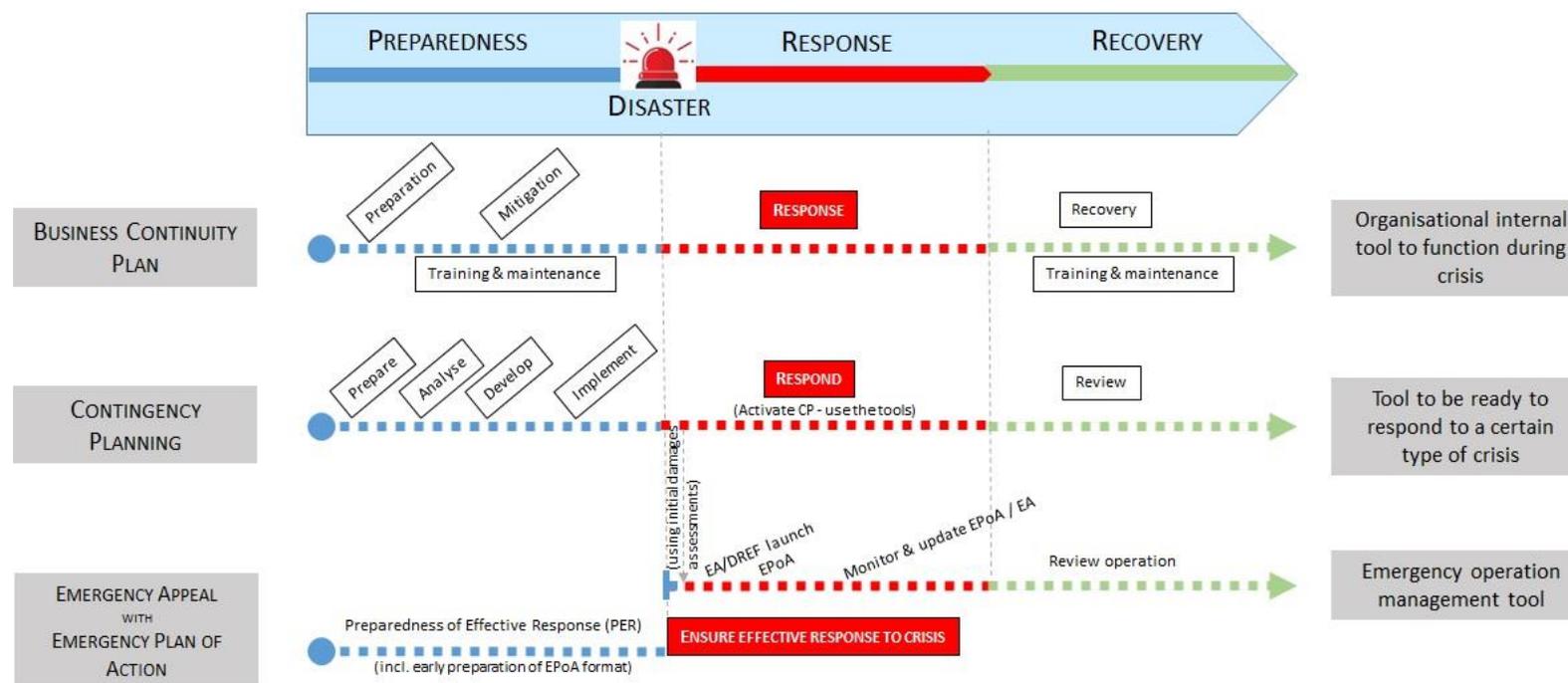# Explanatory note, Business Continuity Plan, Contingency Plan and Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)

In almost all emergency situations there will be an immediate response to save lives before any kind of formal assessment takes place. This immediate action is often based on limited information that is available regarding the impact of the disaster in the initial days, and is dependent upon the **Contingency Planning** carried out by National Societies in coordination with others for a given disaster scenario. At the same time, immediate life-saving actions, Damage and Needs Assessments will start and allow the rest of the response operation, to be carried out through an **Emergency Plan of Action**. In parallel, National Societies have previously developed **Business Continuity Plan** to counter any potential or anticipated obstacles to the effective functioning of the NS, with the aim of ensuring that staff and assets are protected and can function in the event of a disaster/crisis.

