

Participatory Approaches for Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning

MedEWSa Project



Disclaimer

This document constitutes Chapter 1 of the *Handbook for Best Practices and Warning Messaging Templates to Address Societal Challenges Related to Natural Hazard Effects*, produced as Deliverable 5.2 of the MedEWSa Project. It was developed within the framework of the MedEWSa project, funded by the European Commission under Grant Agreement No. 101121192.

The content, including all information, documentation, and figures presented in this deliverable, has been prepared by the MedEWSa partner CIMA Research Foundation. Views and opinions expressed are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the granting authority. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Statement of originality

This document contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both.

How to quote this document

Gomes, I., & Fraschini, F. (2026). *Participatory Approaches for Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning - MedEWSa Project*. CIMA Research Foundation, for the MedEWSa Project (Grant Agreement No. 101121192).

Design and Graphic Layout: Rita Visigalli, CIMA Research Foundation

Authors

Isabel Gomes & Filippo Fraschini CIMA Research Foundation

The authors would like to thank Marina Morando, Lauro Rossi, Antonio Gioia, Chiara Franciosi and Marta Giambelli for their careful revision of the report and valuable contributions.



This document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

List of Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CB	Community-based
CBA	Community-Based Approaches
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSDS	Decision Support Dissemination System
EMDEs	Emerging and Developing Economies
EP	Emergency Planning
EWS	Early Warning Systems
EW4ALL	Early Warning for All
GIS	Geographical information systems
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IoT	Internet of Things
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KII	Key Informant Interview
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning
MHEWS	Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PAPE	Public Awareness and Public Education
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSNs	Social Safety Nets
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNISDR	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
WHO	World Health Organisation
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WP	Work Package

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 6

Approaches to Participatory Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning Theoretical Overview 8

1.1 Introduction8

1.2 Methodology9

1.3 Participatory approaches for risk management: engagement and participation in planning processes.....10

1.4 Key Concepts 11

1.5 Guiding principles for effective and inclusive participatory processes.....14

Participatory Approaches for Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning: a step-by-step toolkit to engage citizens and communities18

A. Before a Participatory Process: assessing feasibility in a specific context.....19

Step A1: Contextual analysis20

Step A2: Stakeholder identification21

Step A3: Political and institutional support.....22

Step A4: Resources availability.....23

Step A5: Community willingness and capacity to engage24

B. During a Participatory Process: engage your community.....26

Step B1: Create the group27

Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals28

Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping29

Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities30

Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans.....31

Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses.....32

Step B7: Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning.....33

C. After a Participatory Process: communicate the outcomes to the wider community.....36

Step C1: Finalise the process and communicate the outcomes of the participatory process to the wider community.....37

Step C2: Establish and apply Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) metrics.....38

Step C3: Communicate MEL Results 40

Case Studies..... 44

Bibliography 48

Appendix I: Chapter 1 Additional Resources 49

Table of Figures & Tables

Figure 1: The ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969) 12

Table 1: Checklist Phase A.....25

Table 2: Checklist Phase B.....34

Table 3: Audiences and suggested communication channels and methodologies.....42

Executive Summary

This document presents the content of Chapter 1: Participatory Approaches for Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning from the broader Handbook of Best Practices and Warning Messaging Templates, a key deliverable of Work Package 5: Societal Support and Outreach within the MedEWSa project. Developed to support more inclusive and effective disaster preparedness and response planning, the document translates participatory principles into practical, actionable guidance for a range of practitioners and institutions.

It offers a comprehensive framework for integrating participatory methods into the planning processes, providing clear recommendations, structured methodologies, and practical tools that span all phases of participatory planning. This includes assessing feasibility, forming inclusive and representative stakeholder groups, facilitating the co-identification of risks and vulnerabilities, and collaboratively developing mitigation and response strategies. In addition, the document introduces approaches for establishing robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) frameworks to promote continuous adaptation, strengthen the effectiveness of planning processes, and contribute to long-term community resilience.

By focusing specifically on participatory approaches for disaster preparedness and response planning, this document serves as a dedicated and accessible resource for those aiming to design community-centred planning processes to support more resilient decision-making.

The **MedEWSa project** (Mediterranean and PAN-European forecast and Early Warning System Against natural hazards) is developing a Mediterranean and pan-European forecast and Early Warning System against natural hazards, aiming to provide an integrated multi-hazard, impact-based solution for Europe, the Mediterranean, and Africa. Funded by Horizon Europe and running from 2023-2026, it focuses on creating new ways to forecast and warn against extreme weather events, utilizing AI-driven analytics and climate modeling to improve preparedness and reduce socio-economic damages. Bringing together scientific organisations, civil protection authorities and end users, MedEWSa promotes a human-centric approach to disaster risk reduction. Central to this approach is the integration of communities' knowledge and experience in risk understanding, preparedness, and planning. This document directly supports MedEWSa's vision by offering tools and processes that integrate citizens' voices and local knowledge into preparedness and response planning efforts.



1. Participatory Approaches for Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning

Theoretical Overview

1.1 Introduction

Effective disaster risk management (DRM) increasingly requires not only the technical capacity and institutional coordination of authorities but also the meaningful engagement of the communities most exposed to risk. The active involvement of citizens in disaster preparedness and response planning processes has been shown to enhance the relevance, inclusiveness, and adaptability of preparedness and response strategies by aligning them more closely with local knowledge, needs, and priorities. Such participatory approaches contribute significantly to building trust, strengthening social cohesion, and ultimately increasing the resilience and adaptive capacity of communities (UNDRR, 2023; IFRC, 2020; Twigg, 2025).

This document presents a structured yet adaptable framework for integrating participatory approaches into preparedness and response planning processes. It offers practical, step-by-step recommendations, tools, and methodologies applicable across the various stages of a participatory process. The framework emphasizes several core components, including the assessment of contextual feasibility for participatory engagement, the formation of diverse and representative planning groups, the co-identification of risks and vulnerabilities, and the collaborative design of mitigation and response strategies. In addition to guiding the operational dimensions of participatory planning, the framework underscores the importance of embedding Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) mechanisms. These are intended to enable

stakeholders to continuously assess progress, reflect on lessons learned and adapt strategies accordingly for continuous improvement.

While this document proposes a structured approach, it is crucial to recognize that participatory processes are inherently iterative. As such, the recommendations provided are intended to serve as a guiding framework - a compass rather than a prescriptive or linear, sequence. Flexibility is essential, given that each context is shaped by its own socio-political realities, institutional capacities, cultural norms, and environmental conditions. In practice, the phases and steps outlined in the methodology may not unfold in a fixed order. They may overlap, require revisiting, or evolve over time in response to emerging needs, stakeholder dynamics, or unforeseen challenges.

This framework is primarily intended to support MedEWSa partners applying participatory approaches within their project activities, as well as institutional stakeholders involved in MedEWSa - such as local governments and civil protection authorities in the pilot countries of Greece, Ethiopia, Italy, Egypt, Slovakia, Georgia, Spain and Sweden. However, its applicability extends beyond this scope and may be equally relevant to other external actors engaged in DRM, in different parts of the world. These include NGOs, development agencies and technical experts. Thanks to its flexible and adaptable framework, the guidance contents can be tailored to diverse institutional, geographic and risk contexts.

1.2 Methodology

The development of the proposed framework for the engagement of communities in disaster preparedness and response planning was initiated through a comprehensive review of grey literature on participatory processes for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA). The review focused on publications that documented participatory processes implemented across various administrative levels - from national to local - and included case studies and experiences drawn from diverse geographical and institutional settings. It encompassed reports, technical documents, and operational guidelines issued by national and international institutions (e.g., UNDRR, UNDP, WMO, World Bank) as well as by non-governmental organizations (e.g., Oxfam, CARE). The review has been mainly focused on grey literature to collect practical applications of participatory processes in the DRR framework, with the aim to identify recurring methodological approaches, challenges and solutions to increase the effectiveness of these processes. Peer reviewed papers have been mainly used to characterize the theoretical framework (chapter 1.3 and 1.4 in particular).

Insights derived from this literature were subsequently triangulated with the empirical experience of the Planning and Procedures Department of the CIMA Research Foundation. The department's interdisciplinary expertise - spanning community engagement, stakeholder involvement, and behaviour change communication - has been developed through practical applications mainly across Italy (Morando

et al., 2019) within the civil protection field. This integrated body of evidence has informed the development of the practical Toolkit presented in the second part of the chapter.

The practical Toolkit consists of 15 factsheets, organized into three phases: Before a Participatory Process, During a Participatory Process, and After a Participatory Process. Each factsheet provides detailed and actionable guidance for implementing participatory preparedness and response plans, outlining specific goals for each step, appropriate methodologies, and tools to support the planning, facilitation, and evaluation of participatory processes.

This framework is specifically tailored to help stakeholders design and implement inclusive, context-sensitive planning strategies, ensuring the meaningful engagement of both local communities and institutional actors throughout the process. It is intended to assist a wide range of stakeholders, including institutional actors, NGOs, development agencies, and technical experts working in the field of disaster risk management.

1.3 Participatory approaches for risk management: engagement and participation in planning processes

Since the end of the past century, participatory processes have been progressively applied to the framework of DRR. However, during the 1990s the experiments with public involvement were criticized for delaying the process, overemphasizing the interests of the active publics, and usurping the role of elected officials (Dorcey & McDaniels, 2001). Afterwards, in the twenty-first century, there has been a shift in the approach to decision-making in the DRR sector, led by an increasing interest in the topic by the local populations (empowered by education) and an increased interest in co-design and co-management practices by the public authorities (Pearce et al., 2003). Thus, the engagement of local communities has been progressively recognized as an important method to increase the effectiveness of the solutions developed and the ownership of the decision-making process by the local stakeholders and citizens, also building social trust and supporting transformative changes (IPCC, 2023). The application of participatory approaches has been fostered by both national and international institutions and by non-governmental organizations. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 recognizes the role of communities in each of its four priorities for action. UNDRR (2015) recommends enhancing the participation of civil society, volunteers and community-based organizations in the DRR policymaking in order to:

1. collect specific knowledge in the context of the development and implementation of normative frameworks, standards and plans for disaster risk reduction;
2. design local, national, regional and global plans and strategies;
3. contribute to and support public awareness, a culture of prevention and education on disaster risk;
4. increase the resilience of the communities, enhancing an inclusive disaster risk management approach.

Furthermore, in the third pillar of the UN Early Warning for All Initiative (UNDRR & WMO, 2022), it is emphasized the role of people-centred approaches in designing effective early warning

services, leveraging existing community-based infrastructures such as indigenous knowledge systems and community-based flood and drought management in order to strengthen and expand alert dissemination and feedback channels reaching all people.

The importance of participatory approaches has also been recognized in the framework of climate change adaptation policies. The Paris Agreement (2015) in the article 7 dedicated to adaptation policies affirms that “*adaptation decision-making processes should take into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems*”.

The EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change (2023) recognizes the engagement of citizens and stakeholders as a powerful approach in enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, and credibility of climate adaptation plans, building trust and supporting a collective mandate for implementing adaptation actions. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2023) emphasizes the role of inclusive governance in defining more effective and sustainable adaptation outcomes, and it states that engaging Indigenous Peoples and local communities through collective and participatory decision-making processes has enabled deeper ambition and accelerated action in different ways, and at all scales, depending on national circumstances.

1.4 Key concepts in disaster preparedness and response planning

This section presents some of the most recurring and relevant concepts of this document, with the aim to clarify the meaning of these dimensions, solving possible ambiguities and making it easier to follow the approach and the actions here proposed.

