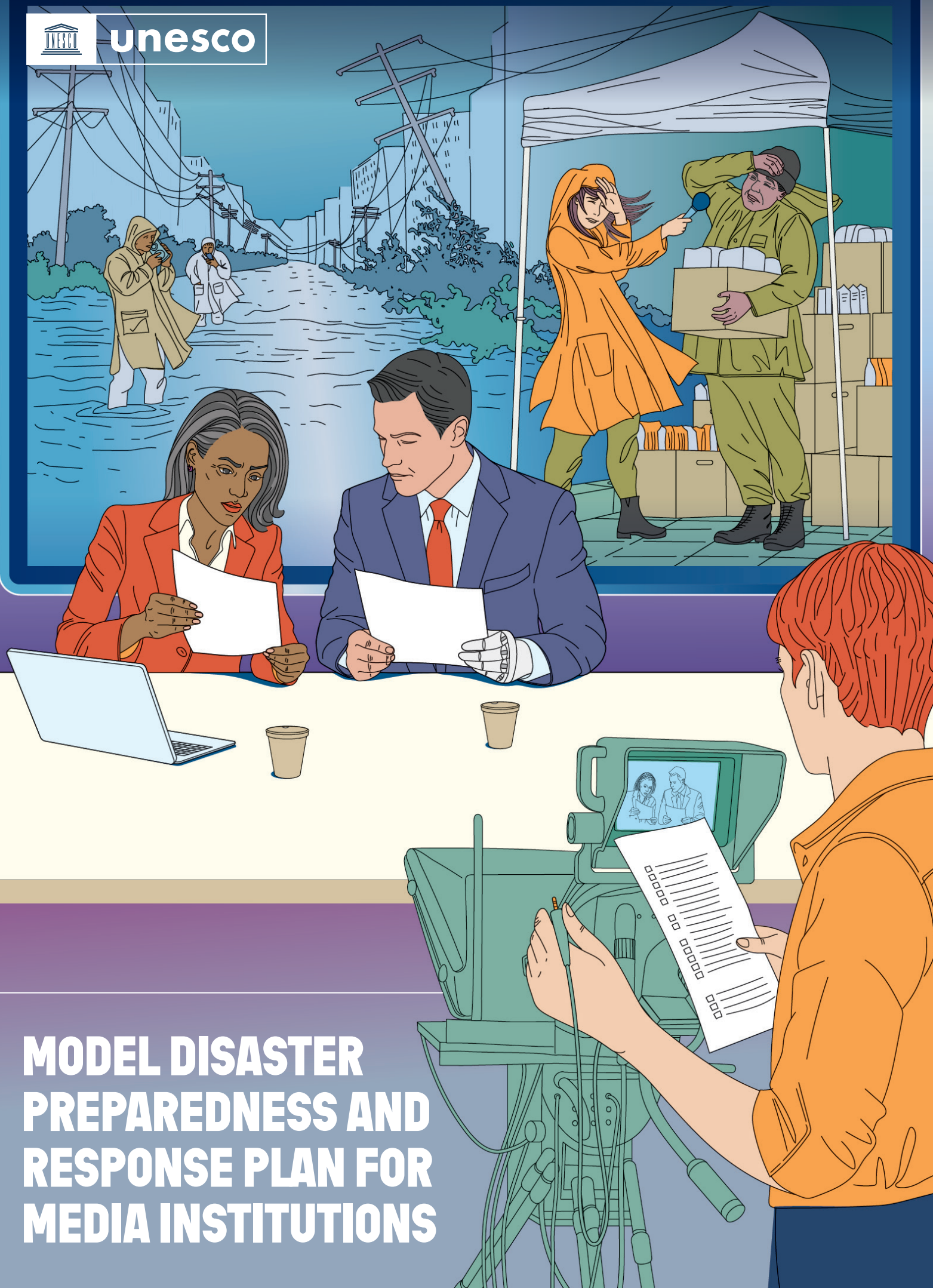




unesco



# MODEL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN FOR MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

## PREFACE



As disasters become more frequent and severe, compounded by climate change, with storms intensifying, floods surging, and earthquakes wreaking havoc, the media's impact goes beyond mere message delivery. When disasters strike, they stand as a lifeline, a beacon cutting through the chaos. In calmer moments, they shed light on risks, reflect our vulnerabilities, and amplify public oversight.