Main Objective

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)	Contingency Plan	Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)
To allow the organisation to operate their essential services during a crisis situation - organisational tool.	For the organisation with partners to be ready to respond to a crisis (by type of hazard) – organisational and operational tool	Operational management tool to respond, mobilise resources and monitor actions during an emergency (based on needs)

What for?

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)	Contingency Plan	Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)
Take all the steps to ensure identified key essential services could be maintained, with appropriate related resources, during a crisis.	Estimate what is going to happen in order to plan the organisation's response (strategies, resources, procedures) Decide pre disasters activities (eg. Financial, coordination, communication) to be ready to respond	Living operational management tool to plan and support delivery of emergency response activities, help with coordination, resources mobilisation, delivery monitoring & reporting

For Who?

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)	Contingency Plan	Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)
National Societies (national, branches levels) - IFRC (global, regional, country levels)	National Societies (national, branches levels)	National Societies (national, branches levels)

For Contingency Plan and Emergency Plan of Action, IFRC surge support is embedded into the NS process and system.

When to develop and use them?

Business Continuity Plan (BCP)	Contingency Plan	Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)
To be prepared prior to a crisis, used during a crisis and review/update in the aftermath of the disaster	To be elaborated prior to a crisis and validated, used during a crisis and review/updated in the aftermath of the disaster	DREF EPoA, 48h to a week after the disaster strikes. EA[1] EPoA, complete and expend DREF EPoA as needed (during larger crisis response)

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[1] Emergency Appeal - An international marketing and positioning document to promote an operation to partners / donors and the external audience / public and to generate funding. Summarizes the information in the EPoA.

	Steps (phases)	Details	Non exhaustive content[2]
BCP[3]		**Preparation:** 1. Assign Accountability, 2. Perform Risk Assessment; 3. Conduct BIA; 4. Agree on Strategic Plans; 5. Crises Management Development **Mitigation:** Comprehensive mitigation strategies to resolve potential problems **Response:** 1. Declare the Crises; 2. Execute the Plan; 3. Create Communication Plan; 4. Resources management **Recovery:** 1. Damage and impact assessment[4]; 2. Resumption of critical & remaining processes; 4. Return to normal operations. **Training and Maintenance:** Educate and train; Develop BCP review schedule; Develop BCP maintenance schedule	Organizational policy, BCP team, delegation of responsibility, Business Impact Analysis (BIA), Threats and Risks Analysis (TRA), critical process (activities), relocation, hibernation plans, alternative sites of operation, crisis management group/team composition, contacts and resources.
CP[5]		**Prepare**: When & how to plan; who has to be involved (in team/Movement/External partners); mandate; data collection **Analyse**: Context/Risk analysis & scenario development **Develop**: 1. What kind of response (related to mandate); 2. What has to be prepared; 3. Roles/responsibilities/procedures **Implement**: Simulations and pre disaster actions **Review** : 1. When & how/who; 2. Resources needed; 3. Recording & sharing	Scenario, risks analysis, roles and responsibilities, Initial and in deep assessment forms, communication tree and procedures, Standard operating procedures : alert & early warning system, mobilising HR and resources, HR/financial /logistic procedures;
EPoA[6]		**Phase 1 immediately before de disaster –** preparing for an imminent disaster or crisis (emergency response preparedness; monitoring situation, initial EPoA) **Phase 2 immediately after the disaster –** Immediate response; initial assessment developing EPoA for immediate response **Phase 3 two to four weeks after the disaster** – Immediate response, further assessment and analysis & revising initial EPoA **Phase 4: From one month onwards** – Implementation of planned activities and if necessary revision of operational strategy activities Monitoring emergency operation **Phase 5: Last month(s) of the operation** – Implementation continue, reviewing progress of emergency operation **Phase 6: Up to three months after the end of the operation** – Reviewing achievements & carrying out final analysis of the operation	Informative element of the disaster; situation analysis; operational strategy; detailed Operational Plan (per sectors); strategies for implementation (resources needed); funding requirement

[2] Content may vary from one NS to the other depending on its operational level.

[3] Source : IFRC, Business Continuity Planning guidelines, Feb. 2020

[4] Damage and impact on the organisation

[5] Source : IFRC Contingency Planning guideline, 2012

[6] Source : Guidance on EPoA (for IFRC staff), 2012 - Procedures for Emergency Plan of Action, Emergency Appeal and related reporting tools, 2013; EPoA format 2019 -Full EPoA 2019 package

This explanatory note was developed in coordination with CADRIM and CREPD, IFRC reference centres in the Americas region.