EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE PLAN (EPRP)

2025 - 2027

ASSOCIATION FOR ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT (AFAD)
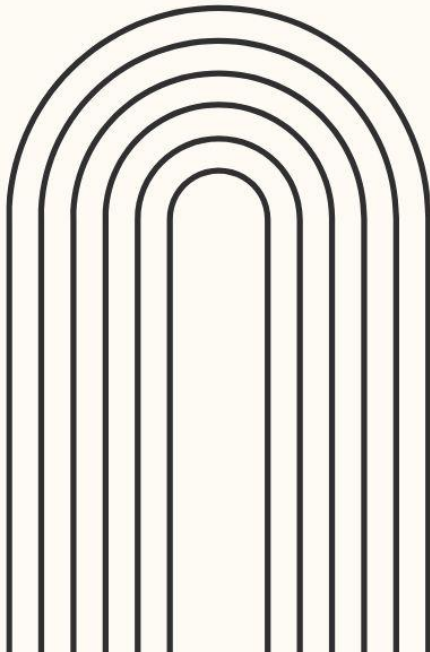
Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary

The *Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP)* of the Association for Alternative Development (AFAD) establishes a comprehensive institutional framework for anticipating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies in Bangladesh. AFAD is a women-led local humanitarian and development organization based in Kurigram, one of the most disaster-prone districts in the country. The organization works closely with climate-vulnerable and marginalized communities that experience repeated shocks and have limited access to resources and services.

Bangladesh is highly exposed to a range of natural and human-induced hazards, including floods, flash floods, riverbank erosion, cyclones, heatwaves, fires, and disease outbreaks. Northern districts such as Kurigram face chronic flooding, erosion, seasonal displacement, and entrenched poverty. These challenges disproportionately affect women, children, persons with disabilities, elderly people, widows, and landless households. As a local organization deeply rooted in these communities, AFAD possesses strong contextual knowledge, community trust, and rapid response capacity, allowing it to act effectively and sensitively during emergencies. This EPRP consolidates AFAD's preparedness measures, response protocols, coordination mechanisms, and accountability commitments into a single guiding document. It defines the organization's approach to disaster preparedness and humanitarian action, clarifying leadership roles, decision-making processes, response triggers, and standard operating procedures. The plan aims to ensure that AFAD's humanitarian interventions are timely, well-coordinated, principled, and effective, while maintaining the highest standards of accountability and inclusivity.

The EPRP seeks to strengthen AFAD's institutional readiness and operational capacity to respond quickly and efficiently to emergencies. It supports the organization's efforts to reduce the time between the onset of a disaster and the delivery of life-saving assistance, while improving coordination with government authorities, humanitarian clusters, and partner organizations. The plan emphasizes gender-responsive, inclusive, and protection-centered assistance to ensure that humanitarian action upholds the dignity, rights, and safety of all individuals, particularly the most vulnerable. It also establishes systems to maintain the continuity of essential operations during crises and to link emergency response with early recovery, rehabilitation, and long-term community resilience.

This plan applies to all AFAD staff, volunteers, and partners across its operational areas. It covers both sudden-onset and slow-onset crises and is designed to guide action throughout the entire emergency management cycle, including preparedness, response, early recovery, and transition to development. The EPRP will be reviewed annually and updated after major emergencies to reflect lessons learned, emerging risks, and evolving contexts. Training, simulations, and capacity-building initiatives will ensure that all staff and volunteers are familiar with the plan and ready to implement it effectively when needed.

Through this plan, AFAD reaffirms its commitment to localization, women's leadership, and accountability to affected populations. The EPRP serves not only as an operational tool but also as a statement of AFAD's mission to deliver humanitarian assistance that is timely, coordinated, and grounded in the values of equity, respect, and human dignity. It bridges immediate emergency relief with sustainable recovery and long-term resilience, ensuring that AFAD continues to protect lives and empower communities across Bangladesh

2. Organizational Background and Context

2.1 Overview of AFAD

The Association for Alternative Development (AFAD) is a women-led local humanitarian and development organization based in Kurigram District, one of Bangladesh's most disaster-prone areas. Established over two decades ago, AFAD works to empower marginalized communities—particularly women, girls, youth, and persons with disabilities—by addressing poverty, inequality, climate vulnerability, and gender-based violence.

AFAD is registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) under the Prime Minister's Office (Registration No. 2443), and with the Directorate of Women's Affairs and Directorate of Youth Development. Its women-led structure ensures that gender equality, accountability, and community participation are embedded across governance, management, and field operations. AFAD implements integrated programs that combine gender equality, disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, livelihoods, WASH, humanitarian response, and localization of aid. With deep community roots and strong local partnerships, AFAD is recognized for its ability to mobilize rapidly during crises and sustain engagement throughout recovery and development phases.

Vision: AFAD envisions a society where women and men are equally empowered, enjoying equal access to justice, human rights, dignity, and opportunities, ensuring a fair and inclusive future for all.

Mission: AFAD's mission is to empower marginalized communities—especially women, girls, adolescents, and youth— by advancing gender equality, ending gender-based violence, promoting climate resilience, and strengthening localized humanitarian action, to build an inclusive and just society where all enjoy dignity, rights, and equal opportunities.

Core Values: To uphold respect, accountability, integrity, gender equality, inclusivity, innovation, sustainability, and excellence in all its work.

2.2 Strategic and Programmatic Focus

AFAD applies a rights-based and gender-transformative approach, linking humanitarian action with long-term development and resilience. Its work spans the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, emphasizing community leadership and locally led solutions. AFAD's core program areas include women's empowerment, disaster preparedness and response, livelihoods, youth engagement, disability inclusion, WASH, climate adaptation, and advocacy. Programs are implemented through trained volunteers, women's groups, and local networks to ensure local ownership and sustainability.

2.3 Key Program Areas

- **Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality:** Gender equality is central to AFAD's mission. The organization promotes women's leadership, prevents gender-based violence, and strengthens women's economic independence through training, advocacy, and income-generation programs.

- **Humanitarian Response and Disaster Preparedness:** AFAD maintains strong readiness to respond to emergencies such as floods, cyclones, and river erosion. It provides life-saving relief, WASH assistance, and protection services, while supporting rehabilitation and early recovery. Community volunteers are trained in early warning, first aid, and evacuation to enhance local preparedness and resilience.
- **Community Empowerment and Governance:** AFAD strengthens women-led community-based organizations (CBOs) and promotes inclusive local governance. It facilitates dialogue between citizens and authorities to improve accountability, transparency, and access to services.
- **Livelihoods and Economic Resilience:** The organization enhances the income and food security of poor households, particularly in the **char (river island)** areas. Activities include skills training, micro-grants, small enterprise support, and promotion of climate-resilient agriculture.
- **Youth and Adolescent Engagement:** AFAD empowers youth and adolescents through leadership programs, civic engagement, and awareness on gender equality, rights, and social responsibility. Youth clubs and girls' circles promote positive values, equality, and participation in community development.
- **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):** AFAD improves access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene practices through community-led initiatives. It promotes low-cost water technologies, builds gender- and disability-friendly facilities, and raises awareness on hygiene and menstrual health management.
- **Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience:** AFAD supports communities affected by climate change through awareness, adaptation training, and promotion of climate-smart livelihoods. It also advocates for policy reform and supports internally displaced families to rebuild sustainable lives.
- **Localization and Partnerships:** Committed to the localization of aid, AFAD collaborates with local government, community organizations, and national networks to ensure that humanitarian action is context-specific, inclusive, and sustainable.

2.4 Organizational Context

Operating in one of Bangladesh's most climate-vulnerable regions, AFAD combines local knowledge, women's leadership, and community engagement to deliver inclusive, gender-responsive humanitarian and development programs. Its strong field presence, rapid mobilization capacity, and trusted relationships enable it to respond effectively to emergencies while addressing the root causes of vulnerability. Through innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning, AFAD remains committed to building resilient, empowered, and equitable communities that can adapt to changing environments and future challenges.

3. Purpose, Objectives, and Scope of the EPRP

3.1 Purpose

The *AFAD Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) 2025–2027* provides clear, practical, and standardized guidance to ensure timely, coordinated, and accountable action before, during, and after emergencies. It strengthens institutional readiness, coordination, and accountability while fostering a culture of preparedness and resilience.

Key aims:
- Define AFAD's preparedness and response framework.

- Clarify organizational roles, responsibilities, and decision-making.
- Establish emergency triggers and response levels.
- Standardize assessment, planning, and monitoring procedures.
- Ensure adherence to humanitarian principles and standards.
- Integrate gender, protection, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

3.2 Objectives

- **Enhance Readiness:** Strengthen staff, systems, and partner capacities for effective emergency action.
- **Ensure Rapid Response:** Facilitate timely decision-making and efficient resource deployment.
- **Promote Accountability:** Uphold humanitarian quality, transparency, and community engagement.
- **Build Resilience:** Support community-based preparedness, risk reduction, and recovery.
- **Link Relief and Recovery:** Ensure smooth transition from response to sustainable development.