Disasters expose fragility. A flooded newsroom, a fractured radio tower, or a media team pushed to its limits can sever the thread of life-saving information, leaving populations stranded in misinformation and disinformation. Without robust preparedness and adequate capacity to respond to a disaster, media institutions risk faltering when they are needed most. The failure to report effectively on gaps and preventive measures in quiet periods inevitably weakens disaster risk governance and communication.

Disaster contexts may also be highly politicized. Therefore, free, independent, and pluralistic media are a precondition to people's trust in disaster communication and information. Without editorial independence, the media can become an arm of dis- and misinformation rather than a credible source and a watchdog. This autonomy is as essential to resilience as the technical aspects, such as infrastructure and emergency operating procedures.

This is where the UNESCO Model Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan for Media Institutions emerges. Crafted with global expertise and aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, it is a blueprint for media organisations of all types and sizes to fortify their operations, protect their staff, and uphold their duty to alert, inform, and educate in the face of disasters. A single timely broadcast can guide thousands to safety. A resilient media outlet, equipped with contingency plans, predefined protocols and well-trained staff, can sustain the flow of vital information amid turmoil. A Plan that serves different types of media and helps them include diverse audience voices ensures that no community is left unheard, no perspective overlooked, and no fact buried beneath dominant narratives, thus true to UNESCO's mission of fostering pluralistic media where information in the service of the public is built not on capacity but on credibility.

This tool is about transforming vulnerability into strength. It empowers the media to navigate the entire disaster management cycle with precision, from

early warnings that pierce the noise to investigative stories that hold those who wield power accountable. It establishes minimum policies and standards for disaster reporting. It demonstrates how to harness digital technologies and AI and cater for communities hardest hit by disasters. It also provides concrete tips to foster coordination and cooperation across sectors.

The Model Plan is a compass in the storm. Tailor it. Embrace it. Let it galvanize your teams to anticipate, adapt, and act. Natural hazards do not pause, nor give the vulnerable a second chance. Build upon this to strengthen your work and create your manifesto for resilience, for the stories you tell today can shape how humanity weathers the tempests ahead.

**Sylvie Coudray**

Director, Division for Freedom of Expression, Media Development and Media and Information Literacy, UNESCO

## WHY A DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN MATTERS TO MEDIA

A Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (DPRP) should first and foremost uphold the principles of press freedom and ensure that emergency communications mechanisms are not misused for regulatory overreach or corporate control. It is imperative that DPRPs protect media's independence and avoid conflating emergency messaging with any sort of institutional pressure, censorship, sector dominance or the like, which could distort data, push propaganda or prioritise profit over facts.



**Figure 1:** What is disaster risk (source: UNDRR)



Figure 2: Media in disaster management and disaster risk reduction



Figure 3: Dual significance of disaster management for media

## A

## A SAFETY NET FOR MEDIA: BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE



Media serving the public interest are key throughout a disaster management cycle, especially in areas with low Internet connectivity or literacy rates. When a media infrastructure collapses or staff are unprepared, this information lifeline snaps, leaving populations vulnerable to misinformation, delayed evacuations, and preventable harm. As disasters keep escalating in frequency and ferocity, media institutions need to prioritise preparedness and resilience, rather than reacting only when damage occurs. At the same time, society needs to include media resilience in wider disaster management planning and invest resources in the media.

A robust and well-resourced DPRP empowers media organisations to proactively identify vulnerabilities, assess risks, anticipate challenges, fortify systems against disruptions during emergencies, and train teams to operate under duress. It establishes protocols, standard operating procedures (SOP) and contingency plans for safeguarding staff, infrastructure, and communication channels, enabling the organisation to safely continue providing critical information even in the midst of an emergency. With a DPRP in place, media outlets can quickly recover from disruptions, ensuring they remain a reliable source of information and a crucial platform for voicing community concerns.

