Project/programme planning
Guidance manual

International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

strategy2020

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Strategy 2020 voices the collective determination of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade. Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified, and peaceful world.

Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

1. **Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises**

2. **Enable healthy and safe living**

3. **Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace**

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Introduction

The aim of this guidance manual is to introduce the user to project/programme planning in a Red Cross Red Crescent environment. It describes the different stages of the planning phase of the "project/programme cycle" within the context of Results-Based Management (RBM). It also gives an overview of the various components of RBM and explains how to integrate and apply this approach in practice. In addition, the manual summarizes briefly the other key phases of the cycle (assessment, implementation and monitoring, evaluation) and provides references to the key Federation manuals on these phases.

The manual has been developed primarily for use by people managing projects and programmes either in a National Society or the secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation). Although it is mainly designed for use at the country level, the basic principles can be applied to project and programme planning at any level. The manual draws on two International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement publications – the International Federation's Project Planning Process (2002) and the ICRC Economic Security Unit's *Programme/ Project Management: The Results-Based Approach* (2008) – reflecting the significant similarity of approach. The International Federation has developed the manual internally to suit the particular needs and uses of project/programme management within the organization.

The explanations in this manual are intended only as a guide, which should be applied with common sense according to the particularities of the context concerned. The manual will be revised periodically to take account of learning gained from use in the field. Feedback or questions can be sent to secretariat@ifrc.org or P.O. Box 372, CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland for the attention of the performance and accountability department.

Part 1/
APPROACHES TO PROJECT/ PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

1. Focus on people
An ethical responsibility

The International Federation exists to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. Those who are vulnerable do not choose to be affected by risks, disasters or other threats to their well-being. Communities affected by such threats may at times require assistance from external organizations to supplement their own coping mechanisms. However, there is often an uneven power balance between humanitarian agencies and the people they seek to help. This, combined with relatively little regulation in humanitarian practice, has the potential to lead to a limited amount of choice exercised by those affected by risks or disasters in regard to the assistance they receive.

Therefore, the ethical responsibility to address people's real needs effectively and with equity and dignity, through their participation, should be a key starting point in the design of humanitarian interventions. One way in which humanitarian organizations, including the Red Cross Red Crescent, can fulfil this ethical responsibility is through the adoption of a "results-based" approach to the management of their work.

2. Results-Based Management

"Results-Based Management" (RBM) refers to an overall approach to managing projects and programmes that focuses on defining measurable results and the methodologies and tools to achieve those results. RBM supports better performance and greater accountability by applying a clear logic: plan, manage and measure an intervention with a focus on the results you want to achieve.

"Results" are the intended or unintended effects of an intervention, and they can be positive or negative, depending on multiple factors. In RBM, *intended positive* results are used as the basis of planning, while an effort is made to anticipate any potential negative results so that they can best be avoided or minimized.

The *intended* results of an intervention are often referred to as "objectives". Results and objectives can be classified according to their level of importance, with the lower-level objectives defining the changes that need to occur in order for the higher-level objectives to be achieved.

By setting out in advance the intended results of an intervention and ways in which to measure whether they are achieved or not, we can see more clearly whether a difference has genuinely been made for the people concerned.

The different levels of results and objectives, how they are defined and how they fit into the "logical framework" are explained in detail in Section 5, p. 27.

The Fundamental Principles

The main way in which the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement takes ethical issues into account is by ensuring that the seven Fundamental Principles are taken into consideration at all stages of the intervention.

The fundamental principles are: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality (see inside back cover for the full text of each Principle).

The RBM approach to project/programme management provides a clear and practical framework to help ensure that these guiding principles are incorporated into the design of an intervention.

> 2.1 The project/programme cycle

There is a range of models that can be used to implement a results-based approach. The model described and recommended in this manual is based on the "project/programme cycle", which depicts the management of an intervention through a sequence of inter-related phases (see Figure 1).[1] These phases help define and think through the design and management of an intervention. The phases are broadly progressive, with each one leading into the next. However, the phases are also interrelated and may at times overlap.

The type, duration and importance of activities related to each phase will vary depending on the context. For example, if the initial assessment was very brief, there may be a need to obtain supplementary information during the planning phase. Similarly, information gathered during implementation and monitoring will be relevant for a later evaluation or a possible second instance of assessment, if the intervention continues beyond one cycle.

For the purposes of this manual, the different phases of the project/programme cycle are defined as follows:[2]

Initial assessment: This phase is a process to understand the current situation and find out whether or not an intervention is required. This is done by identifying the key factors influencing the situation, including problems and their causes, as well as the needs, interests, capacities and constraints of the different stakeholders. When an intervention is required, an assessment can include an initial analysis and proposal of the type of intervention that could be carried out.[3]

Planning: The planning phase is the main topic of this manual and is explained in detail in Part III (pp. 15–50). It is a process to define an intervention's intended results (objectives), the inputs and activities needed to accomplish them, the indicators to measure their achievement, and the key assumptions that can affect the achievement of the intended results (objectives). Planning takes into consideration the needs, interests, resources, mandates and capacities of the implementing organization and various stakeholders. At the end of the planning phase, a project plan is produced and ready to implement.

1. *Although there are differences between projects and programmes (see p. 13 for definitions), the basic principles for good management outlined here are the same for both. Therefore, "project" and "project/programme" are at times used interchangeably in this manual.*

2. *These phases are referred to by other terms and formulated differently by different organizations, but the broad logic is the same.*

3. *For more information on assessment, refer to the International Federation's Guidelines for Assessment in Emergencies, 2008, and Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA), 2006, both available at http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/resources/publications.asp.*
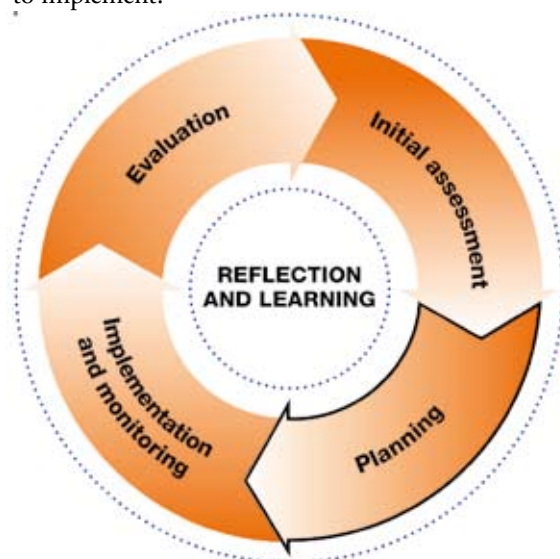

FIGURE 1

The project/programme cycle

Implementation and monitoring: During implementation, activities are carried out to achieve the intended results (objectives). Implementation is specific to each particular area of intervention, be it water and sanitation, first aid, organizational development, emergency response or humanitarian advocacy. Detailed guidance on implementation can therefore be found in manuals dedicated to the area of intervention concerned. **"Monitoring"** is defined in this manual as "the routine collection and analysis of information in order to track progress, check compliance and make informed decisions for project/programme management". Monitoring systems should be established during the planning phase to allow collection of information on the progress made in achieving the objectives during implementation. The resulting progress reports inform decisions on whether or not an intervention needs to be changed or adapted as the situation evolves.

Evaluation: The "evaluation" phase is defined as "an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors."[4]

As with monitoring, it is critical that reliable indicators are identified during the planning phase for the purposes of evaluation at various stages of the project/programme. Evaluation in turn informs the new planning process, whether it is for the continuation of the same intervention, for the implementation of a new intervention or for ending the intervention.

> 2.2 Tools and techniques

For an intervention to be successful, it is important that each phase of the cycle includes the involvement of the people the intervention seeks to help. It is also important to ensure the relevant participation of all those involved in different aspects of the planning and implementation of the intervention, as well as of decision-makers in governance and management and of stakeholders in other organizations or neighbouring communities.

During each phase of the project/programme cycle, various tools and techniques that encourage analysis and reflection are used to support well-informed and participatory decision-making at every stage. Part III of this manual describes the planning phase of the project/programme cycle, outlining some of the analytical tools and techniques commonly used in developing an intervention. These include analysis of stakeholders, problems and their causes, objectives, and alternative options for intervention. The methods described can help project managers identify the factors that may affect the success of an intervention. However, it is important to remember that the usefulness of these methods will depend on how well they are adapted to each specific situation.

In this manual, certain tools are recommended, some with specific step-by-step instructions. These are provided in particular for those new to project/programme design and who require detailed guidance. In every case, the methods and steps are intended only as a guide, which can and should be adapted as necessary for different situations.

4. *This definition is from the International Federation's Evaluation Policy, adopted from the OECD/DAC (Development Assistance Committee), Working Party on Aid Evaluation, Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, 2002.*

2.2.1 Limitations

The practice of RBM may be limited if the tools are not used as intended. The logical framework (logframe) matrix is often used in the planning phase (see Section 5.2, p. 27). The logframe is probably the planning tool that is best known and most used by humanitarian and development agencies and donors. As a result, it can often be created in a mechanical or bureaucratic way rather than as a practical, logical and flexible tool to define the key elements of a potential intervention.

To counter this problem, it is important to focus as much on the "analysis stage" (Section 4, pp. 15–26) as the "design stage" (Section 5, pp. 27–42) and ensure meaningful participation in both stages. Moreover, logframes should be adapted to the changing situation when necessary and not be allowed to trap a project/programme into a fixed way of working that has ceased to be relevant.

Lastly, it is useful to remember that the project/programme cycle methodology is primarily designed for an intervention that has the following characteristics:[5]

> It is a mechanism to solve a specifically defined problem.
> It has a specified timeframe, completion date and performance parameters.
> It takes advantage of existing opportunities in the context and of local capacities.
> It has a fixed amount of resources.
> It benefits a specific group.
> It is carried out by a team with a team leader.

The core logic of RBM is useful in many models of working but may often need to be applied differently for ongoing, non-project "service-delivery" models, such as running a blood donor clinic or providing long-term primary health care.

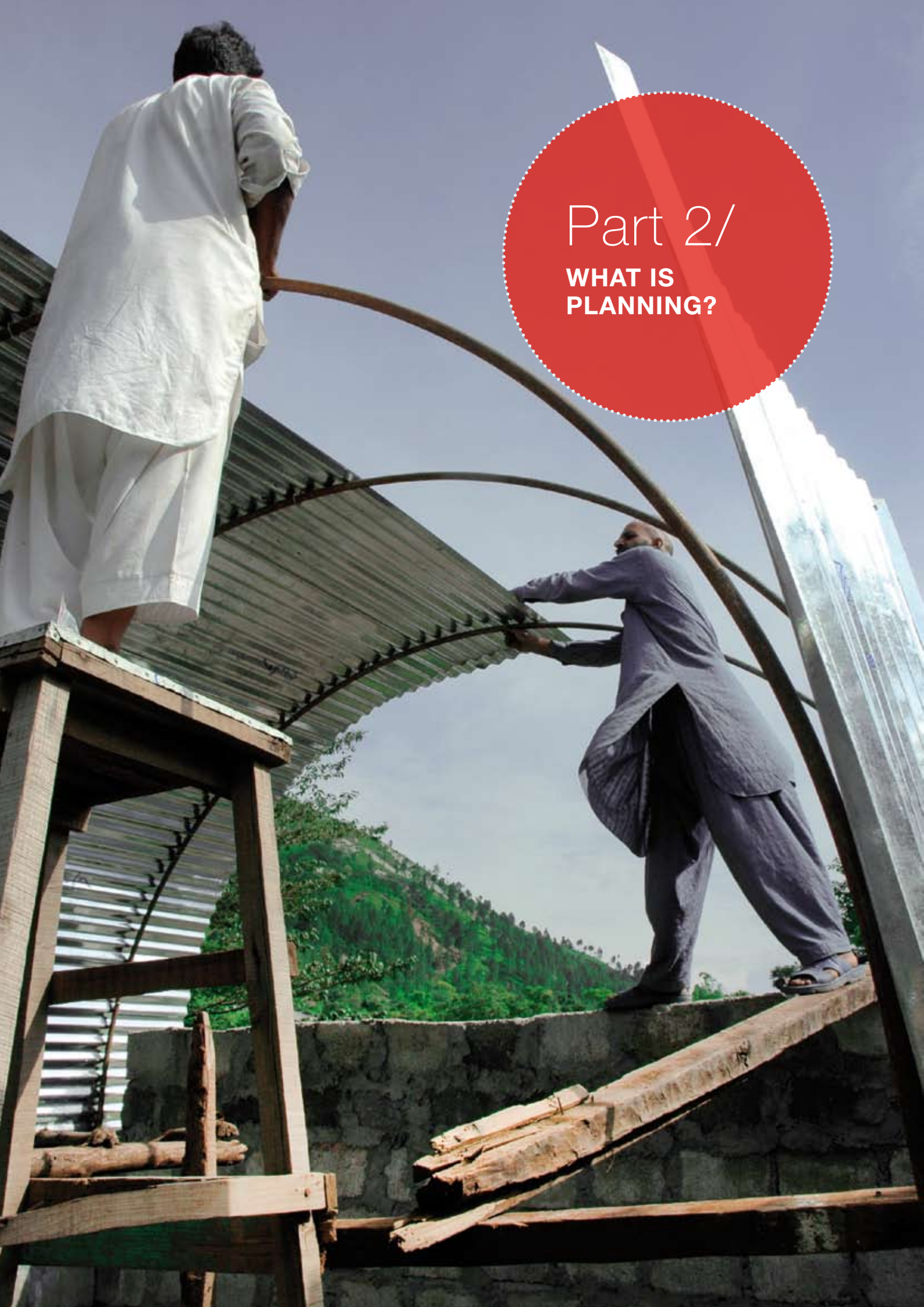| **Key message** |
|---|
| The project/programme cycle model provides an appropriate set of methods, tools and principles to put the "results-based management" approach into practice in humanitarian and other interventions. |

Part 2/
WHAT IS PLANNING?