3.3 Scope

The EPRP applies to all AFAD staff, partners, volunteers, and operational areas, covering both sudden-onset and slow-onset emergencies. It applies across all phases of the disaster management cycle:

- **Preparedness:** Risk analysis, contingency planning, and capacity building.
- **Response:** Life-saving interventions and relief assistance.
- **Early Recovery:** Restoration of services and livelihoods.
- **Transition:** Linking relief efforts with long-term development and disaster risk reduction.

The EPRP is a **living document**, regularly reviewed and updated based on new learning, emerging risks, and operational experiences.

3.4 Linkages and Alignment

The EPRP aligns with:
- The *National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP)* and *Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD)* of Bangladesh.
- International standards including the *Sphere Handbook*, *Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)*, and *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)*.
- AFAD's Strategic Plan and national coordination mechanisms to ensure coherence and complementarity in humanitarian action.

4. Humanitarian Principles, Standards, and Commitments

AFAD's humanitarian work is guided by universally recognized principles and international standards that safeguard the rights, dignity, and protection of crisis-affected people. These principles form the ethical and operational foundation of AFAD's actions, ensuring that all interventions remain people-cantered, transparent, and accountable. By upholding these values,

AFAD reaffirms its commitment to saving lives, reducing suffering, and supporting the most vulnerable with respect and impartiality.

4.1 Humanitarian Principles

AFAD's humanitarian action is grounded in the four core principles endorsed by the United Nations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:

- **Humanity:** Respond to human suffering wherever it exists, protecting life and dignity with compassion and respect.
- **Impartiality:** Provide assistance solely based on need, without discrimination of any kind.
- **Neutrality:** Remain non-partisan in political, religious, or ideological matters to maintain trust and access.
- **Independence:** Operate autonomously from political or military influence to ensure credibility and impartial action.

All AFAD staff and partners are expected to understand and uphold these principles in every aspect of their work.

4.2 Humanitarian Standards and Accountability Frameworks

AFAD aligns its operations with globally recognized humanitarian standards to ensure quality, effectiveness, and accountability. These include:

- **Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS):** Commitment to quality assistance, participation, and continuous improvement.
- **Sphere Minimum Standards:** Application of essential sectoral benchmarks in WASH, shelter, food security, health, and protection.
- **Do No Harm and Conflict Sensitivity:** Integration of approaches that prevent exacerbating tensions and promote social cohesion.
- **Child Safeguarding and PSEA:** Enforcement of zero tolerance for abuse, exploitation, or neglect, with clear reporting and response procedures.
- **Gender Equality and Women's Leadership:** Promotion of inclusive, gender-responsive, and locally led humanitarian action.
- **Localization and Partnership:** Collaboration with local actors to strengthen community ownership and sustainable impact.

Regular orientation and training ensure all personnel understand and comply with these standards.

4.3 Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

Accountability to Affected Populations is central to AFAD's humanitarian approach, ensuring communities play an active role in shaping the assistance they receive. AFAD's AAP commitments include:

- **Transparency:** Sharing timely and accessible information on rights, services, and decisions.
- **Participation:** Involving affected people—especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities—in all program stages.
- **Feedback and Complaints:** Maintaining safe and confidential mechanisms for communities to voice concerns and receive responses.
- **Learning and Improvement:** Using feedback and evaluations to strengthen program quality and accountability.
- **Protection and Dignity:** Ensuring all actions respect and uphold the safety, rights, and well-being of affected populations.

Through these commitments, AFAD promotes trust, inclusion, and shared responsibility between humanitarian actors and the communities they serve.

5. Governance, Leadership, and Accountability Framework

5.1 Emergency Governance Structure

AFAD's emergency governance and management framework operates through an **integrated command structure** that ensures clarity, efficiency, and accountability throughout the entire emergency management cycle — from preparedness and response to recovery and transition. The key structures include:

Executive Committee (EC)	
Composition:	**Core Responsibilities:**
AFAD Executive Members	• Provide **strategic oversight** and ensure that all emergency actions align with AFAD's mission, strategic priorities, and humanitarian commitments. • Approve **organizational emergency response policies**, resource allocations, and risk management strategies. • Authorize the **activation of large-scale emergency responses** based on predefined triggers or government declarations. • Ensure **institutional accountability**, financial transparency, and compliance with internal policies and external donor regulations. • Review and endorse **post-emergency evaluations**, lessons learned, and policy adjustments for continuous improvement.

Crisis Management Team (CMT)	
Composition	**Core Responsibilities**
Chief Executive (Lead), Program, Program/ Project Coordinator, key departmental heads (Finance, Logistics, MEAL, HR, Communications), and focal persons from relevant sectors	• Lead **strategic and operational decision-making** during active emergency responses. • Approve **response strategies, budgets, and resource mobilization plans** in consultation with the Executive Committee. • Coordinate cross-departmental functions to ensure seamless implementation and information flow. • Oversee **situation analysis, needs assessments, and coordination with external actors**, including government and cluster mechanisms. • Monitor the evolving context and recommend **scale-up or phase-out decisions** based on field realities and funding availability.

Emergency Response Team (ERT)	
Composition	**Core Responsibilities**
Program Managers, Project Coordinators, Technical Specialists (e.g., WASH, Protection, Livelihoods, DRR), MEAL Officers, and field coordinators.	• Translate the strategic guidance from the CMT into **technical response plans and sector-specific implementation frameworks**. • Lead the **development of detailed implementation schedules**, work plans, and monitoring indicators for all response activities. • Provide **technical guidance and capacity support** to field teams and local partners. • Ensure that interventions meet **Sphere Standards**, **Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)** commitments, and AFAD's internal quality benchmarks. • Conduct **real-time monitoring and reporting**, ensuring timely adjustments based on community feedback and contextual changes.

Field Response Team (FRT)	
Composition	**Core Responsibilities**
Field Coordinators, Community Mobilizers, Volunteers, and Partner Organization Representatives.	• Conduct **rapid and detailed needs assessments** at the community level to inform program design and prioritization. • Coordinate closely with **local authorities, Disaster Management Committees (DMCs)**, and community leaders to ensure alignment with local response structures. • Implement activities related to **food assistance, shelter, WASH, protection, and livelihoods** according to the approved response plan. • Facilitate **community participation**, ensuring that the most vulnerable groups (women, children, older persons, and people with disabilities) are reached. • Maintain **regular communication with the ERT**, reporting field realities, challenges, and success stories in real time.

5.2 Roles and Responsibilities

AFAD ensures that all roles and responsibilities are clearly defined across departments and levels of operation to guarantee accountability, minimize duplication, and enable rapid action during emergencies.

Roles and Responsibilities	
Chief Executive	- Provides **overall leadership and strategic direction** for the emergency response. - Approves activation of the EPRP and major operational or financial decisions. - Represents AFAD in coordination forums with government agencies, donors, and national humanitarian platforms. - Ensures adherence to humanitarian principles, organizational policies, and donor compliance requirements.
Program Head/ Program Coordinator	- Leads the **Crisis Management Team** and oversees all technical and operational aspects of the emergency response. - Ensures the integration of cross-cutting issues (gender, protection, disability inclusion, and accountability). - Coordinates program planning, resource allocation, and reporting between headquarters and field teams.
Finance Lead	- Ensures **financial integrity and accountability** in all emergency transactions. - Develops emergency budgets and tracks expenditures in line with donor and AFAD financial procedures. - Facilitates timely **resource mobilization** and fund disbursement for response operations. - Supports audits and financial reporting to maintain transparency.
Logistics and Procurement Lead	- Oversees **procurement, transportation, and warehousing** of emergency supplies. - Ensures efficient **supply chain management** and compliance with procurement policies. - Maintains a roster of pre-qualified suppliers and service providers for rapid mobilization. - Coordinates the movement of goods and assets to ensure timely delivery to affected areas.
MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning) Lead	- Develops and implements **monitoring and evaluation frameworks** for the emergency response. - Oversees the collection, analysis, and reporting of data for evidence-based decision-making. - Ensures community feedback mechanisms are functional and that learning is systematically documented.

	• Leads **after-action reviews, evaluations, and learning events** to strengthen institutional preparedness.
HR and Administration Lead	• Manages **staff deployment, welfare, and performance** during emergency operations. • Ensures that staff are trained, equipped, and supported to perform their roles effectively. • Oversees the recruitment and onboarding of surge staff and volunteers. • Maintains compliance with AFAD's **safeguarding, code of conduct, and PSEA** policies.
Communications and Advocacy Focal Point	• Coordinates **internal and external communication**, ensuring consistent messaging during emergencies. • Documents success stories, lessons learned, and case studies for visibility and advocacy. • Serves as liaison with media, government communication offices, and humanitarian coordination bodies.

5.3 Accountability and Decision-Making

AFAD's emergency governance system emphasizes clear accountability and transparent decision-making at all levels.
- Strategic accountability lies with the Executive Committee.
- Operational accountability rests with the Crisis Management Team and Program Head.
- Implementation accountability is held by the Emergency Response Team and Field Response Units.