## B

## A SAFETY NET FOR SOCIETY: RESPONDING MORE EFFECTIVELY AND FOSTERING A CULTURE OF PREVENTION



Beyond ensuring business continuity, a media organisation's DPRP sustains the flow of accurate, actionable information before, during, and after disasters. It reinforces the media's function in the event of a disaster, such as early warning dissemination and real-time reporting on unfolding disasters and response actions, ultimately helping save lives and protect livelihoods. It also provides guidance to better informing on disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures and upholding accountability in the relatively quiet times between disasters (hereinafter referred to as the "quiet times"), hence contributing to building a culture of prevention and trust in disaster management agencies.

## 1

### DISSEMINATING ALERTS AND MOBILIZING STAKEHOLDERS IN EMERGENCIES

When a disaster strikes, the media have to activate predefined SOPs to disseminate alerts from credible sources such as disaster management agencies and meteorological services, without relaying hearsay and rumour. This is instrumental to timely and continuous dissemination of reliable information that can support the evacuation, rescue and relief efforts. Often lying at the nexus of communities, authorities and relief agencies, the media's power to facilitate the coordination of multi-agency emergency operations and galvanize community response efforts depends on their own upstream preparedness. Provided the wider disaster communication system is operational, a DPRP helps ensure seamless coordination between the media, authorities, and first responders in times of emergency. It also promotes sound disaster response practices and compliance with disaster management regulations.

## 2

### ENHANCING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE IN "QUIET TIMES"

In quiet times, in collaboration with national or local authorities, the media can raise awareness about impending disasters and disaster risks, help translate DRR measures into accessible and actionable content, highlight successful mitigation initiatives and act as a space for communities to voice their concerns and needs. This proactive approach bridges the gap between authorities and scientists and the public. By informing on data and recommendations about prevention and preparedness, the media help society better implement disaster prevention actions. A DPRP helps media outlets identify opportunities and gaps in disaster coverage, ensuring they incorporate disaster preparedness considerations throughout the media production chain. This includes content that sheds light on the root causes of disaster risks and vulnerabilities.

## 3

### REINFORCING REPUTATION AND PUBLIC TRUST

Media can serve as a key defence against misinformation and disinformation, which may cost lives during emergencies. Without engaging with reliable sources well before hazards strike and pre-establishing adequate internal editorial policies, media and technical agencies may struggle to provide accurate information about disasters and relief efforts, risking public criticism and loss of trust. A DPRP helps media organisations uphold ethical standards and information integrity in disaster reporting, while navigating challenges that can arise on different fronts. It strengthens their credibility as trusted sources of information, reinforcing the public's confidence in their ability to provide accurate and timely updates. This also boosts brand loyalty and fosters stronger relationships with the audience, as people turn to their trusted outlets for guidance in times of crisis.

## 4

## SUPPORTING ALL REGIONS WITH CONTEXT-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

In every part of the world, and in particular highly disaster-vulnerable regions, such as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), media serving the public interest can be a backbone of survival for populations. A DPRP enables media organisations to fulfil their social mandate despite disruptions. In resource-limited regions, a DPRP provides guidance to the media on how to prioritise and allocate resources for disaster management effectively and can inspire fundraising efforts to support these critical actions.

In all regions, a DPRP should not just focus on logistics and emergency communication and information, but also advocate for creating or improving policies, regulations and laws that ensure that media can operate independently during emergencies before a crisis hits. This protection of access to information and freedom of expression during disasters results in increased accountability and an informed citizenry.

## DEVELOPING A DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN FOR A MEDIA INSTITUTION: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

This section guides you through the key steps to create a comprehensive DPRP tailored to the needs and resources of your organisation and your audience. Media organisations can adapt these recommendations to their capacity, adopting a tiered approach, while ensuring key dimensions are covered: outlets with minimal resources should focus on core, high-impact actions; those with moderate resources can tackle additional steps to strengthen resilience; and well-resourced institutions are encouraged to implement the full suite of measures. It should be noted that this process is often accompanied by expert assistance provided by a development agency as part of a support project or programme.

## STEP 1

### CONSTITUTE A TASK TEAM TO DRAFT THE PLAN



1. **Raise awareness** of the management and obtain their endorsement and commitment. More details are provided after **Section VII**.
2. **Form a diverse cross-departmental team** with representatives from senior management, editorial team, technical and IT facilities, advertising, HR,

security, legal affairs, finance and administration, as far as possible.