Introduction

Planning consists of determining solutions to an unsatisfactory situation by identifying the results that will best address identified problems and needs, and the actions and resources required to achieve those results. It is the foundation of good performance management and accountability.

Planning can also be seen as a process of choosing from the different courses of action available and of prioritizing the steps to take in order to change a particular situation for the better. Usually, time and resources (material, financial, human) are limited. These two limitations have a direct consequence on an organization's ability to improve or resolve a problematic situation. This is why planning is so crucial, especially in small organizations with limited capacity.

Frequently, planning is considered a difficult exercise, complicated and inaccessible – a matter reserved for specialized technicians with specific qualifications. But, in reality, we plan all the time in our daily lives: who has never had to move house or organize a party or a trip? In these and many other aspects of our lives, we have to plan what we want to do and with whom, which steps to follow and what we need to get things done.

3. Levels of planning

Although almost anything can be planned, the ways in which we make plans and implement them are not always the same. Different levels of planning have to be established according to the aims of the planning process.

In the International Federation, a distinction is made between "strategic" and "operational" planning. Both are integral parts of the overall process of setting priorities and targets for the organization.

> 3.1 Strategic planning

Strategic planning is the process of deciding where an organization wants to get to and why, then choosing from the different courses of action available to ensure the best chance of getting there. It helps an organization to define a clear way forward in response to emerging opportunities and challenges, while maintaining coherence and long-term sustainability. It usually covers the long term (roughly a minimum of three or four years, up to ten years). It guides the overall direction of an organization by defining its vision and mission and the goals or strategic objectives necessary to achieve them.

The strategic objectives should be linked to prioritized sectors of intervention based on the capacities of the organization and other stakeholders and should include a time-frame and outline evaluation mechanisms. Strategic planning also includes choosing and designing a framework which sets out the best courses of action to achieve the stated objectives.

A "strategic plan" is the document resulting from this process. One of the key functions of the strategic plan is to guide and influence the development of more detailed planning at the operational level. Therefore, a strategic plan is a key reference for project/programme managers when designing, implementing and evaluating a Red Cross Red Crescent intervention.

> 3.2 Operational planning

Operational planning is the process of determining how the objectives spelt out in the strategic plan will be achieved "on the ground". This is done by working through a series of steps (outlined in Part III), identifying or refining more detailed objectives at each level, linked to the objectives in the strategic plan. These objectives can then be grouped and organized into "plans", "programmes" and "projects". Operational planning usually covers the short term (between several months and three years).

In order to translate strategic objectives into practical results, the required actions need to be planned (in a work plan), along with their costs (in a budget), how the work will be funded (in a resource mobilization plan) and who will carry out the work (see Section 6, Towards implementation, p. 42).

FIGURE 2

The relationship between strategic and operational planning in the International Federation

The relationship between strategic and operational planning is also a cyclical process, with the experience from operational planning being used to inform strategic planning, and strategic planning then informing the general direction of operational planning. Operational plans are often made up of several "programmes", which are in turn made up of several "projects". Projects and programmes consist of several activities, which are the smallest elements for which we plan.

> **Experience from operations influence strategy development**
>
> **Strategic**
> High level Federation-wide strategic (Strategy 2010 / 2020)
> National Society strategic plans, Secretariat strategic plans
> *(e.g. for a geographical area or technical sector)*
>
> **The broad direction in strategic planning guides operational planning**
>
> **Operational**
> Operational (1-3 year) plan
> *(e.g. for geographical area [country, zone] or technical sector)*
>
> **Experience learned at the project level influences programme development**
>
> **Programmes** *(groups together several project plans)* | Disaster management programme | Health programme | Organizational development programme
>
> **Broad programme directions guide project development**
>
> **Projects** *(includes objectives, activity plan, budget)* | Preparedness | Response | Recovery | HIV/AIDS | First Aid | TB treatment | Leadership training | Legal base strengthening

> 3.3 Defining "projects" and "programmes"

What constitutes a "programme" and what constitutes a "project" depends to a large extent on the context. An intervention that is seen as a "programme" in one context, such as a National Society's HIV/AIDS programme, may be considered a "project" in another context, for example when a health programme incorporates an HIV/AIDS project, a TB project and a first-aid training project.

To avoid confusion, it is important to describe a project or a programme in the same way consistently within one context and to maintain a logical hierarchy of plans, programmes and projects. Guiding definitions are given below:

Plan

Definition

A plan (e.g. for a geographical area or for a technical area) is the highest level of operational planning. It groups several programmes (and their respective projects, activities, etc.) with a view to achieving part of an organization's strategic objectives.

Example

Examples include the annual or two-year plans of National Societies or International Federation delegations. These plans represent the overall operation to be implemented through various programmes.

Programme

Definition

A programme is a set of coordinated projects implemented to meet specific objectives within defined time, cost and performance parameters. Programmes aimed at achieving a common goal are grouped under a common entity (country plan, operation, alliance, etc.).

Example

Examples include a health and care programme consisting of an immunization project and a community-based first-aid project or a disaster management programme consisting of a community-based capacity building project, a school-based awareness-raising project and a project to develop a National Society's disaster management functions.

Project [6]

Definition

A project is a set of coordinated activities implemented to meet specific objectives within defined time, cost and performance parameters. Projects aimed at achieving a common goal form a programme.

Example

An example would be a community-based first aid project to expand the reach of first aid in a region or a disaster risk reduction project to increase awareness of disaster preparedness and response measures. These projects would consist of various activities, like those described below.

Activity

Definition

An activity is a combination of several tasks, all of which target the same objective. Activities are the lowest level of actions that need to be planned.

Tasks are the simplest actions that make up activities.

Example

Examples of activities include organizing a community meeting (scheduling the time, finding a location), developing communication materials, training volunteers in certain techniques, or organizing the distribution of relief supplies.

Examples of tasks include writing a letter, checking a warehouse inventory or ordering stock.

As described in the "results chain" (see Section 5.1, p. 27), the activities to be undertaken in an intervention are organized according to the different levels of intended results an intervention sets out to achieve (outputs, outcomes and goal) within that intervention.

6. *Also called "programme component" in International Federation secretariat annual planning*

Part 3/

**THE PLANNING
PHASE IN THE
PROJECT/
PROGRAMME
CYCLE**

Introduction

As mentioned earlier, the aim of the planning phase is to define an intervention's intended results (objectives), the inputs and activities needed to accomplish them, the indicators to measure their achievement, and the key assumptions that can affect the achievement of the results (objectives). Planning takes into consideration the needs, interests, resources, mandates and capacities of the implementing organization and various stakeholders. At the end of the planning phase, a project plan is produced and ready to implement.

The planning phase can be divided into several stages and steps, in a number of different ways. For the purposes of this manual, the phase is organized as follows:

Analysis stage

> **Situation and problem analysis** – This involves identifying the main strengths, interests, needs, constraints and opportunities of the implementing team and of key stakeholders and identifying the problems that need to be solved and their causes and consequences.
> **Development of objectives** – This involves developing objectives based on the identified problems and verifying the cause-effect relationships.
> **Selection of objectives** – This involves identifying the different options available to achieve the main objective and determining which one the implementing team or agency is best suited to tackle.

Design stage

> **Logical framework (logframe) matrix** – This involves refining the intervention's objectives, identifying the assumptions, indicators and means of measuring them, and developing a summary of activities.
> **Activity scheduling** – This involves determining the sequence of activities, estimating their duration, setting milestones and assigning responsibilities.
> **Resource planning** – This involves determining the inputs needed and budget on the basis of the activity schedule.
> **Developing a monitoring system** for the intervention.

4. Analysis stage

> 4.1 Situation and problem analysis

The aim of the first steps in the analysis stage is to understand in more detail the information gathered during the assessment phase. It is often a transitional step between initial assessment and design, but exactly what steps are necessary will depend on how the initial assessment was carried out.

The conclusions and recommendations of the assessment should be used as the basis for a more detailed analysis of the problems to be tackled. If the information collected appears to be inaccurate, incomplete or biased, it may be necessary to redo some of the assessment steps, using the relevant methodology and tools.[7]

7. *See International Federation,* Guidelines for assessment in emergencies, *2008, and* Vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA)*, 2006, available at http://www. ifrc.org/what/disasters/ resources/publications.asp.*

It is therefore useful for the people who carried out the initial assessment to participate in this stage of the planning phase. As a general rule, if the assessment team has already completed some of the steps outlined here (e.g. stakeholder analysis or problem analysis) and there is a consensus on the conclusions and recommendations between all those involved in the assessment and the planning of the intervention, these steps do not need to be repeated or supplemented.

4.1.1 Tools for analysis

Situation analysis requires tools to summarize, compare, prioritize and organize data. Many different tools can be used – those provided here are examples only and are not necessarily the best tools to use in every situation.

Minimum criteria for situation analysis
Whatever tool is used for situation analysis, it should, as a minimum: > **foster participation, including of the people the intervention aims to help**, the whole planning team and other National Society staff and volunteers concerned > **allow the team to take decisions** on how to intervene > **include self-assessment**, to identify the implementing agency's or team's own capacity to intervene	> **allow room for creativity**, to plan the changes needed to improve the situation > gather both **qualitative and quantitative data**, as well as **objective and subjective information** **Note:** In the cases where National Society interventions are being implemented in partnership with the International Federation, with the ICRC or with a sister National Society, it is important that the analysis is carried out by the host National Society, with the full participation of its partners.

A tool is only useful if used at the right time and in the right way. The same tool can also be used at different times.

This manual proposes three tools to analyse the situation in which a team intends to intervene:

1. **Stakeholder analysis** – to assess the problems, interests and potential of different groups in relation to the conclusions of the assessment
2. **SWOT analysis** – a tool with a wide range of uses, including, as suggested here, to assess the capacity of the implementing agency or team
3. **Problem tree analysis** – to get an idea of the main problems and their causes, focusing on cause-effect relationships

The above tools can be supplemented or replaced by other tools, as long as the minimum criteria are met.

4.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

A "stakeholder" in this context is a person or group of people who have an interest in the intervention that is being planned. "Stakeholder analysis" is a technique used to identify and assess the interests of the people, groups or institutions that the intervention seeks to help and of others who may significantly influence the intervention's success. The overall aim of stakeholder analysis is to ensure that the intervention takes place in the best possible conditions, by aligning it realistically with the needs and capacities of the stakeholders.

One way to conduct this analysis is by drawing up a comparative table. First, the stakeholders must be identified. In the example given in Figure 2, the stakeholders are categorized as follows:

a) **Institutions** that will potentially be involved in the intervention: the implementing National Society, sister National Societies, United Nations agencies, government ministries, the Federation delegation, etc.

b) **Target groups**, for example vulnerable groups or potential beneficiaries, such as "mothers with young children", "youth population under 30 years old" or, for a capacity-building project, "the National Society's youth members", etc.

c) **Others**, for example various associations, local groups, schools, local NGOs, community leaders, the media, etc.

Second, the problems, interests, needs, potential, interaction and other relevant factors are identified and analysed for each stakeholder. The factors to be considered for each stakeholder may vary from context to context, but some key factors would normally include:

a) **Problems:** What are the key problems identified in the assessment and affecting the stakeholder in question? (e.g. poor health care/education, poor crop yield, high unemployment, etc.)

b) **Interests:** What motivates the stakeholder group? (e.g. music and dance, sport, technology, recognition, etc.)

c) **Potential:** How can the stakeholder group contribute to resolving the issues identified? (e.g. high level of commitment in areas of interest, voluntarism, idealism, free time, knowledge of the environment, etc.)

d) **Interaction:** How can the implementing team relate to this group? Which channels of communication can be used? (e.g. youth associations, community centres, Red Cross Red Crescent members or trainers, school, families, etc.)

e) **Others' actions:** Is any other association, organization, group, etc. already implementing a project or action that targets the selected group? If so, identify them and their actions to avoid any overlap, as well as to establish the basis for a possible collaboration and to save effort and resources.

f) **Red Cross Red Crescent actions:** Is there any previous or current Red Cross Red Crescent project/programme or service targeting this group? If so, the team should discuss with those implementing the project/programme to see if it is sufficient as it is or if it needs to be reinforced, improved or replaced.

Ideally, the whole exercise would be carried out in a participatory session with representatives of potential stakeholder groups, including potential beneficiaries, Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers, and government officials. The effective use of participatory planning methods and group facilitation tools can help ensure that the views and perspectives of different stakeholder groups are adequately represented and understood.

The example in Figure 3 is based on assessment information from a disaster-prone community in the (fictional) country "Xland", in the "Eastern District". The aim of the analysis is to find out more about the roles of the various stakeholders in relation

FIGURE 3 **Stakeholder analysis (comparative table)**

| | Institutions | | Target groups | Others | |
| | **Women's groups, local authorities** | | **Community leaders, women's groups, schoolchildren, other people in the community** | **National Society volunteers** | |
	Community leaders	**Women's groups**	**Schoolchildren**	**National Society volunteers**	**Local authorities**
Problems	Have some responsibility to ensure the safety of the community	Do not have enough information to prepare for disaster	Vulnerable to disaster and health risks	Need better links with community to reduce disaster risk	Have to ensure the safety of the community
Interests	Want to ensure safer community	Want to get a better understanding of disaster risk	Want to be better protected from risk	Want to be able to work well with the community	Want to demonstrate improvements in community safety
Potential	Knowledge of the local situation and power relations	In-depth knowledge of the community (weather and harvest patterns)	Keen to learn and pass on messages	Committed and skilled facilitators and community motivators	Cooperation and support greatly facilitate project
Interaction	Through monthly local committee meetings	Through monthly women's group meetings	Arrange school visits through teachers who are linked to the National Society	Through National Society branch structures	Through National Society branch structures
Others' action	Also work with the INGO "Disaster Relief Action" and several local church groups	Some groups have relations with church groups	Many children attend church group activities	Good relations between other NGOs and church groups	Generally good relations
Red Cross Red Crescent action	The National Society (Xland Red Cross) has been working for many years across the country with community leaders / Currently no active work on disaster management	Xland Red Cross has agreements in place with all main groups / Zland Red Cross (partner National Society) supporting mothers' clubs	No ongoing projects, good relations with all Red Cross Red Crescent actors	Good regular relations with the ICRC and the International Federation through Xland Red Cross	ICRC and Xland Red Cross have carried out a dissemination campaign recently

to disaster response and disaster risk reduction. The assessment was carried out by the Xland Red Cross disaster management team, supported by the International Federation.