Disaster preparedness and response planning: According to UNDRR (2017), disaster preparedness represents “*the knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters*”. DG ECHO DG ECHO views preparedness as “*a way to promote anticipatory actions, early response, and flexibility which are critical to managing disasters more efficiently and effectively, and mitigating their impact*”. In order to enhance the effectiveness of the risk mitigation strategies identified, the preparedness and response planning should be collaborative and inclusive, involving consultation and engagement with those affected by the plan. Moreover, preparedness and response planning is an iterative activity: a continual cycle of planning, training, exercising, and revision. (Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, 2020).

Community: The idea of community comprises groups of actors (e.g. individuals, organizations, businesses) which share a common identity or interest. However, even though the presence of a common identity, the different members of the community could possess a wide range of specific needs, capacities and risks (IFRC, 2021). Every community has a unique combination of people reflecting variations in: (i) employment and economic circumstances and resources; (ii) religious affiliation; (iii) belief and value systems; (iv) ethnic background and languages; (v) age, gender and sexual orientation; (vi) physical and intellectual ability; (vii) health and wellbeing; (viii) social networks, groups and connections; (ix) connectedness to the natural environment and Country (AIDR, 2020) “*Communities can have a spatial expression with geographic boundaries and a common identity or shared fate*” (Kruse et al., 2017).

Community-based DRR: This approach is aimed at engaging the local community, including the most vulnerable, in managing local disaster risks, identifying risk mitigation measures and strategies while recognizing existing capacities and coping mechanisms and the local needs and priorities. This includes both a participatory assessment of hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities, and the engagement of local stakeholders and citizens in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the risk mitigation measures. The European Agency for special needs and inclusive education (<https://www.european-agency.org>) defines community-based approaches as follows: “*Community-based approach motivates women, girls, boys and men in the community to participate in a process which allows them to express their needs and to decide their own future with a view to their empowerment. It requires recognition that they are active participants in decision-making*”. According to IPCC (2012), a critical factor in community-based disaster risk reduction is that community members are empowered to take control of the processes involved. When communities are truly engaged and they play an active role in designing and managing programmes, the outcomes are more effective, sustainable and of a higher quality (IFRC, 2021). Furthermore, this approach is recognized effective in increasing the resilience of the engaged community, enhancing both the local preparedness to disaster risks and the adaptive capacity to climate change effects.

Participation: There are various conceptualizations of “participation” and “participatory approach”. Some conceptualizations are quite general, sometimes leaving ambiguity about the real application of the approach. The IPCC Glossary (<https://apps.ipcc.ch/glossary/search.php>) defines participatory processes as “*a governance system that enables direct public engagement in decision-making. The approach can be applied in formal and informal institutional contexts from national to local but is usually associated with devolved decision making*”. To illustrate a more clear and practical definition of the concept, we refer to the well-known work of Arnstein (1969) who

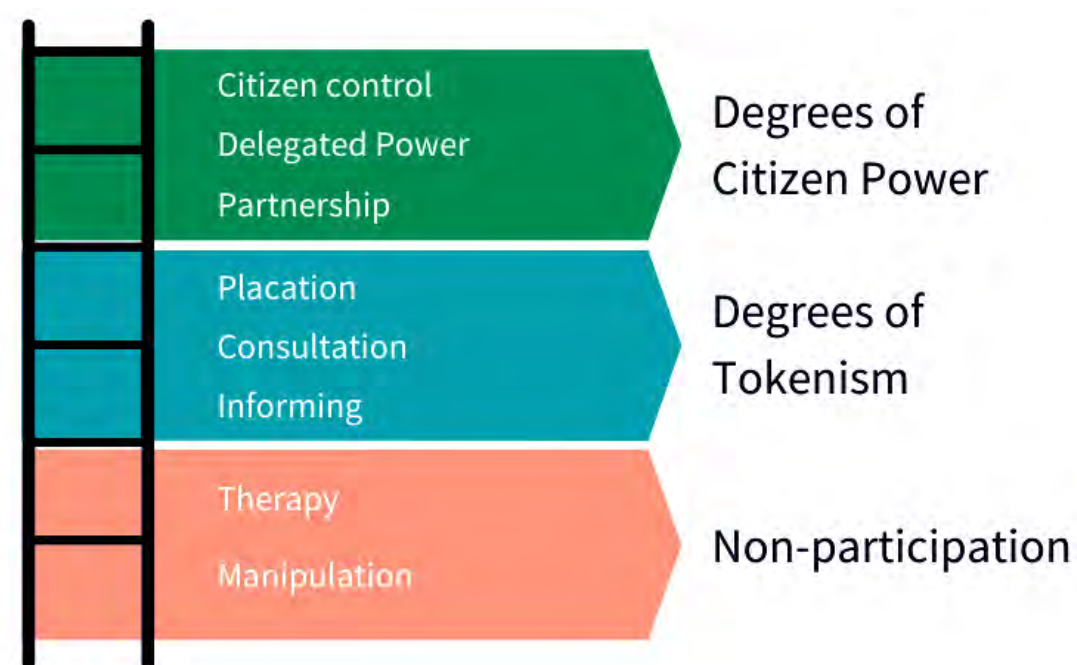


Figure 1: The ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969)

defines a ladder of participation (Figure 1) with normative ranking where “citizens power” is at the top of the ladder, with a category “tokenism” in the middle and “non-participation” at the bottom.

A fully participatory approach lies in the “citizens power” category, whereas “consultation” and “informing” are placed inside the “tokenism” category. Consultation does not guarantee that the contribution by the population is fully considered in the decision-making process; whereas informing usually stands for one-way flowing of knowledge, with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation. Even the categorization by Pretty (1995) ranks the typologies of participation on a spectrum defined by a shift from control by authorities to control by the people or citizens. Pretty’s ranking starts with approaches where participation is just a pretence or where there are just unilateral decisions by the public, and it ends with forms of participation where people participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions, and where, in some case, people

participate by independently taking initiatives to change systems. Therefore, according to these contributions (Arnstein, 1969; Pretty, 1995), true participation seems to result in the opportunity given to the community to contribute to shaping the decision-making process and to truly influence its outcomes. However, the most proper level of community engagement for a specific context strictly depends on its own institutional, cultural and social characteristics.

Local knowledge: In the context of DRR policies, local knowledge refers to everything that communities at risk know about natural hazards and associated risks, their perception of these risks, and a vast array of actions they take to reduce and manage these risks (Dekens, 2007). There are various terms used in place of local knowledge in literature, including “indigenous knowledge”, “traditional knowledge”, “traditional ecological knowledge”, “rural people’s knowledge” and “people science” (Trogrlic, 2022). Local knowledge is not a community trait, but it depends on the member of the community you are considering

(e.g. older citizens have a different knowledge of past events and a different risk perception than younger people). Moreover, local knowledge is highly dynamic, and it depends on the lived experience of disasters.

Resilience: According to the literature review by Modica et al (2016), in the large number of definitions of resilience identified, there are two recurring characteristics of resilience, the capacity to recover from shocks and the degree of preparedness. These characteristics lead to three main definitions of resilience: (i) the capacity to recover from a shock; ii) the capacity to resist a shock; and (iii) the ability to adapt after a shock or to develop new growth paths. This multidimensional conceptualization of resilience is at the core of the definition by

UNDRR glossary (2017): “*the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management*”.

These definitions contribute to create the conceptual framework of this document, clarifying the meaning attributed to some key dimensions (e.g. participation and community) inside this Deliverable. The next section is focused on identifying principles and general approaches to increase the effectiveness and the inclusiveness of the participatory approaches.



1.5 Guiding principles for effective and inclusive participatory processes

This section provides a series of general practical indications on approaches to increase the effectiveness and the inclusiveness of the participatory processes. These guiding principles emerged from the literature review of case studies presented by international institutions and NGOs.

The analysis of these reports provided numerous insights into the conditions contributing to the effectiveness of the methods applied in the respective case studies. The following list presents some of the most recurring elements.



Optimal
Timing



Understand
the Context



Public
Administration
Endorsement



Active
Engagement



Realistic
Outcomes



Dedicated
Resources



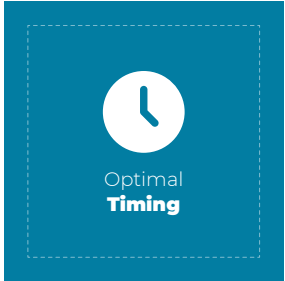
Enhancement of
Capacities and
Awareness



Integration between
Scientific and
Local Knowledge



Adaptation of
Locations to local
needs and culture



The identification of the most suitable timing for the launch of a participatory process is recognized as a crucial preliminary step for an effective approach. Engaging a community represents a valuable

opportunity to establish trust bonds between the citizens and the public administration and to foster beneficial collaborations, increasing the resilience of the local community. Timing refers to two distinct dimensions:

1. the length of the process: it is essential to allocate sufficient time for overcoming scepticism and resistance and to give the opportunity to citizens and stakeholders to provide a meaningful contribution to the process;
2. the right moment to launch the process: to facilitate interactions between the public administration and the local community, the participatory process should be planned far from political elections, or from other intricate periods for the social and political life of the community, or can be planned within effective “windows of opportunity”, considering for example seasonality of hazardous events etc.



Effective community engagement requires partners to develop a strong understanding of the unique history, values, diversity, dynamics, strengths, priorities and needs of each community. It is

also important to understand the environmental, political, or historical context that surrounds any hazard, emergency event or disaster (AIDR, 2020). Before start planning a participatory process is also essential to collect and analyse the previous experiences of participatory processes in the target community, identifying recurring challenges and potential conflicts between stakeholder categories.

The assessment of past experiences is necessary to understand the feasibility of a participatory approach in a specific context, focusing in advance on possible solutions and coping strategies to avoid conflicts and to enhance the effectiveness of the processes in reaching the expected goals.



The involvement of the public administration should be carefully evaluated before starting a participatory process. In various examples from grey literature, the head of the public administration, such as

the mayor, along with council members, legitimate the participatory process and promote inclusive community engagement. However, the role of the public administration can vary according to the local social, cultural and political framework. For example, in autocratic and/or military governments, the public administration may be an obstacle to the engagement of a local community, because in these cases, in particular, there is no real agency to be developed or enhanced by citizens or stakeholders. The democratic nature of government must also be considered, as well as the ethical and moral values that characterise governments. Furthermore, when engaging the public administration, it's pivotal to engage pertinent government departments, extending from central offices to the grassroots level.

This collaboration between the public administration and the relevant stakeholders from the local community can be established through the institution of a governing body of the participatory process. For example, in a case study focused on the co-creation of an early warning system to increase the preparedness of a community of Indonesian farmers to droughts, a shared secretariat was established among local public administration officials, community stakeholders, and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with the aim to oversee the whole participatory process (UNISDR & UNDP, 2007).



Active Engagement

Some case studies recommend actively engaging the target community across all the phases of the participatory process, starting from the preparatory activities to the final evaluation phase

(UNISDR & UNDP, 2007; UNISDR, 2017; CARE, 2014), if possible. During the initial stages, the goals and objectives of the participatory process should be shared with both the community and the key stakeholders of the project. Even the outputs of the project can be co-designed with the local community, to increase the tailoring of the products to the needs, priorities and expectations of citizens and local DRR stakeholders. UNISDR and UNDP (2007) presents the experience of a participatory approach in Bangladesh at the local level, conducted with selected community volunteers. Local citizens have been involved in identifying local needs and solutions and in implementing these co-designed strategies. This approach resulted effective to empower the community, strengthening community cohesion and social bondage, improving the community' capacity to make informed decisions and increasing self-confidence among the poorest and most vulnerable families.