3. **Include representatives** from technical agencies (e.g. disaster management authorities and meteorological services), relief organisations and local communities into the task team.
4. **Include representatives** as well from independent journalists' associations, community media networks, and management of other media outlets to ensure diversity of viewpoints.
5. **Include besides** regulators, media law specialists, press freedom advocates, media watchdogs and/or media study scholars to support efforts to strengthen legal protections for independent journalism (see Step 4).
6. **Call on an external expert** for specialized disaster management knowledge if this is not available in the team.

## STEP 2

### CONDUCT HAZARD AND VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS



1. **Collaborate with technical agencies** to identify risks, hazards and disaster trends, including those amplified by climate change, in your territory of operations, based on historical data, modeling, and future projections.
2. **Rank hazards by likelihood and impact on media and on communities**, using a risk matrix that may be provided or developed by technical agencies.
3. **Use the data** from the analysis to prioritise areas for intervention.

## STEP 3

### ANALYSE PREVIOUS DISASTER PROGRAMMING AND REPORTING AND LESSONS LEARNED



1. **Analyse previous disaster-related programming and measures** taken by the organisation in response to a disaster.
2. **Evaluate** past disaster reporting's clarity, timeliness, response speed, presence of inaccuracy or bias, and framing.
3. **Assess reach, engagement, effectiveness and vulnerabilities** of media's own communication channels, as well as existing local communication channels that can be linked to the DPRP.
4. **Assess past opportunities and challenges** related to collaboration with disaster management agencies and meteorological services.
5. **Incorporate findings** into the DPRP.

## STEP 4

## CHECK LEGAL AND REGULATORY PROVISIONS AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION LANDSCAPE



1. **Examine** relevant national laws, regulations, and frameworks governing disaster preparedness, crisis communication, and media response.
2. **Review existing legal frameworks** to determine if they adequately safeguard media freedom and pluralism or if advocacy for enabling legal frameworks is needed.
3. **Take note** of national and international broadcasting standards, ethical guidelines, and protocols for emergency reporting.
4. **Review** the disaster communication landscape in the country to determine what options are available (e.g. hotlines, SMS alerts, door-to-door...).
5. **When necessary, hold consultations** with media regulatory bodies, disaster management agencies, and emergency response organisations to align the plan with official protocols.

## STEP 5

## DEVELOP A WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A well-structured DPRP of a media institution encompasses several components to ensure a holistic approach to handling disasters.



1. **Business continuity plan:** to maintain critical operations during disruptions, covering basic SOPs (roles, responsibilities, priorities), crisis communication workflows, staff safety and cyber protections, reinforced infrastructure (e.g., flood-proof studios), redundant systems (power, data backups), emergency broadcasting options (shortwave, mobile units), and pre-arranged alternate worksites. It ensures the media remain a lifeline in crises while safeguarding people and assets. More details are provided in [Section I](#).
2. **Content production plan:** to ensure rapid, reliable disaster coverage and prevention messaging by adopting a "Plug and Play" approach—pre-designed templates for real-time alerts, evacuation guides, and crisis updates—while also creating educational content (e.g. risk reduction tips, preparedness drills) to foster long-term community resilience. More details are provided in [Section II](#).
3. **Editorial policies on disaster coverage:** to establish standards and policies for ethical, fact-based reporting on risks and impacts while amplifying marginalised voices. They mandate investigative rigour into root causes, promote solutions-focused storytelling on resilience, and ensure inclusive representation of affected communities—balancing urgency with accuracy and humanity. More details are provided in [Section III](#).