4.1.3 SWOT analysis

Another common tool used to analyse the situation before designing an intervention is the "SWOT analysis". This can be used to facilitate participatory group discussions to identify and compare strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to different aspects of the situation being analysed.

This tool can be used in many different ways. Different definitions of each "SWOT" element can be used by the implementing team, depending on what they want to analyse. Sometimes, "strengths" and "weaknesses" are taken to be factors internal to an organization and "opportunities" and "threats" to be external factors. An alternative is to define "strengths" and "weaknesses" as current factors and "opportunities" and "threats" as future factors. A third approach is not to use a fixed definition but to leave the exercise very open.

The exercise can be used to analyse organizational capacity, capacity in the community or simply general societal factors in relation to the issues identified in the assessment. If a similar analysis has already been carried out at an earlier stage during the initial assessment,[8] SWOT may still be useful to verify and add to this information if necessary.

If an implementing team uses the SWOT analysis to look at the capacity of the organization to act on the issues identified in the assessment, some of the key questions to be answered would be:

> **Where are we today in terms of strength and development?** (e.g. for a National Society, the number of members/volunteers, branches at community level, people served, organizational structure, relationships with donors and partners, etc.)
> **Is our environment (political/economic situation, culture, history, traditions, etc.) favourable to project/programme implementation and the organization's own development?**
> **How could we benefit from the project/programme for its long-term development** (and not just from the capacity-building component of the project/programme)?
> **What are the risks related to the project/programme for the organization** (i.e. side effects, hidden costs in the short and long term, burden, additional staff, logistics to sustain in the long term, public image/perception, etc.)?
> **What is the expected impact on key aspects of the organization?** Is that impact positive or negative for its long-term development?

A SWOT analysis can reveal hidden obstacles to a potential project/programme, especially when participants have a wide range of interests and knowledge. It can similarly identify positive elements that may not be immediately evident. Used properly, a SWOT analysis can generate valuable data quickly.

8. *See the International Federation's Guidelines for assessment in emergencies, 2008, p. 62, and Vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA), 2006.*

Figure 4 provides a brief example of a completed SWOT analysis of the Xland Red Cross Society, reflecting on its capacities in relation to the disaster risks identified in an assessment report. A brief summary of suggested steps to carry out a SWOT analysis focusing on organizational capacity is given below.

FIGURE 4. **SWOT analysis of a National Society**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
> Good knowledge of the community > Good experience in disaster response and preparedness in other parts of the country > Understanding of issues of disaster risk reduction > Good links with the International Federation and other National Societies	> Little influence over local government structures > No experience in training other institutions

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
> Good links with schools through Red Cross Youth clubs > Funding and technical assistance are available from the International Federation and other National Societies	> Government structures may not be able to support the work > Communities may not be interested/willing to engage on disaster risk

4.1.3.1 Suggested steps for an organizational SWOT analysis

Step 1: Ask participants to brainstorm the following question: "What are the strengths and weaknesses within the organization that could affect the problems we seek to address?" Ask group members to write their answers in large letters, using one to three words only, in the appropriate space.

Step 2: Ask participants to do the same with the question: "What are the opportunities and threats outside the organization that could affect the problems we seek to address?" Record the answers as before.

Depending on the size of the group, the facilitator might divide participants into one, two or four working groups. Each group should have a minimum of three and maximum of eight participants. If the facilitator chooses to have two working groups, he/she can ask one group to think about the strengths and weaknesses, while the other works on opportunities and threats.

Step 3: After an agreed time (20–30 minutes), each group's responses are explained to the others.

Step 4: The facilitator may then guide the group in a "focused discussion" based on questions such as "What do these results tell us?", "What decisions should we take?" and "Are we ready to proceed? If so, what needs to be done first? If not, what needs to be done before we can proceed?"

4.1.4 Problem analysis (using the "problem tree" tool)

Problem analysis can be defined as the thorough study of one or more problems (identified during the assessment stage), to identify their causes and decide whether and how to tackle them. A "problem" is defined here as "an unsatisfactory situation that may be difficult to cope with". Problem analysis is a critical stage of project/programme planning, as it guides all subsequent analysis and decision-making on priorities.

Merely listing and ranking problems does not provide for a sufficiently deep analysis of the situation. The aim of problem analysis is to structure, summarize and organize the initial findings of an assessment in order to arrive at a clearer understanding of the situation under analysis. It involves identifying the negative aspects of an existing situation (i.e. "problems") and then identifying the immediate and underlying causes. By identifying the causes of a problem, it is possible to start to identify possible solutions which will address the problem.

Some form of problem analysis may have been done during the initial assessment, in which case the information should be revisited, verified, and completed if necessary. If not, it should be started at this point, using the information discussed and analysed during the assessment and during the stakeholder and SWOT analyses.

A variety of tools can be used to support problem analysis. One commonly used tool is the "problem tree".[9] This visual method uses the analogy of a tree to facilitate the analysis of the problem(s). The exercise produces a summary picture of the existing negative situation, for example with the main problem as the "trunk", the causes of the problem as the "roots" and the effects of the problem as the "branches".

The problem tree exercise can be carried out in three steps:

Step 1: Discuss in a group the various issues that have been identified in the assessment.
Step 2: Identify and agree on the core problem(s) to be addressed.
Step 3: Identify and analyse the causes and effects of the core problem(s).

The third step involves repeatedly asking the question "why does this problem exist?" (the exercise is sometimes called a "why-why tree"). The analysis then looks at the connections (cause-effect relationship) between the problems identified.

The "problem tree" produced by the exercise should provide a robust but simplified version of reality. A problem tree cannot and should not contain or explain the complexities of every identifiable cause-effect relationship.

FIGURE 5. **Simplified problem tree**
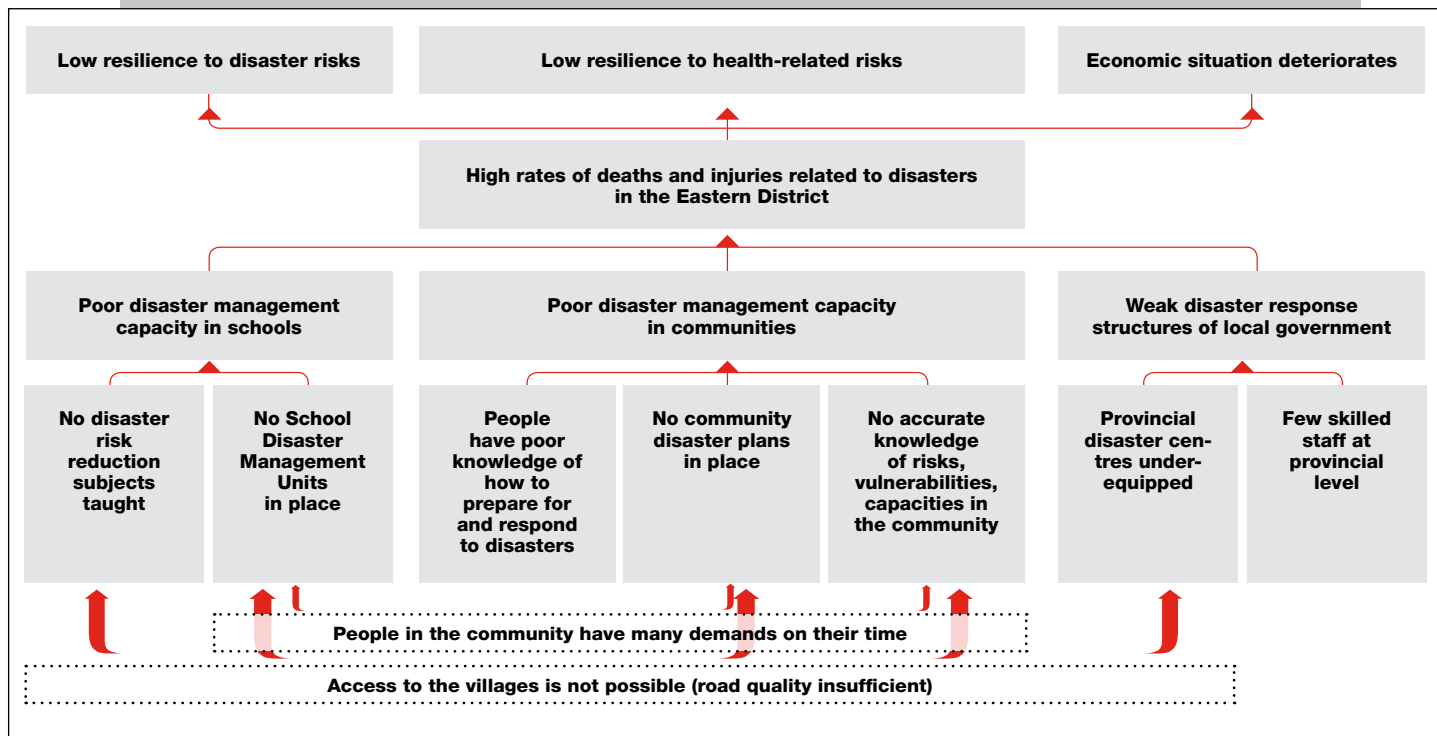
::::::: External factors which may affect feasibility

- **Figure 5** above gives a summarized and simplified version of a problem tree analysis.
- **Annex 1. How to create a problem tree** (p. 51) presents this method in more detail, including figure 19 (p. 53) which gives an example of a detailed problem tree analysis.

The example of a problem analysis given in Figure 5 is based on the same context as the stakeholder and SWOT analyses, i.e. it investigates the reasons why in one area of Xland (the Eastern District), capacities to reduce deaths and injuries from disaster are low.

For all of these tools, the quality of the analysis will be significantly improved by the use of participatory group facilitation methods,[10] as this will help ensure that the views and perspectives of different stakeholder groups are adequately represented and understood.

> 4.2 Development of objectives

An objective is an intended result that an intervention sets out to achieve. This is the stage at which you begin to define the results you want to achieve at different levels. The aim of the exercise is to define the desired future situation for all the identified problems, so that you can later identify those that the organization can realistically tackle.

It is again critical to conduct the process in a participatory way, involving the main stakeholders, including representatives of the people whom the intervention aims to help.

10. *See International Federation. How to do a VCA. Geneva, 2007, pp. 18–19, for more information about levels of participation in group facilitation methods http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/disasters/resources/preparing-disasters/vca/how-to-do-vca-en.pdf.*

A common method of developing, identifying and selecting objectives is to create an "objectives tree", based very closely on the "problem tree". As with the problem tree, the objectives tree should provide a simplified but robust summary of reality.

The objectives tree is a tool to aid analysis and the presentation of ideas. Its main strength is that it keeps the analysis of potential project objectives firmly rooted in addressing a range of clearly identified priority problems. It will help to:

> Demonstrate and describe the situation in the future if all the identified problems were remedied
> Identify possible objectives (intended results) and verify the hierarchy between them
> Illustrate and verify the causal (means-ends) relationships through a diagram
> Establish priorities by:
  – assessing how realistic the achievement of some objectives may be and
  – identifying additional means that may be required to achieve the intended results

There are two basic steps in creating an objectives tree:

Step 1: Turn each of the problems in the problem tree into positive statements ("objectives") by reformulating the negative situations as desirable positive situations, based on the needs that arise from the problems. Reproduce the shape of the problem tree, substituting each problem with an objective.

Step 2: Check the logic (the cause-effect relationships) to ensure that the objective makes sense. Will the achievement of the lower-level objectives help achieve the higher-level objectives? Modify the objectives, if necessary by:
> Revising the statements to be more clear or accurate
> Adding new objectives that are relevant/necessary
> Removing objectives that are irrelevant or unnecessary

- **Annex 2**, p. 54, provides a detailed explanation of the creation of an objectives tree.
- **Figure 6**, p. 24, provides an example of the objectives tree created from the problem tree in Figure 5.

> 4.3 Selection of objectives

Once the objectives tree has been created, it provides a set of overall *potential* objectives for the intervention. However, you cannot solve all of the problems. If you try to address all of the objectives identified, it is likely to be a very lengthy and expensive intervention. You will therefore need to focus on one or a few specific areas in the objectives tree.

This analytical stage is in some respects the most difficult and challenging, as it involves synthesizing a significant amount of information and then making a complex judgement about the best implementation options to pursue. In practice, a number of compromises often have to be made to balance different stakeholder interests, the demands of the population, and practical constraints such as likely resource availability.