Other case studies highlight the importance of collaboratively generating project outputs (such as informational materials, educational content, and research publications like academic journal articles) in partnership with the community. For example, in a participatory project developed by CARE (2014), fishermen and related communities were responsible for the development of new regulation to use the mangrove forest area to face increasing number of floods and food security issues and for presenting this output to the wider public in a dedicated workshop. An active involvement of the community in the whole process is an effective approach to increase the engagement of the community during the participatory process and its ownership on the related outcomes. In certain CB projects, local actors have taken on the role of training their own communities in DRR/CCA matters.

For instance, the “farmer-to-farmer approach” has been utilized, where local farmers receive training in farmers' schools from their peers. This approach involves learning novel farming techniques through field visits to other local farms (Reid et al., 2009). Schools and universities are widely regarded as key stakeholders to be actively involved in participatory processes aimed at disaster preparedness and response planning. These institutions can contribute both innovation and a long-term perspective to planning activities. At the same time, children are particularly vulnerable to natural hazards, and schools function as central nodes within networks that influence the behaviours and movements of large numbers of people, thereby increasing their exposure to such events. Consequently, the active engagement of school staff and students can be particularly effective in enhancing the effectiveness of the proposed solutions and it can also have a strong spillover potential to disseminate risk and emergency procedures awareness to the students' families and related neighbourhoods. This guiding principle is interlinked with the one related to the “optimal timing”. An active engagement of the community and local stakeholders needs time and dedicate activities; thus, it must be organised in the very first steps of the participatory process, accurately considering the social, cultural and institutional conditions of the context.



Realistic Outcomes

There should be clear and evident advantages for the local community to participate in the CB project, and those facilitating the engagement should be capable of articulating these benefits right from the outset. It is essential to clearly demonstrate the results and the concrete outcomes of the engagement process. Results should be explicitly presented to the engaged community at the end of the project, increasing the ownership on these outputs and the trust bond between actors engaged in the participatory process (e.g. the public administrations and the citizens).



Dedicated Resources

CB approaches typically represent a component of a broader DRR project. Nevertheless, even if the participatory approach isn't the central focus of the project, specific resources should be allocated to the development of its activity. This is crucial to ensure the progression of activities, the continuous engagement of the community and the presence of professionals, such as the facilitators (UNISDR & UNDP, 2007). Resources should not be limited to financial ones, and both dedicated tools and professional competencies should be considered when designing a participatory process. Priorities and objectives of the engaged stakeholders may diverge, potentially leading to conflicts among participants. Consequently, the recruitment of facilitators is recommended in various case studies. Facilitators bring their specialized skills and experience, to effectively manage conflicts and to facilitate quick, transparent, and effective discussions.



Enhancement of Capacities and Awareness

The DRR framework is made by a complex terminology and concepts, requiring specific competencies and knowledge to define effective solutions and coping strategies. When dealing with local communities, ambiguities and lack of knowledge on some key dimensions (e.g. the components of risk) can hamper the engagement of the target community and the implementation of an effective participatory process. To enhance the full potential of community engagement, it seems to be crucial to improve the knowledge and skills of the public administration and of the engaged stakeholders on DRR issues and on the civil protection planning topic. This is necessary to set a basic level of knowledge, also facilitating a meaningful and informed participation of non-experts.



Integration between Scientific and Local Knowledge

Several case studies have acknowledged the importance of collecting both scientific and traditional knowledge as an essential step to draft effective local strategies for mitigating risks and increasing coping capacity (Reid et al., 2009). Local knowledge is also vital for identifying existing coping mechanisms and adaptive solutions. However, the incorporation of scientific knowledge becomes indispensable when devising solutions to address unprecedented climate impacts. For instance, farmers in the Andes region (Bolivia and Chile) exhibited an understanding of localized weather patterns, yet they lacked insights into the more intricate relationships between sea temperatures and anticipated weather changes, as well as the ability to forecast critical meteorological phenomena. Therefore, the presence of academia and the scientific research community has emerged as a key resource in developing an effective participatory process in various case studies.



Adaptation of Locations to local needs and culture

Particular attention should be paid to the selection of the location for the meetings of the participatory process. Locations should be relevant for the life of the community and accessible to the most vulnerable citizens, in order to guarantee the fair and impartial engagement of the whole community and to increase the participation of citizens and selected stakeholders over the entire duration of the participatory process activities. Even the conclusive presentation of the outcomes achieved by the project requires an adequate and effective location. For example, local fairs and festivals can be used in order to present the results to the whole community and to a wider public, emphasizing the importance of the process and of the achieved outcomes.

2. Participatory Approaches for Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning: a step-by-step toolkit to engage citizens and communities

The next section presents a step-by-step approach for the engagement of communities in participatory preparedness and response planning processes planning. The approach is structured into three overarching phases (A - B - C), each reflecting a critical stage in the participatory process. Within each phase, a series of clearly defined steps (e.g., A1, B2, C3) guide practitioners through the progressive stages of community engagement.

Each step includes four key components:

1. Specific objectives, which clarify the intended outcomes of the step;
2. A methodological approach, offering strategies for implementation;
3. Practical tools and techniques, which support the operationalization of the approach; and
4. A set of guiding questions, designed to prompt critical reflection and promote adaptation to diverse socio-cultural, institutional, and environmental contexts.

A

Before a Participatory Process: assessing feasibility in a specific context

- Step A1:** Contextual analysis
- Step A2:** Stakeholder identification
- Step A3:** Political and institutional support
- Step A4:** Resources availability
- Step A5:** Community willingness and capacity to engage

B

During a Participatory Process: engage the community

- Step B1:** Create the group
- Step B2:** Share the process and establish common goals
- Step B3:** Validate and improve stakeholder mapping
- Step B4:** Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities
- Step B5:** Analyse existing disaster preparedness and response plans
- Step B6:** Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses
- Step B7:** Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning

C

After a Participatory Process: communicate the outcomes to the wider community

- Step C1:** Finalise the process and communicate the outcomes of the participatory process to the wider community
- Step C2:** Establish and apply Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) metrics
- Step C3:** Communicate MEL Results

A

Before a Participatory Process: assessing feasibility in a specific context

Contents:

- **Introduction**
- **Step A1:** Contextual analysis
- **Step A2:** Stakeholder identification
- **Step A3:** Political and institutional support
- **Step A4:** Resources availability
- **Step A5:** Community willingness and capacity to engage
- **Checklist phase A**

Introduction

The first step in developing a participatory planning process should involve a comprehensive assessment of its feasibility and sustainability within the specific context - defined here as the particular social, cultural, institutional, legal, and environmental conditions characterizing a given setting. This may refer, for instance, to urban neighbourhoods with diverse migrant populations, remote rural communities with limited infrastructure, coastal towns frequently exposed to flooding, informal settlements with weak institutional presence, or mountainous regions where access and communication are constrained. While participatory planning can enhance inclusivity and effectiveness, it is not inherently straightforward nor universally applicable. It may entail trade-offs and give rise to unexpected challenges or unintended consequences. Conducting a feasibility assessment helps

practitioners to determine whether a participatory is contextually appropriate, feasible within existing resources and capable of meaningfully engaging relevant actors. Early identification of these dynamics allows planners to anticipate and mitigate potential pitfalls, such as discrepancies between community expectations and governmental capacity, limited material or human resources, barriers to participation, or the risk of adverse outcomes. A robust feasibility assessment should address several interrelated dimensions, including the prevailing socio-cultural norms, the legal and regulatory framework, the identification and influence of key stakeholders, and the degree of institutional, political, and community support for participatory processes. A summary table is provided at the end of the section (Table 1).



Step A1: Contextual analysis

Before a Participatory Process:
assessing feasibility in a specific context

Step A1: Contextual analysis
Step A2: Stakeholder identification
Step A3: Political and institutional support
Step A4: Resources availability
Step A5: Community willingness and capacity to engage

Objective

To evaluate the social, legal and institutional context governing disaster risk management and preparedness and response planning, with the aim of identifying both barriers and enabling conditions for participatory approaches. This includes an examination of governance structures, legal provisions and socio-cultural dynamics that influence community engagement. Moreover, this step considers the feasibility of integrating outputs from the participatory process - such as proposed measures or procedures - within the existing regulatory and institutional frameworks.

Suggested Methodology

Analysis of disaster risk management legal and policy frameworks

Conduct a comprehensive review of relevant national and local legislation, policies, and planning instruments related to DRM and emergency preparedness. This may include disaster risk management laws, national and municipal contingency plans, civil protection acts, and risk reduction strategies. The analysis should identify whether and how current frameworks incorporate participatory mechanisms, and evaluate to which extent these mechanisms are institutionalised, implemented, or absent.

Informal conversations and interviews

Engage in both informal (e.g., one-on-one conversations) and formal (e.g., semi-structured interviews) qualitative discussions with stakeholders. These may include community leaders, government officials, technical experts, civil society actors, and representatives of marginalized groups. These discussions aim to explore perceptions, concerns, expectations, and the general openness towards participatory planning, as well as to identify potential entry points or resistance within the governance system.

Key Questions to address

- Who are the key decision-makers in preparedness and response planning at national, regional and local levels?
- What formal or informal roles do citizens, civil society organizations, and the private sector play in DRM and preparedness and response planning?
- Do legal, cultural or political constraints exist that may hinder equitable participation?
- Do existing political or legal frameworks disproportionately favour certain groups or institutions in the decision-making process?
- Do national or local legal frameworks explicitly support or mandate participatory processes in disaster risk management and preparedness and response planning?
- Are there examples of legislation or policies mandating community involvement in preparedness and response planning?
- Are there records of participation initiatives? With which results?
- In the absence of formal mandates, what informal practices or community-driven initiatives facilitate participation?
- How do current policies allocate the roles and responsibilities between government institutions and other stakeholders?

Tools and Resources

- DRM legal and policy mapping template
- DRM institutional map
- Interview guide

Step A2: Stakeholder identification

Before a Participatory Process:
assessing feasibility in a specific context

Step A1: Contextual analysis
Step A2: Stakeholder identification
Step A3: Political and institutional support
Step A4: Resources availability
Step A5: Community willingness and capacity to engage

Objective

To identify and analyse key stakeholders in DRM and preparedness and response planning, assessing their respective roles, interests, capacities and levels of influence. This step aims to understand the dynamics among stakeholders - including power relations, potential conflicts, and willingness or ability to engage - to inform inclusive and balanced participatory processes.

Suggested Methodology

Stakeholder mapping

Develop a comprehensive stakeholder map to document all relevant actors within the DRM and preparedness and response planning context. These may include:

- Government agencies (national, regional and local levels)
- Civil society organizations (NGOs, community-based organizations)
- Community leaders and informal local structures
- Academia and research institutions
- Private sector actors (e.g. utility providers, businesses, infrastructure operators).

Stakeholder power and influence analysis

Use a stakeholder influence-interest grid to classify stakeholders according to their relative power and level of engagement in the disaster preparedness and response planning process. This analysis should address:

- The stakeholder's functional role (e.g. decision-maker, advisor, implementer, etc.)
- Their influence over key decisions or outcomes regarding the planning process
- Their interest and motivation regarding the planning process and its success

Key Questions to address

- Who are the key stakeholders in disaster risk management/preparedness and response planning and which roles do they currently play?
- What are the specific responsibilities and mandates of each stakeholder within the DRM framework?
- What is the level of influence or decision-making power each stakeholder has over the process?
- How can each stakeholder influence the design, implementation, and success of the participatory process?
- Do key stakeholders have the will and resources to engage in a participatory process?
- What barriers exist (e.g., logistical, political, resource-based) that could hinder their involvement?
- Are there conflicting interests or power imbalances?
- What strategies can be employed to mitigate conflicts?