4. **Stakeholder engagement plan:** to coordinate with state actors, relief agencies, scientists, local leaders, NGOs, and peer media to ensure accurate disaster reporting, resource sharing, and community-sensitive coverage. It builds trusted networks for real-time cross-sectoral collaboration while reflecting the full human impact of the disaster and aligning messaging with responders. More details are provided in [Section IV](#).
5. **Leave No One Behind plan:** to ensure inclusive disaster reporting by prioritizing hard-to-reach groups, such as persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, older persons, displaced and migrant population, children, people living in remote areas with limited information and media infrastructure, through accessible formats and co-creating content with at-risk communities to address their specific needs. More details are provided in [Section V](#).
6. **Staff training and support plan:** to prepare teams for disasters by forming a dedicated task force, teaching prevention strategies and safe crisis reporting, conducting post-disaster reviews, and institutionalizing strategies to survive staff changes. It ensures teams stay prepared, protected, and mission-ready through drills, knowledge transfer, and continuous improvement. More details are provided in [Section VI](#).
7. **Digital tools integration plan:** to leverage digital tools for disaster visualization, data-driven reporting, and AI automation, to enhance early warnings, multilingual communication, and audience engagement during crises. It helps ensure uninterrupted coverage while improving response coordination with other stakeholders—blending real-time analytics with accessible, fact-checked content for optimized impact. More details are provided in [Section VII](#).

## I. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Developing and implementing a robust Business Continuity Plan is a top priority for a DPRP. This sub-plan outlines SOPs and protocols, assigns roles, and identifies resources necessary to keep operations running in disaster events and minimize disruptions in all aspects of the media institution. This is to ensure that funding or partnerships do not compromise editorial independence and instead protect it.

## A

### DEFINING THE BASICS



- **Outline contingency measures** for key functions such as broadcasting, content production, and distribution.
- **Define triggers** for activating the plan and steps to initiate the plan and notify all staff.
- **Establish a clear chain of command**, with specific roles assigned to positions to implement the plan.

- **Determine procedures** for the delegation of editorial authority, to manage situations where certain members of staff become incapacitated.
- **Create a database** of emergency contacts with relevant agencies and key stakeholders (more details are provided in **Section IV**).
- **Design a recovery timeline** outlining steps and expected timeframe for resuming normal operations.
- **Specify how often** regular reviews and updates of the plan should be done (e.g. annually, bi-annually, or each time after a disaster).

## B

## STAFF SAFETY AND CYBERSECURITY



- **Develop evacuation plans**, identify safe assembly points, and map accessible evacuation routes.
- **Conduct regular safety drills** and provide staff with protective gear and first aid training.
- **Provide psychosocial support** and counselling services to staff affected by the disaster.
- **Use mobile apps**, satellite phones, SMS, or secure messaging platforms to track and confirm staff safety during a disaster.
- **Plan for emergency staff accommodation**, ensuring access to basic necessities and safe, gender-sensitive sleeping arrangements.
- **Arrange transport logistics** and security escorts when staff have to cover high-risk disaster zones.
- **Enforce multi-factor authentication** and strict role-based access on CMS, broadcast consoles, social-media accounts, and remote publishing tools.
- **Encrypt** all field recordings, source files and transfers and require encrypted backups for archives and emergency bulletins, so that sensitive material remains secure even when collected from the field.
- **Design data security** and privacy protection protocols to prevent loss or leaks of sensitive information during disruptions.
- **Use UNESCO's *Safety Guide for Journalists*.**

## C

## INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE



- **Assess risks and hazards** associated with the default locations for media operations.
- **Regularly inspect buildings** and premises to ensure compliance with disaster-resilient construction standards.

- **Retrofit or upgrade older structures** to withstand common local hazards.
- **Secure critical areas** such as server rooms and storage facilities with reinforced walls and elevated platforms.
- **Install flood barriers**, drainage systems, and waterproofing in areas prone to flood; equip premises with fire-resistant materials and maintain fire suppression systems.
- **Ensure proper insurance coverage** is in place for facilities and equipment.

## D

## BACKUP SYSTEMS AND REDUNDANT EQUIPMENT



- **Make an inventory** of resources and equipment that are critical for emergency situations.
- **Ensure backup power systems** (e.g. generators, uninterruptible power supply) and redundant hardware and communication tools (e.g. satellite phones) are in place, and run regular tests or checks, at least once a year.
- **Employ a “plug and play” approach** to equipment installations to support swift evacuation and relocation to alternative sites.
- **Secure** essential technical and broadcasting equipment like mobile hotspots, mobile broadcasting units, and first aid kits, and run regular tests or checks, at least once a year.
- **Create data backups** in secure cloud and offsite locations for editorial archives and operational systems.
- **Reserve specific phone lines** for critical internal communication and coordination with emergency responders to minimize the impact of potential line congestion.

