

Tsunami Contingency Planning

To Enable Timely, Effective and Appropriate Responses

“Despite of the significant improvements in preparedness; humanitarian organizations had undertaken virtually no contingency planning for a major tsunami in the Indian Ocean. The most likely explanation for this is a classic dilemma for planners: should you plan for events that are the most likely or the most destructive?” This statement made by John Twigg and Richard Choularton in their paper, “The Asian Tsunami: The Implication for Preparedness and Contingency Planning” (January 2005), definitely describes one of the major challenges related to contingency planning for tsunamis.

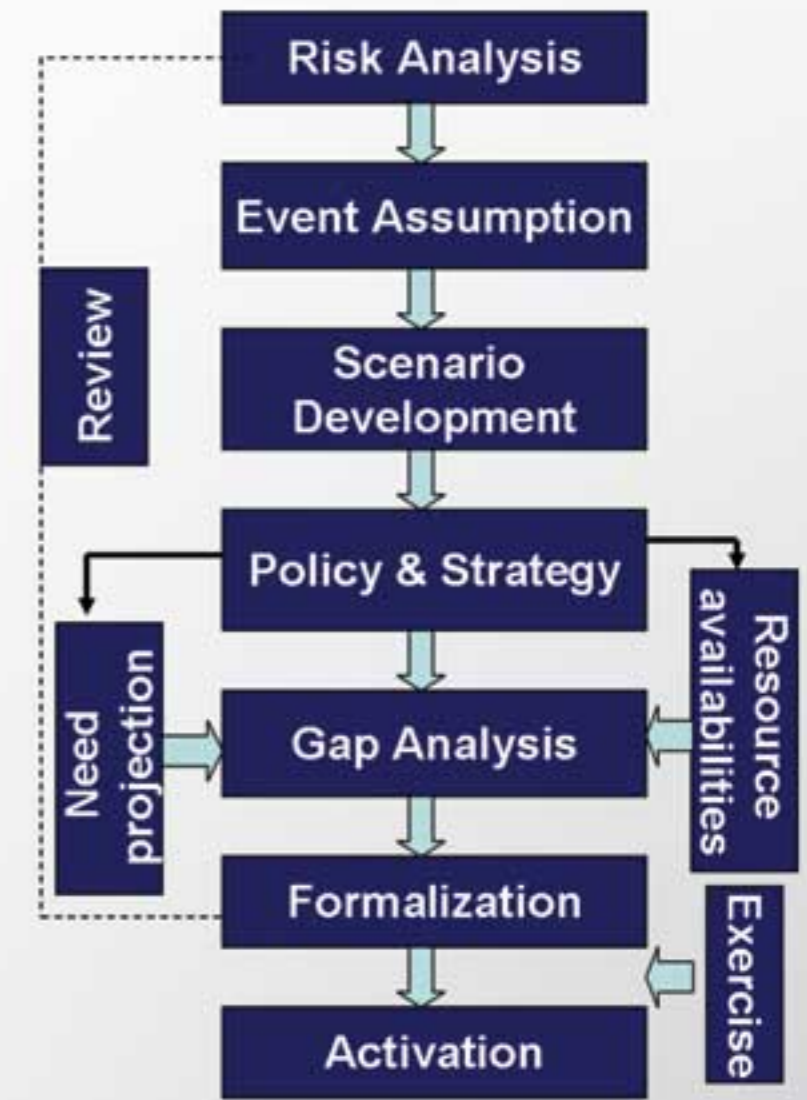
In May 2005, the Indonesian government, together with UN agencies, conducted a two-day workshop on lessons learnt and best practises on the national and international response to the tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004. Main problem areas and relevant recommendations were outlined in the workshop. Contingency planning was identified as one of the five main thematic areas besides institutional and legislative framework, response mechanism, stand-by arrangements, and early warning/ awareness raising.

One of the lessons learnt by the government, UN agencies, and humanitarian organizations from the December 2004 tsunami was that they should reprioritize contingency planning efforts to ensure that low-probability-yet-catastrophic disasters, like tsunamis, are also considered in disaster management plans. Some tsunami-prone countries or states, including Indonesia, have recently developed tsunami contingency planning for some of their vulnerable areas, while humanitarian organizations that are working in tsunami-prone countries also have made significant progress in mainstreaming tsunami contingency planning into their management and operations.