Tools and Resources

- Stakeholder Power/Interest Matrix
- Stakeholder Analysis Table
- Stakeholder Ecosystem Map
- Stakeholder visual mapping tools (e.g., Adobe Create Cloud, Miro, Canva)

<https://urbact.eu/toolbox-home/implementing/stakeholders-powerinterest-matrix>
<https://urbact.eu/toolbox-home/implementing/stakeholders-analysis-table>
<https://urbact.eu/toolbox-home/implementing/stakeholders-ecosystem-map>
<https://www.adobe.com/home?acomLocale=ca>
<https://miro.com/templates/stakeholder-map/>
<https://www.canva.com/>

Step A3: Political and institutional support

Before a Participatory Process:
assessing feasibility in a specific context

Step A1: Contextual analysis
Step A2: Stakeholder identification
Step A3: Political and institutional support
Step A4: Resources availability
Step A5: Community willingness and capacity to engage



Objective

To evaluate the level of commitment and readiness of political leaders and local institutions to support a participatory approach to preparedness and response planning. This includes assessing both the willingness and the capacity of political and institutional actors to engage in sustained, long-term efforts that promote community involvement.



Suggested Methodology

Dialogue with key officials

Engage with political representatives and decision-makers, including civil protection authorities, government officials and key departments at the relevant territorial level (e.g. local, regional, and national level) - to assess their support for participatory preparedness and response planning. Conduct structured interviews, consultations, or roundtable discussions to explore their perceptions regarding community engagement and their willingness to support participatory processes with tangible resources and actions.

Assess institutional readiness

Evaluate the openness and capacity of relevant institutions to integrate participatory approaches. This should include an analysis of institutional leadership and culture, staff expertise, availability of resources (e.g. funding, time, training), and the existence of formal or informal mechanisms that enable or support public engagement.



Key Questions to address

- Do key political figures support participatory preparedness and response planning?
- Is there evidence of political leaders actively championing participatory processes in disaster risk planning, or is support primarily rhetorical?
- Are disaster risk management institutions willing and prepared to work in a participatory manner?
- What capacity-building measures are necessary to ensure local institutions are both willing and able to facilitate meaningful community involvement? Are there gaps in knowledge, training, or resources that need to be addressed?
- What political or institutional obstacles may hinder participatory planning efforts?
- What are the potential obstacles to sustained political or institutional commitment? (Consider factors such as political cycles, competing priorities, bureaucratic inertia, and possible conflicts of interest among key stakeholders).



Tools and Resources

- SWOT analysis creator and visual collaboration platforms (graphic chart or online tools such as Miro or Canva)
- Interview template for political and institutional actors

<https://miro.com/strategic-planning/swot-analysis/>

https://www.canva.com/it_it/

Step A4: Resources availability

Before a Participatory Process:
assessing feasibility in a specific context

Step A1: Contextual analysis
Step A2: Stakeholder identification
Step A3: Political and institutional support
Step A4: Resources availability
Step A5: Community willingness and capacity to engage



Objective

To evaluate whether the necessary financial, human, and technical resources are available and sufficient to support the participatory process.



Suggested Methodology

Resource mapping and gap analysis

Conduct a systematic mapping of available resources within local government institutions and potential external support networks, including NGOs, international organizations, private sector, and community-based organizations. The analysis should include both formal resources - such as financial allocations, technical expertise, trained personnel, and physical infrastructure - and informal resources, such as local knowledge, volunteer networks and community initiatives. The output should be a comprehensive inventory of all the available resources relevant to the participatory process. In parallel, identify any critical resource gaps that may undermine the success or continuity of the participatory process. These may include inadequate funding, insufficient trained personnel, limited facilitation capacity, or difficulties in communication and coordination tools. The analysis should also explore practical strategies to address these gaps, such as establishing partnerships or mobilizing additional funding to ensure sustained resource availability over time.



Key Questions to address

- What financial resources are available to support participatory planning and are they sustainable over the long term? Are there potential challenges in securing funding beyond the initial stages of the process?
- Do local authorities and stakeholders have the technical capacity (e.g., trained facilitators, communication tools) to engage in participatory processes?
- Are trained facilitators explicitly identified and available to be engaged in the participatory process? Is there an economic budget specifically dedicated to guaranteeing the presence of a professional facilitator?
- What capacity gaps exist in terms of trained facilitators, technical tools, or communication platforms? How can these be addressed through training, partnerships, or external support?
- Are there existing collaborations (e.g., CSOs, NGOs, international agencies) that can support the process?



Tools and Resources

- Resources table: Availability; Gaps and Contributors (Microsoft Excel or any other management tool)

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/excel>

Step A5: Community willingness and capacity to engage

Before a Participatory Process:
assessing feasibility in a specific context

Step A1: Contextual analysis
Step A2: Stakeholder identification
Step A3: Political and institutional support
Step A4: Resources availability
Step A5: Community willingness and capacity to engage

Objective

To measure the community's disaster risk awareness, perceptions and willingness to engage in participatory planning. This step aims to ensure long-term involvement and foster a sense of community ownership towards disaster preparedness and risk management.

Suggested Methodology

Surveys and questionnaires

Distribute structured surveys to a broad cross-section of community members to evaluate their awareness of disaster risks, perceptions on risk management institutions and willingness to participate in preparedness and response planning activities. Instruments can include a mix of quantitative components (e.g., Likert-scale for measuring trust in authorities, perceived preparedness and readiness to engage) and qualitative components (e.g., open-ended questions exploring personal experiences, expectations and perceived needs). This will help capture a full range of perspectives and inform planning decisions. When possible, offer both online and offline survey options.

Group discussions

Conduct informal or semi-structured group discussions with community leaders, local organizations, and members of vulnerable populations to uncover insights into community perceptions, cultural norms, past experiences with participatory-like initiatives and perceived barriers to engagement. The inclusion of underrepresented voices is essential to ensure the process reflects the needs and aspirations of all community segments.

Key Questions to address

- What level of disaster awareness and preparedness exists within the community?
- What specific areas of disaster preparedness does the community feel confident about (e.g. knowledge on shelter locations, evacuation norms, civil protection measures, alert system functioning, etc.), and what areas need more awareness or training?
- What social or cultural dynamics exist that could either facilitate or hinder community participation? (Consider power dynamics, social norms, and historical relationships with local authorities).
- How does the local community view the role of external actors (such as local authorities, NGOs, and national and international organizations) in disaster management, and does this perception affect cooperation or engagement?
- What specific barriers (e.g., physical, social, economic) prevent marginalized or vulnerable groups from participating fully? How can these barriers be overcome to ensure equitable involvement?

Tools and Resources

- Community engagement survey template (with Likert-scale)
- SWOT analysis creator for visualizing community sectors' willingness and readiness to engage (graphic chart or online tools such as Miro or Canva)

<https://miro.com/strategic-planning/swot-analysis/>

https://www.canva.com/it_it/

Checklist Phase A Before a Participatory Process: assessing feasibility in a specific context

STEP	OBJECTIVE	SUGGESTED METHODOLOGIES	QUESTION TO ADDRESS	TOOLS & RESOURCES
Step A1: Context analysis	To evaluate the social, legal, and institutional context that governs DRM, identifying enablers and barriers for participatory approaches	Review of relevant national and local legislation, policies, and planning instruments related to DRM and emergency preparedness. Informal/formal interviews and group discussions	<i>Do legal frameworks explicitly support or mandate participatory processes in DRM?</i> <i>Are there cultural, legal, or political constraints to participation?</i>	DRM legal and policy mapping Interview guide
Step A2: Stakeholder identification	To identify key stakeholders and assess their interest, power, capacity, and willingness to engage in participatory preparedness and response planning processes	Stakeholder mapping Stakeholder power and influence analysis	<i>Who are the key stakeholders in DRM and what roles do they play?</i> <i>What is each stakeholder's influence and interest in the planning process?</i> <i>Are there conflicting interests or power imbalances?</i>	Stakeholder Power/ Interest Matrix Stakeholder Analysis Table Stakeholder Ecosystem Map Stakeholder visual mapping tools (e.g. Miro and Canva)
Step A3: Political and institutional support	To evaluate political and institutional openness and willingness to support a participatory approach to preparedness and response planning	Dialogue with local political leaders and officials Assessment of institutional openness and readiness to participatory planning approaches	<i>Do political leaders support participatory preparedness and response planning?</i> <i>Are local institutions willing and prepared to work in a participatory manner?</i> <i>What obstacles may hinder this process?</i>	SWOT analysis creator and visual collaboration platforms (e.g. Miro and Canva) Interview template
Step A4: Resources availability	To evaluate the availability of financial, human, and technical resources to support the participatory process	Resource mapping and gap analysis (funding, technical expertise, personnel)	<i>What financial resources are available?</i> <i>Do authorities have the capacity to engage in participatory processes?</i> <i>Are there collaborations with external actors for resource support?</i>	Resources table
Step A5: Community willingness and capacity to participate	To measure the community's awareness and willingness to engage in participatory preparedness and response planning	Surveys and questionnaires (Likert-scale) Group discussions with community leaders, organizations, and vulnerable groups	<i>What is the community's level of disaster awareness and preparedness?</i> <i>What social or cultural factors could affect participation?</i> <i>Are there barriers for marginalized groups?</i>	Community engagement survey template SWOT Analysis

During a Participatory Process: engage your community

Contents:

- **Introduction**
- **Step B1:** Create the group
- **Step B2:** Share the process and establish common goals
- **Step B3:** Validate and improve stakeholder mapping
- **Step B4:** Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities
- **Step B5:** Analyse existing preparedness and response plans
- **Step B6:** Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses
- **Step B7:** Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning
- **Checklist phase B**

Introduction

This phase marks the practical implementation of the participatory preparedness and response planning process, where prior preparatory work transitions into active engagement and co-creation with the community. It is a dynamic phase characterized by collaboration, iterative reflection and integration of diverse perspectives into the development of localized disaster and risk mitigation strategies. Key principles during this phase are:

Inclusive participation: all segments of the community - including marginalized, vulnerable and underrepresented groups should be meaningfully included. Their knowledge, concerns and priorities are essential to building comprehensive and equitable measures/suggestions.

Collaboration and co-creation: all participants contribute to the design of plans and solutions. This includes jointly identifying hazards, assessing vulnerabilities and co-designing response measures and preparedness strategies.

Transparency and open communication: all stages of the process should be clearly communicated to participants, fostering trust, shared understanding and continued engagement throughout the initiative.

This stage is operationalized through a series of collaborative steps designed to strengthen local capacity, enhance risk knowledge, and ensure that the resulting preparedness and response plans reflect the lived realities and priorities of the communities they are intended to serve.



Step B1: Create the group

During a Participatory Process: engage your community

Step B1: Create the group

- Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals
- Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping
- Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities
- Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans
- Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses
- Step B7: Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning



Objective

To establish a diverse, inclusive, and representative group of participants who will actively engage throughout the participatory preparedness and response planning process.

Suggested Methodology

Define group composition

Identify and create a balanced group of participants representing different sectors and social groups, including government representatives, community leaders, NGOs, and members of or marginalised populations. Selection criteria should emphasize inclusion and equity - for instance, by reserving seats for individuals from underrepresented groups such as ethnic minorities, women, youth, elderly and people with disabilities. The group's size and composition should reflect the scope of the participatory process and the available resources (e.g. time, facilitators, funding, etc). In some contexts, the process may be tailored to incorporate specific stakeholder perspectives (e.g.: the needs of schools into municipal preparedness and response planning).



