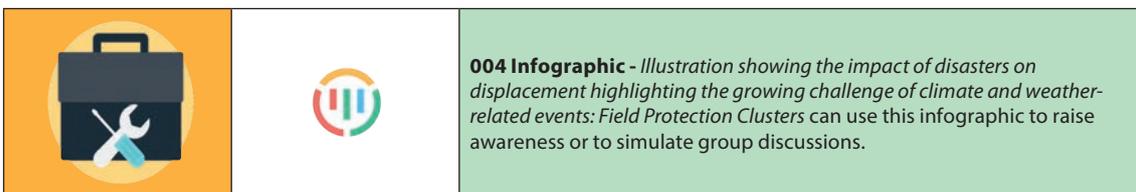
Challenges caused by climate change and disasters are often multi-faceted and complex and resulting protection risks also interconnected and multi-layered. Events often exacerbate and compound existing vulnerabilities at individual, community, and institutional level. For example, in Somalia those forced to move to urban areas due to the impact of drought are often then vulnerable to evictions and in Yemen those displaced by drought and conflict have often settled on land more prone to flooding. Damage to social infrastructure and essential services can also increase vulnerability and give rise to protection challenges. For example, a school severely damaged by a cyclone will not only be unable to provide education to children, but also a protective environment during its normal hours of opening increasing a range of protection risks to children. Displacement due to disasters brings its own risks and challenges, but some of the most vulnerable may also be unable to move due to physical disability, a lack of resources or for other social and political reasons.

<sup>6</sup>Université catholique de Louvain, Brussels, Belgium



The negative effects of conflict/insecurity and disasters are also often interlinked and may exacerbate each other. In areas affected by armed groups, including organized criminal groups, disaster events may provide opportunities to further exploit situations and extend control or influence. In some situations, loss of livelihoods caused by hazards such as drought may drive recruitment into armed groups and exacerbate tensions and conflict over resources within and between communities. Disasters may also lead to some people being more exposed to risks associated with human trafficking<sup>7</sup> and gender-based violence.

In summary, the impacts of climate change and disasters are likely to give rise to new protection risks to people in a variety of locations, to increase risks to those already living in fragile and vulnerable contexts and at the same time degrade the capacity of communities and states to respond. It is therefore important to consider preparedness for climate change and disasters from a protection perspective.



## 3. APPROACHES AND INTERVENTIONS



### 3.1. Importance of a No-Regrets Approach and establishing priorities

**“No-Regrets” Approach:** there is consensus that both humanitarian interventions and those related to disasters, climate change should increasingly be made on a “No-Regrets” basis. Broadly defined, “No-Regrets” actions are those that can be justified whether hazard events they are intended to prevent or mitigate take place or not – but which if carried out increase resilience. “No-Regrets” approaches can be found enshrined within a number of humanitarian strategy and policy documents. For example, the UNHCR Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response (2019) states:

*“(5.6). UNHCR shall not under any circumstances permit that person of concern face avoidable harm or endure undue suffering. Managers will be empowered, supported, and held accountable to take all decisions and actions necessary to ensure that refugees and other persons of concern receive protection and life-saving humanitarian assistance in a timely and effective manner that stems or diminishes harm, suffering and untoward hardship. (5.7). Managers who take decisions and/or act on the basis of “no regrets” should document their reasoning and share it with those to whom they report”.*

<sup>7</sup> See: [An Introductory Guide to Anti Trafficking Action in Internal Displacement Contexts \(GPC 2020\)](#)



A practical example of a “No-Regrets” approach in protection terms could be to undertake contingency planning and the development of partnerships and outline service level agreements with local authorities and agencies for the provision of services for those in areas at high risk of flooding taking into account the needs of potentially vulnerable groups, such as those with disabilities. Even if plans and services are not required, partnerships developed should still help improve the overall protection climate and local capacities in key areas.

**Establishing priorities:** In many humanitarian contexts, including in those caused by disasters and climate change, responding to all that needs to be done can easily become overwhelming. It is therefore important to take practical steps forward. One way of doing this on protection-related concerns would be to follow the approach described below which is focused on taking forward action based on three workstreams/objectives.