All decisions during emergencies are made based on timely information, assessed needs, and humanitarian priorities, following established approval protocols. AFAD also ensures upward, downward, and horizontal accountability — to donors and partners (upward), to affected communities (downward), and across departments and teams (horizontal).

5.4 Leadership During Transitions

When an emergency shifts from acute response to early recovery or development phases, leadership responsibilities transition accordingly:
- The CMT oversees handover from emergency mode to programmatic recovery operations.
- The Program Head/ Program Head/ Program Coordinator integrates recovery actions into regular development programs.
- The MEAL Unit conducts post-response reviews to identify strengths, gaps, and recommendations.

This ensures continuity, institutional learning, and the seamless transition from relief to long-term resilience.

5.5 Institutional Learning and Continuous Improvement

AFAD promotes a learning culture within its emergency governance framework. Regular reviews, simulations, and evaluations help strengthen preparedness and response capacities. Key mechanisms include:
- After-action reviews and debriefings following each major emergency.
- Annual simulation exercises to test coordination and response readiness.
- Periodic policy updates to reflect evolving risks and lessons learned.

6. Risk Analysis, Hazard Mapping, and Vulnerability Assessment

AFAD's *Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP)* is built on a comprehensive understanding of the hazards, vulnerabilities, and risks that shape its operational environment. Through evidence-based analysis and community participation, AFAD identifies priority risks, informs contingency planning, and ensures targeted, inclusive, and efficient response actions. AFAD applies a **multi-hazard approach**, integrating environmental, social, economic, and climatic data with community knowledge to anticipate threats, enhance early warning systems, and reduce disaster impacts on vulnerable populations.

6.1 Hazard Profile

AFAD primarily operates in **Kurigram District** and other northern regions of Bangladesh—areas highly exposed to recurring natural and human-induced hazards due to their proximity to the **Brahmaputra, Dharla, and Teesta Rivers**. The low-lying floodplains, fragile embankments, and limited infrastructure amplify exposure to disasters. Major hazards include:

- **Seasonal Floods and Flash Floods:** Recurrent monsoon flooding affects large areas of Kurigram, leading to loss of crops, livestock, and shelter, as well as damage to roads, schools, and health centres. Flash floods in upstream areas cause sudden inundations, disrupting livelihoods and increasing food insecurity.
- **Riverbank Erosion and Displacement:** Riverbank erosion is a chronic hazard in northern Bangladesh, displacing thousands of families each year. Displaced households often settle on unstable land (chars), where they face high levels of poverty, insecurity, and limited access to services.
- **Cyclones and Severe Storms:** While coastal areas face the highest cyclone risks, northern regions experience the indirect effects—strong winds, heavy rainfall, and infrastructure damage. Severe storms often cause casualties, destroy homes, and affect agriculture.
- **Heatwaves and Extreme Temperatures:** Rising temperatures due to climate change lead to heat stress, water scarcity, and health risks, particularly for children, the elderly, and outdoor labourers.
- **Fires:** Urban fires and homestead fires in densely populated settlements, especially among displaced or informal communities, cause loss of life and property. Poor electrical wiring, dry weather, and use of traditional stoves increase fire hazards.
- **Epidemics and Pandemics:** Waterborne and vector-borne diseases (such as diarrhea, dengue, and malaria) rise following floods. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for strong community health preparedness, infection prevention, and continuity of essential services.

- **Cold Waves and Seasonal Hazards:** Northern Bangladesh often experiences cold waves during winter months, disproportionately affecting the poor, elderly, and homeless populations with limited access to warm clothing and shelter.

6.2 Vulnerability Analysis

Vulnerability in AFAD's areas is driven by poverty, social inequality, isolation, and weak infrastructure. Vulnerability assessments help AFAD prioritize assistance to those most at risk. Key vulnerable groups include:
- **Women-headed households:** Limited access to land, income, and decision-making.
- **Persons with disabilities and elderly:** Barriers to mobility, communication, and healthcare.
- **Landless and ultra-poor families:** Reliant on informal labor with minimal coping capacity.
- **Children and adolescents:** At risk of malnutrition, school disruption, and exploitation.
- **Climate-displaced populations:** Living in temporary or unsafe settlements with poor access to basic services.

Compounding factors include gender inequality, stigma, chronic poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and limited early warning dissemination. AFAD's vulnerability mapping integrates socio-economic, gender, and spatial data to ensure equitable and inclusive preparedness planning.

6.3 Hazard and Risk Mapping

AFAD conducts **community-based hazard and risk mapping** to identify high-risk areas and inform planning. These maps combine participatory insights with scientific data from the **Bangladesh Meteorological Department**, **Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC)**, and **Disaster Management Information Centre (DMIC)**. The mapping process:

- Identifies hazard-prone zones and exposure levels.
- Assesses risk by frequency, severity, and population density.
- Overlays vulnerability indicators such as poverty, gender, and disability.
- Produces digital and visual maps for field teams and local partners.

These maps guide contingency planning, shelter placement, evacuation routes, and pre-positioning of relief items in each operational area.

6.4 Scenario Planning

AFAD uses a **three-tier scenario framework** to anticipate emergencies and prepare proportionate responses:

Scenario 1 – Localized Emergency	Small-scale, short-duration incidents (e.g., flash floods, fires) managed by field offices and local volunteers.
Scenario 2 – Multi-Union/District Emergency	Medium-scale disasters (e.g., major floods, storms) requiring surge support, extended operations, and coordination with district authorities.
Scenario 3 – Large-Scale or Protracted Crisis:	Major, multi-district events (e.g., severe floods, pandemics) requiring national coordination, donor support, and long-term recovery efforts.

This tiered system enables flexible, scalable response planning aligned with available resources and local capacities.

6.5 Risk Mitigation and Preparedness Measures

Based on the analysis, AFAD prioritizes the following preparedness and risk reduction measures:

- Strengthening **early warning systems** and community disaster management committees.
- Pre-positioning **emergency stocks** in high-risk areas.
- Conducting **community awareness, simulation drills, and training**.
- Integrating **gender, protection, and inclusion** in all preparedness activities.
- Partnering with **local government, NGOs, and the private sector** for coordinated action.
- Promoting **climate-resilient livelihoods** and sustainable land management.

6.6 Continuous Risk Monitoring

AFAD maintains a continuous risk monitoring system that tracks hazard trends, climate data, and socio-economic conditions through collaboration with government and research institutions. Quarterly risk reports guide management and field teams in updating preparedness priorities and resource allocation. Through this dynamic, data-driven process, AFAD ensures that its EPRP remains adaptive, inclusive, and responsive to evolving risks and community needs.

7. Preparedness Framework

AFAD's Preparedness Framework ensures that the organization and its partners can respond rapidly, efficiently, and effectively to emergencies. It integrates institutional, programmatic, and community-based preparedness measures across all levels and emphasizes readiness as a continuous process of planning, capacity building, coordination, and learning. The framework balances Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPAs)—ongoing readiness measures—and Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs)—scalable actions triggered by early warning signals. Together, they enable predictable, timely, and well-coordinated responses. AFAD's preparedness framework is guided by **four objectives:**

- Ensure organizational readiness through systematic planning and resource management.
- Strengthen staff and community capacity for rapid, confident action.
- Enhance coordination and partnerships to improve response effectiveness.
- Institutionalize learning and accountability for continuous improvement.

7.1 Minimum Preparedness Actions (MPAs)

MPAs are the essential, year-round activities that maintain AFAD's readiness to act at any time. These include:

- **Annual hazard and capacity mapping** to update risk profiles, safe shelters, and evacuation routes.

- **Updated staff and partner contact lists** and deployment rosters for rapid mobilization.
- **Framework agreements with suppliers** and **pre-positioned emergency stocks** of NFIs and WASH items.
- **Regular staff training and simulations** on emergency SOPs, safety, and communication protocols.
- **Standardized assessment and reporting tools** for rapid data collection and decision-making.
- **Identification of high-risk communities** and dissemination of early warning information.
- **Internal coordination systems** (communication trees, digital alert groups) ensuring 24/7 connectivity.

7.2 Advanced Preparedness Actions (APAs)

APAs are implemented when forecasts or alerts indicate a high probability of an emergency. They enable AFAD to scale up operations and proactively position resources. Key APAs include:
- Activation of **district-level surge teams** trained in assessment, logistics, and protection.
- Readiness for **cash and voucher assistance (CVA)** through partnerships with financial providers.
- **Pre-arranged MoUs with transport providers** for rapid logistics support.
- **Community simulation exercises** and evacuation drills with Disaster Management Committees.
- Use of **digital data systems** for real-time assessments and monitoring.
- **Updated contingency and scenario plans** reflecting seasonal risks.
- **Early coordination and resource mobilization** with government, clusters, and donors.

7.3 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

AFAD conducts **quarterly preparedness reviews** using a Preparedness Scorecard to track MPA and APA progress. Lessons from simulations and evaluations inform annual updates to the EPRP. Preparedness indicators are integrated into performance appraisals and strategic plans, ensuring sustained institutional focus. Through continuous monitoring, adaptation, and collaboration with local Disaster Management Committees, AFAD maintains a **dynamic, inclusive, and resilient preparedness system** capable of meeting evolving humanitarian challenges.