Send out invitations via multiple channels

Ensure broad outreach by disseminating invitations through a range of communication channels, such as social media, local newsletters, community radio/podcasts, public assemblies posters and personal outreach. Special attention should be given to methods that effectively reach vulnerable groups who may have limited access to mainstream media.

Facilitate participation by addressing barriers

Anticipate and address potential barriers that may prevent full participation. This may include offering transportation support, providing childcare services, ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities, or offering interpretation for non-dominant languages. Flexible scheduling and location choices should also be considered to accommodate participants' availability and comfort.



Key Questions to address

- Who are the key representatives from the community and local institutions?
- What steps can we take to remove barriers to participation, ensuring all groups can engage meaningfully?
- What communication methods will best reach the target groups and ensure maximum engagement?
- How can we provide practical support to ensure that vulnerable individuals are not excluded from the process?



Tools and Resources

- Participant's identification and representation map (Excel or any other visual tool such as Miro or PowerPoint)
- Stakeholder invitation letter template
- Enablers/Barriers checklist and mitigation measures (Excel or any other visual tool such as Miro or PowerPoint)

<https://miro.com/>

<https://secondnature.org/resource-invitation-letter/>



Funded by
the European Union



This fact sheet has been produced as part
of the MedEWSa Horizon Europe project



Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals

During a Participatory Process:
engage your community

Step B1: Create the group
Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals
Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping
Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities
Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans
Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses
Step B7: Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning

Objective

To ensure that all participants understand the purpose, scope and structure of the participatory process and to facilitate the co-creation of shared goals. During this step, a straightforward and detailed plan of the participatory process should be developed, outlining planned activities, expected timeline and desired outcomes. This plan enables participants to clarify their roles and responsibilities in advance, understanding their commitment and the necessary timing of the process. The plan may serve as the basis for a formal or informal collaboration agreement between participants and the organizing committee.

Suggested Methodology

Present the facilitation team, the objectives and the timeframe

Introduce the facilitation team and provide an overview of the process, its objectives, and its timeline. Clearly explain each phase of the participatory engagement and the intended outcomes. Ensure facilitators are experienced in inclusive communication and able to support equitable participation from all individuals.

Facilitate icebreakers activities

Conduct introductory exercises to create a welcoming and respectful environment. Icebreakers help participants feel more comfortable, establish early rapport, and foster a sense of psychological safety essential for open dialogue.

Conduct guided and inclusive discussions

Facilitate structured discussions aimed at co-defining the goals of the participatory process. Encourage participants to express their expectations, concerns and inspirations. Use Inclusive formats such as breakout groups, anonymous feedback or visual brainstorming to ensure all voices are heard.

Use visioning and goal-setting exercises

Use participatory tools such as visioning, scenario mapping or future-back thinking to help participants collectively articulate their long-term goals and desired outcomes of the process.

Key Questions to address

- What specific outcomes should we focus on (e.g., improved evacuation plans, emergency kits, self-protection measures)?
- Are the goals identified aligned with your expectations and needs?
- How can we align the community's needs with the broader preparedness and response planning goals?

Tools and Resources

- Goal-setting materials - Excel, flipcharts, sticky notes, whiteboards, or any other visual tool
- Facilitation techniques, such as the World Café
- Feedback collection tools: online forms (e.g. google forms, SurveyMonkey), anonymous feedback, polling apps (e.g. Mentimeter)

<https://theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>
<https://itsurveymonkey.com/>
<https://www.mentimeter.com/>

Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping

During a Participatory Process:
engage your community

Step B1: Create the group
Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals
Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping
Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities
Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans
Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses
Step B7: Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning

Objective

To validate and refine the initial stakeholder mapping exercise (conducted during Phase A, Step A2) through a collaborative process involving participants.

Suggested Methodology

Facilitate group discussions

Organize group sessions to collaboratively identify and review all stakeholders involved in preparedness and response planning. Use brainstorming techniques to bring out ideas from all participants, including community members, local authorities, NGOs, private sector and vulnerable groups.

Use visual mapping for stakeholder identification

Facilitate the stakeholder identification process through visual tools such as sticky notes boards, large posters, or digital platforms such as Miro or Woodlap. These tools help participants visualise the relationships and relevance of each stakeholder to the participatory preparedness and response planning process.

Categorize stakeholders by power/influence and interest

In small groups, categorize stakeholders according to their level of influence and interest in the planning process. Encourage participants to debate and refine these categories. Use the power-interest grid to map stakeholder visually and invite participants to position each stakeholder within the grid based on their perceived level of influence and interest. Discuss the rationale behind these placements and adjust the grid collaboratively.

Validate and confront

Cross-reference the outcomes of this exercise with the stakeholder profiles developed in Phase A (Step A2). Discuss similarities, omissions, or discrepancies to validate and enhance the accuracy and inclusiveness of the final stakeholder map.

Key Questions to address

- Who are the key stakeholders with functions and roles regarding preparedness and response planning in our specific context?
- What are their roles, and how could they influence and benefit from the participatory planning process?
- Which are the enablers and barriers to their engagement in participatory preparedness and response planning?

Tools and Resources

- Visual mapping materials: sticky notes, flipcharts or digital boards
- Brainstorming and consensus-building sessions: to identify and agree on key stakeholders.
- Power-interest grid template: to map stakeholders visually, making it easier to see where each group fits.
- Comparison checklist: among exercise A2-B3

Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities

During a Participatory Process: engage your community

Step B1: Create the group
Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals
Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping
Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities
Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans
Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses
Step B7: Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning



Objective

To collaboratively identify and assess the key hazards that threaten the community, and to understand how different population groups are exposed and affected based on their physical, social and economic vulnerabilities.

Suggested Methodology

Conduct a preparatory training on risk concepts

Before initiating the local hazards and vulnerability identification process, conduct a brief training session for participants to establish a common understanding of core disaster risk concepts. This session should cover the definition of risk and its components (hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and capacity), and introduce key terms related to disaster risk reduction (e.g. risk mitigation, climate change adaptation, emergency plan, civil protection). This preparatory activity helps ensure that all participants-regardless of their backgrounds - can contribute meaningfully to the subsequent discussions.

Engage in a participatory hazard mapping

Facilitate a community-based mapping exercise in which participants identify and geographically locate local hazards - such as floods, earthquakes, wildfires, landslides, or other relevant threats. This can be done using participatory mapping tools such as paper-based maps, GIS software, or digital platforms (e.g.: OpenStreetMap). Encourage the integration of local knowledge - particularly historical memory of past events and their impacts - with available scientific data (e.g.: hazard models, official risk maps) to ensure a comprehensive understanding of hazard patterns and spatial distribution. Parallely, identify and locate community assets (e.g., emergency shelters, rescue teams or civil protection units, critical infrastructure).

Facilitate a community vulnerability and capacity assessment

Conduct a participatory analysis of community vulnerabilities, considering physical (e.g., unsafe housing), social (e.g., elderly populations, people with disabilities), economic (e.g., poverty), and environmental (e.g., deforestation, drainage issues) factors. Discuss how these intersect with hazard exposure and influence the community's capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Establish a hazard and exposure prioritisation

Have participants evaluate and rank hazards based on perceived frequency, severity, impact and likelihood. Use participatory tools like matrix scoring/risks ranking charts. Cross-reference findings with secondary data or institutional assessments where possible to validate community perceptions (collect evidence-based data beforehand).

Key Questions to address

- What are the primary hazards that pose a risk to the community?
- What are the most relevant past events according to collective memory?
- Which locations or groups are mostly exposed and vulnerable to these hazards?
- How do the community's assets (e.g., infrastructure, local knowledge, social capital) influence their ability to cope with disasters?

Tools and Resources

- Participatory hazard mapping tools (e.g., GIS, paper-based maps, or mobile apps like OpenStreetMap)
- Community Assets and Resources
- UNDRR Disaster Resilience Scorecards for Cities

<https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=6/42.09/12.56>
<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/identify-community-assets/main>
<https://mcr2030.undrr.org/disaster-resilience-scorecard-cities>

Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans

During a Participatory Process: engage your community

Step B1: Create the group
Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals
Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping
Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities
Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans
Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses
Step B7: Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning



Objective

To collaboratively review and assess existing preparedness and response plans to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. Attention should be given to the clarity of procedures, the identification of roles and responsibilities, and the relevance of these plans from the perspective of the local community. The aim is to bridge the gap between institutional planning and lived community experience.

Suggested Methodology

Analyse existing preparedness and response plans

In small groups examine the structure, content and key procedural elements of local preparedness and response plans - such as communication protocols, assigned responsibilities, evacuation strategies and resource mobilisation.

Facilitate a community evaluation and reflection

Facilitate discussions in which participants reflect on their experiences during past emergencies or simulation exercises. Ask them to evaluate the clarity, accessibility and effectiveness of the preparedness and response, identifying which procedures worked in practice and which did not. Highlight the lives experiences of different groups, especially vulnerable populations.

Produce a gap analysis

Collectively identify gaps, inconsistencies or areas for improvement within the existing plans. This may include limited accessibility, lack of consideration for specific population needs, weak coordination mechanism or outdated information. This analysis should prioritize the community's perspective.

Key Questions to address

- What existing preparedness and response plans or policies are in place, and how effective are they?
- Are there any significant gaps in existing plans (e.g., inadequate evacuation procedures, lack of resources)?
- How can the community contribute to strengthening these plans?

Tools and Resources

- Comparative Checklist: matrix for reviewing preparedness and response plans contents
- Gap analysis framework/SWOT analysis
- Community feedback tools: such as semi-structured interviews

<https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/>

Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses

During a Participatory Process:
engage your community

- Step B1: Create the group
- Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals
- Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping
- Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities
- Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans
- Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses**
- Step B7: Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning

Objective

To assess the community's coping capacity and identify strengths and weaknesses in the current disaster management system. The step focuses on identifying both formal and informal disaster risk management practices at the local level, providing insight into what works, what needs improvement and how community resilience can be strengthened through targeted support.

Suggested Methodology

Facilitate a coping capacity mapping

Facilitate discussions to explore how the community responds to different types of hazards. Identify the coping strategies they have used in the past - whether institutional (e.g.: municipal response) or informal (e.g.: community self-organization, mutual aid). This exercise should highlight what measures are already in place and how effective or sustainable they are under current conditions.

Conduct a participatory (SWOT) analysis

Conduct a participatory Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis to assess the community's own capacities (strengths and weaknesses) and external influencing factors (opportunities and threats) regarding preparedness and response mechanisms.

Identify and map resources

Engage participants in identifying and mapping available community resources relevant to disaster preparedness and emergency planning. This may include physical assets (e.g., early warning systems, community shelters), human resources (e.g.: local civil protection/rescue teams, trained volunteers), and intangible assets (e.g.: local knowledge, strong social networks). Gaps and limitations should also be recorded.

Key Questions to address

- What are the community's existing strengths in dealing with emergencies (e.g., strong local leadership, community networks)?
- What are the primary weaknesses in current coping mechanisms?
- What resources and support structures can be leveraged to improve disaster preparedness?
- What external opportunities or threats (e.g., institutional partnerships, climate-related challenges) may impact future disaster resilience?