**Identify and address the immediate protection risks and needs of the most vulnerable**

*This involves the provision of what will include lifesaving interventions as well as those aimed at preventing or responding to the most serious human rights violations and promote integrity and dignity. Achieving this will require context analysis including risk analysis to be carried out (see Tools 007 & 008).*



**Prevent key protection risks towards the most vulnerable through enhanced preparedness and resilience**

*This might involve working with others on broader context analysis as well as specific protection analysis, the mapping and analysis of specific hazards and risks as well as the development of response plans and community-based structures, training, capacity building on key DRR and protection issues and the development of anticipatory action instruments (see Tool 011). Referral pathways for some services and issues would also be identified and developed.*



**Actions to strengthen the overall protection environment – including policy and legislative frameworks, institutional capacity, and coordination mechanisms**

*Assessment and review of legislative frameworks, partner capacity and coordination structures in terms whether they are likely to be able to respond to disaster events (see Tool 006). Advocacy, training, planning, and community engagement are likely to be key activities.*

The above approach enables urgent priorities to be established and acted upon where necessary whilst at the same time also identifying and taking forward other issues which are of importance in terms of long-term sustainability. It is important to note that work on these issues is likely to require approaches that are multi-sectoral and involve work across clusters as well as on specific protection risks.

		<p><b>005: Sample documents</b> – Objective and priority statements developed by the Protection Cluster in Mozambique as a component of the Protection Cluster National Strategy, 2021.</p>
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## 3.2. Areas of focus

### 3.2.1. Recognise and uphold the primary responsibility of States for protection

Under international humanitarian, human rights, refugee law and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, States have the primary responsibility to protect citizens and individuals living in their territories. This is true in any situations of disasters and on issues related to DRR and climate change adaptation, and not just in conflict. Humanitarian organisations have a role in advocating for and supporting actions that prevent and reduce risks and to ensure respect for the rights of all individuals by duty bearers.

In terms of practical support to protection, different types of assistance are likely to be needed depending on the situation and the context faced. For example, advocacy may be the primary response in situations where there is capacity on the part of authorities, but a deficit in apparent willingness to act whereas if there is apparent willingness to act, but a lack of sufficient technical knowledge then capacity building may be a priority. Responses required from humanitarian organisations will therefore be different in each case, but it is important to recognise and work towards the upholding of the State's primary responsibility to provide protection. Further useful background advice and analysis on legal, policy and institutional approaches may be found in the UNHCR-IOM report [Bridging the Divide in Approaches to Conflict and Disaster Displacement](#).

Substantial work has also been done by UNDRR, the Platform for Disaster Displacement and the Norwegian Refugee Council to produce guidelines that explain how governments might practically implement the Sendai Framework target to reduce the risk of disaster displacement and related human suffering. These are known as the [Words into Action Guidelines on Disaster Displacement: How to Reduce Risk Address Impacts and Strengthen Resilience](#).

In some situations, it may be easier to engage with authorities on issues related to climate change and natural hazards than it would be on issues with a primary conflict and security focus. This may in fact offer opportunities to establish and strengthen dialogue amongst a range of duty bearers, with communities and partners across a range of different technical sectors (e.g., health, education, water and sanitation, and policing that it might otherwise be difficult to bring together).

#### EXAMPLE FROM BEST PRACTICE

The Pacific Islands region is at the forefront of the impacts of climate change, of which increased human mobility and displacement are features. At the same time, working alongside international and local partners, governments and communities in the region have also been amongst the first to develop policies and plans to confront the challenges faced and the protection issues that arise. For example, in 2018 the Fijian Government published "Planned Relocation Guidelines" intended to guide relocations related to climate change. It considers planned relocation as a last resort adaptation option, to be engaged in once all other options available under its National Climate Change Policy have been exhausted. The Guidelines stress the importance of ensuring that all plans are rights-based, transparent and the importance of multi-stakeholder co-operation so that "services are provided, and negative impacts prevented for those who have moved, for those who may host relocated persons and also for those who have decided not to take part in planned relocation".

Source: [Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security: Policy Brief Series \(May 2021\) \(IOM\)](#)



		<p><b>006 Analytical Tool</b> - <i>Assessing Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness</i>: A framework tool that can be used to help determine issues affecting the ability or willingness of duty bearers to carry out protection responsibilities and to help determine strategic responses.</p>
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### 3.2.2. Ensure preparedness measures are based on careful analysis of context

Every situation will always have its own unique characteristics, stakeholders, and impacts, which will need to be identified and understood. Context analysis plays a key role in helping ensure appropriate interventions are undertaken in environments that are complex, rapidly evolving and often insecure. Proper context analysis should enable the socio-cultural, political, economic, and geographic factors involved to be properly understood. Those with specific responsibilities for protection will need to be involved both in supporting efforts to understand and analyse the wider context as well as the identification and analysis of specific protection risks based on these findings. Engagement with local authorities, communities and, in particular, those responsible for DRR will be particularly important.