## E

## EMERGENCY BROADCAST METHODS



- **Set up alternative broadcasting methods**, such as shortwave radio, satellite communication, outside broadcast vans and community loudspeakers, to reach audiences if primary channels fail.
- **Invest** in mobile broadcasting units, including battery-powered or solar-powered transmitters, mobile radio broadcasting kits.
- **Pre-establish agreements** with telecom operators to set up toll-free call-in lines for broadcasting live radio feed or replaying essential broadcasts (e.g. evacuation instructions).

- **Develop** a stripped-down, text-based/audio-only version of the website with essential updates, using minimal bandwidth to improve accessibility during high traffic and slow network conditions.
- **Coordinate** with other media outlets to share emergency broadcasts and ensure continuous coverage if one station is down (more details are provided in **Section IV**).
- **Establish a central hub** for real-time information sharing between journalists, experts, and authorities (more details are provided in **Section IV**).

## F

## PROTOCOLS FOR CRISIS COMMUNICATION



- **Develop a SOP** for managing internal communication during an emergency.
- **Establish** a call tree to check on staff and confirm who can report to work.
- **Develop contingency plans** for communication in general during loss of connectivity.
- **Establish protocols** for communication with alert-issuing authorities and other stakeholders and relaying updates to the public.
- **Define key steps** for promptly verifying information before it is shared with the public to prevent the spread of misinformation, while ensuring message consistency across platforms (more details are provided in **Section III**).
- **Prepare pre-approved templates** for alerts, social media updates, and internal announcements that can be quickly adapted during emergencies.
- **Activate multiple communication channels** to receive updates, reports, feedback, and complaints from the public, particularly people in affected areas.

## G

## ALTERNATIVE WORK LOCATIONS



- **Identify safe offsite locations** for operations if the workplace is no longer accessible.
- **Establish agreements** with other media outlets or other types of organisations that could offer their premises as temporary workspace in case of displacement due to a disaster.
- **Consider installation** of certain essential equipment (e.g. transmitters) and backup power systems at identified alternative sites, especially those located on higher ground.
- **Develop remote work protocols** and provide necessary tools for staff to work remotely.

## II. PROGRAMMING FOR EMERGENCIES AND PREPAREDNESS

The power of media to catalyse change through text, audio and audiovisuals is immense. The media's impact goes far beyond reporting only when a disaster hits; it is also about weaving the important topics of disaster prevention and preparedness into everyday content to strengthen societal readiness and resilience. It is evident that effective programming for disaster preparedness and response forms a key part of a DPRP. This section will dive into how media outlets can strategically programme content in advance, which not only keeps audiences updated during emergencies but also educates and prepares them during periods of relative calm. Note that a useful starting point is conducting audience research to first understand your audience's existing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours when it comes to disasters and prevention.

## A

## CONTENT TO WARN AND COVER UNFOLDING DISASTERS: A "PLUG AND PLAY" APPROACH



To rapidly distribute targeted and actionable early warning and cover disaster response in real time, it's necessary to plan and produce content in advance. Such a "Plug and Play" approach allows media organisations to quickly switch to crisis mode with the following pre-established ready-to-deploy content, formats or templates in all necessary languages and aligned with the related protocols defined in the previous section:

- **Pre-recorded public service announcements (PSAs)** in video, audio or infographic formats.
- **Pre-recorded instructional videos** or podcasts that explain safe evacuation routes, shelter-in-place approaches, and first aid procedures, in accessible formats.
- **Pre-recorded segments** featuring disaster management specialists and local authorities, designed to provide context and authoritative guidance.
- **Templates for multi-hazard early warning** that describe: source of early warning (e.g. MET office, disaster management authority, police...), hazard, expected impact, location and time, protective actions, and where to find additional information.
- **Thematic expert interviews** on different aspects of a disaster response.
- **Feature interviews** with community members who are following recommended protective measures (e.g.

reinforcing homes, evacuating). Peer examples can be a compelling tool to encourage wider adoption and reduce public reluctance.