FIGURE 6. **Objectives tree**

Resilience to disaster risks is improved	Resilience to health-related risks is improved	Economic situation improves	**HIGHER IMPACTS**

Reduce deaths and injuries related to disasters in the Eastern District — **GOAL (IMPACT)**

| Disaster management capacity of schools is improved | Political and security situation remains stable | Disaster management capacity of communities is improved | The local government disaster response structures are strong | **OUTCOMES** |

| Disaster risk reduction lessons are included in curriculum | School Disaster Management Units are formed | Local political leaders support the process | People know how to prepare and respond to disaster | Community disaster plans are developed | Detailed assessments are carried out | Provincial disaster centres are well equipped | Skilled staff are in place at provincial level | **OUTPUTS** |

People in the community have no new demands on their time preventing them from participating

Access to the villages is possible (road quality sufficient)

▢ Factors outside the control of the project which may affect feasibility

▩ Factors outside the control of the project which may affect feasibility but will be controlled by other actors

FIGURE 7. **Selection of objectives**

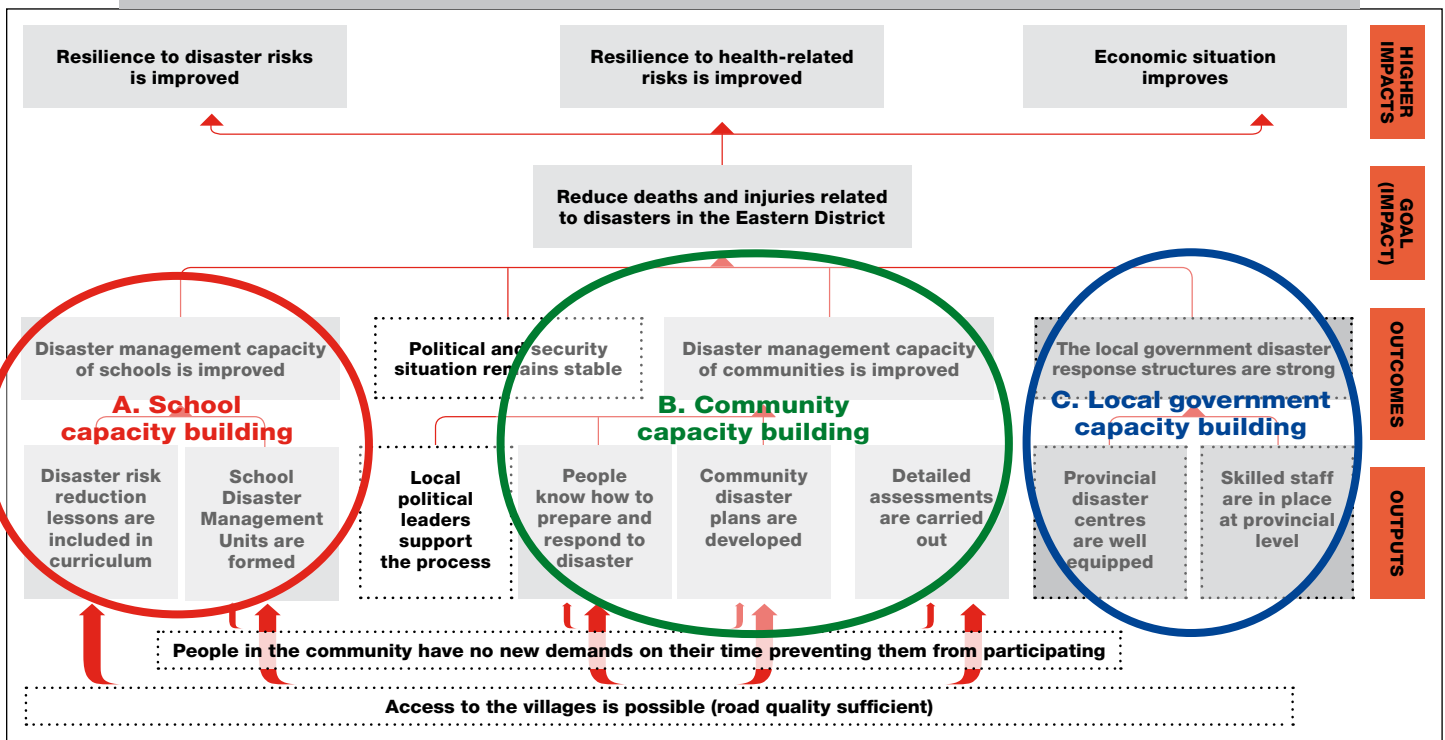|			
Resilience to disaster risks is improved	Resilience to health-related risks is improved	Economic situation improves	**HIGHER IMPACTS**

Reduce deaths and injuries related to disasters in the Eastern District — **GOAL (IMPACT)**

| Disaster management capacity of schools is improved | Political and security situation remains stable | Disaster management capacity of communities is improved | The local government disaster response structures are strong | **OUTCOMES** |

A. School capacity building

B. Community capacity building

C. Local government capacity building

| Disaster risk reduction lessons are included in curriculum | School Disaster Management Units are formed | Local political leaders support the process | People know how to prepare and respond to disaster | Community disaster plans are developed | Detailed assessments are carried out | Provincial disaster centres are well equipped | Skilled staff are in place at provincial level | **OUTPUTS** |

People in the community have no new demands on their time preventing them from participating

Access to the villages is possible (road quality sufficient)

4.3.1 Suggested method for analysis

Step 1: Define potential solutions.

Look at the objectives tree and group objectives together to define broad potential "solutions". This is done by looking at which objectives are directly linked to each other in a cause-effect relationship (see Figure 7: Selection of objectives, p. 24).

During the earlier *analysis stage*, the potential merits or difficulties of different ways of addressing the problems may well have already been discussed. These issues and options must now be looked at more closely to determine the likely scope of the intervention before more detailed design work is undertaken.

Step 2: Select the most appropriate solution.

Based on the set of solutions identified in the objectives tree, the team will now need to weigh up the different options available and choose the most appropriate one for the implementing team. This will then determine the scope of the intervention. There is a variety of tools to assist in this process. Two tools described here are the **objectives analysis table** and **SWOT analysis**. (See Annex 2, p. 54, for a more detailed explanation of how to select the most appropriate solution.)

The objectives analysis table (see Figure 8, below) summarizes and organizes the information on each issue in a comparative table. It is a useful tool to promote discussion and exchange among the team designing and implementing the intervention. As always, the quality of the analysis and the viability of the resulting decisions made will depend on the quality and legitimacy of the data being analysed (costs, prices, availability, local practices, etc.). The different criteria can be measured using numbers

FIGURE 8

Objectives analysis table

Which combination of objectives will address most effectively the needs of the target population?	Solution A School capacity building	Solution B Community capacity building	Solution C Local government capacity building	Solution D (combine solutions A & B)
1. Which objectives are compatible with the Red Cross Red Crescent's **fundamental principles, mandate and policies**?	2	3	1	3
2. Which combination of objectives does the **organization and team have the capacity** to address effectively?	2	3	1	3
3. Are **other organizations** already addressing the problem?	2	2	1	2
4. **Constraints and risks:** How vulnerable is the intervention to external factors? (see also Section 5.4, p. 31)	2	1	2	1
5. How can **local ownership** of the project best be supported?	3	1	2	3
6. How can we take into account respect for **local culture**?	3	2	3	3
7. What is/are the most **cost-efficient** option(s)?	3	3	2	3
Total	**17**	**15**	**12**	**18**

(e.g. 1 to 3, with 3 being the most positive and 1 the least positive); the solution that scores highest should be selected. The example given in Figure 8 uses one set of criteria, but any relevant set of criteria can be used according to the context. The SWOT analysis introduced earlier (see Figure 4, p. 20) can also be used.

In this example, SWOT analysis is used to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a potential community capacity-building strategy. The same criteria as given in the table above can be used to inform the SWOT analysis. The use of a SWOT analysis in two different ways (here and earlier for "internal analysis") demonstrates that, like all tools, it has many applications and is not necessarily only employed at one specific point during the planning process.

FIGURE 9. **SWOT analysis for a community capacity-building strategy**	
STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
> Directly reaches the community actors > More sustainable as builds local knowledge > Relatively low cost as does not require expensive equipment	> Does not tackle wider institutional (government) issues > Does not address the need for improved disaster management mechanisms in the National Society
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
> Improves links with the community for other National Society projects/programmes > Improves National Society knowledge of community issues	> Lengthy process to establish community rapport and precise needs > Reliant on interest and willingness of the communities > Time consuming to visit many communities

Based on the example given above in Figure 7: Selection of objectives, p. 24, and following the various analyses carried out above:

> The implementing team (a disaster management team from a National Society working in its own country) decides to carry out a disaster management programme with two projects (programme components), combining two groups of objectives – "school capacity building" and "community capacity building".
> The third possible group of objectives ("local government capacity building") is excluded because it is being handled by other actors (e.g. the national government or a UN agency) and because the intervention team does not have the same expertise or mandate in this area as it does in community- and school-based work.
> The external factors that the programme cannot address are identified for the moment as being low risk but will be looked at again in more detail in Section 5.4, p. 31.

5. Design stage

The design stage involves clarifying the objectives of the intervention through the definition of precise and measurable statements of the intended results to be achieved at different levels. It also entails defining how the results will actually be achieved through inputs and activities and identifying indicators by which to measure those results.

> 5.1 Defining results and objectives

"Results" are defined as "the effects of actions, and can be intended or unintended, positive or negative". The *intended* results that an intervention sets out to achieve are often referred to as "objectives" and are the basis of planning.

Results and objectives can be split by levels of increasing significance, sometimes referred to as the "results chain" or "objectives hierarchy", as shown in Figure 10. The terms are explained in Section 5.2 and examples are given in Section 5.3.

The different levels of results/objectives are developed according to the information generated during the assessment phase and analysis stage and organized in a summary table or other structure. The most commonly used tool is the logical framework (logframe) matrix.

Goal (Impact)

Outcomes

Outputs

Activities

Inputs
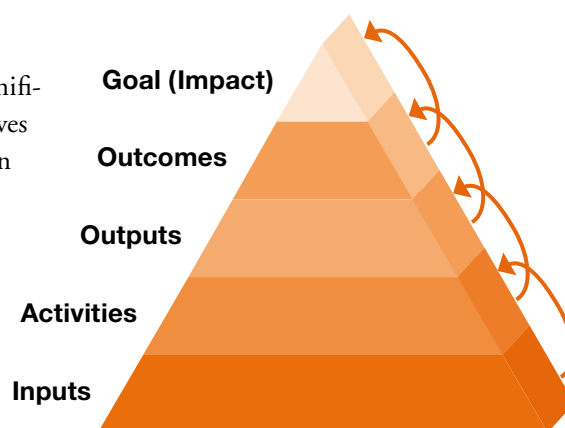
> 5.2 Logical framework matrix

The logframe matrix consists of a table with four rows and four columns, in which the key aspects of a project/programme are summarized. It sets out a logical sequence of cause-effect relationships based on the results chain/objectives hierarchy. The process of developing and selecting objectives explained earlier is used as the basis for the objectives set out in the logframe matrix.

FIGURE 10

The results chain/objectives hierarchy

There are a variety of formats used for logframes, and it is important to have a clear and common understanding of the different terms used. Figure 11 shows the format, terminology and definitions that this manual recommends for use in the International Federation.

The logframe does not show every detail of a project/programme. Further details, such as the proposal, budget and activity schedule, can be provided in other documents that accompany the logframe, but they should all be linked very clearly to the logframe. The logframe is used not only for project/programme design, but also as the basis for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It is a living document, which should be consulted and altered throughout the intervention's life cycle.

The following section shows one way that a logframe matrix can be created in a structured way. However, it is important to note that the task can be approached in different ways. It is a process of improvement by trial and error, not just a set of linear steps.

One approach is to fill in all the objectives first, then check whether they are realistic by looking at the assumptions at each level, before adding the indicators and means of verification. This is the approach taken here. Another approach is to complete all the objectives with their indicators and means of verification together before moving on to develop the assumptions.

As new parts of the logframe are drafted, information previously assembled will often need to be reviewed and, if required, revised. However, choosing one of the broad approaches to the completion of the matrix can sometimes help to guide the team. The sequence of steps presented here is therefore only a guide, to be used if the intervention team find it helpful. The examples give for the different objectives statements are taken from the full example of a logframe in Figure 15, p. 40–41.

FIGURE 11. **Logical framework: definitions of terms**			
Objectives (What we want to achieve)	**Indicators** (How to measure change)	**Means of verification** (Where/how to get information)	**Assumptions** (What else to be aware of)
Goal The long-term results that an intervention seeks to achieve, which may be contributed to by factors outside the intervention	**Impact indicators** Quantitative and/or qualitative criteria to measure progress against the goal	How the information on the indicator(s) will be collected (can include who will collect it and how often)	External factors beyond the control of the intervention, necessary for the goal to contribute to higher-level results
Outcome(s) The primary result(s) that an intervention seeks to achieve, most commonly in terms of the knowledge, attitudes or practices of the target group	**Outcome indicators** Quantitative and/or qualitative criteria to measure progress against the outcomes	As above	External factors beyond the control of the intervention, necessary for the outcomes to contribute to achieving the goal.
Outputs The tangible products, goods and services and other immediate results that lead to the achievement of outcomes	**Output indicators** Quantitative and/or qualitative criteria to measure progress against the outputs	As above	External factors beyond the control of the intervention, necessary if outputs are to lead to the achievement of the outcomes
Activities The collection of tasks to be carried out in order to achieve the outputs	**Inputs** The materials and resources needed to implement activities	**Costs (and sources)** The summary costs for each of the identified resources/activities; sources of income can also be specified	External factors beyond the control of the intervention, necessary for the activities to achieve the outputs

> 5.3 Designing objectives

At this stage, the draft objectives selected from the objectives tree should be transferred to the logframe and further refined if necessary in order to design a complete set of objectives for the intervention. In keeping with the RBM approach, the logframe must focus on the achievement of real changes which can be measured.

All the objectives should be written as simple, clear and concise statements that describe the intended result to be achieved. The different levels of objectives outlined in Figure 2 are here explained in more detail.

The goal

The "goal" is a simple, clear statement that describes "the long-term results that an intervention seeks to achieve, which may be contributed to by factors outside the intervention". It should reflect the ultimate aim of the intervention, i.e. the conditions to be changed. It relates to the highest level of results, those over which you have least control.

Objectives	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Goal			
Outcome(s)			
Outputs			
Activities			

For instance, the goal of a mother/child nutrition project could be: "Reduce infant mortality associated with poor nutrition in target communities". There are factors that may contribute to reducing infant mortality other than the nutrition project. Other health interventions such as immunization campaigns or the construction of health clinics can have an impact on reducing infant mortality. Livelihood projects which increase household income can also contribute to the reduction of infant mortality.

Often, the goal may be developed from the main objective set out in the objectives tree (see Figure 6, p. 24). The goal may also be taken from a lower-level objective in the objectives tree, especially if the main objective that was originally identified was at a very high level (e.g. "improve the overall well-being of the community".)