**Disaster Risk Analysis:** involves the development of a clear understanding of potential risks which may trigger an event requiring an emergency response. Risk analysis usually seeks to identify hazards and rank them by impact and likelihood. [IASC Guidance on Emergency Response Preparedness \(2016\)](#) provides a useful overview of how to determine and rank overall risk by considering the severity of impact related to the likelihood of its occurrence. Information needed to make a proper assessment and sources of data will vary, but indicative requirements and potential data sources that may be considered are summarised in the table below.

Sample information requirements	Potential sources of data
<p><b>Basic demographic data</b> – including available information on population structure, data on health and social status, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local/national government statistical data</li> <li>• Health information systems</li> <li>• Local government planning offices</li> </ul>
<p><b>Information on hazards and historical data</b> on previous events and their impact in terms of geographical areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National disaster management authorities (where these exist)</li> <li>• National Red Cross Societies</li> <li>• Land survey departments /meteorological offices</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>
<p><b>Location and status of key services and infrastructure</b> (including capacity and their ability to withstand hazard): should include key health and social services and potential providers of care and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local government planning offices and departments (e.g. health, education, social services etc.</li> <li>• Red Cross, Local NGO's, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Information on groups likely to face high levels of risk</b> (e.g., people living in poverty, informal settlements, internally displaced people, migrants, minorities, those with reduced mobility).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities and community groups themselves – including potentially affected groups</li> </ul>



**Specific Protection Analysis:** Engagement with wider stakeholders and involvement in assessments will enable protection actors to access information on a range of issues of relevance to understanding the context as well as the responses required. This will enable them to help support protection mainstreaming as a component of preparedness planning and also to identify specific protection risks requiring discrete analysis and intervention. Coordination and cooperation with those responsible for DRR should be an important part of these efforts.

Protection Analysis should always include the identification and assessment of groups or individuals who may require protection in specific contexts. It should help to determine and understand; (a) what will trigger potential protection threats, (b) who is vulnerable and why, (c) current coping mechanisms and the impact of the event on them, (d) commitment and capabilities to respond amongst duty bearers. In the attached toolkit, a checklist of key issues to consider when undertaking a context analysis are highlighted. The GPC has also been working to develop a Protection Analytical Framework (PAF) which provides a structured approach to analysing protection risks. A link to this tool is also provided in the toolkit.

It is important that an assessment of preparedness includes an examination of the legal and policy frameworks to understand if and how displacement in the context of disaster and climate change is addressed. Where an assessment identifies deficits or weaknesses in legal and policy frameworks for protection in the context of disasters and climate change may also include work to address this including advocacy, support for capacity building and technical assistance with drafting or reforming legislation, etc. Further useful advice and material can be found on the GPC webpages related to [Law and Policy on Internal Displacement](#). In the toolkit, a specific legal checklist prepared and used by the IFRC can also be accessed.

Protection is staff intensive and sensitive. A critical issue therefore for preparedness is staffing and partnerships. Context analysis should therefore include and consider mapping of organisational capacity in protection and what is required to scale up as needed. Trade-offs must sometimes be made between having experienced protection staff versus having staff who can communicate directly with affected populations; especially where multiple languages are spoken.

Broader context and specific protection analysis should lead to the identification of appropriate preparedness measures and plans. Examples of these might include regularly updated simple contingency plans for identified hazards or more complex and developed community-based systems linked to early warning with trigger mechanisms that support timely evacuations of people from areas at high risk of exposure to natural hazards. These are likely to have pre-identified vulnerable groups and make provisions for them in terms of protection interventions and contingency budgets for their operationalisation.



## EXAMPLES FROM BEST PRACTICE

In Mindanao, the Philippines, an analysis of protection risks revealed a complex range of challenges encompassing both natural hazards and conflict. An initial protection analysis developed by a Technical Working Group, whose membership was drawn from humanitarian organisations, was presented to stakeholders, including representatives of national and local Government whose inputs were then also incorporated. The ensuing protection strategy included activities aimed at strengthening links between Local Government, State human rights institutions with community-based protection networks and support for the development of legal frameworks and coordination structures related to IDPs and DRR.