- **Emergency alert bulletins**, with pre-scripted video, radio, and digital text alerts that provide critical safety instructions and early warnings for low Internet connectivity situations.
- **Pre-set format for fact-checking** informing before sharing with the public.
- **Templates** for multi-hazard emergency broadcasts, social media posts, and live updates.
- **Pre-designed interactive maps** on websites or mobile apps, which display local hazard information, safe zones, and resource locations.
- **Library of standardized metadata templates**, such as tags and social media hashtags.

## B

### CONTENT TO EDUCATE AND NURTURE A CULTURE OF PREVENTION



During “quiet times” between disasters, media are essential to building societal resilience by prompting informed dialogue and fostering a culture of prevention and preparedness. This can be achieved by developing prevention and preparedness content and messaging in various genres and formats, either as standalone programmes/sections or integrated into existing ones. An important area to address is the growing misinformation and disinformation surrounding climate change and disasters. In some cases, such change may require the approval of a media outlet’s board of directors, particularly for long-term editorial shifts or resource allocation. Here are some examples suggested in a non-exhaustive manner:

- **News and current affairs:** Include regular disaster preparedness segments in existing news programmes or sections. <sup>LC</sup>
- **Expert interviews and discussions:** Conduct regular or ad hoc in-depth discussions with experts. <sup>LC</sup>
- **Podcasts:** Hold conversations with survivors and stakeholders engaged in past disasters and with traditional/ Indigenous leaders, providing first-hand accounts of disaster experiences and lessons learned. <sup>LC</sup>
- **Explainer videos and tutorials:** Create step-by-step guides on emergency preparedness, first aid, and evacuation procedures.
- **Myth-busting programmes/sections:** Use a short format to analyse and debunk common myths about disasters, climate change, and mitigation/preventive measures in your area of operations. <sup>LC</sup>
- **Call-in radio shows:** Allow community members to ask disaster preparedness questions. <sup>LC</sup>

- **Documentaries:** Craft human-centered stories on resilience and solutions. Showcase community members taking action to inspire others.
- **Opinion pieces and investigative reports:** Publish articles analysing disaster risks, disaster management policies, and recovery efforts.
- **Children’s programmes:** Develop entertaining and interactive content accessible to children, such as animated series or games.
- **Entertainment:** Incorporate disaster preparedness themes or segments into popular TV or radio shows.
- **Dramatisation:** Design fictional narratives depicting real-life disaster scenarios and response strategies.
- **Online campaigns:** Leverage the media’s web platforms and social media channels, if they exist, to launch hashtag movements, influencer collaborations, photo essays, comics, challenges and quizzes promoting disaster preparedness. <sup>LC</sup>
- **Offline community engagement:** Organise and record or live broadcast community meetings, storytelling sessions, or listening groups. Leverage the media’s own database of callers and radio clubs, if they exist. <sup>LC</sup>

Small media organisations like community media may not have the means to achieve all of the above or modify their programming grids to include DRR related content. Nevertheless, some of the options above are tagged as “low-cost”, which can allow these media to maximize impact while working with limited financial and technical resources.

Include diverse civil society, grassroots leaders, and community voices in preparedness content, not only official sources and experts. This safeguards against biased capture of emergency information and communication. Editorial independence protections and pluralistic viewpoints should apply even to pre-scripted content.

## C

### SPECIAL TIMING AND NEWS PEGS



Media outlets can leverage UN international observances, such as the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (13 October each year), start of an annual storm season, anniversaries of major disasters, or a major disaster in another country or region (e.g. “Are we prepared if this happened here?”), as timely hooks to spotlight disaster prevention and preparedness. These dates and events inherently carry public and political relevance, offering a natural news peg to engage audiences on such critical issues.

Media may design special programmes, articles, or campaigns, aligning them with these moments, and thus tap into heightened awareness, contextualize past failures or successes, and amplify calls for proactive DRR measures. Such timing also fosters collaboration with governments, NGOs, and survivors, enriching storytelling with urgency and authenticity while driving home the message that some disasters can be prevented if good decisions are taken.