8. Emergency Triggers and Response Levels

AFAD's emergency activation system ensures **timely, coordinated, and evidence-based response actions** to reduce human suffering and loss. By establishing clear triggers and response levels, AFAD ensures that emergencies are managed proportionally to their scale, complexity, and impact. This framework promotes **anticipatory action**, encouraging early decision-making before a crisis fully develops—especially for predictable hazards such as floods and cyclones. Early activation enables AFAD to protect lives, assets, and livelihoods

through rapid mobilization of resources and coordination with government and humanitarian actors.

8.1 Emergency Triggers

AFAD activates its emergency preparedness and response mechanisms based on a combination of **early warning data, field intelligence, and formal notifications** from authorities or partners. The decision to activate is guided by clear criteria to ensure consistency, accountability, and timeliness. **Emergency activation may be triggered by one or more of the following indicators:**

- **Official Disaster Declaration by the Government of Bangladesh:** Activation follows formal notifications or disaster declarations issued by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), the District Administration, or relevant Upazila authorities under the *Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD)*.

- **Alerts or Warnings from Local Government Authorities:** AFAD monitors hazard alerts or evacuation advisories issued by Union Parishad, Upazila Disaster Management Committees (UzDMCs), or the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC).

- **Early Warning Information from Technical Agencies:** Data and forecasts from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), Department of Health, and other relevant agencies are used to anticipate and prepare for potential hazards such as cyclones, floods, or epidemics.

- **Rapid Deterioration of Humanitarian Conditions:** Reports from AFAD's field teams indicating sharp increases in displacement, food insecurity, water contamination, or damage to critical infrastructure can trigger activation—even in the absence of formal government declaration.

- **Requests for Assistance from Local Authorities or Communities:** Direct appeals from affected communities, local leaders, or partner organizations are treated as urgent triggers for initial assessments and potential response activation.

- **Significant Displacement or Livelihood Disruption:** Sudden loss of housing, agricultural land, income sources, or access to essential services (e.g., water, health, or education) serves as a key determinant for AFAD's intervention.

Anticipatory and Early Action: AFAD prioritizes **early activation** in response to forecast-based warnings—such as predicted river levels, cyclone trajectories, or heatwave alerts—to prevent avoidable losses. Anticipatory actions may include pre-positioning relief materials, cash transfers, or evacuation support in coordination with local authorities. This proactive approach reflects AFAD's commitment to the global shift from **reactive humanitarian response** to **forecast-based early action and resilience building**.

8.2 Emergency Response Levels

AFAD applies a **three-tier emergency response classification system** that defines the scale of action, decision-making authority, and resource mobilization requirements for each level of emergency. This system enables AFAD to respond proportionally and efficiently—scaling operations up or down as the situation evolves.

Level 1 (L1): Localized Emergency	
Definition:	A small-scale or localized incident that affects a limited geographic area (e.g., one or two villages or a single union) and can be managed with AFAD's existing resources and regular project staff.
Examples:	Local flash flood, small fire, minor erosion, or localized outbreak.
Key Characteristics:	Local flash flood, small fire, minor erosion, or localized outbreak.
Decision-Making and Authority:	• Limited geographic scope (single community or union). • Minimal displacement and manageable damage. • Short-term duration (usually under two weeks). • Local government and community mechanisms remain functional.
Typical Actions:	• Rapid needs assessment within 24–48 hours. • Deployment of local field staff and volunteers. • Utilization of available contingency funds or pre-positioned stocks. • Short situation report (SitRep) submitted to headquarters.

Level 2 (L2): Multi-Area or Multi-District Emergency	
Definition:	An emergency that affects multiple unions, upazilas, or districts and requires mobilization of internal surge capacity and reallocation of resources across AFAD departments or projects.
Examples:	Major river flood, severe storm, or multi-union erosion and displacement event.
Key Characteristics:	• Broader geographic impact requiring coordination between multiple field offices. • Increased displacement and damage to livelihoods or infrastructure. • Disruption to essential services (e.g., water, health, education). • Duration may extend from several weeks to a few months.
Decision-Making and Authority:	• Activation approved by the Executive Director upon recommendation from the Program Head. • The Crisis Management Team (CMT) is formally activated. • AFAD's surge response team is deployed for assessment and operations.

Typical Actions:	• Expanded multi-sectoral needs assessment (within 72 hours). • Reallocation of staff, budget, and logistics from non-affected projects. • Activation of internal emergency procurement and financial procedures. • Enhanced coordination with District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC), NGOs, and humanitarian clusters. • Development of a short-term Response Plan and Budget for approval by senior management.

Level 3 (L3): Large-Scale or Protracted Emergency	
Definition:	A widespread or long-term crisis that exceeds AFAD's internal capacity and requires external support, coordination, and partnerships at the national or international level.
Examples:	Severe regional flooding, major cyclone aftermath, epidemic, or complex multi-hazard emergency affecting several districts.
Key Characteristics:	• Extensive geographic coverage and population impact. • Long-term humanitarian needs (3 months or longer). • Significant displacement, infrastructure collapse, or livelihood disruption. • Requires coordinated national or multi-agency humanitarian response.
Decision-Making and Authority:	• Activation approved by the Executive Committee (EC). • Full Emergency Governance Structure (EC, CMT, ERT, and FRUs) activated. • AFAD engages in national coordination mechanisms such as NAHAB, BWHP, and Cluster Working Groups. • Strategic leadership provided by the Chief Executive/ Executive Director and Executive Committee Chair.
Typical Actions:	• Launch of a comprehensive Emergency Response Strategy and Appeal. • Large-scale resource mobilization, including donor and partner engagement. • Establishment of dedicated emergency coordination hubs or field offices. • Activation of emergency procurement, logistics, and communication protocols. • Regular situation updates, donor briefings, and coordination meetings. • Integration of protection, gender, and accountability mechanisms in all interventions.

8.3 Transition Between Levels

Emergencies are **dynamic**—they may escalate from L1 to L2 or L3, or de-escalate as conditions improve. AFAD continuously monitors the situation through field reports, assessments, and external updates.

- **Escalation:** If needs exceed current capacity or geographic coverage expands, the next response level is activated upon recommendation from the CMT and approval by senior management.
- **De-escalation:** Once the situation stabilizes, AFAD transitions from emergency mode to **early recovery** and **long-term rehabilitation**, guided by exit criteria and lessons learned.

8.4 Linkage with Preparedness and Contingency Planning

Each response level corresponds to predefined actions in AFAD's **Preparedness Framework (Section 7)** and **Contingency Plans**.
For example:

- **L1:** Activation of local-level MPAs and existing project mechanisms.
- **L2:** Deployment of surge teams and use of pre-positioned resources.
- **L3:** Full mobilization of APAs, donor engagement, and cluster coordination.

This structured approach ensures that AFAD's response is **predictable, proportionate, and well-coordinated**, aligning with national disaster management protocols and global humanitarian standards.

9. Coordination Mechanisms

Effective coordination is the cornerstone of a **timely, coherent, and accountable emergency response**. AFAD's coordination framework ensures that internal systems, partners, and external stakeholders work in harmony, avoiding duplication and maximizing the collective impact of humanitarian efforts.
AFAD recognizes that coordination must occur at **three interlinked levels**:

1. **Internal coordination** among departments and teams within AFAD.
2. **External coordination** with government bodies, networks, and humanitarian actors.
3. **Community coordination**, ensuring the participation of affected people and local leaders in decision-making.

This integrated coordination model allows AFAD to maintain operational efficiency, ensure consistent communication, and uphold humanitarian accountability throughout all stages of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

9.1 Internal Coordination

Internal coordination ensures that AFAD's emergency response is timely, organized, and strategically aligned across all departments and field offices. During crises, the organization adopts a centralized decision-making and decentralized implementation model — meaning that decisions are guided by leadership, while field teams retain flexibility to act swiftly according to local realities. **Key elements of AFAD's internal coordination system include:**

➔ **Crisis Management Team (CMT) Meetings:**
   o The CMT convenes daily or regular meetings (depending on the emergency phase) to review updates, make key operational decisions, and assign responsibilities.
   o Meetings are chaired by the Program Head or Executive Director, with participation from the heads of, Finance, Logistics, MEAL, and HR units.
   o Decisions are recorded and circulated promptly to ensure transparency and follow-up.

➔ **Clear Communication and Information Flow:**
   o Structured communication channels are maintained between headquarters and field teams.
   o The Field Response Units (FRUs) provide situation updates, needs assessments, and implementation progress reports to the Emergency Response Team (ERT), which consolidates and shares these with the CMT.
   o Information is exchanged through emails, WhatsApp groups, shared digital folders, and emergency radio communications, depending on the situation.

➔ **Joint Planning and Integrated Operations:**
   o Coordination across program, logistics, finance, MEAL, and HR ensures coherent response planning and avoids resource bottlenecks.
   o Weekly Joint Operations Meetings (JOMs) are held to synchronize action plans, track deliverables, and troubleshoot challenges.
   o The MEAL unit ensures that feedback from affected communities informs real-time decision-making.