"Impact" is often used primarily to refer to the *actual* long-term results brought about by the intervention, whether positive or negative, primary or secondary, direct or indirect, intended or unintended.[11] Impact refers to the same level of long-term results as the goal, but the goal refers to the *intended positive* results of the intervention only.

Example project goal

Reduce deaths and injuries related to disasters in the Eastern District.

Outcomes

"Outcomes" are "the primary result(s) that an intervention seeks to achieve, most commonly in terms of the knowledge, attitudes or practices of the target group". The achievement of the outcome(s) should contribute directly to the achievement of the overall goal. Outcomes are the intended medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. You have less control over outcomes than outputs.

The outcomes will often be developed from the next level down in the objectives tree (see Figure 6, p. 24.). The goal and outcomes of an intervention are often taken directly from an organization's strategic plan or influenced by it. Even when this is the case, the process of defining objectives based on analysis is nonetheless a vital step in order to check whether there are additional outcomes specific to the situation. It also acts as a necessary validation of the relevance of the wider strategy to the particular context in which the project/programme is being developed. One or more outcomes can be adopted, depending on the context of the intervention.

Example project outcome 1

The capacity of communities to prepare for and respond to disasters is improved.

Outputs

"Outputs" are "the tangible products, goods and services and other immediate results that lead to the achievement of outcomes". They are the most immediate effects of an activity, the results over which you have most control.

The outputs should describe all the results that need to be achieved in order to achieve the outcome(s), no more, no less. Normally, the key outputs can be developed from the objectives statements at the next level down of the objectives tree, but it is necessary to verify whether there are any missing or unnecessary outputs.

Example outputs (for outcome 1)

1.1 Disaster Management Plans are developed by Community Disaster Management Committees.
1.2 Early warning systems are established to monitor disaster risk.
1.3 Communities' awareness of the measures to prepare for and respond to disasters is improved.

Activities

"Activities" are the collection of tasks to be carried out in order to achieve the outputs – the day-to-day actions that need to be carried out in order to achieve the project/programme outputs and, by extension, the outcome(s).

Activities are not always included in the logframe. Sometimes they are included in detail, sometimes in summary, and sometimes not at all. If they are only summarized or not included at all in the logframe, they are usually set out in more detail, along with an activity schedule (work plan), in a separate document (see Section 6.1, p. 42).

Example activities for output 1.1

1.1.1 Organize 10 community planning meetings.
1.1.2 Train peer facilitators and professional trainers.
1.1.3 Develop/translate disaster management awareness materials.

Inputs/resources, costs and sources

The inputs/resources are the materials and means needed to implement the planned activities. This concept includes the required personnel (number and profile), equipment, facilities, technical assistance, funds, contracted services, etc.

> **Example inputs**
>
> Space to hold meetings, trainers/peer facilitators, training materials. Costs/sources: CHF 20,000 (appeal), CHF 3,000 (locally raised funds), volunteer time, donated venue for meeting.

5.3.1 Verifying the logic of the objectives – if-then causality

The first column of the logframe matrix summarizes the "means-end" logic of the proposed project/programme (also known as the "intervention logic"). When the objectives hierarchy is read from the bottom up, it can be expressed in terms of:

IF adequate **inputs** are provided, **THEN activities** can be undertaken.
IF the **activities** are undertaken, **THEN outputs** can be produced.
IF outputs are produced, **THEN** the **project outcome** will be achieved.
IF the **project outcome** is achieved, **THEN** this should contribute to the **goal**.

If reversed, we can say that:

IF we wish to contribute to the **goal**, **THEN** we must achieve the **project outcome**.
IF we wish to achieve the **project outcome**, **THEN** we must deliver the **outputs**.
IF we wish to deliver the **outputs**, **THEN** the specified **activities** must be implemented.
IF we wish to implement the specified **activities**, **THEN** we must be able to source the identified **inputs**.

This logic is tested and refined by the analysis of assumptions in the fourth column of the matrix.

> 5.4 Assumptions and risks

"Assumptions" in the logframe are external factors which are important for the success of the intervention but are beyond its control. They should also be "probable" – reasonably likely to occur, not certain or unlikely.

For example, in an agriculture project in an area where droughts have occasionally occurred, as assumption would be: "*There will be no drought during the project.*" This external factor is clearly outside the control of the implementing team and would influence the project's success if it did not hold true and a drought did occur.

Other examples of external factors outside the control of the project include political and economic changes, war/civil disturbance, and the actions of other actors, such as public agencies, private organizations and civil society organizations.

Objectives	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Goal			
Outcome(s)			
Outputs			
Activities			

Assumptions are important to identify because they help check whether the proposed objectives are reasonable and well informed or based on unrealistic optimism or poor initial assessment. The identification of assumptions is a "reality check" for the potential for success of an intervention and may lead to the modification of the objectives and their indicators (see Section 4.8).

It is important to monitor assumptions during the life of the intervention, in order to make decisions about how to manage them. For example, if an unexpected drought did occur, the implementing team would have to consider how to find alternative water sources. In the case of factors even further beyond the project's control – such as the outbreak or worsening of internal conflict – the project team would have to consider scaling down or even closing the project.

What is the difference between an assumption and a risk?

An assumption describes a risk as a positive statement of the conditions that need to be met if the intervention is to achieve its objectives. The risk, "the security situation gets worse", can be written as the assumption, "the political and security situation remains stable". Risks are often identified during the initial assessment stage and restated as assumptions during the design of the logframe.

There are a number of approaches to identifying which assumptions which should be monitored during the intervention, usually based on a series of key questions. The process may seem complicated at first, but as you become more familiar with designing logframes, it will become more straightforward. The following six steps are recommended to assist in the identification of assumptions, followed by two examples illustrating how the steps are applied to two potential assumptions, of which one is an actual assumption (see Figure 13: How to determine an assumption, p. 34).

5.4.1 Recommended steps for identifying an assumption

Step 1: Identify critical external factors/risks.
This is typically done during the initial assessment phase or analysis stage of the planning phase, e.g. through the problem analysis, SWOT analysis or other such tools. It may also be done by looking at each objective in the logframe and asking what may prevent it from being achieved.

**Step 2: Restate the external factors/risks as assumptions –
i.e. statements of the positive conditions needed
for the intervention's success.**
Assumptions identify potential problems or risks that can hinder or block the achievement of objectives, but they are restated as the conditions needed for the success of the project/programme (see above on the difference between assumptions and risks).
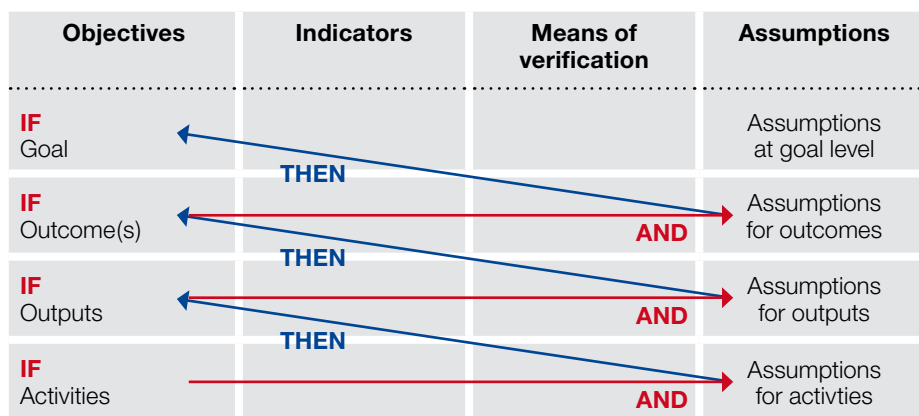
Objectives	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
IF Goal			Assumptions at goal level
IF Outcome(s)			Assumptions for outcomes
IF Outputs			Assumptions for outputs
IF Activities			Assumptions for activties

FIGURE 12

"If and then" test

Step 3: Align the assumptions with specific objectives.

Each assumption should be linked to a specific objective in the logframe – they are conditions which need to hold true in order for the achievement of one level of result to lead to the next. For example, the assumption *"Prices for building materials remain within the project budget"* applies for the output *"Transitional shelter kits are distributed"*. An "if-and-then" test helps to identify the correct assumption at the correct level, for example:

> **IF** *"Transitional shelter kits are distributed"*
> **AND** *"Prices for building materials remain within the project budget"* hold true,
> **THEN** the outcome *"Improve access to transitional shelter in target communities"* will be achieved.

In some instances, a general assumption may apply to all objectives, such as: *"The political situation remains stable allowing for project implementation"*. It is best to list such a global assumption at the goal level, with the understanding that such an assumption would also affect all the objectives below that if it did not hold true.

Step 4: Check that the assumption is indeed important.

Excessive assumptions can complicate the logframe and monitoring. Therefore, it is important to limit assumptions to only those that would threaten the intervention's success if they did *not* hold true.

For example, for the output "*Transitional shelter kits are distributed*", it is unnecessary to list as an assumption that "Public transport is functioning in the area" if shelter kits would be distributed by agency vehicles and collected by people on foot. However, assumption related to public transport may be relevant for a different output of the intervention, e.g. *"Volunteers from the region are trained in shelter skills at the central office"*), if the volunteers would have to use public transport to attend the training.

Steps	Two examples of potential assumptions for a fishing livelihoods project	
	FIGURE 13. How to determine an assumption	
1. Identify critical external factors/risks.	Local fish supply becomes depleted.	Economic recession threatens market for fish products.
2. Restate the factor as an assumption – a statement of the positive condition needed for success.	Fish supply does not become depleted from overfishing.	Economic recession does not threaten the market for fish products.
3. Align the assumption with the specific objective.	Outcome level: **IF** we achieve the outcome "*support the development of small-scale fishing businesses in target communities*" **AND** the assumption "*local fish supply does not become depleted*" holds true **THEN** we will contribute to the goal "*improve livelihoods in target communities*".	Outcome level: **IF** we achieve the outcome "*support the development of small-scale fishing businesses in target communities*" **AND** the assumption "*economic recession does not threaten the market for fish products*" holds true **THEN** we will contribute to the goal "*improve livelihoods in target communities*".
4. Check that the assumption is indeed important.	Yes – sufficient fish supply is necessary to develop fishing-based livelihoods.	Yes – a healthy economy is necessary to develop fishing-based livelihoods.
5. Check that the assumption is indeed outside the control of the project.	**This is not included in the logframe as an assumption** because the project can control this by, for example: > designing activities and objectives that will educate local fishermen; and > facilitate community agreements on fishing rights and times to limit overfishing.	While the project may be able to anticipate an economic recession, it is outside of its control to prevent it.
6. Check that the assumption is probable.	This is not listed as an assumption because it can be controlled (as shown in Step 5).	**This is included in the logframe as an assumption** because there is a reasonable chance that a recession could occur, although not certain or very unlikely. Therefore the state of the economy should be monitored during the lifetime of the intervention.

Step 5: Check that the assumption is indeed outside the control of the intervention.

It is important to avoid listing as an assumption something that the intervention should address itself. For example, in the context of a health promotion project, *"People are receptive to personal hygiene messages"*, may not be a good assumption when the intervention team can recruit appropriately trained staff or volunteers to consult the target population to design and market hygiene messages that people will be receptive to.

Step 6: Check that the assumption is "probable".

An assumption that should be included in the logframe and monitored is one that is "probable", i.e. *an important external factor that will most likely hold true, but there is still a reasonable chance that it may not.* Due to this element of uncertainty, it is important to monitor the external factor during the intervention, in order to take action to address it if necessary.

External factors which are "certain" or "unlikely" require different action. *An important external factor that is **certain** to hold true should not be listed as an assumption.* It is certain the positive condition *will* happen, so no action needs to be taken.

*An important external factor that is **unlikely** to hold true should not be listed as an assumption.* The project/programme design should be modified to address such a risky external factor.

If it is impossible to modify the intervention to address an external factor which is unlikely to hold true (i.e. a high risk), it may mean that the intervention is not viable and needs to be re-examined.

> 5.5 Indicators

An indicator is a unit of measurement that helps determine what progress is being made towards the achievement of an intended result (objective). Indicators set out what information to collect in order to answer key questions about the progress of an intervention. These questions relate to different evaluation criteria (shown in brackets after each question):[12]

Objectives	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Goal	Impact indicators		
Outcome(s)	Outcome indicators		
Outputs	Output indicators		
Activities	Process indicators *(if used)*		

> How much did we do? How many resources did we use to get there? (*efficiency*)
> Are we accomplishing what we set out to do? (*effectiveness*)
> How do the people we are seeking to help feel about our work? (*relevance and appropriateness*)
> Is the intervention responding to real needs? (*effectiveness, relevance and appropriateness*)
> Is the work we are doing achieving its goal? (*impact*)
> Will the benefits to the population be long-lasting, even after the intervention has finished? (*sustainability*)

The information collected on the indicators is then used to assess progress and guide decision-making through the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the intervention. The information can also help lessons to be learned from an intervention in order to build on successes and avoid repeating mistakes.

Indicators can be quantitative (e.g. the percentage of farmers adopting new technology, number of sanitation facilities constructed or renovated) or qualitative (e.g. the level of commitment of farmers to using new technology, beneficiaries' perceptions of the quality of the sanitation facilities provided). It is best to use a combination of both when possible.

There are different levels of indicators, which follow the logframe's hierarchy of objectives, as shown in Figure 14, p. 36 (taken from a livelihoods development project). (See also Figure 15: Logframe for School & Community Disaster Management Project, p. 40–41, for further examples of indicators at the different levels.

It is usually easier to accurately measure process and output indicators than outcome indicators, such as changes in behaviour. The higher levels of the indicator hierarchy require more analysis and synthesis of different information types and sources. This affects the data collection methods and analysis during the monitoring and evaluation phases, which in turn has implications for staffing, budgets and timeframe.