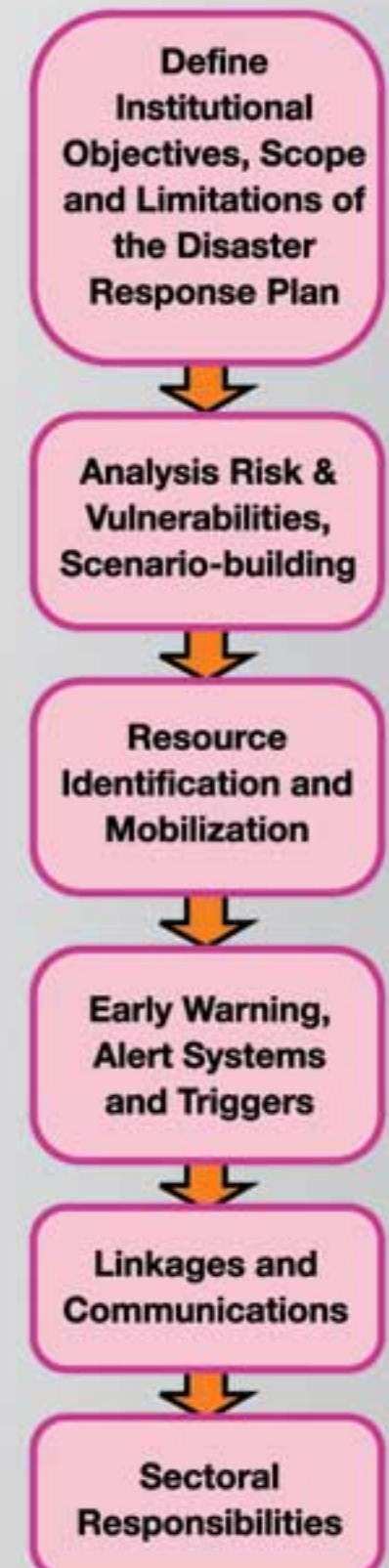
DEFINITION OF CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The United Nation / International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for humanitarian assistance, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), each provide different definitions of the term ‘contingency planning’. The term is used to describe a wide variety of activities, in a wide variety of contexts to answer some basic questions about a potential situation (what type of disasters or other crises could happen, what needs to be addressed and what actions should be taken, how much it will cost, etc.)

The various definitions emphasize a common understanding that contingency planning should cover a forward management process to establish planning or arrangement and procedures to respond to a potential crisis or emergency. This includes developing scenarios (anticipating the crisis), determining the objectives of all actors involved in these situations, with clearly-identified institutional roles and resources, information processes, and operational arrangements for specific actors in times of need, and defining what will be needed to reach those objectives. Contingency planning is an important part of overall preparedness and needs to be developed for each individual hazard, regularly updated and exercised.



Contingency Planning Process by BNPB



IASC Contingency Planning Process

Definitions for Contingency Planning from Selected Agencies

UNISDR: Management process that analyses specific potential events or emerging situations that might threaten society or the environment and establishes arrangements in advance to enable timely, effective and appropriate responses to such events and situations.

IASC: Contingency planning is the process of establishing programme objectives, approaches and procedures to respond to situations or events that are likely to occur, including identifying those events and developing likely scenarios and appropriate plans to prepare for and respond to them in an effective manner.

The International Federation: Based on specific events or known risks at local, national, regional, or even global levels (e.g. earthquakes, floods) or disease outbreaks, to establish operational procedures for response, based on anticipated resource requirements and capacity to enable timely, effective and appropriate responses.

BNPB: A forward planning process, in the state of uncertainty in which scenario and objectives are agreed upon, technical and managerial actions defined, and potential response system and resource mobilization put in place in order to prevent, or better respond to, an emergency or critical situation.



Contingency Planning Framework by BNPB

THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF TSUNAMI CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- Tsunami contingency planning should cover at least 8 steps, respectively: priority setting, risk analysis, warning system and procedures, scenario development, sectors plan upon receiving tsunami warning, notification to the public, evacuation procedures, and plan monitoring and testing evacuation.
- Tsunami contingency planning should be practical. It should be based on realistic parameters and should not be a bureaucratic exercise undertaken for its own sake. This starts with a scenario that is detailed enough to allow equally detailed planning and preparedness, but is not overly detailed. It also requires enough flexibility to adjust the plans, because real life events will probably be different from the assumptions made in the scenario.
- Tsunami contingency planning should be process-driven. Although a final written document is important, without a good process contingency planning will not be effective.
- Tsunami contingency planning should not be seen as a technical activity; it is a management function. Consistently, the engagement of senior management and decision makers has resulted in more effective contingency planning processes, leading to improved emergency responses.
- Tsunami contingency planning needs to consider existing tsunami early warning mechanisms by the respective local governments and the NTWC for immediate reaction (evacuation) and early response. Hence, tsunami contingency plans will be activated upon early warnings.
- Tsunami contingency planning should take into account the existing databases on tsunami scenarios and information on affected areas that have been developed in the framework of InaTEWS.

A review document and full text versions of selected contingency planning guidelines are available in the Tsunami-Kit DVD.



Contingency Planning Process in Java



Introduction for Contingency Planning Process in Cianjur

Author:

Henny D. Vidiarina
henny.vidiarina@gtz.de

Published by:

Deutsche
Gesellschaft für
Technische
Zusammenarbeit
(GTZ) GmbH

Photos:

© MPBI

GTZ Office Jakarta
Menara BCA 46th Floor
Jl. M.H. Thamrin No.1
Jakarta 10310

T: +62-21-2358 7111
F: +62-21-2358 7110
E: gtz-indonesien@gtz.de
I: www.gtz.de/indonesia

Further information:

www.gitews.org/tsunami-kit
BNPB: www.bnpb.go.id
UN OCHA ReliefWeb : www.reliefweb.int
IASC: www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc
IFRC: www.ifrc.org
Humanitarian Practice Network: www.odihpn.org
MPBI: www.mpbi.org
GITEWS: www.gitews.org