➔ **Situation Reporting (SitReps):**
   o Regular Situation Reports (SitReps) summarize field developments, beneficiary reach, resource status, risks, and key decisions.
   o SitReps are circulated internally to all relevant teams and externally to donors and coordination partners, ensuring transparency and shared situational awareness.

➔ **Decision-Making and Escalation Protocols:**
   o Decisions at field level are made by Field Coordinators within pre-approved parameters.
   o Strategic and financial decisions requiring additional resources or scale-up are escalated to the CMT or Executive Committee (EC) for approval.
   o
➔ **Coordination Tools and Systems:**
   o AFAD utilizes standardized coordination templates, emergency dashboards, and online task-tracking tools to ensure accountability and information consistency.
   o Internal coordination is also guided by AFAD's Emergency SOPs.

9.2 External Coordination

External coordination is vital for ensuring that AFAD's humanitarian efforts are complementary, inclusive, and aligned with national disaster management systems. As a trusted local actor, AFAD works in close partnership with government agencies, humanitarian clusters,

civil society networks, and local organizations to maximize collective impact and ensure that community needs are accurately represented in broader humanitarian planning. **Key external coordination mechanisms include:**

➔ **Coordination with Government Disaster Management Committees (DMCs):**
  o AFAD actively participates in Union, Upazila, and District Disaster Management Committees (UDMC, UzDMC, and DDMC).
  o These committees coordinate planning, early warning dissemination, relief distribution, and post-disaster assessments.
  o AFAD aligns its interventions with the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) and collaborates with government agencies to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication.

➔ **Engagement with Line Departments:**
  o AFAD works closely with local government departments such as the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Department of Social Services (DSS), and Health and Family Welfare Department.
  o Coordination focuses on sectoral areas such as WASH, agriculture, health, protection, and livelihoods, depending on the nature of the crisis.

➔ **Participation in Humanitarian Clusters and Networks:**
  o AFAD engages in national and sub-national cluster coordination mechanisms, such as the WASH Cluster, Protection Cluster, and Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group.
  o Through its memberships in NAHAB (National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors, Bangladesh), BWHP (Bangladesh Women Humanitarian Platform), and DAWN (Disadvantaged Adolescent Working NGOs), AFAD contributes to joint advocacy, coordination, and capacity sharing.

➔ **Partnerships with Local NGOs, INGOs, and Civil Society Organizations:**
  o AFAD collaborates with other humanitarian agencies to promote joint needs assessments, share data, and coordinate resource allocation.
  o Partnerships are built on mutual respect, transparency, and alignment with **localization principles**, promoting efficiency and sustainability.

➔ **Collaboration with Women-Led and Community-Based Organizations:**
  o AFAD places strong emphasis on **women-led and community-based coordination**, ensuring that the perspectives and priorities of women, youth, and marginalized groups shape emergency response decisions.
  o Community groups participate in joint planning, monitoring, and feedback processes to ensure locally grounded and gender-responsive actions.

➔ **Coordination with Donors and Development Partners:**
  o During major emergencies (Level 2 and Level 3), AFAD engages directly with donors, UN agencies, and INGOs to share updates, align strategies, and mobilize resources for collective response.
  o Regular donor briefings, coordination meetings, and joint field visits help maintain transparency and build trust.

➔ **Information Sharing and Joint Reporting:**
  o AFAD contributes to joint situation reports, needs assessments, and sectoral updates through relevant coordination platforms.
  o Data and analysis are shared with stakeholders in line with information management standards, ensuring that decision-makers have access to reliable and up-to-date information.

9.3 AFAD's Bridging Role

As a local, women-led organization, AFAD serves as a bridge between affected communities and formal humanitarian coordination mechanisms. Its grassroots presence and strong community networks enable two-way communication:

- **Bottom-up:** Community voices, needs, and priorities are communicated to government and humanitarian platforms to inform decision-making.
- **Top-down:** Policies, guidelines, and early warning information are disseminated to communities in accessible language and formats.

This bridging role reinforces local ownership, enhances accountability to affected populations (AAP), and strengthens the localization of humanitarian action in line with the *Grand Bargain* and *Principles of Partnership (PoP)*.

9.4 Coordination Principles

AFAD's coordination practices are guided by the following principles:

- **Transparency:** Open sharing of information, plans, and challenges with partners and stakeholders.
- **Complementarity:** Building on the strengths of different actors to deliver a unified response.
- **Inclusiveness:** Ensuring representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in coordination spaces.
- **Accountability:** Upholding commitments to communities, donors, and partners through consistent reporting and feedback.
- **Localization:** Promoting leadership of local organizations and community groups in disaster preparedness and response.

10. Emergency Response Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

AFAD's Emergency Response Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) define the sequence of actions, responsibilities, and quality benchmarks that guide timely and accountable humanitarian response. These procedures ensure that emergency interventions are evidence-based, transparent, gender-sensitive, inclusive, and aligned with humanitarian standards such as the *Sphere Minimum Standards* and *Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)*. The SOPs apply to all AFAD emergency operations — from the onset of a crisis through assessment, planning, implementation, and reporting — and are adjusted based on the level of response activation (L1–L3) outlined in Section 8.

10.1 Rapid Needs Assessment

Purpose:
To collect timely, accurate, and disaggregated data that informs decision-making and ensures assistance is directed to those most in need.

Key Principles:
- Rapid, yet methodical — completed within the shortest possible time without compromising data quality.
- Inclusive — reflecting the perspectives of women, men, youth, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities.
- Coordinated — aligned with government and humanitarian partners' assessment efforts to avoid duplication.

Key Steps:
1. **Activation of Assessment Team (within 24 hours):** The Crisis Management Team (CMT) authorizes the deployment of a multi-sectoral assessment team composed of program, MEAL, and field staff. Surge personnel and volunteers may be mobilized as needed.

2. **Use of Standardized Tools:** AFAD employs pre-approved Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) formats and digital data collection tools (e.g., KoboToolbox) covering sectors such as WASH, shelter, protection, food security, and livelihoods.

3. **Collection of Disaggregated Data:** All data are sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated (SADD) to ensure equitable analysis and inclusive targeting.

4. **Prioritization of Vulnerable Households:** Special focus is placed on women-headed households, persons with disabilities, the elderly, landless families, and children at risk.

5. **Validation of Findings**: Results are verified and cross-checked with community leaders, government officials, and partner organizations to ensure accuracy and community ownership.

6. **Reporting and Submission:** The Initial Assessment Report (IAR) is submitted to the CMT within 48 hours of activation, summarizing key findings, priority needs, and recommendations for response.

Additional Considerations:
- Assessments include analysis of **protection risks**, **market functionality**, **access constraints**, and **community coping mechanisms**.
- MEAL staff ensure that data collection respects ethical standards, including informed consent and confidentiality.

10.2 Response Planning

Purpose:
To translate assessment findings into a clear, coordinated, and accountable action plan that defines how AFAD will respond to the identified needs.

Process Overview:
Response planning begins immediately after assessment results are validated and incorporates multi-sectoral perspectives to ensure an integrated approach.

Key Components of the Response Plan:

1. **Target Population and Geographic Coverage:** Definition of who will be assisted, where, and why — based on verified needs, vulnerability criteria, and available resources.
2. **Selection of Response Modality:** Determination of the most appropriate modality — **cash, in-kind, service delivery, or a combination** — based on market assessments, security considerations, and beneficiary preferences.
3. **Sectoral Interventions and Implementation Approach:** Clear articulation of intervention strategies across relevant sectors such as WASH, protection, shelter, food security, and livelihoods. Cross-cutting themes (gender, protection, disability inclusion, and accountability) are mainstreamed in all plans.
4. **Risk Mitigation and Safeguarding Measures:** Identification of key operational, protection, and reputational risks — along with mitigation strategies to ensure the safety and dignity of affected populations. AFAD's **PSEA (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse)** and **Child Safeguarding** policies are integrated into all response activities.
5. **Budget and Resource Requirements:** Development of a detailed budget, including staff costs, logistics, procurement, and contingency allocations. The Finance Lead ensures budget compliance and donor alignment.
6. **Implementation Timeline:** A clear timeline outlines immediate, short-term, and early recovery activities with assigned responsibilities and milestones.
7. **Approval and Activation:**
   The final response plan is reviewed and approved according to the **activated response level:**
   - **L1:** Approved by the Program Head.
   - **L2:** Endorsed by the Executive Director following CMT review.
   - **L3:** Approved by the Executive Committee.
   -

10.3 Implementation and Distribution Procedures

Purpose:
To ensure that emergency assistance is delivered efficiently, transparently, and in a manner that safeguards dignity, safety, and accountability to affected populations.

Core Principles:
- Fairness and impartiality in beneficiary selection.
- Community participation and oversight.
- Safety, order, and accessibility in distributions.
- Full documentation and reporting for accountability.

Standard Implementation Steps:

1. **Clear Beneficiary Selection Criteria:**
   Criteria are defined based on vulnerability, need, and community consultations. These are communicated publicly to ensure transparency.