12. *See the International Federation's Management Policy for Evaluations 2010 for detailed definitions of these criteria.*

Objective level	Indicator level	Main evaluation criteria
Goal: Improve the economic well-being of the people living in the target district.	**Impact Indicator:** **G1** % of people living on less than US$ 1 per day	> Sustainability > Impact
Outcome 1: Household economic opportunities in target communities are improved.	**Outcome Indicators:** **1a** % of households that have functioning income-generation activities **1b** % of people reached who state their level of satisfaction with the opportunities provided is "satisfied" or "very satisfied"	> Sustainability > Effectiveness > Relevance and appropriateness
Output 1.1 Income-generation activity plans are developed in households in target communities.	**Output Indicator:** **1.1a** % of participating households having completed an income-generation activity plan **1.1b** # of income-generation activity plans developed	> Efficiency > Relevance
Activities: **1.1.1** Household livelihood-support project planning session	**Process (Activity) Indicator:** **1.1.1** # of households that participated in the planning session	> Efficiency

FIGURE 14. **Objective and indicator levels (for a livelihoods project)**

5.5.1 Targets, baselines and the relationship between them

It is important to note that an indicator is a unit of measurement only. It does not have a target or value set against it until information (e.g. from the assessment phase) can be analysed to determine a realistic target. A "baseline" is an analysis that describes the situation prior to an intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made. Ideally, this is a measurement against the indicators before the intervention begins. A "target" is the measurement against the indicator that the project/programme hopes to reach. The "actual" values are then the levels that are reached during implementation.

For example, if the baseline measurement is "*20% of households have functioning income-generation activities*", doubling this figure to "*40% of households*" could be a reasonable target, depending on the capacity of the implementing organization. If the baseline measurement was higher or lower than 20%, then the target would have to be modified accordingly.

5.5.2 How to define the indicators

Three useful steps can be followed in defining the indicators:

Step 1: Clarify the objectives.
Review the precise intent of the objectives and make sure you are clear on the exact changes being sought by the intervention. Good indicators start with the formulation of good objectives that everyone agrees on.

Step 2: Develop a list of possible indicators.

Usually, many possible indicators can be readily identified. Often, it helps to develop first a long list through brainstorming or drawing on the experiences of similar projects/programmes. It can be particularly useful to refer to international industry standard indicators for a similar project/programme. At this point, encourage creativity and the free flow of ideas.

Step 3: Assess the possible indicators and select the best.

In refining and selecting the final indicators, you should set a high standard and be practical. Data collection is expensive, so select only those indicators that represent the most important and basic dimensions of the results sought.

Checking whether indicators meet a set of "SMART" criteria (see box) is a well-known method that can be used to review suggested indicators to ensure that they will help the team accurately monitor and evaluate the progress/success of the project/programme.

SMART criteria

SMART is a well-known formula to verify the quality of indicators. All indicators should meet the following criteria to be accurately and reliably measured:

> **Specific:** The indicator clearly and directly measures a specific result for the objective it is measuring.

> **Measurable:** The indicator is unambiguously specified so that all parties agree on what it covers and there are practical ways to measure the indicator.

> **Achievable:** The measurement of the indicator is feasible and realistic, within the resources and capacity of the project/programme, and the data are available.

> **Relevant:** The indicator provides appropriate information that is best suited to measuring the intended result or change expressed in the objective.

> **Time-bound:** The indicator specifies the specific timeframe at which it is to be measured.

The same criteria can be used to develop indicators. For example, for the outcome **"The capacity of communities to prepare for, respond to and mitigate disasters is improved"**, the indicator topic would be: "*Practice of disaster preparedness measures*". In order to make this indicator accurately and objectively verifiable, elements meeting the SMART criteria are added.

SMART criteria	Indicator topic: Practice of disaster preparedness measures
Add **Specific** quality	People who practise disaster preparedness measures **identified in the community disaster management plan**
Add **Specific** area/target group	People **in the Eastern District** who practise disaster preparedness measures identified in the community disaster management plan
Add **Measureable** quantity	**Percentage** of people in the Eastern District who practise **5 or more** disaster preparedness measures identified in the community disaster management plan
Make sure the information is **Achievable**	(Information can be collected through a household survey)
Make sure the information is Relevant	("Practising preparedness measures" is relevant to "prepare for disasters")
Make **Time-bound**	Percentage of people in the Eastern District who practise 5 or more disaster preparedness measures identified in the community disaster management plan **within 2 years**
Set target after baseline has been established	**80%** of people in participating communities in the Eastern District who practise 5 or more disaster preparedness measures identified in the community disaster management plan within 2 years

5.5.3 Indicator traps

Some of the most frequent traps that people fall into when identifying indicators are:

Trap	How to avoid it
Selection of too many indicators Having long lists of indicators that nobody ever measures.	> Be realistic! Indicators only need to capture what is necessary for monitoring and evaluation and to be realistic in terms of data collection. > 1–3 indicators per objective statement are usually sufficient.
"Re-inventing the (indicator) wheel" Designing indicators when good ones already exist.	> Look for international or industry standard indicators, e.g. indicators developed by UN agencies (such as for the Millennium Development Goals) or for the Demographic and Health Surveys, which have been used and tested extensively.
Labour-intensive indicators Selection of overly complex indicators requiring labour-intensive data-collection and analysis.	> Check if there are secondary indicator sources. It may be cost-effective to adopt indicators for which data have been or will be collected by a government ministry, international agency, etc.
Irrelevant indicators Selection of indicators that are activities or results statements or indicators which do not directly measure the objective.	Make sure you can answer yes to the following questions: > Is this statement a criteria or measurement by which we can demonstrate progress? > By measuring this indicator, will we know the level of progress?
Imprecise indicators Indicators that are not specific so they cannot be readily measured.	> Keep the indicators as simple, clear and precise as possible (see SMART criteria). > For example, it is better to ask how many children have a weight/height ratio above malnourishment levels than to enquire generally whether the household suffers from malnourishment.
Low-level indicators Over-concentration on indicators which measure only outputs or activities.	> Although indicators at the output level are easier to collect and are useful for project/programme management, they do not show the project's/programme's progress or impact. > It is important to have a few key indicators at output, outcome and impact levels. Again, other sources of outcome and impact indicators, such as those used by other agencies, can be useful.

It is important when defining indicators to consider carefully how the actual information required will be collected, stored and analysed. This topic is covered in the next section.

> 5.6 Means of verification

Objectives	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Goal			
Outcome(s)			
Outputs			
Activities			

The "means of verification" are the ways in which information will be collected on the indicators to monitor and evaluate the progress of the intervention. For example, body temperature is an indicator of health, a thermometer provides the information.

The means of verification should be defined at the same time as the formulation of the indicator. This is especially important as it helps to test whether or not the indicator can be realistically measured at all, and within a reasonable amount of time, money and effort.

This stage can be split into two steps:

Step 1: Define the sources of information.

Normally this would state from where the information to measure the indicator will be collected, whether through primary research (reports or other information gathered

from special studies, surveys, observation, focus group discussions and different participatory tools such as those outlined in the Federation's VCA toolbox [13]) and/or secondary research, i.e. available documentary sources (e.g. administrative records, progress reports, project accounts, official statistics, etc.).

Sometimes, only the sources of information can be identified in the initial planning stage, and Step 2 will be completed in more detail when designing the monitoring system.

Step 2: Identify the data collection methods.

In addition, the means of verification can specify *how* the information will be collected. If this is not done at this stage, it can be carried out when designing the monitoring system.

Identifying the data collection methods can include:

> Consulting secondary research sources (as listed above).
> Specifying which primary research methods will be used (as listed above).
> For more detail, one can also include the following information – although this would more commonly be specified in a monitoring and evaluation plan: who will participate in the data collection (e.g. contracted survey teams, the district health office, the project/programme management team, etc.)
> When/how regularly the information will be provided (e.g. monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.)
> How the data will be analysed

You should consider whether the collection of information will be possible with current capacities. If the required information cannot easily be collected with existing capacities, this should be discussed carefully. Can the required information be collected through existing systems or by improvements to existing systems? If important information is not already being collected, additional time and costs should be budgeted for in the overall intervention plan.

If the means of verification imply that it is much too expensive or complicated to collect information on a particular indicator, consider whether it should be replaced by an indicator that is easier to measure, which may be an indirect (proxy) indicator. For example, it can be very difficult to measure real increases in income in a community, as it is not possible to have access to individuals' bank statements. However, changes can be more easily measured in household assets (number of new vehicles or improved housing) in the community through focus group interviews or even observation, which gives a good indirect measure of the levels of income in that community.

The collection and analysis of data is an extensive and important topic, addressed in more detail in guidelines for monitoring and evaluation produced by the International Federation[14] and others.

Once all of these steps have been completed, you should have a logframe matrix, similar to the example given in Figure 15 on the next page.

13. *Available at http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/pubs/disasters/resources/preparing-disasters/vca/vca-toolbox-en.pdf.*

14. *Available on the International Federation's intranet at https://fednet.ifrc.org/sw114678.asp (revised editions forthcoming).*

FIGURE 15. **Logframe for School & Community Disaster Management (DM) Project**

Objectives (What you want to achieve)	Indicators (How to measure change)	Means of verification (Where and how to get information)	Assumptions (What else to be aware of)
Project goal: Reduce deaths and injuries related to disasters in the Eastern District.	G1: ratio of deaths caused by disaster to number of people exposed to a disaster in the target district *(10:100,000 within 2 years)* G2: % of injuries caused by disasters within population exposed to a disaster in the target district *(5% within 2 years)*	G1: Xland Government Disaster Management Agency statistics for the region *(analysed by project manager, annually)* G2: Sample survey by branch disaster management officers/monitoring information from CDMC meetings *(reviewed 6 monthly by project manager)*	No major unexpected epidemics, serious civil unrest or "mega-disaster" occur.
Community Disaster Management Capacity Building			
Outcome 1: The capacity of communities to prepare for and respond to disasters is improved.	1a: % of people in participating communities who practise 5 or more disaster preparedness measures identified in the community DM plan *(80% in 2 years)* 1b: % of targeted communities with identified response mechanisms in place *(80% in 2 years)*	1a: Focus group discussions during CDMC meetings *(monthly, by CDMC members & Red Cross volunteers)*. 1b: CDMC meetings/DM plans *(collected & verified by project officer)*	The political and security situation remains stable allowing community-level actions to be carried out.
Output 1.1 Community Disaster Management Plans are developed and tested by Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs). **Output 1.2** Early warning systems to monitor disaster risks are established. **Output 1.3** Communities' awareness of measures to prepare for and respond to disasters is improved.	1.1: # of participating communities that have a tested Disaster Management Plan *(16 [out of 20] within 2 years)* 1.2: % of communities with an early warning system in place *(90% within 2 years)* 1.3: % of people [of which 50% are female] in participating communities who can identify at least 5 preparedness and 5 response measures. *(75% within 1 year)*	1.1: Copies of DM plans *(collected by project manager)* 1.2: Field officer's report 1.3: Focus group discussions *(every 3 months, by National Society volunteers & project staff)* – cross-checked during annual disaster simulation *(annually by CDMC members & National Society project officers)*	The economy remains stable, and food shortages do not become acute. The security situation in the country does not prevent implementation of the DM plan. Local political leaders support implementation of the findings of the VCA.
Activities (for Output 1.1) 1.1.1: Organize 10 community planning meetings. 1.1.2: Engage volunteer peer facilitators. 1.1.3: Develop/translate community DM awareness materials.	**Inputs/resources** 1.1.1: Space to hold meetings, trainers/peer facilitators, training materials 1.1.2: Per diems 1.1.3: Computers, printers, awareness-raising materials, translator	**Costs & sources** CHF 20,000 (appeal), CHF 2,000 (locally raised funds), volunteer time, donated space for meeting/training	People in the community have no new demands on their time preventing them from participating.
Activities for other outputs	**Inputs & resources for other outputs**	**Costs & sources for other outputs**	

School-based Disaster Management Capacity Building

Outcome 2 The capacity of schools to prepare for and respond to disasters is improved	1a: % of schools that have passed the annual disaster safety inspection from the Ministry of Disaster Management *(80% within 2 years)* 1b: % of participating schools that have successfully conducted 1 disaster simulation *(60% within 1 year and 80% within 2 years)*	1a: Ministry of Disaster Management records 1b: Project reporting system through a simulation checklist	The political and security situation remains stable allowing school-level actions to be carried out.
Output 2.1 School Disaster Management Plans are developed and tested at participating schools. **Output 2.2** School Disaster Management Groups (DMGs) are formed in participating schools. **Output 2.3** Disaster risk reduction lessons are included in the curriculum.	1.1: # of participating schools that have a new DM Plan tested *(20 [out of 25] within 2 years)* 1.2: % of DMGs that have at least 2 teachers/ staff, 2 parents, 2 students, and conduct regular monthly meetings *(80% within 2 years)* 1.3: % of students [of which 25% are female] in the targeted schools who have received disaster preparedness and disaster risk education	1.1a: Copy of school DM plan *(checked by project manager, every 6 months)* 1.2a: DMU meeting minutes *(checked by project manager, every 6 months)* 1.3a: School classroom reports *(project manager & volunteer, every 6 months)*	Students are not taken out of school by their parents. The majority of teachers remain in their jobs for at least 1 year.
Activities (for output 2.1) 2.1.1: Organize 10 school planning meetings. 2.1.2: Train school teachers in facilitating DM planning. 2.1.3: Develop/translate school-based DM awareness materials.	***Input/ Resources*** 2.1.1: Space to hold meetings, trainers/peer facilitators, training materials 2.1.2: Classroom, training materials 2.1.3: Computers, printers, awareness raising materials, translator	***Costs & sources*** CHF 10,000 (appeal), CHF 3,000 (locally raised funds), volunteer time, donated space for meeting/training	People in the community have no new demands on their time preventing them from participating
Activities for other outputs	**Inputs & resources for other outputs**	**Costs & sources for other outputs**	

Note that the targets and timescales given in italics for each indicator would be set after a baseline study has been conducted by the implementing team.