Tools and Resources

- SWOT analysis template (Adobe or Miro)
- Coping capacity assessment tool
- Community resource mapping tool
- Mapping materials: GIS, Paper/digital local maps, Sticky notes
- Facilitation guide for group exercises

<https://www.adobe.com/express/learn/blog/swot-analysis>

<https://miro.com/strategic-planning/swot-analysis/>

<https://idrr.cbm.org/en/card/community-mapping-process>

Step B7: Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning

During a Participatory Process:
engage your community

- Step B1: Create the group
- Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals
- Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping
- Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities
- Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans
- Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths, and weaknesses
- Step B7: Elaborate recommendations for disaster preparedness and response planning**

Objective

To collaboratively develop actionable recommendations, for disaster preparedness and response planning. This step aims to translate the finding of previous participatory exercise into concrete strategies that address identified hazards, vulnerabilities and capacity gaps.

Suggested Methodology

Use scenario planning and simulation exercises for discussion

Use hypothetical or historical disaster scenarios relevant to local stakeholders to guide structured planning exercises. Engage participants in envisioning the sequence of events during an emergency and brainstorm realistic mitigation and preparedness strategies (e.g., self-protection behaviours, evacuation routes, accessible early warning messages, activation procedures for community response groups).

Produce recommendations and advocate for integration

Facilitate a collective process for drafting recommendations and proposed actions, by type (e.g.: infrastructure, communication, coordination) and prioritize them based on urgency, feasibility and impact. Advocate for the integration of the community-developed recommendation into existing disaster preparedness and response planning, municipal strategies and civil protection protocols.

Key Questions to address

- What specific risk reduction and mitigation measures should be put in place (e.g., flood barriers, evacuation routes, better EWS messages)?
- What are the most urgent or feasible actions that should be prioritized?
- How can the community contribute to the implementation of these measures?
- What partnerships or support (e.g., municipal, NGO, private sector) are needed to ensure the success of proposed actions?
- How can the recommendations be institutionalized within official planning frameworks?

Tools and Resources

- UNDRR Scenario Planning with Creative Practices

<https://www.undrr.org/media/80338/download?startDownload=20250311>

Checklist Phase B

During a Participatory Process:

engage your community

STEP	OBJECTIVE	SUGGESTED METHODOLOGIES	QUESTION TO ADDRESS	TOOLS & RESOURCES
Step B1: Create the group	To establish a diverse, inclusive, and representative group of participants	Define a balanced group composition Send out invitations via multiple channels Facilitate participation by addressing barriers	Who are the key representatives? How to reach them? Which barriers to participation and how to address them and ensure that all voices are included?	Participant's representation map Invitation letters Enablers and barriers assessment and mitigation measures
Step B2: Share the process and establish common goals	To ensure that all participants understand the purpose, scope and structure of the participatory process and to facilitate the co-creation of shared goals	Present the facilitation team the objectives and the timeframe Facilitate icebreakers activities Conduct guided and inclusive discussions Use goal-setting exercises	What do we want to achieve? What specific outcomes should we focus on? Are the goals identified aligned with your expectations and needs?	Goal-setting exercises Facilitation techniques Feedback collection tools
Step B3: Validate and improve stakeholder mapping	To validate and refine the initial stakeholder mapping exercise (conducted during Phase A, Step A2)	Facilitate group discussions Categorize stakeholders by influence and interest Validate and confront	Who are the key stakeholders in our context? What are their roles, and how could they influence and benefit from the process? Which are the enablers and barriers to their engagement?	Visual mapping Power-Interest grid Comparison checklist among exercise A2-B3
Step B4: Identify hazards, community exposure, and vulnerabilities	To identify and assess the key hazards and community exposure and vulnerabilities	Conduct a preparatory training on risk concepts Engage in participatory hazard mapping Facilitate a community vulnerability assessment	What are the primary hazards that pose a risk to the community? What are the most relevant past events according to collective memory? Which locations or groups are mostly exposed and vulnerable to these hazards? How do the community's assets (e.g., infrastructure, local knowledge, social capital) influence their ability to cope with disasters?	Participatory hazard mapping tools (e.g. GIS/paper maps, OpenStreetMap) Community Assets and Resources assessment UNDRR Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities

STEP	OBJECTIVE	SUGGESTED METHODOLOGIES	QUESTION TO ADDRESS	TOOLS & RESOURCES
Step B5: Analyse existing preparedness and response plans	To review and assess existing preparedness and response plans in order to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement	Analyse existing preparedness and response plans Facilitate a community evaluation and reflection Produce a gap analysis	What existing preparedness and response plans or policies are in place, and how effective are they? Are there any significant gaps in existing plans (e.g., inadequate evacuation procedures, lack of resources)? How can the community contribute to strengthening these plans?	Preparedness and response Plans Gap analysis Suggested actions for improvement
Step B6: Assess community coping capacity, strengths and weaknesses	Assess the community's coping capacity and identify strengths and weaknesses	Facilitate a coping capacity mapping Conduct a participatory SWOT Analysis Identify resources	What are the existing strengths of the overall system? What weaknesses need addressing? What mechanisms, resources and networks can be leveraged?	SWOT Analysis Coping capacity assessment tool Community resource mapping tool Facilitation of group exercises
Step B7: Elaborate recommend. for disaster preparedness and response planning	To develop actionable recommendations, for preparedness and response planning that can be integrated into a cohesive community-driven plan	Use scenario planning and simulation exercises to brainstorm and identify realistic mitigation and preparedness strategies Advocate for integration of recommendation onto the local preparedness and response plan	What specific risk reduction and mitigation measures should be put in place? What are the most urgent or feasible actions that should be prioritized? How can the recommendations be integrated with official planning frameworks?	UNDRR Scenario Planning with Creatives Practices List of group's recommendations

After a Participatory Process: communicate the outcomes to the wider community

Contents:

- **Introduction**
- **Step C1:** Finalize the process and communicate the outcomes of the participatory process to the wider community
- **Step C2:** Establish and apply Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) metrics
- **Step C3:** Communicate MEL results

Introduction

This final phase focuses on consolidating and communicating the outcomes of the participatory preparedness and response planning process while embedding mechanisms for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL). Rather than viewing participation as a one-off event, this phase emphasizes the importance of ongoing learning and accountability to enhance the long-term impact and relevance of community engagement efforts.

Effective MEL frameworks enable stakeholders to evaluate the quality of participation, effectiveness of outcomes, and the sustainability of the process. While MEL indicators are typically evaluated during the mid-point and conclusion of the participatory cycle, they should be defined - at least in part -

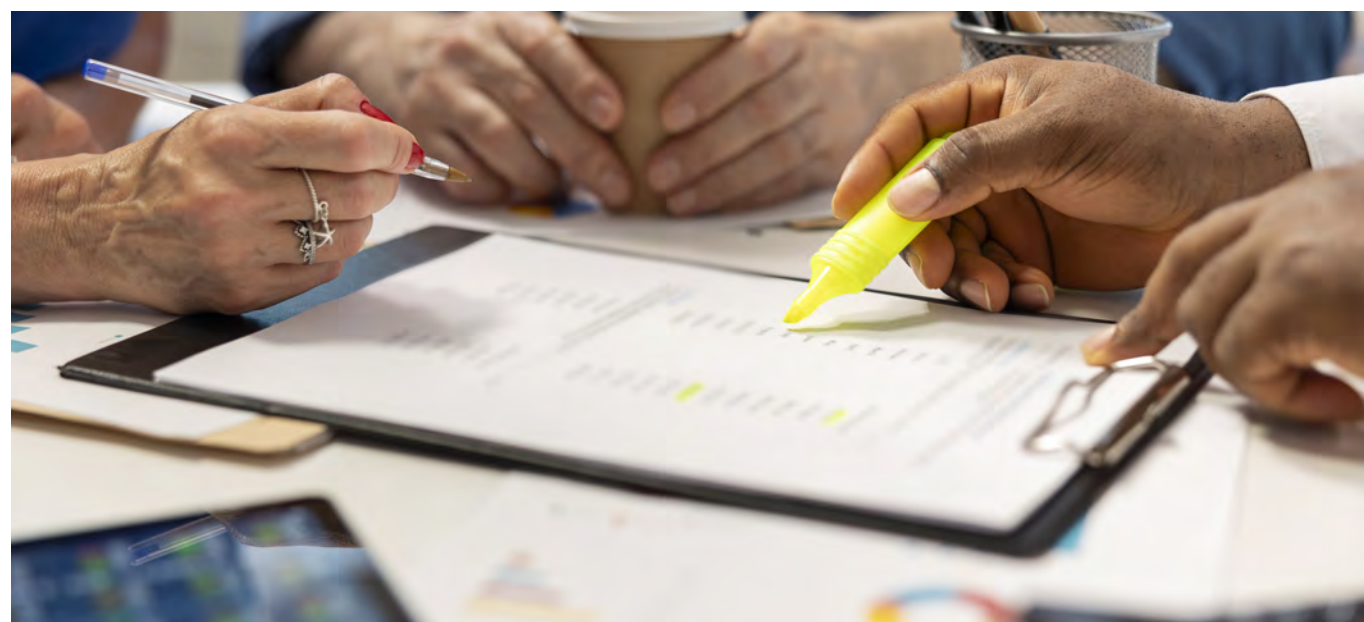
during the initial stages. Wherever feasible, these indicators can be co-designed with participants to reflect shared priorities and enhance ownership of the process.

The aims of a MEL-integrated participatory process are:

Continuous learning: gather feedback and lessons learned to adapt and improve the participatory approach over time.

Accountability: ensure that both the process and its outcomes align with community expectations and the agreed-upon goals.

Sustainability: establish mechanisms for ongoing feedback and improvement to ensure the process remains relevant and effective in the long term.



Step C1: Finalize the process and communicate the outcomes of the participatory process to the wider community

After a Participatory Process:
communicate the outcomes to the wider community

Step C1: Finalize the process and communicate the outcomes of the participatory process to the wider community

Step C2: Establish and apply Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) metrics
Step C3: Communicate MEL results

Objective



To share and disseminate the results and key findings of the participatory preparedness and response planning process to the broader community in a transparent, inclusive and accessible manner. This step aims to close the feedback loop, reinforce accountability and sustain community engagement by ensuring that all stakeholders are informed of the outcomes and potential future steps.

Suggested Methodology

Prepare clear and accessible summaries

Condense the main findings into formats that are easy for the community to understand, such as infographics, reports, or brief summaries.



Use multiple communication channels

Utilize a variety of channels, including community meetings, social media, newsletters, posters, and local radio or TV stations.

Host a community event

Organize a public meeting or town hall to present the outcomes and engage the community in a dialogue about the findings.

Encourage feedback

Provide mechanisms for the community to ask questions and give feedback on the outcomes.

Key Questions to address



- What are the main outcomes of the participatory process?
- How can the community benefit from or contribute to these outcomes?
- Are there any actions or next steps for the community to take following the outcomes?
- How will the feedback from the community be integrated into future processes?

Tools and Resources



- Outcomes summary templates/infographics
- Presentation slides (PowerPoint)



Funded by
the European Union



This fact sheet has been produced as part
of the MedEWSa Horizon Europe project



MedEWSa

Step C2: Establish and apply Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) metrics

After a Participatory Process:
communicate the outcomes to the wider community

Step C1: Finalize the process and communicate
the outcomes of the participatory process
to the wider community

Step C2: Establish and apply Monitoring,
Evaluation and Learning (MEL) metrics
Step C3: Communicate MEL results

Objective

To develop and apply a set of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) indicators that assess the quality and effectiveness of the participatory process and its impacts on community preparedness. The MEL framework enables stakeholders to measure progress, reflect critically on the process, and adapt future participatory initiatives based on evidence. MEL indicators should cover three key dimensions:

- **Process indicators:** these focus on how well the participatory process was implemented, including the engagement of stakeholders, inclusivity, and the extent to which the process adhered to its intended design.
- **Outcome indicators:** these measure the results or effects of the participatory process, such as increased community risk awareness, enhanced resilience, or tangible improvements in disaster preparedness and response planning.
- **Learning indicators:** these focus on the learning outcomes of the process - whether community members, local authorities, and other stakeholders have gained new knowledge or changed behaviours as a result of the participatory process.