2. **Community Verification and Validation:**
   Beneficiary lists are verified through community meetings and coordination with local authorities to minimize inclusion and exclusion errors.

3. **Distribution Planning and Site Management:**
   Distribution points are selected based on accessibility, safety, and proximity to affected communities. Crowd management and security arrangements are established in advance.

4. **Token or List-Based Distribution Systems:**
   Beneficiaries receive tokens, ID verification, or digital codes (for cash/voucher programs) to ensure orderly and traceable distributions.

5. **Gender- and Age-Sensitive Arrangements:**
   Separate queues and waiting areas are established for women, elderly persons, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities to ensure comfort and dignity. Priority assistance is given to those with mobility challenges.

6. **Crowd Management and Safety Measures:**
   Volunteers and security focal points manage queues, spacing, and emergency medical support. Health protocols are enforced during disease outbreaks or heat conditions.

7. **Documentation and Reporting:**
   Distribution records include beneficiary signatures or digital verification, quantities distributed, and itemized receipts. Field teams prepare a Post-Distribution Report (PDR) summarizing outputs, issues, and beneficiary feedback.

8. **Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM):**
   MEAL teams conduct follow-up visits and surveys to assess beneficiary satisfaction, relevance of assistance, and unintended effects. Findings are used to adjust future programming.

Special Considerations:
- **Accountability Mechanisms:** Affected people are informed of their rights, entitlements, and complaint channels (hotline, help desk, suggestion boxes).
- **Coordination:** Distribution plans are shared with local authorities and other NGOs to avoid duplication and ensure coverage.
- **Protection:** No staff or volunteer may request or accept any form of payment, favor, or personal benefit in exchange for aid delivery.

10.4 Reporting and Learning

After each major distribution or operation, AFAD conducts After-Action Reviews (AARs) and team debriefings to capture lessons learned and challenges. Findings are documented in a Response Review Report, which informs future SOP updates and training modules. This continuous learning process ensures that AFAD's response remains adaptive, accountable, and aligned with humanitarian best practices.

11. Sectoral Response Guidelines

AFAD's sectoral response framework outlines the organization's priority areas of intervention during emergencies. Each sectoral response follows international humanitarian standards and national coordination guidelines, ensuring that assistance is timely, inclusive, and accountable. AFAD integrates cross-cutting issues — including gender equality, disability inclusion, environmental sustainability, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) — across all interventions. The following sector-specific guidelines provide operational direction for planning, implementation, and coordination during emergency response.

11.1 Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

Objective:
To provide immediate, safe, and dignified temporary shelter and essential household items to families whose homes are destroyed, damaged, or rendered uninhabitable by disasters.

Key Activities:
- Distribution of **emergency shelter materials**, such as tarpaulins, ropes, bamboo poles, and toolkits for temporary repairs or construction.
- Provision of **basic household NFIs**, including blankets, sleeping mats, cooking utensils, mosquito nets, and solar lamps.
- Distribution of **dignity kits** for women and adolescent girls, including menstrual hygiene materials and culturally appropriate items.
- Coordination with local authorities and technical partners to identify safe shelter sites, avoiding flood-prone or hazardous areas.
- Support to community-led **temporary shelter repair** using locally available materials and labor.

Targeting and Prioritization:
- **Women-headed households**, widows, and families with pregnant or lactating women.
- **Persons with disabilities**, elderly individuals, and families with infants or small children.
- **Households displaced** by riverbank erosion, floods, or fire.

Implementation Standards:
- Shelter designs adhere to *Sphere Standards* for space, ventilation, and safety.
- Separate privacy spaces and lighting arrangements are provided for women and girls.
- Distributions are coordinated with local Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) to prevent duplication and ensure equitable coverage.

11.2 Food Security and Cash Assistance

Objective:
To ensure that disaster-affected families have sufficient access to food and essential goods while supporting local market recovery and promoting household dignity.

Key Modalities:
1. **Cash-Based Assistance:**
   - **Multi-Purpose Cash Grants (MPCGs):** Unrestricted transfers that enable households to meet urgent food and non-food needs.

- o **Conditional Cash Assistance:** Linked to specific objectives, such as livelihood re-establishment or school re-enrollment.
  - o **Unconditional Cash Transfers:** For the most vulnerable households in acute crises.
2. **In-Kind Food Assistance:**
   - o **Dry Food Packages:** Rice, lentils, oil, salt, and other essentials distributed when markets are disrupted.
   - o **Cooked Meals or Community Kitchens:** Implemented during displacement or shelter stays when households lack cooking facilities.

Implementation Considerations:
- Cash interventions are implemented only where **markets are functional and accessible**.
- Market assessments are conducted prior to implementation to ensure supply availability and price stability.
- Distributions and cash transfers are conducted with **gender-sensitive targeting** and measures to prevent exploitation or abuse.

Benefits:
- Promotes **dignity, flexibility, and choice** for affected households.
- Supports **local traders and market recovery**.
- Reduces logistical and warehousing costs associated with in-kind aid.

Coordination:
- Implemented in coordination with the **Food Security Cluster** and local authorities.
- Aligned with government relief operations and national cash working group guidelines.

11.3 Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Objective:
To prevent disease outbreaks, maintain dignity, and protect public health through safe access to water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities during and after emergencies.

Key Activities:
1. **Emergency Water Supply:**
   - o Provision of **safe drinking water** through water trucking, installation of tube wells, or purification tablets.
   - o Rehabilitation of damaged water sources and installation of hand pumps in affected communities.
2. **Sanitation Support:**
   - o Construction or rehabilitation of **temporary and emergency latrines** in shelters, schools, and public areas.
   - o Promotion of **twin-pit latrine models** for safe and sustainable waste management.
   - o Inclusion of **gender-specific sanitation facilities** with proper lighting, locks, and privacy measures.
3. **Hygiene Promotion and Awareness:**
   - o Distribution of **hygiene kits** containing soap, detergent, menstrual hygiene materials, and disinfectants.
   - o Conducting **hygiene promotion sessions** emphasizing handwashing, waste disposal, and safe water storage.

- o Mobilizing **community hygiene promoters and volunteers** for continuous awareness and behavior change campaigns.
4. **Public Health Integration:**
   - o Coordination with the **Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)** and health authorities to ensure water quality testing and disease surveillance.

Implementation Standards:
- All WASH interventions align with *Sphere Minimum Standards*.
- Facilities are accessible to **women, children, and persons with disabilities**.
- Communities participate in decision-making and management of WASH infrastructure.

11.4 Protection

Objective:
To safeguard the rights, safety, and dignity of crisis-affected populations — particularly **women, children, and persons with disabilities** — through mainstreamed and targeted protection interventions. AFAD adopts a **"protection mainstreaming"** approach, ensuring that protection principles inform all sectoral responses while also implementing dedicated protection programs where necessary.

Key Activities:
1. **Identification and Referral of Protection Cases:**
   - o Establish mechanisms for identifying individuals at risk of violence, exploitation, neglect, or abuse.
   - o Refer cases to appropriate government or NGO service providers (social welfare, legal aid, health, or psychosocial support).
2. **Women- and Girl-Friendly Spaces (WGFS):**
   - o Safe spaces where women and girls can access information, counseling, psychosocial support, and life skills training.
   - o Platforms for community dialogue on gender equality, GBV prevention, and leadership development.
3. **Child Protection Measures:**
   - o Support safe spaces for children's play, learning, and psychosocial support during emergencies.
   - o Implement awareness activities to prevent child marriage, trafficking, and exploitation.
4. **Implementation of Safeguarding and PSEA Protocols:**
   - o Enforce AFAD's Code of Conduct, Child Safeguarding, and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policies.
   - o Ensure all staff and partners are trained and sign compliance commitments.
   - o Establish confidential and accessible complaint and feedback mechanisms for affected populations.

Cross-Cutting Protection Integration:
- All programs ensure that distributions, shelters, and WASH facilities are **safe, accessible, and free from discrimination or risk of exploitation**.
- **Community Protection Committees** are established where possible to promote awareness and self-protection strategies.

Coordination:

- AFAD works with **Protection Cluster**, **Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group**, and **Department of Social Services (DSS)** for referral pathways and coordinated case management.

11.5 Livelihoods and Early Recovery

Objective:
To restore income-generating activities and promote long-term recovery for disaster-affected households through sustainable, climate-resilient means.

Key Activities:
- Distribution of **agriculture and livestock inputs** (seeds, tools, chicks, feed).
- Provision of **small business grants or cash-for-work opportunities** to restore livelihoods.
- Training in **vocational skills and disaster-resilient income generation** (e.g., homestead gardening, handicrafts, micro-enterprise).
- Market linkage and value chain support to help producers access fair prices.

Implementation Principles:
- Target the **most vulnerable households**, especially women-headed families and climate-displaced persons.
- Integrate **climate adaptation practices** and environmentally sustainable livelihoods.
- Ensure linkages between early recovery programs and AFAD's long-term development initiatives.

Coordination:
- Aligned with **Livelihoods and Early Recovery Clusters** and relevant government departments.