Source: [Philippines Mindanao Protection Strategy \(2018-2020\)](#)

In Somalia, an in-depth protection analysis has helped to highlight the multiple protection risks arising out of displacement due to drought and conflict in several locations. These included unlawful evictions and negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage and labour and tensions with host communities as well as problems with access to basic services, exposure to basic hazards and GBV. Informed by this analysis, the HCT has prioritised work to strengthen referral systems, has developed a common position on evictions from temporary settlements and is undertaking work to promote land tenure security and support legal representation for IDPs and marginalized groups. As well as addressing events that have occurred, this will help to ensure responses to potential future risks are identified and responded to rapidly.

Source: [Somalia HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy \(2020-2021\)](#)

		<b>007: Checklist</b> – <i>Key Issues to consider when undertaking a context analysis as part of preparedness</i> – a summary of questions and issues to explore when planning a context analysis in relation to climate change and disasters.
		<b>008 Analytical Tool</b> – <a href="#">Link to Protection Analytical Framework</a> The PAF helps anyone undertaking protection analysis to answer the following questions (a) How should data and information be organised and structured to support in-depth and integrated analysis? (b) What information is needed to undertake a protection analysis?
		<b>009: Checklist on Law</b> – <a href="#">Link to Checklist on Law and Disaster Preparedness and Response</a> : Copy of IFRC checklist and guide
		<b>010 Groupwork</b> – Short scenarios with associated questions designed to stimulate group discussion on practical implications of context analysis for protection preparedness and operational response.

### 3.2.3. Ensure protection issues related to age, gender and diversity are properly addressed

It is important that issues related to age, gender, and diversity are properly and carefully considered when making an analysis of protection risks and required responses. Considering differences helps to provide an understanding of specific protection risks, but also capacities that exist within communities which before, during or after a disaster may also help to identify and inform potential responses.

- **Age:** This should include consideration of the specific needs of children, youth, and older people. All of these groups are likely to have specific protection needs but are also likely to bring important perspectives and capacities in terms of preparedness and response. Children are likely to face increased risks and vulnerabilities requiring specific intervention. (see below)
- **Gender:** Gender refers to the socially constructed roles for women and men and boys and girls. These are often key to the way in which people define themselves and are defined by others and their society. Gender roles are learned, changeable over time, and variable within and between cultures and they often determine access to and control over resources and roles in decision making, creating both opportunities and constraints. Hazards and disasters may exacerbate challenges and risks related to gender roles and access to resources and services, but can also result in changes which can create new dynamics moving forward, for example the greater participation of women and girls in planning or decision making structures. Gender-Based Violence is a particular concern and protection challenge during and after disasters.
- **Disability:** Disability results from the interaction between a person's impairment (such as visual, hearing, speech, physical, intellectual), the barriers which exist in our environment (such as absence of laws, lack of physical and communications accessibility and negative attitudes) as well as other intersecting personal factors such as gender, age, race, ethnicity etc.). Persons with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by different crises such as those arising from natural hazards. For instance, persons with disabilities are more likely to have difficulty obtaining information about evacuation plans and are more likely to experience injuries and death while trying to evacuate from an affected area. They are also more likely to have their income negatively impacted by climate change-related crises. Therefore, targeted actions should be taken to ensure that persons with disabilities are not being left behind in efforts to prevent and mitigate the effects of climate change or plan responses.
- **Diversity:** According to the UNHCR 2018 [Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity \(Annex 1\)](#) diversity refers to different attitudes, values, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, health, social and economic status, skills, and other specific personal characteristics. Difference within communities can often be a source of strength and resilience. However, depending on the context they may also give rise to specific vulnerabilities and protection risks which need to also be recognised and addressed within preparedness and response plans and prevention and recovery activities.

Some specific issues are considered below but further information and ideas are also contained within the checklist on context analysis and the Protection Analytical Framework (see Tools 007 and 008).