Suggested Methodology

Design MEL Indicators:

Where appropriate, involve community participants and institutional stakeholders in the definition of indicators.

Apply the SMART Framework:

Ensure MEL indicators are both meaningful and achievable, using the SMART framework:

- Specific: clearly defined
- Measurable: quantifiable or observable
- Achievable: realistic targets
- Relevant: aligned with the process goals
- Time-bound: with a clear timeframe for achievement

Use mixed methods for data collection:

Where possible, apply a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools to assess MEL indicators, including:

- Pre/post surveys
- Key informant interviews
- Focus groups
- Attendance and participation records
- Observation checklists
- Case studies of impact

Create a MEL Plan:

Develop a clear MEL plan outlining what will be measured, by whom, when, and how data will be analysed and used. Include a feedback loop to communicate findings and adapt the process accordingly.

Key Questions to address

- *What aspects of the participatory process should be tracked to ensure quality implementation?*
- *How will we know if the participatory approach has improved community awareness, preparedness, or planning outcomes?*
- *What evidence will demonstrate that learning has occurred among stakeholders?*
- *How will findings be used to inform and improve future participatory processes?*

Tools and Resources

- Survey tools: Google Forms or SurveyMonkey, to collect pre- and post-participation data.
- Focus groups: qualitative insights from participants regarding their perceptions and learning outcomes.
- Evaluation templates: evaluation frameworks (e.g., theory of change) to assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.
- Data analysis software: Excel, SPSS Statics software, or R programming language for data analysis, especially for quantitative indicators.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>

Examples of Process indicators

These indicators assess the quality and inclusivity of the participatory process.

Example: Stakeholder engagement

- Indicator: Percentage of key stakeholders involved in the process (e.g., government officials, community leaders, NGOs, vulnerable groups).
- Target: At least X% of identified stakeholders actively participated.

Example: Inclusivity and diversity

- Indicator: Percentage of marginalized or vulnerable groups (e.g., women, children, elderly, and people with disabilities) included in the process.
- Target: X% representation of marginalized groups in planning meetings and workshops.

Example: Participant satisfaction

- Indicator: Percentage of participants satisfied with the participatory process (measured through post-event surveys or interviews).
- Target: At least X% of participants report being satisfied with the process.

Examples of Outcome Indicators

These indicators assess the effectiveness of the participatory process in achieving tangible changes.

Example: Community risk awareness

- Indicator: Percentage increase in community members who can identify local hazards and risks (measured through pre- and post-surveys).
- Target: A X% increase in hazard awareness after completing the participatory process.

Example: Community preparedness and response capacity

- Indicator: Percentage of households with emergency kits and/or with proven capability of adopting protection measures
- Target: X% of households surveyed have emergency kits and/or demonstrate good knowledge of self-protection measures in the event of an emergency.

Example: Improvement in community networks

- Indicator: Number of new or strengthened community-based disaster response groups (e.g., local disaster committees and community volunteer groups).
- Target: At least X new community disaster response groups formed, or existing groups strengthened through increased membership or enhanced functionality - assessed by questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and/or activity reports.

Example: Risk reduction actions

- Indicator: Number of community-driven risk reduction or mitigation actions implemented (e.g., EWS, retrofitting houses, improving drainage systems).
- Target: At least X risk mitigation actions per community (tracked through community action plans).

Examples of Learning indicators

These indicators measure knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural changes as a result of the participatory process.

Example: Changes in knowledge

- Indicator: Increase in community members' understanding of disaster risks and preparedness and response actions (measured by surveys before and after the process).
- Target: X% of participants can demonstrate improved knowledge of disaster risk management concepts and practices.

Example: Increased trust in institutions

- Indicator: Percentage of community members who report greater trust in local authorities or emergency management agencies (measured by surveys or focus groups).
- Target: X% of participants report a positive change in their trust towards local authorities involved in the process.

Example: Behavioural change

- Indicator: Percentage of community members who have adopted specific emergency preparedness actions (e.g., creating family emergency plans, attending training sessions).
- Target: X% of participants report adopting new preparedness behaviours.

Example: Stakeholder learning

- Indicator: Number of government or institutional stakeholders who report increased understanding of community needs or new approaches to preparedness and response planning.
- Target: X% of participants report increased knowledge after the participatory process.

Tools and resources:

- Survey tools: Google Forms or SurveyMonkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>), to collect pre- and post-participation data.
- Focus groups: qualitative insights from participants regarding their perceptions and learning outcomes.
- Evaluation templates: evaluation frameworks (e.g., theory of change) to assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.
- Data analysis software: Excel, SPSS Statics software, or R programming language for data analysis, especially for quantitative indicators.

Step C3: Communicate MEL results

**After a Participatory Process:
communicate the outcomes to the wider community**

Step C1: Finalize the process and communicate the outcomes of the participatory process to the wider community
Step C2: Establish and apply Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) metrics
Step C3: Communicate MEL results

Objective

To ensure that the findings derived from the MEL indicators are effectively communicated to all relevant stakeholders, including the community, local authorities, and external partners. This step reinforces transparency, accountability, and sustained engagement by ensuring that lessons learned are learned and shared and inform future participatory processes.

Suggested Methodology

Define target audiences

- Community members: residents, community groups, and marginalized or vulnerable populations.
- Local authorities and government agencies: key decision-makers who need to be informed about the outcomes to adapt policy or planning.
- Donors and external partners: NGOs, international organizations, and other external stakeholders who may be providing support or funding.
- General public

Create clear and accessible communication materials

- Provide an interpretation of the data: explain what the indicators mean and how they reflect the success or challenges of the participatory process.
- Highlight key takeaways: share the most significant improvements or areas needing further attention. For example: "We saw a 40% increase in the number of households with self-emergency plans, but we still need to address gaps in disaster preparedness among vulnerable groups."
- Use a variety of communication formats to ensure that results are understandable and accessible to diverse audiences (e.g., written reports, infographics, presentations, and community meetings).
- Avoid jargon and technical language, making the findings accessible to people without specialized knowledge.

Visualize data

- Infographics and data visualization tools: graphs, charts and heatmaps can make complex data more digestible and engaging. For example, showing before-and-after comparisons of risk awareness or community preparedness levels using visual tools.
- Interactive tools: web and dashboards for ongoing data monitoring.

Choose the communication channels

- Community meetings: host open community meetings where results can be shared, questions can be answered, and further feedback can be solicited.
- Digital platforms: use social media, community websites, or mobile apps to communicate results widely.
- Public events and reports: prepare simple, clear, and concise reports (both digital and physical) that summarize MEL findings and can be publicly accessed.
- Printed materials: prepare flyers, posters, or brochures which can be distributed in community centres, local businesses, or schools to reach a broader audience.

Share challenges and areas for improvement

- Be transparent about challenges faced during the process or areas where the goals were not fully met. This is key for fostering trust and showing a commitment to continual improvement.
- Use constructive feedback to address gaps in future participatory processes.

Solicit further feedback

- After sharing the results, it's crucial to continue the conversation by asking for feedback on how the participatory process can be improved moving forward.

Step C3: Communicate MEL results

**After a Participatory Process:
communicate the outcomes to the wider community**

Step C1: Finalize the process and communicate the outcomes of the participatory process to the wider community
Step C2: Establish and apply Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) metrics
Step C3: Communicate MEL results

Key Questions to address

- *What did we learn from the participatory process? (Highlight both successes and challenges, and what this means for future planning).*
- *How have the indicators shown progress or gaps? (Explain how the data reflects the community's growth, preparedness, and involvement in the process).*
- *What steps will be taken next? (Provide a clear action plan for next steps based on the findings from the MEL indicators).*
- *How can the community continue to be involved? (Emphasize ongoing participation opportunities and how feedback can continue to shape the planning process).*
- *How will this information be used to improve future participatory processes? – (Discuss how the results will inform and adapt future engagement strategies or preparedness and response planning).*

Tools and Resources

- Infographic tools: Adobe Creative Cloud , Canva or Piktochart can help create visual summaries of data for easy understanding.
- Survey platforms: Google Forms or SurveyMonkey can be used to distribute post-process feedback and collect results in an accessible format.
- Reporting templates: Microsoft Word or Google Docs can be used to create formal reports. Results-based management reports can guide the structure.
- Online dashboards: Platforms like Tableau or Flourish can be used to create interactive dashboards for sharing real-time data with stakeholders.

https://www.adobe.com/it/creativecloud.html?gclid=EAlaQoChMlmoPJ752CjAMVJauDBx1loATCEAYASAAEgLOT PD_BwE&mv=s&search&mv2=s&paidsearch&adid=DRCF12978ef_id=EAlaQoChMlmoPJ752CjAMVJauDBx1loATCEAYASAAEgLOT PD_BwE&gclid=AL130853717428329801lellgladobe%20suite121820710190172013991354&gad_source=1
https://www.canva.com/it_it/
<https://piktochart.com/>
<https://uk.surveymonkey.com/>
<https://www.tableau.com/>
<https://flourish.studio/>

Audiences and suggested communication channels and methodologies

COMMUNICATION CHANNEL	TARGET AUDIENCE	SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY	SUGGESTED FREQUENCY
Community meetings	Residents, community groups	In-person meetings where the process and its results are presented and discussed openly.	Once before starting the process and once after final evaluation; additional sessions if needed.
Digital platforms (social media, websites)	General public, younger population, external partners	Use of social media and websites to share progress/ WhatsApp groups for ongoing dialogue.	Ongoing updates and key findings.
Printed materials (flyers, posters, brochures)	Residents, low-tech populations	Simple summaries of MEL results in visual and easy-to-understand posters, flyers and videos.	After key evaluation milestones.
Public reports (print and online)	Decision-makers, donors, public	A formal report that includes MEL data, key achievements, and areas for improvement.	Annually or at key project milestones.
Community newsletters	Residents, stakeholders	Regular newsletters summarizing key findings, changes, and upcoming actions.	Quarterly or bi-annually.
Interactive dashboards	Community leaders, stakeholders, external partners	Online visualizations of progress, showing real-time data and interactive feedback tools.	Ongoing or as needed.
Focus group discussions	Vulnerable groups, marginalized populations	Smaller groups to discuss the results and provide additional input on the process.	As part of final evaluation or annual check-ins.



Participatory Methodology for Volcanic Emergency Planning in Tenerife
Participatory Risk-Management Approach for Implementing the Tenerife Island Volcanic Emergency Action Plan



Participatory Workshop Plenary

Summary

To strengthen volcanic emergency preparedness on Tenerife through a participatory, multi-stakeholder planning process, ensuring that the island’s Volcanic Emergency Action Plan reflects local realities, knowledge, institutional capacities, and coordinated roles across actors.