6. Towards implementation

Once the main aspects of the intervention have been designed following the steps outlined above, the next step is to define:

1. How the objectives will be achieved (activities and timeframe)
2. The resources that should/will be mobilized to achieve them (resource schedule, budget and cash flow)
3. The monitoring (and evaluation) system – how information on the indicators will be collected, analysed and used to guide the progress of the intervention

> 6.1 Activity schedule

An activity schedule (also called a "work plan") is a document analysing and graphically presenting project/programme activities. It helps to identify their logical sequence, expected duration and any dependencies that exist between activities, and provides a basis for allocating management responsibility.

6.1.1 Aim of the activity schedule

Once all the objectives, assumptions, indicators and means of verification have been inserted in the logframe matrix, you will be able to define the activities. Sometimes, activities are included in the logframe matrix itself, either in detail or in summary form, sometimes they are not included at all. Whichever option is used, the scheduling of when activities will take place should be completed in a separate document known as the activity schedule.

The activity schedule for a project (programme component) should be designed with a separate set of activities normally for each output of the project. An activity schedule helps to consider and determine:

> What will happen
> When, and for how long it will happen
> In which order activities have to be carried out (dependencies)

Other elements can also be added to help ensure that activities are completed as planned. Some key additional elements include:

> Who will do what
> What types of inputs, besides people, will be needed
> Budgets, available income, expenditure
> Specific targets of amounts per period (e.g. Number of food kits distributed, number of workshops held)

The level of achievement of targets can be more thoroughly monitored in a monitoring and evaluation plan (see p. 49). The activity schedule can also be used as a basis for monitoring activities. There are many computer-based and other tools available to facilitate activity scheduling. One commonly used tool is the GANTT chart, which normally includes monitoring of the execution of activities, similar to the example in Figure 16.

FIGURE 16. **Activity schedule (work plan)**												
Activities	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
Programme component 1												
Output 1.1												
Activity 1.1.1 *planned*	■	■	■									
Execution		■	■	■								
Activity 1.1.2 *planned*		■	■	■								
Execution			■	■	■							
Output 1.2												
Activity 1.2.1 *planned*		■	■	■	■	■	■					
Execution			■	■	■	■	■					
Activity 1.2.2 *planned*				■	■	■	■	■				
Execution					■	■	■	■	■			
Activity 1.2.3 *planned*						■	■	■	■			
Execution								■	■	■		
Output 1.3												
Activity 1.3.1 *planned*	■	■	■	■	■							
Execution			■	■	■	■	■	■				
Activity 1.3.2 *planned*									■	■	■	■
Execution									■	■	■	■
Assessment, monitoring and evaluation												
Monitoring	■		■		■		■		■		■	
Mid-term/final evaluation						■						■

The level of detail required in the activity schedule will depend on the nature and scale of the project/programme and expected implementation modalities. During the planning stage, activity specification should be indicative, as it is usually inappropriate to try and go into too much detail. However, it is useful to establish in which order key activities will take place. Once funding has been secured, activity scheduling can be more specific and detailed.

The activity schedule should be viewed as a flexible document that can be altered as circumstances change. With the activity schedule prepared, the resources required and the scheduling of costs can be specified.

The activity schedule should be clearly linked to the delivery of project/programme results (as defined in the logframe matrix), as should the resource schedule and budget.

The most common problem encountered in the development of an activity schedule is an underestimation of the time required. This can happen for a number of reasons:

> The omission of essential activities and tasks
> Failure to allow sufficiently for the interdependence of activities
> Failure to allow for resource competition (e.g. Scheduling the same person or piece of equipment to do two or more things at once)
> A desire to impress with the promise of rapid results

> 6.2 **Budgeting and resource planning**

Once the team has established the activity schedule, it is time to create a budget detailing the required resources and costs. A budget is a financial plan for a project/programme. The basic rule is to ensure that all resources and costs needed for each identified activity are reflected in the budget.

There must be a clear and direct connection between the budget and the activities, resources needed and costs as reflected in the logframe. The budget is a key component of a good planning process because it:
> Helps check if the project plan is realistic: calculates estimated costs and the funding that would be required
> Is a prerequisite for funding applications
> Is a vital support for monitoring and evaluation of project/programme progress

The person with the overall direct responsibility for the implementation of the intervention (sometimes called "project/programme manager" or "budget holder") is responsible for preparing all budgets related to the project/programme. Finance staff can provide technical support where needed.

6.2.1 Budget structure

The budget template given below is a useful general structure often used in the International Federation. It shows which activities are to be budgeted for according to each output of the logframe matrix, and according to preset (Federation) budget lines.

FIGURE 17. **Example of a budget structure**						
	Budget lines					
Project activities	**Supplies**	**Capital**	**Transport**	**Personnel**	**General**	**Total**
Output 1.1						
Activity 1.1.1						
Activity 1.1.2						
Output 1.2						
Activity 1.2.1						
Activity 1.2.2						
Activity 1.2.3						
Output 1.3						
Activity 1.3.1						
Activity 1.3.2						
Assessment, monitoring & evaluation						
Monitoring						
Mid-term and/or final evaluation						
Total						

6.2.2 The role of the budget

The budget plays an essential role throughout the project/programme cycle.

Planning phase

Budget planning enables project managers and others to form a precise idea of the project's likely costs. It ensures that they are realistic in terms of the funds needed to implement activities to achieve the intended results.

When developing budgets, project managers should have detailed discussions both with staff responsible for parts of the project and with those managing wider programme or operational budgets to ensure that the budgeting is realistic.

Resource mobilization

A realistic plan and budget are crucial for fundraising and any negotiation with the potential donor. It sets out what the organization will use the funds for and the results that it is hoped to achieve with those funds. A clear and realistic plan and budget which creates donor confidence are therefore essential for developing a resource mobilization plan to help secure funding that will enable the intervention to be carried out as planned.

Implementation phase

A clear and accurate budget is the main basis for ensuring that sufficient financial resources exist to carry out activities as planned.

Monitoring

An accurate and detailed (activity level) budget allows for ongoing monitoring of actual expenditure alongside the activity schedule, an essential means of ensuring that the intervention is going according to plan. Good monitoring enables revisions to be made to the project plan where necessary, to ensure better implementation in terms of the realization of the stated objectives.

It is also necessary to review the budget during project implementation. When differences between budgeted and actual figures are significant, the plan and budget may need to be revised, or further review and analysis of the reasons may be required.

Financial reporting

The budget is the starting point for financial reporting to donors. Donor confidence will be increased if reporting against the budget is sound, hence the need for realistic plans and budgets. It is also important that the narrative and financial reports are prepared together and are coherent.

It is very useful to be able to track a project's expenditure by activity. This allows the project manager to see easily and clearly how the implementation of the project is progressing. There are many ways in which this can be accomplished.

> 6.3 Sustainability analysis

Interventions must be checked for sustainability before their implementation. An intervention may be said to be sustainable when it can deliver benefits to the selected target group for an extended period of time after the main assistance from donors has ended.[19]

The following factors should be taken into account when planning/designing and implementing projects and programmes:

> **Policy support measures:** Do specific policies need to be established to support the project/programme?
> **Socio-cultural aspects:** These have an impact on motivation and participation. Describe measures to encourage participation of all stakeholders.
> **Gender issues:** Refer to the gender checklist below.
> **Institutional and management capacity:** Refer to the SWOT analysis, p. 20, a tool with a wide range of uses, including, as suggested here, to assess the capacity of the implementing agency or team
> **Environmental issues:** Will the project have any environmental impact that needs to be taken into account? What protection measures need to be put in place and budgeted for?
> **Appropriate technology:** Is the technology used culturally appropriate? Will the technology included in the project/programme build on existing technology/know-how or on the different needs of men and women?
> **Economic and financial issues:** Who will cover running, maintenance and depreciation costs?
> **Risk management:** Describe how the assumptions/risks identified in the logframe will be monitored and the steps that will be taken to minimize the risks, as far as it is possible to do so.
> **Exit strategies:** If the project/programme requires initial external intervention or management, describe how complete control and management of the project/programme will be progressively transferred to the appropriate stakeholders.

6.3.1 Gender check list [16]

It is essential both to ensure the success of the project/programme and as a matter of policy to consider gender aspects in the design. This is a complex topic, which is discussed in more detail in a number of publications, including the International Federation's *Gender Training Manual* (2004) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's *Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action* (2006). A short checklist by project/programme phase is provided below:

Assessment

> Examine gender roles/relationships in the area where activities are to take place.
> Understand the problems of women and men, girls and boys from their perspective, and consider age, disability, and socio-economic and ethnic differences.

15. *OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC).* Principles for project assessment. *Paris, 1988.*

16. *Adapted from March, Candida.* Concepts and frameworks for gender analysis and planning. A tool kit. *Oxfam UK/Ireland, 1996.*

Planning

> Ensure the proposal addresses problems related to gender identified in the situation analysis.
> Incorporate the views of women and men, girls and boys in the plan, making sure that all groups are represented.
> Check whether the project/programme budget includes activities required for effective mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all steps.
> Identify gender sensitive indicators. Use indicators such as: How have women contributed to discussions and decisions? How have they related to policy changes improving their status? Has there been any change in women's control over, and access to, resources?

Implementation and monitoring

> Ensure appropriate participation of both sexes in project/programme implementation.
> Ensure that participation does not merely increase the workload of women but means their active involvement in decision-making.
> Collect and analyse data disaggregated by gender and by age wherever possible.

Evaluation

> Evaluate the different impacts the project/programme has had on both sexes.
> Include gender sensitivity in the terms of reference and/or women in the evaluation team.

7. Looking forward: monitoring and evaluation

This manual began with an overview of Results-Based Management (RBM), which focuses on planning for measurable results. Such an approach helps us and others better assess, and hopefully appreciate, the value of our work.

It then outlined the four phases of the project/programme cycle (see Figure 18) and examined in detail the analysis and design stages of the planning phase in which measureable objectives are identified and defined. These objectives are the building blocks of projects and programmes and are summarized in a logframe matrix. The logframe also defines the indicators and their means of verification to measure the achievement of the objectives, and the key assumptions that can affect their achievement.

The assessment and planning phases lay the groundwork for the implementation of projects/programmes. With implementation, the cycle enters the next two phases, which include monitoring and evaluation.
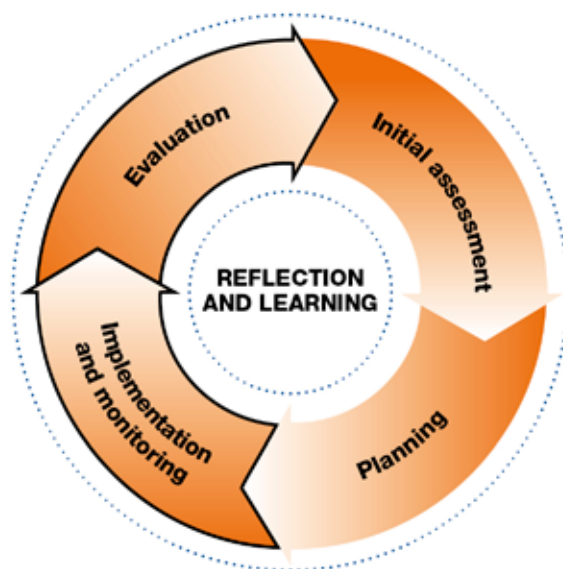

FIGURE 18

The project/ programme cycle
(with M&E highlighted)

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) build on the logical framework developed during the planning phase. Therefore, these phases will be the focus of the sequel to this manual. However, it seems fitting to touch briefly on some of the key points that concern M&E.

Monitoring refers to the routine collection and analysis of information in order to track progress, check compliance and make informed decisions for project/programme management. It focuses on what is being done and how it is being done. Therefore, as stressed in this manual, it is essential that objectives are well designed, with SMART indicators (see Section 5.5.2, p. 36) to measure ongoing processes and results. Reliable monitoring allows project/programme teams to identify trends and patterns, adapt strategies, and make decisions regarding human, financial and material resources to enhance project/programme effectiveness.

Evaluation refers to the periodic collection and analysis of information that forms the basis of "an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors." [17]

As with monitoring, it is critical that reliable indicators are identified during the planning phase for the purposes of evaluation at various stages in the project/programme, whether it is a mid-term or a final evaluation. Evaluation in turn informs the new planning process, whether it is for the continuation of the same intervention, for the implementation of a new intervention or for ending the intervention. As with monitoring, it is critical that reliable indicators are identified in the planning phase to inform the evaluation of the project/programme.

An important tool for monitoring is an **M&E plan** (sometimes called an "M&E planning matrix"). The M&E plan expands on the elements in the logframe matrix to identify key informational requirements for each indicator. It is a critical tool for planning and managing data collection, analysis and use. The M&E plan takes the logframe one stage further to support project/programme implementation and management.

A critical difference between monitoring and evaluation is in their respective focuses: monitoring tends to focus on operational implementation, while evaluation focuses on the effects or impact of the implementation. Monitoring and evaluation are integrally linked, as monitoring provides information that can also inform evaluations. Therefore, it is best to plan for these two critical functions as part of a coherent, comprehensive M&E system.

Monitoring and evaluation form the basis for **clear and accurate reporting** on the results achieved by an intervention. When objectives and indicators are clearly defined during the planning phase, and a comprehensive M&E system is set up to collect information on progress, reporting is greatly facilitated. In this way, reporting is no longer a headache, but becomes an opportunity for critical analysis and organizational learning, informing decision-making and impact assessment.

The sequel to this manual will look in further detail at the key components of an M&E system, from M&E planning to data collection, analysis and reporting. Each phase of project/programme management plays a critical role in helping us attain our mission to deliver quality services to people in need in an accountable, effective manner.

17. *This definition is from the International Federation's Evaluation Policy, adopted from the OECD/DAC, Working Party on Aid Evaluation, Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, 2002.*

Annexes/

Annex 1
How to create a "problem tree"

A **"problem"** is defined here as "an unsatisfactory situation that may be difficult to cope with". Problem analysis is a critical stage of project/programme planning, as it guides all subsequent analysis and decision-making on priorities.