11.6 Cross-Sectoral Integration

AFAD promotes **multi-sectoral and integrated responses**, recognizing that humanitarian needs are interdependent. For example:
- **Protection and WASH:** Ensuring women's safety in latrine placement.
- **Cash and Shelter:** Allowing flexibility for households to purchase shelter materials.
- **Food Security and Livelihoods:** Linking relief assistance to recovery and self-reliance.

This integrated approach strengthens efficiency, coherence, and sustainability of humanitarian interventions while addressing both **immediate needs** and **long-term resilience**.

12. Logistics and Supply Chain Preparedness

AFAD's logistics and supply chain system ensures that relief goods and services are delivered **efficiently, transparently, and on time** during emergencies. It integrates procurement, warehousing, transport, and coordination mechanisms designed to support rapid humanitarian action while upholding accountability, ethical standards, and environmental responsibility.

12.1 Procurement and Vendor Management: Procurement during emergencies follows AFAD's Procurement and Logistics Policy, ensuring transparency, value for money, and accountability. A roster of pre-qualified vendors and framework agreements with key suppliers allows fast procurement of essential items such as NFIs, WASH kits, and shelter materials. AFAD prioritizes local sourcing to stimulate local economies and minimize transport time and carbon footprint, while ensuring fair opportunities for women-led enterprises. All procurement processes, including emergency purchases, are documented and subject to internal oversight. Supplier performance is regularly reviewed, and underperforming vendors are replaced to maintain quality and reliability.

12.2 Storage and Inventory Management: AFAD maintains strategically located warehouses in hazard-prone districts to enable rapid mobilization. Stocks include relief essentials such as tarpaulins, hygiene kits, water filters, and shelter toolkits, maintained at levels determined by risk analysis and population exposure. Inventory is managed through standardized tracking systems and verified through regular stock reports and audits. Stock release follows documented authorization procedures, ensuring accountability and accuracy. Warehouses are kept secure, well-ventilated, and equipped with fire and safety measures, while perishable items are rotated regularly to prevent spoilage and maintain readiness.

12.3 Transport and Distribution: Transportation arrangements prioritize **speed, safety, and cost-effectiveness**. AFAD maintains agreements with trusted local transporters and utilizes multiple modes—trucks, boats, and rickshaw vans—depending on terrain and access conditions. Contingency routes and staging points are identified in advance to ensure continuity during floods or restricted movement. Coordination between logistics and field teams ensures timely and equitable distribution, supported by clear documentation and proof of delivery records. Post-distribution monitoring verifies accuracy and community satisfaction, while safety protocols and PPE use safeguard all personnel involved in transport and delivery operations.

12.4 Coordination and Communication: The logistics unit operates under the Crisis Management Team (CMT) and coordinates closely with program, finance, and field departments to ensure seamless flow of information and resources. Regular logistics meetings review procurement, stock levels, and transport updates, while daily communication between field and headquarters ensures timely problem-solving. AFAD also collaborates with the Logistics Cluster, District Relief and Rehabilitation Offices, and Disaster Management Committees for shared resources and operational coordination.

12.5 Environmental and Ethical Standards: AFAD integrates sustainability and ethics across its logistics chain by reducing plastic use, promoting recyclable materials, and enforcing ethical labour standards among suppliers. Environmentally responsible disposal procedures are followed for expired or damaged goods, ensuring minimal environmental impact.

12.6 Continuous Improvement: Logistics preparedness is strengthened through regular staff training, capacity assessments, and simulation exercises. After-action reviews and periodic audits identify lessons and guide future improvements. Through these continuous efforts, AFAD maintains a logistics system that is efficient, resilient, and capable of supporting lifesaving humanitarian operations at any scale.

13. Finance, Human Resources, Safety, and Security

AFAD's emergency management systems ensure that financial resources, human capacity, and staff safety are effectively managed during crisis operations. These systems uphold accountability, transparency, and staff welfare, enabling rapid and responsible humanitarian action across all operational levels.

13.1 Emergency Financial Management: AFAD manages emergency funds with efficiency, transparency, and compliance in line with donor requirements and internal policies. Dedicated emergency budget codes and cost centers are activated for each response to ensure accurate financial tracking. Simplified cash advance and liquidation procedures allow field offices to maintain operational continuity, supported by timely documentation and audit readiness. Financial reports are shared regularly with the Crisis Management Team (CMT) for informed decision-making. All procurement and expenditure follow AFAD's financial policies, with clear spending authorities defined by emergency level. Post-response audits reinforce accountability and integrity, while collaboration between Finance and Program teams ensures timely donor reporting and effective resource mobilization.

13.2 Human Resources and Surge Capacity: AFAD maintains a roster of trained staff and volunteers who can be deployed within 24–48 hours of emergency activation. During large-scale crises, surge teams from non-affected areas support critical operations through task shifting and temporary reassignment. Recruitment processes are simplified yet compliant with HR standards, emphasizing gender balance, inclusion, and safeguarding. Continuous training in humanitarian principles, first aid, security, and PSEA strengthens staff capacity. AFAD also prioritizes staff welfare by providing psychosocial support, rest breaks, and medical assistance where needed, ensuring that employees remain motivated, protected, and effective during emergency operations.

13.3 Safety and Security Management: AFAD safeguards its personnel and assets through proactive security risk management. Context-specific security assessments guide operational planning, travel, and deployment decisions. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) define safety responsibilities, communication protocols, and evacuation processes. Field teams are equipped with reliable vehicles, communication devices, and safety gear, and all staff receive training on road safety, first aid, and emergency communication. A security incident reporting system ensures that all events are documented, investigated, and addressed promptly. Coordination with local authorities and participation in national security forums enhance access and situational awareness. Health and safety measures, including PPE use and adherence to public health protocols, are integrated into all field operations, supported by periodic evacuation drills to test readiness.

13.4 Integration and Oversight: Finance, HR, and Security functions operate collaboratively under the CMT framework to ensure synchronized and efficient emergency operations. The Finance Lead oversees funding and expenditure tracking, the HR Lead manages deployment and welfare, and the Security Focal Point monitors risks and enforces safety measures. Strategic oversight from the Executive Director ensures compliance with AFAD's policies and humanitarian principles.

14. Communication, Reporting, and Information Management

Effective communication and information management are essential for a coordinated, transparent, and accountable response. AFAD ensures that accurate, timely information flows between staff, partners, and communities to support decision-making and uphold humanitarian principles.

14.1 Emergency Communication: AFAD's communication system promotes clarity, consistency, and respect for dignity. It provides timely and accurate information for decisions, supports coordination with partners, and keeps affected communities informed about their rights and services. All communication follows principles of accuracy, confidentiality, and Do No Harm.

14.2 Internal Communication: During emergencies, field teams share regular updates and situation reports with the Crisis Management Team (CMT). Major decisions and directives are communicated across departments to maintain coherence. Coordination meetings and digital tools—email, calls, and messaging apps—ensure real-time information exchange between field and headquarters.

14.3 External Communication: AFAD maintains consistent communication with government authorities, humanitarian clusters, donors, and media. Engagement aligns with local disaster-management committees and sector coordination platforms. All external communication is cleared by the Executive Director or Communications Focal Point to ensure accuracy, consistency, and compliance with safeguarding and visibility standards.

14.4 Media and Visibility: AFAD engages media responsibly to highlight community resilience and women's leadership while protecting privacy and dignity. Only authorized spokespersons communicate publicly, and all materials comply with child-protection and safeguarding policies. Visibility follows donor and organizational branding guidelines.

14.5 Information Management: AFAD manages data securely through centralized systems and digital tools such as KoboToolbox. Information is disaggregated by sex, age, and disability, verified by MEAL staff, and shared only through authorized channels. Sensitive data are handled under AFAD's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

14.6 Communication with Communities: Two-way communication strengthens accountability. Communities receive information through meetings, posters, and notice boards, while feedback and complaints are gathered via hotlines, help desks, and suggestion boxes. Feedback is reviewed regularly and informs program adjustments.

15. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

AFAD's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system ensures that all emergency preparedness and response activities are evidence-based, transparent, and focused on continuous improvement. The system integrates real-time monitoring, feedback collection, and learning processes to strengthen program quality and accountability to affected populations.

15.1 Purpose and Approach: The MEAL framework supports decision-making by tracking progress, identifying challenges, and promoting adaptive management during all phases of the emergency cycle—preparedness, response, recovery, and transition. It combines quantitative and qualitative data to assess performance, effectiveness, and alignment with humanitarian principles.

15.2 Monitoring and Reporting: Monitoring is conducted at field and organizational levels through regular situation reports, field visits, and digital data collection tools such as KoboToolbox and ODK. Key indicators measure timeliness, coverage, quality, and compliance with standards. The MEAL team consolidates data from all departments and shares concise updates with the Crisis Management Team (CMT) for operational decisions. Standardized reporting formats ensure consistency and comparability across responses.

15.3 Evaluation and Learning: Post-response evaluations, after-action reviews, and simulation exercises help assess the relevance and impact of AFAD's interventions. Lessons learned are documented and integrated into contingency planning, capacity building, and policy updates. Learning is shared across departments through review meetings and debriefs, promoting an organizational culture of reflection and improvement.