**Referral Pathways and Mechanisms:** Developing mechanisms to refer those with needs or services is an important part of ensuring an effective response. Effective referral pathways and processes should include documented procedures for safely and effectively linking people in need with appropriate services. Inter-agency referral mechanisms and pathways should be established, and awareness raised about how to use them ahead of time as part of preparedness efforts once key hazards and protection risks have been identified. It is important to consider the extent to which services providers may themselves be impacted by hazards, and their resilience and ability to continue providing services. As part of Do No Harm approaches issues related to confidentiality, informed consent, data protection must also be considered. Referral pathways and processes required will depend on the situation, but are likely to need to be in place for; child protection, sexual and gender-based violence, family separation, disability support, access to justice/legal support and access to specialised health care. Pathways and mechanisms need to be revisited, assessed, and updated regularly as they will change, including as a result of the impact of hazards if they occur.



**Child Protection:** Children are amongst those groups who will require special consideration and protection in response to disasters. Those who find themselves without parental protection are likely to be particularly vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and trafficking as the disruption caused by an event that creates opportunities for exploitation and abuse. Displacement, loss of services, greater exposure to disease and illness and economic hardship can trigger a range of additional and secondary risks. However, it is also important to recognise that children themselves can be important sources of information on hazards and potential protection risks as well as providing important and unique perspectives on risks and potential solutions. They can play an important role in DRR efforts through their involvement in community activities and action. The Child Protection Area of Responsibility has available a collection of information and tools which can be accessed directly [via this link](#) or through the GPC website.



**Gender-Based Violence:** The term GBV describes any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females. GBV can affect men and boys and women and girls, but has a greater impact on women and girls. GBV can include differential access to food and services, sexual exploitation and abuse, deprivation of inheritance and property rights, sexual violence, and intimate partner violence. GBV has become particularly associated with conflict situations, but it is important to note that in any emergency resulting in a breakdown in services, systems or structures increases the risk of its occurrence and this can be made greater if responses do not consider gender specific vulnerabilities as well as capacities. Ensuring women and girls' full participation in planning and programming and engaging with men and young people is fundamental to promoting protection from GBV. The GBV Area of Responsibility has a range of advice and tools available which can be directly accessed via [this link](#) or through the GPC website and further IASC/GPC Guidance on Integrating Gender-Based Violence interventions in Humanitarian Action are available [here](#).



**Disability Inclusion:** Disability Inclusion is achieved when persons with disabilities meaningfully participate in all their diversity, when their rights are promoted, and when disability-related concerns are addressed in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is related to the concept of 'social inclusion', which has been defined as "the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities – that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life." Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as enable citizen's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives."



### 3.2.4. Ensure mechanisms for Accountability to Affected Populations are in place

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is more than just “consulting beneficiaries” during assessments or in required feedback processes. It should involve processes that respond to priorities identified by people themselves and their involvement in both the design and delivery of protection solutions and helping them to claim their rights and find their own solutions. In the [Framework for Accountability to Affected Persons](#) the IASC suggests that this needs to include three core components.

- **Taking account:** providing communities with meaningful influence over decision making that is inclusive, non-discriminatory and accounts for diversity of communities.
- **Giving account:** is about sharing information in an effective and transparent way across communities including about roles and responsibilities and how to raise complaints or provide feedback.
- **Being held to account:** ensuring communities have the opportunity to assess and, where feasible, alter or sanction humanitarian actors’ actions. It has been proposed that a culture of accountability should be created by upholding five commitments related to leadership and governance, transparency, feedback and complaints, participation, and design, monitoring and evaluation.

These components also have corresponding commitments related to: leadership and governance, transparency, feedback and complaints mechanisms, participation in decision making and involvement in design and monitoring and evaluation (M & E). Taking forward the components and the commitments is challenging, but important in terms of ensuring protection risks are prevented or mitigated.

Ensuring all this takes place is a collective responsibility and certainly not just the work of the protection cluster. However, the protection cluster has an important role to play in helping to support and promote the components highlighted above. An important aspect of this, which protection personnel can promote and uphold is the development of processes and mechanisms to ensure that representatives (individuals or organisations) from historically under-represented groups such as women, persons with disabilities, youth, older persons, minorities are consulted and included.

		<b>011 Infographic</b> – AAP Commitments and practical responses: AAP IASC commitments highlighted in detail alongside ideas on what this might mean in terms of practical protection responses in the context of disasters.
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### EXAMPLES FROM BEST PRACTICE

In Mozambique, the 2021 Protection Cluster Strategy made firm commitments to integrate AAP response strategies into work plans. These included a range of measure related to gender equality programming, prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation, social protection and strengthened protection monitoring tools. Partner feedback mechanisms are being further developed to include regular consultations with women and girls and their participation in decision making processes.