Creating a problem tree should ideally be undertaken as a participatory group exercise, including, wherever possible and relevant, the people the intervention seeks to help. It requires pieces of paper or card on which to write individual problem statements, which can then be sorted visually into cause-effect relationships.

A detailed example of a problem tree is depicted in Figure 19: Detailed problem tree, p. 53. The example looks at the type of problem tree that could be developed when investigating the reasons why in one area (the "Eastern District"), capacities to reduce the effects of disaster are low.

To build a problem tree, follow the step-by-step procedure below and adapt it to the specific needs of the group.

Step 1: Brainstorm the problems that participants consider to be priorities.
This step can either be completely open (no preconceived notions as to what participants' priority concerns/problems might be) or more directed (specifying a "known" high priority problem or objective based on a preliminary analysis of existing information and stakeholder consultations during the assessment). It is important to agree first on the definition of a "problem" (see definition above).

Step 2: From the problems identified through the brainstorming exercise, agree on the main or core problem.
This is a vital part of the process and requires a strong consensus of the group. During the process, group members should check they have correctly identified the main problem and that it is a relevant one for their work.

Write the core problem on a post-it note or piece of card and place it in the middle of the wall or floor. This constitutes the trunk of the tree. To simplify the process, it is normally best to focus on one main problem at a time.

Step 3: Begin to establish a hierarchy of causes and effects.
> **Identify the causes of the main problem** by asking "why?" until you can go no further. Some problems may have more than one cause. Problems directly causing the main problem are placed underneath the main problem. These are the roots.
> **Identify the effects of the main problem** by asking "what happens then?" until you can go no further. Some problems may have more than one effect. Problems that are identified as direct effects of the main or core problem are placed above the trunk. These are the branches.

All other problems are then sorted in the same way. If there are two or more causes combining to produce an effect, they should be placed at the same level in the diagram. Encourage discussion and ensure that participants feel able to move the post-it notes or cards around.

Step 4: Connect the problems with cause-effect arrows clearly showing key links.

Step 5: Review the diagram.
Check through the problem tree to make sure that each problem logically leads to the next. Ask yourself/the group: Are there important problems that have not been mentioned yet? If so, specify the problems and include them in an appropriate place. (See Figure 19 for a detailed example of a completed problem tree.)

Step 6: Consolidate the problems.
At this stage, it may be useful to group problems that appear many times in the tree and remove some of the layers of the problem tree, to focus on the most immediate causes and effects of the main problem identified (see Figure 5: Simplified problem tree, p. 22).

Step 7: Make a copy of the diagram.
Copy the problem tree onto a sheet of paper to keep as a record, or take a picture of it.
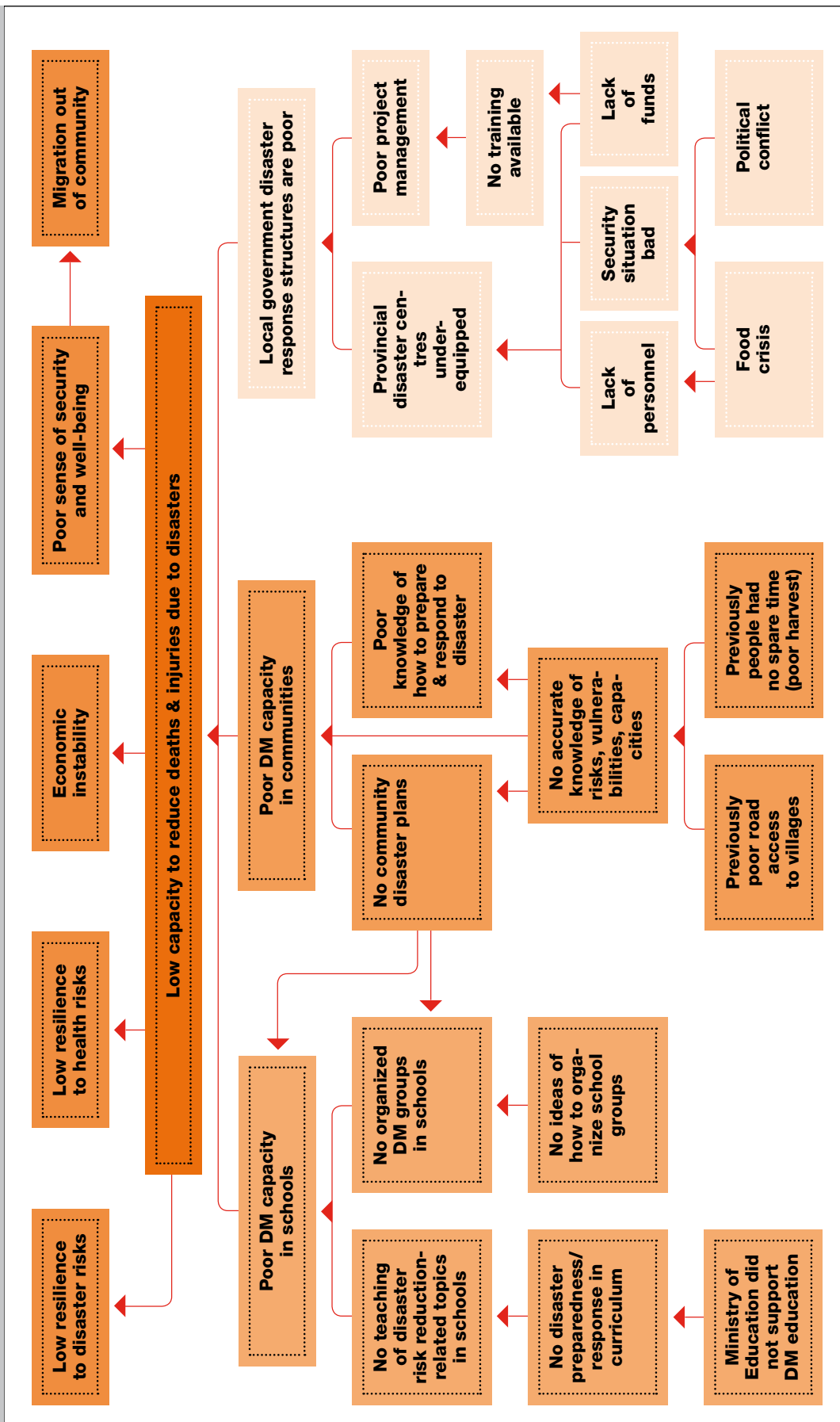
> The product of the exercise (the problem tree) should provide a robust but simplified version of reality. A problem tree cannot (and should not) contain or explain the complexities of every identifiable cause-effect relationship. Once complete, problem trees represent a summary picture of the existing negative situation.

The process is as important as the product. The exercise should be treated as a learning experience and an opportunity for different views and interests to be expressed.

If necessary, the different aspects of a problem area can be further elaborated through focus groups or interviews.

When the problem tree is created with the target population's participation, the analysis of the problem is enriched and joint learning among all concerned is made possible.

FIGURE 19. **Detailed problem tree**

Low capacity to reduce deaths & injuries due to disasters

Migration out of community

Poor sense of security and well-being

Economic instability

Low resilience to health risks

Low resilience to disaster risks

Local government disaster response structures are poor

Poor project management

No training available

Lack of funds

Security situation bad

Political conflict

Provincial disaster centres under-equipped

Lack of personnel

Food crisis

Poor DM capacity in communities

Poor knowledge of how to prepare & respond to disaster

No accurate knowledge of risks, vulnerabilities, capacities

Previously people had no spare time (poor harvest)

No community disaster plans

Previously poor road access to villages

Poor DM capacity in schools

No organized DM groups in schools

No ideas of how to organize school groups

No teaching of disaster risk reduction-related topics in schools

No disaster preparedness/response in curriculum

Ministry of Education did not support DM education

Annex 2
How to create and use an objectives tree

Developing the objectives tree

Step 1: Create an objectives tree using the problem tree as a basis.

Turn each of the problems in the problem tree into positive statements by reformulating the negative situations as desirable positive situations. Reproduce the shape of the problem tree, keeping the objectives in the same place as the problems.

An objectives tree is created by looking at the needs arising from the problems, the needs being the link between the problems and the objectives.

PROBLEM →	NEED →	OBJECTIVE
Poor disaster management capacity in communities	Means to mitigate effects of disaster	Community capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters is improved

Step 2: Check the logic (the cause-effect relationships) to ensure that the objective makes sense.

Will the achievement of the lower-level objectives help achieve the higher-level objectives? Modify the objectives, if necessary, by:
> revising the statements
> adding new objectives, if these seem to be relevant and necessary to achieve the objective at the next level up
> removing objectives that do not seem suitable or necessary

There may be some causes near the bottom of the tree that are very general. They cannot be turned into objectives that can easily be addressed by an intervention. Instead, they act as external factors that need to be considered and assessed to verify the feasibility of the intervention (see Section 5.4, p. 31).

Suggested method to select objectives and define solutions

Step 1: Define potential solutions.

Look at the objectives tree and group objectives to define broad "potential solutions" to choose from. This is done by looking at which objectives are directly linked to each other in a cause-effect relationship (see Figure 7, p. 24).

During the "analysis stage", the potential merits or difficulties of different ways of addressing the problems may well have already been discussed. These issues and options must now be looked at more closely to determine the likely scope of the intervention before more detailed design work is undertaken.

Step 2: Select the most appropriate solution.

Based on the set of solutions identified in the objectives tree, you must now look at which is the most appropriate solution for you to implement. This will determine the scope of the intervention. You can do this by considering a range of questions:

> Which objectives will address most effectively the needs of the target population and other identified vulnerable groups?
> Which objectives are compatible with the Red Cross Red Crescent's fundamental principles, mandate and policies?
> Which combination of objectives does our organization and team have the capacity to address effectively?
> Are other organizations already addressing the problem?
> How can local ownership of the project/programme best be supported, including through the development of the capacities of local institutions?
> Constraints and risks: How vulnerable is the intervention to external factors? (See also Section 5.4, p. 31)
> What is/are the most cost-efficient option(s)?
> How can you take into account respect for local culture and strategies?

What will the organization not do?

One useful way of deciding which objectives to tackle is to look at those factors that the project/programme will not address. These are factors which:

> Could potentially affect an intervention's success but will be addressed by other actors
> Are unlikely to seriously affect the success of the project/programme
> Are of relatively small importance in achieving the main objective

Some key "filters" which can be used to determine what the organization cannot or should not seek to tackle are:

A. Constraints and risks: How vulnerable is the intervention to external factors?

In the example in Figure 7, p. 24, external factors that cannot be controlled by the intervention but are expected to remain positive are:

> People in the community have no new demands on their time preventing them from participating
> Access to the villages is possible (road quality sufficient)
> Local political leaders support the process
> The political and security situation remains stable

B. Capacity, mandate and experience of different organizations

Also in this example, objectives that are important to achieving the main identified objective but will be undertaken by other organizations are as follows:

> The local government disaster response structures are strong.
> Provincial disaster centres are well equipped.
> Skilled staff are in place at provincial level.

In this example, the assessment information showed that although there was an identified problem of the local government disaster response structures being weak, it also

identified that the national government already had an extensive provincial disaster response capacity-building programme in place to address the issue.

In addition, providing guidance to local government offices is not something in which the National Society has expertise so would also not get involved in these issues.

C. Existing capacities and opportunities: What can the affected people do themselves?

It is essential to look at existing capacities within the community, in line with the participatory approach and ethical responsibility that underpin this manual. In addition, building on existing capacities will normally help ensure the sustainability of results and enhance community resilience. In the example given here, the majority of the objectives identified are related to working with communities to build on their existing capacities.

Annex 3
Glossary of selected terms

Term	Definition
Activities	The collection of tasks to be carried out in order to achieve an output.
Assumption	Positively-stated external factors which are important for the success of the intervention, are probable (not certain/unlikely) to happen, and are beyond its control.
Evaluation	An assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.
Goal	The long-term result that an intervention seeks to achieve, which may be contributed to by factors outside the intervention.
Impact	The actual long-term results brought about by the intervention, whether positive or negative, primary or secondary, direct or indirect, intended or unintended.
Indicator	A unit of measurement that helps determine what progress is being made towards the achievement of an intended result (objective).
Initial assessment	A process to understand the current situation and find out whether or not an intervention is required. This is done by identifying the key factors influencing the situation, including problems and their causes, as well as the needs, interests, capacities and constraints of the different stakeholders.
Monitoring	The routine collection and analysis of information in order to track progress, check compliance and make informed decisions for project/programme management.
Objectives	The intended results of an intervention which can split by levels of increasing significance, for example outputs, outcomes and goal.

Term	Definition
Operational planning	The process of determining how the objectives spelt out in the strategic plan will be achieved "on the ground". It usually covers the short term (between several months and three years).
Outcome(s)	The primary result(s) that an intervention seeks to achieve, most commonly in terms of the knowledge, attitudes or practices of the target group.
Outputs	The tangible products, goods and services and other immediate results that lead to the achievement of outcomes.
Plan	The highest level of operational planning, which groups several programmes (and their respective projects, activities, etc.) with a view to achieving an organization's strategic objectives.
Planning	The process of defining an intervention's intended results (objectives), the inputs and activities needed to accomplish them, the indicators to measure their achievement, and the key assumptions that can affect the achievement of the intended results (objectives).
Programme	A set of coordinated projects implemented to meet specific objectives within defined time, cost and performance parameters. Programmes aimed at achieving a common goal are grouped under a common entity (country plan, operation, alliance, etc.).
Project	A set of coordinated activities implemented to meet specific objectives within defined time, cost and performance parameters. Projects aimed at achieving a common goal form a programme.
Problem	An unsatisfactory situation that may be difficult to cope with.
Results	The effects of an intervention. Such effects can be intended or unintended, positive or negative. The three highest levels of results are outputs, outcomes and impact.
Results (intended)	See "Goal", "Outcome" and "Output"
Strategic planning	Strategic planning is the process of deciding where an organization wants to get to and why. It usually covers the long term (roughly a minimum of three or four years, up to ten years). It guides the overall direction of an organization.

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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