15.4 Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP): Accountability is central to AFAD's humanitarian approach. Communities are informed about available services, selection criteria, and entitlements through accessible communication methods. Feedback and complaint mechanisms—such as hotlines, help desks, and suggestion boxes—allow affected people to share concerns safely and confidentially. All feedback is reviewed and addressed promptly, with findings used to refine ongoing and future interventions.

15.5 Data Quality and Protection: All data are verified, disaggregated by sex, age, and disability (SADD), and stored securely in centralized databases. Sensitive information is handled according to AFAD's Data Protection and Privacy Policy to ensure confidentiality and ethical data management.

15.6 Continuous Improvement: Regular MEAL reviews, quarterly reflection sessions, and annual EPRP updates ensure that AFAD's preparedness and response systems remain relevant and effective. By linking learning with practice, AFAD strengthens institutional resilience and delivers accountable, people-centered humanitarian assistance.

16. Cross-Cutting Priorities

AFAD integrates gender equality, disability inclusion, child protection, and safeguarding across all stages of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. As a women-led organization, AFAD ensures that humanitarian actions are inclusive, equitable, and protective—addressing the needs of the most vulnerable while promoting dignity and empowerment.

16.1 Gender Equality and Women's Leadership: AFAD places women and girls at the center of humanitarian action by ensuring their active participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels. All assistance addresses gender-specific needs and protection risks, including GBV prevention and menstrual hygiene support. Safe and accessible spaces for women and girls are prioritized in shelters and distribution points, while women-led groups are supported to take on leadership roles in community recovery and resilience efforts. These measures help women become key agents of change in rebuilding their communities.

16.2 Disability Inclusion: AFAD guarantees that persons with disabilities have equal access to assistance and decision-making. Assessments identify their specific needs, and facilities are made physically and communicatively accessible. Collaboration with caregivers and disability networks ensures inclusive planning and delivery. Training for staff and volunteers on disability rights reinforces equity, dignity, and participation, ensuring that no one is left behind during crises or recovery.

16.3 Child Protection and Safeguarding: AFAD enforces a zero-tolerance policy toward child abuse, exploitation, and neglect. All programs are designed to minimize risks to children in shelters, distributions, and public spaces. Referral systems connect at-risk children to protection, health, and psychosocial services, while staff and volunteers are trained on safeguarding standards. Community engagement activities strengthen family and caregiver awareness, ensuring that children remain safe and supported in all emergency contexts.

16.4 Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA): AFAD upholds a strict Code of Conduct and mandatory PSEA orientation for all personnel. Safe, confidential reporting mechanisms are in place to receive complaints, and survivor-centered procedures ensure confidentiality, consent, and access to appropriate support services. Awareness sessions inform communities about their rights and reporting options, reinforcing AFAD's commitment to a safe and respectful environment for all.

16.5 Integration and Oversight: Cross-cutting priorities are embedded in every AFAD program area, including WASH, shelter, livelihoods, and protection. Gender, disability, and safeguarding indicators are incorporated into assessments, monitoring, and reporting systems. Designated focal points oversee implementation, provide training, and ensure continuous improvement informed by community feedback.

17. Early Recovery and Transition Planning

Early recovery is the bridge between emergency response and long-term development. It focuses on restoring dignity, rebuilding livelihoods, and strengthening resilience so that communities recover sustainably after crises. AFAD's approach is grounded in local ownership, gender equity, and resilience building, ensuring that short-term relief leads to long-term empowerment.

17.1 Objectives of Early Recovery: The goal of early recovery is to help individuals and communities regain self-reliance and reduce vulnerability after disasters. AFAD aims to restore livelihoods, revitalize local markets and services, strengthen community resilience, and transition households from dependency on aid to sustainable livelihoods. By integrating recovery into ongoing humanitarian action, AFAD ensures that emergency response contributes to long-term well-being and resilience.

17.2 Early Recovery Interventions: AFAD's early recovery programs are community-driven and inclusive, prioritizing women, youth, and persons with disabilities as key actors in rebuilding their lives. Core interventions include livelihood restoration through cash or in-kind grants, skills training in market-relevant trades, and support for women-led enterprises to expand local economic opportunities. Psychosocial support and community healing activities address trauma and promote social cohesion, while rehabilitation of community

infrastructure—such as water points, sanitation facilities, and rural roads—enhances access to essential services and livelihoods. All initiatives promote environmentally sustainable and climate-adaptive practices to reduce future disaster risks.

17.3 Linking Relief to Development: AFAD ensures that early recovery efforts are aligned with its broader development programs and national strategies, including the National Disaster Management Plan and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Community-based disaster management committees and self-help groups lead recovery planning, ensuring inclusiveness and accountability. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) measures are integrated across all interventions to strengthen community coping mechanisms, promote resilient livelihoods, and reinforce local governance structures.

17.4 Transition Planning: Transition planning ensures smooth continuity between emergency, recovery, and development phases. Post-crisis evaluations identify ongoing needs and inform recovery priorities. Transition plans define timelines, funding requirements, and pathways for integration into regular development programs. Active engagement with communities, government agencies, and partners ensures sustainability and ownership, while lessons learned inform future preparedness and strategic planning.

18. EPRP Review, Simulation, and Capacity Strengthening

AFAD treats the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) as a living document—regularly reviewed, tested, and strengthened through training and simulation exercises. This continuous process ensures the plan remains relevant, practical, and effective, enabling AFAD and its partners to respond rapidly and confidently to any emergency.

18.1 Review and Updating: The EPRP is reviewed annually by the Crisis Management Team (CMT) and senior management to maintain alignment with AFAD's strategic direction, national disaster policies, and evolving risks. Post-emergency reviews and debriefings capture lessons learned, which are incorporated into updates to strengthen systems and procedures. The plan is also revised when contextual or structural changes occur, such as new hazard profiles, partnerships, or operational areas. Once validated by the Executive Committee, the updated plan is disseminated across all departments and field offices through print and digital formats, with staff orientations to ensure familiarity.

18.2 Simulation and Drills: Simulation exercises and emergency drills are integral to maintaining readiness. AFAD conducts both table-top and field-based simulations annually to test coordination, communication, logistics, and decision-making under real conditions. Table-top exercises engage management and technical staff to review activation procedures and coordination mechanisms, while field-based drills involve staff, volunteers, and local partners in evacuation, assessment, and safety operations. Each exercise includes an after-action review, and findings are documented to inform future updates, ensuring that staff remain confident and well-prepared to execute the EPRP effectively.

18.3 Capacity Building: Building human and institutional capacity is central to AFAD's preparedness strategy. Regular training equips staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills needed for effective response in areas such as logistics, protection, MEAL, and WASH. Community volunteers receive training on first aid, evacuation, and early warning dissemination. AFAD emphasizes women's leadership through targeted mentorship and leadership development initiatives. Specialized and cross-functional training—covering cash programming, security, data management, and surge capacity—enhances technical competence

and flexibility. Partnerships with government agencies, clusters, and CSOs strengthen coordination and promote shared learning, while annual reviews of capacity-building outcomes guide future priorities.

19. Annexes and Supporting Documents

The Annexes and Supporting Documents section provides the operational tools, reference materials, and templates that complement AFAD's Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP). These annexes ensure that staff and partners can quickly access standardized guidance, data, and procedures required during all phases of an emergency. They also enable alignment with national policies, humanitarian standards, and AFAD's internal systems.

19.1 Purpose and Use: Annexes translate the EPRP's policies and procedures into practical tools for implementation. They include detailed checklists, forms, maps, contact lists, and technical references that support preparedness, rapid assessment, coordination, and reporting. Field staff and managers use these documents during training, simulation, and response operations to maintain consistency and efficiency. All annexes are reviewed and updated alongside the main EPRP to ensure relevance and usability.

19.2 Structure of Annexes: The annexes are organized into thematic categories for ease of reference:
- **Operational Tools:** Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), activation checklists, and emergency response flowcharts.
- **Assessment and Reporting:** Rapid needs assessment forms, situation report (SitRep) templates, and post-response review formats.
- **Coordination and Communication:** Contact directories of key staff, government bodies, and humanitarian partners; internal communication trees; and information-sharing protocols.
- **Logistics and Finance:** Procurement templates, warehouse tracking forms, transport logs, and financial authorization formats.
- **Protection, Gender, and Inclusion:** Safeguarding guidelines, PSEA reporting forms, and gender and disability inclusion checklists.
- **Reference Materials:** Maps of operational areas, risk profiles, contingency plans, and national disaster management references.

19.3 Maintenance and Access: The MEAL and Program units coordinate the regular review and organization of annexes, ensuring that all departments have access to updated materials. Digital copies are stored in AFAD's central database and shared drives, with printed versions available in field offices for rapid use during emergencies. Access to sensitive information follows AFAD's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

Through comprehensive annexes and supporting tools, AFAD ensures that its EPRP remains functional, practical, and user-friendly. These materials enable staff and partners to act with confidence, maintain operational standards, and deliver timely, coordinated, and accountable humanitarian assistance.

----//---