Source: [Mozambique Protection Cluster National Strategy \(2021\)](#)



### 3.2.5. Support processes to assess Do No Harm within planning and response

The principle of Do No Harm is widely used in both humanitarian and development programming and can be especially useful when thinking about protection risks. With its origins in medical ethics, Do No Harm analysis requires that individuals and organisations to consider and strive to minimise the harm they may inadvertently cause through interventions.

Although in humanitarian contexts it has primarily been used in situations where conflict and insecurity are key challenges, Do No Harm analysis can be used more widely to consider the impacts of interventions on communities and their relationships with each other and duty bearers and is therefore also applicable in prevention, preparedness and response to other types of disasters including those related to climate change or other hazards. Whilst some issues may seem straightforward others may be more complex requiring careful analysis when thinking about how to prevent or respond to protection risks and protection mainstreaming within broader responses.

#### EXAMPLES FROM BEST PRACTICE

In Northeast Nigeria plans were developed in advance of the rainy season to identify and prepare for protection risks. As well as considering the direct challenges related to the hazard itself, potential protection risks associated with interventions were also proactively considered. For example, potential challenges related to safety in temporary shelters were identified and the guidance stressed the importance of putting in place measures to avoid and manage these risks. These included monitoring and information gathering, inclusion of community representatives in shelter management and design, secure access to sanitary facilities and food distribution points etc. for vulnerable groups.

Source: [Operational Guidance for the Rainy Season \(June 2020\)](#)

		<b>0012 Video</b> – <i>Do No Harm explained</i> : Basic explanation about the importance of considering Do No Harm <a href="#">in this short video clip</a> .
		<b>013 Analytical Tool</b> – <i>Do No Harm Analysis Guide</i> : A simple step by step guide to how to conduct a basic Do No Harm analysis - focused on protection issues.
		<b>014 Groupwork</b> – <i>Critical Incident Analysis</i> : Group members are asked to identify examples from their own experience when Do No Harm related incidents occurred.

### 3.2.6. Work across the Humanitarian-Peace Development Nexus

In recognition of the growing complexity and scale of humanitarian crises, conflict, climate change and other challenges it is recognised that there is a need for more effective collaboration and action. The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus is a way of describing this process both in policy and operational terms and as a concept it is described in some detail in a IASC /UN Working Group on Transitions [Background Paper on the HDP-N in 2016](#).

The HDP-N emphasises a whole of system approach across humanitarian, development and peace interventions and stakeholders. In protection terms, the HDP-N can be a valuable way of highlighting the importance of both short and longer term needs and responses and the importance of building connections and short-term and long-term capacity in terms of referral pathways and service delivery systems and of strengthening the broader protection environment and addressing root causes. When considering continuity of support and services, where needed, after the end of humanitarian operations it is also important as a mechanism for enhancing the prospects for durable solutions.

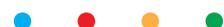
#### EXAMPLES FROM BEST PRACTICE

In February 2018, Cyclone Gita caused widespread destruction throughout the Island of Tonga destroying over 5,000 houses and directly affecting 80% of the population. Groups already considered vulnerable, such as the elderly and persons with disabilities were amongst those who were most severely impacted and at risk by the cyclone. On this occasion the government decided to use existing social protection mechanisms as part of its emergency response allowing the targeting of the elderly and disabled people rapidly with cash pay-outs via existing disability and social welfare mechanisms. This also allowed longer-term follow-up and continuity of care for those requiring it.

Source: [Disaster-responsive social protection in the Pacific Small Island Developing States. UNESCAP \(2020\)](#)

In the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Oxfam established a community-based approach that drew on Community Protection Committees, made up of six men and six women elected by their communities to ensure accountability and credibility. A “women’s forum” was also established to focus on protection issues that particularly affect women. In addition, “change agents” are elected from further remote villages or locations to expand the geographical impact of the CPC’s work. By establishing local ownership and engagement communities were more empowered to engage with and on issues related both to immediate needs and concerns, but also longer-term structural issues related to human rights, governance and development.

Source: Mindshift: [A Collection of Examples that Promote Protection Outcomes \(Interaction\)](#)





**Global Protection Cluster**