Location: Tenerife, Canary Islands
Country: Spain
Scale: Regional / Island-wide
Timeframe: 2024-2025
Duranton of the process: 12-18 months

Implementers

- Tenerife emergency management institutions
- Local government authorities/Technical agencies and volcanic monitoring experts
- Public and private sector stakeholders
- Community actors

Target group(s)

- Local and regional emergency responders
- Public authorities (municipal, island-level)
- Technical agencies involved in volcanic monitoring
- Private sector stakeholders
- Community groups potentially affected by volcanic activity

Participatory process & actions

The initiative applied a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology to co-develop the implementation strategy for the island’s volcanic emergency plan. Key actions included:
Stakeholder mapping and engagement
Identification of all relevant actors involved in volcanic risk management.
Collaborative workshops
Multi-actor sessions to discuss vulnerabilities, coordination gaps, and operational needs.
Horizontal coordination
Bringing together institutions, community groups, technical agencies, and private stakeholders to harmonize actions with emphasis on shared ownership and inclusiveness.
Vertical coordination
Linking municipal, island-level, and regional governance structures.
Co-drafting of proposals
Contributors jointly worked on improving procedures, communication flows, and operational guidelines within the emergency plan.

Highlights

Enhanced coordination and governance
The process improved collaboration across municipal, island, and regional institutions, clarifying roles and responsibilities and fostering a more integrated approach to volcanic risk management.
Stronger ownership and legitimacy of the emergency plan
Inclusive engagement of key stakeholders increased trust in the plan and generated a shared sense of responsibility for its implementation.
Valuable blend of scientific and local knowledge
Stakeholder discussions helped connect technical volcanic-risk assessments with operational and social realities, producing a more grounded and context-appropriate plan.
Improved operational readiness
Co-developed proposals strengthened procedures for communication, response coordination, and preparedness, contributing to a more robust emergency system.

Lessons Learned

Uneven participation across actors
Some groups (e.g., institutional stakeholders) were more represented than others, limiting the extent

to which the process reflected the full diversity of community perspectives.
Technical complexity restricted broad community involvement
Volcanic-risk planning involves scientific concepts that can be difficult for non-specialists, making meaningful participation challenging without additional facilitation or communication tools.
Coordination demands were resource-intensive
Bringing together actors across governance levels required substantial time and administrative effort, which could limit the scalability of such approaches.
Implementation still dependent on political will and resources
Despite strong co-design, successful execution of the plan relies on long-term commitment, funding, and institutional continuity.
Risk of participation fatigue
Stakeholders may experience overload when multiple participatory processes run in parallel, especially in high-risk territories that engage frequently in planning exercises.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212420925001803>

Prevenzione Comune
A participatory process for the municipal Civili Protection Plan update



Summary

The project proposes a new approach to address the so-called “last mile” of the Civil Protection

System, in which municipal administrations and citizens collaborate to update the Municipal Civil Protection Plan. The process focused on the following topics:

- Risk prevention and land management
- Tools for risk prevention and forecasting
- Tools used by the Administration to communicate the state of emergency
- Tools available to citizens to collaborate during an emergency
- Proposals for revising or integrating the Plan (e.g. territorial monitoring teams, gates, unpaved roads, citizen contact systems, patrol rounds, door-to-door notifications, sound alarms, mass use of SMS)

Location: Quiliano (SV)
Country: Italy
Scale: Local
Population involved: 7,000
Timeframe: 2013-2014
Duranton of the process: 24 months

Promoting entities

- Quiliano municipality
- CIMA Research Foundation

Target group(s)

- Schools (parents, students, teachers),
- Volunteers,
- Active Citizens,
- Civil Protection Experts

Participatory process & actions

Following several internal meetings among municipal administrators, technical staff, and consultants, the citizen-engagement process was launched with a public presentation assembly. The programme included awareness-raising and information activities, and was structured into three phases:
Listening: Valuing community knowledge

- Walking tour of the areas affected by the 1992 flood
- “COMMON PREVENTION” listening point at the AGRIGUSTA fair
- On-site interviews

Experimenting: Becoming protagonists of one’s own safety

- Drill/exercise involving schools and the wider community

- Post-exercise debriefing and discussion

Participating: Identifying solutions and strategies together

- Participatory workshops aimed at identifying solutions and strategies

During the project, various participatory methods were applied, such as interviews, walking tour of the flood-affected areas, two workshops (including one on participatory risk mapping), exercise and related debriefing. At the end of project activities, the revised plan was presented to the local community.

Highlights

Integration of perspectives and knowledge:

The integration of competencies and knowledge from both emergency planning technicians and citizens in the definition of the revised plan led to the development of an operational and resilient emergency plan.

Schools as a cornerstone of community

resilience: The engagement of school institutions and younger generations is a key element in reducing the vulnerability of the local community

Learning by doing: A civil protection exercise has been effective in assessing the functioning of the municipal emergency plan, enhancing the awareness of the local community regarding the plan, as well as appropriate preparedness and response behaviours

Lessons Learned

Participation emerges as an effective approach in emergency planning, as it provides citizens with practical information and basic scientific knowledge while simultaneously acting as a tool for risk acceptance and self-empowerment. By recognizing the central role of community preparedness, participation promotes the active involvement of citizens not only in defining solutions and strategies, but also in strengthening their capacity to protect themselves.

RiskPACC

Risk Perception and Action to Enhance Civil Protection–Citizen Interaction



3rd External Workshop

Summary

RiskPACC is a European Horizon 2020 project aimed at enhancing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) by strengthening two-way communication between citizens and Civil Protection Authorities (CPAs). The project applied a co-creation approach based on local workshops to better understand diverse risk perceptions, build trust among stakeholders, and co-develop technological and conceptual solutions supporting disaster preparedness, response, and risk communication.

Location: Six local case study areas across different European countries

Country: Multi-country (Europe)

Scale: Local

Population involved: N/A

Timeframe: September 2021 – August 2024

Duration of the process: 3 years

Promoting entities:

- Academia/Universities

Target group(s):

- Citizens (Vulnerable and marginalised groups)
- Civil Protection Authorities
- Volunteers and first responders
- Researchers and ICT developers

Participatory process & actions

- More than 20 co-creation workshops implemented in six case study areas
- Structured participatory activities following four phases:

Introduction - the DRR topic that was of highest relevance to the case study area was identified and introduced

Conceptualisation - discussions on the topic, facilitating an exchange of different understandings of risks, perspectives, and pertinent needs, fostering trusts between the participants which were a diverse group of stakeholders in DRR including citizens and Civil Protection Authority representatives

Collaboration - solutions was co-designed and tested

Continuation - case study owners were advised to make sure the ideas and suggestions developed in the workshop as well as the relationships built can continue to exist in the future, especially by follow-up communication among workshop facilitators and participants

- Various conceptual tools and approaches were applied in the conceptualization phase: a storyboard user story; the method of nudging; a risk communication exercise and participatory mapping.

Highlights

- Strengthened trust and mutual understanding between citizens and Civil Protection Authorities
- Successful co-development of technological solutions
- Modular and adaptable co-creation methodology applicable to diverse local contexts
- Inclusion of multiple stakeholder perspectives, including those of vulnerable groups

Lessons Learned

- Co-creation can effectively align solutions with real user needs
- Challenges can emerge due to the different level of knowledge, competencies and language between researchers (from the promoting entity) and the local stakeholders; however, practical tools and approaches (e.g. participatory

mapping) can enhance mutual understanding

- Proper participation in co-creation requires time and resources; thus, funding conditions and sufficient time are crucial for a meaningful participation and for properly ensuring the transfer of the engagement results into practice.
- Achieving full representativeness of stakeholders remains challenging
- Continuation of co-created processes and tools after project completion is at risk without dedicated funding

Link:

<https://www.riskpacc.eu/>

Bibliography

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216–224.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366908977225>

IFRC. (2020). *Community engagement and accountability toolkit*. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

IPCC. (2023). *Climate change 2023: Synthesis report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Core Writing Team, H. Lee & J. Romero, Eds.). IPCC.
<https://doi.org/10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647>

Kruse, S., Abeling, T., Deeming, H., Fordham, M., Forrester, J., Jülich, S., Karanci, A. N., Kuhlicke, C., Pelling, M., Pedoth, L., & Schneiderbauer, S. (2017). Conceptualizing community resilience to natural hazards: *The emBRACE framework. Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences*, 17(12), 2321–2333.
<https://doi.org/10.5194/nhess-17-2321-2017>

Modica, M., & Zoboli, R. (2016). Vulnerability, resilience, hazard, risk, damage, and loss: A socio-ecological framework for natural disaster analysis. *Web Ecology*, 16(1), 59–62.
<https://doi.org/10.5194/we-16-59-2016>

Morando, M., Franciosi, C. Giambelli M., Participatory Processes for Civil Protection Planning. international Conference Life Franca, 2019 Participatory processes for civil protection planning. LIFE FRANCA Project. https://www.lifefranca.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/15_Participatory-process-for-Civil-Protection-planning.pdf

Pearce, L. (2003). Disaster management and community planning and public participation: How to achieve sustainable hazard mitigation. *Natural Hazards*, 28(2–3), 211–228.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022917721797>

Selje, T., Schmid, L. A., & Heinz, B. (2024). Community-based adaptation to climate change: Core issues and implications for practical implementations. *Climate*, 12(10), 155.
<https://www.mdpi.com/2225-1154/12/10/155>

Sphere Association. (2018). *The Sphere handbook: Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*. Sphere.

Twigg, J. (2015). *Disaster risk reduction: Mitigation and preparedness in development and emergency programming*. Overseas Development Institute.

UNDRR. (2015). *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030*. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

UNDRR. (2022). *Global assessment report on disaster risk reduction 2022: Our world at risk - Transforming governance for a resilient future*. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

UNDRR. (2023). *The report of the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030*. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

UNDRR & WMO. (2022). *The executive action plan for the “Early Warnings for All” initiative*. World Meteorological Organization. <https://public.wmo.int/en/resources/united-nations-early-warnings-all-initiative>

URBACT. (n.d.). *Stakeholders power/interest matrix*. <https://urbact.eu/toolbox-home/implementing/stakeholders-powerinterest-matrix>

World Bank. (2014). *Community-led disaster risk management: A review of good practice and lessons learned*. World Bank.

Appendices

Appendix I: Chapter 1 Additional Resources

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (2020). Community engagement for disaster resilience

The handbook presents national principles of community engagement for disaster resilience and provides guidance to support those who engage with communities in disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. These guidelines are dedicated to a plurality of organizations and institutions, such as policy makers, practitioners working for NGOs, practitioners working in the private sector, volunteers working in disaster resilience, community leaders.
<https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/community-engagement-disaster-resilience>

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (2021). A Red Cross Red Crescent guide to community engagement and accountability

This guide provides staff and volunteers across the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with a common approach to building Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) systematically into our ways of working. It provides an overview of CEA approaches and activities that can be applied to any type of program or operation at any point in the program cycle.
<https://www.ifrc.org/document/cea-guide>

Wehbe, M., Salmoral, G., López-Gunn, E., M. & Smithers, R.J. (2024). DIY Manual on engaging stakeholders and citizens in climate adaptation, including tools, good practices, and experiences. August 2024. EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change. European Union, Brussels

This manual collects practical indications aimed at supporting local authorities in engaging local communities for the development of climate change adaptation policies.
<https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/mission/news/news/new-diy-manual-empowers-local-authorities-to-boost-citizen-engagement-in-climate-adaptation>

UNDP (2020). Guidelines for community participation in disaster recovery

Methodological approach to guide Governments, United Nations agencies, International NGO's, the Private Sector and other stakeholders on how to engage communities in every step of the recovery process. Ultimately the aim is to improve the quality of post-disaster recovery by promoting the active involvement of people and their communities, from the post-disaster needs assessment, to recovery planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
<https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/guidelines-community-participation-disaster-recovery>



Funded by the
European Union



This report has been produced as part
of the MedEWSa Horizon Europe project



Participatory Approaches for Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning

MedEWSa Project