<sup>LC</sup> Low Cost

### III. EDITORIAL POLICIES ON DISASTER COVERAGE

Press freedom must remain protected during emergencies, with safeguards against censorship and surveillance, as this ensures that media outlets can operate independently. To uphold this independence, clear internal editorial policies and compliance with them are paramount to accurate and ethical reporting on disasters. They not only reinforce information integrity but help reduce the impact of false and misleading narratives that may jeopardize public safety, cater to the needs of diverse populations, and balance timely updates with veracity. Investigative and solution-oriented journalism also plays a key role in holding stakeholders accountable and highlighting effective resilience-building efforts. This section provides guidance on creating minimum internal editorial policies or standards in the following areas.

#### A

#### ACCURACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY



- 1. Verification protocols:** Create a checklist to verify sources, content, and relevance before publication or broadcast. Cross-check emergency alerts, casualty figures, and aid claims with at least 3 sources (e.g. official agencies, scientific experts, NGOs). Fact-check official sources if they are not transparent. Enforce these protocols in emergency situations.
- 2. Use of verified visuals and data:** Verify photos, videos, and user-generated content (e.g. through geolocation, timestamps, etc), paying special attention to content potentially created by generative AI.
- 3. Misinformation mitigation:** Familiarize yourself with common false narratives circulating in disaster contexts. Publish myth-debunking or pre-bunking content ahead of predictable risks (e.g. monsoon season). Create a rumour log (detailing the date, location, content, level of risk, verification status, and mitigation measures for a rumour) to track and publicly address false claims circulating during crises.
- 4. Social media monitoring:** Monitor the most popular online platforms in your territory of operation for misinformation and debunk false or misleading narratives, to the extent that capacity and resources allow, prioritising debunking content that presents the highest risk of public harm.
- 5. Real-time updates:** Ensure mechanisms are in place for continuous updates as the disaster situation evolves. Be clear with the audience how often they can expect updates.

- 6. Transparency in reporting:** Disclose funding sources (e.g. when covering an NGO's relief work or if you receive funding to cover certain operations). Distinguish commentary, analysis and speculation from verified facts.
- 7. Mandatory labels:** Use clear timestamps on all digital/print content to indicate when information was last updated. Explicitly flag AI-generated or AI-assisted content (including text, audios, visuals, and audiovisuals). Mark breaking disaster news and unfolding situations as "developing" and clearly state the uncertainty in reporting.
- 8. Error correction:** During or after a disaster, correct errors promptly and transparently, with archived versions retained for accountability. Correct the errors clearly and confidently, without restating the false claim or misleading message.

#### B

#### INDEPENDENT AND ETHICAL REPORTING



- 1. Editorial independence:** Protect reporting from political, commercial or other external pressures, particularly during emergencies. Resist undue influence that could distort coverage, especially regarding disaster-related aid or funding.
- 2. Neutrality and impartiality:** Avoid favouring any group, political entity or party, particularly when covering the causes of the disaster, response efforts, or government actions.
- 3. Conflict of interest policies:** Prevent reporters from accepting favours (e.g. compensation for framing the causes of a disaster in a particular way) that could compromise integrity.
- 4. Adherence to ethical principles:** Focus on resilience, avoid sensationalism in covering (i.e. photographing, filming, or writing about) tragedies and post-disaster settings. Avoid reporting unverified information or contributing to panic.
- 5. Trauma-sensitive reporting:** Respect the dignity and privacy of affected populations while conducting interviews with them. Allow them space to express themselves without pressure. Have contact details for health specialists and other support services at hand should the interviewee need them. Ensure that family members have been officially notified before publishing names of the deceased.
- 6. No premature blame:** Avoid assigning blame before all facts are verified. Acknowledge the complexity of disasters and allow time for thorough investigation. Focus on informing the public with accuracy, not speculation.
- 7. News embargoes:** Allow conditional use of embargoed or off-the-record information, when delays could endanger lives or aid delivery, after senior editorial management has assessed whether overriding the embargo serves the public interest without causing harm. Attempt to engage in dialogue with the source imposing the embargo to seek partial or time-bound clearance.

## C

## TONE, BALANCE AND FORMAT



- 1. Constructive urgency:** Depending on the situation, use a calm tone to reduce panic or switch to an alarming one to draw audiences' urgent attention in high-stakes situations. For example, not "Chaos sets in as floods worsen" but "Evacuate immediately to area X". Always ensure that fear is balanced with clear actions people can take.
- 2. News-you-can-use format:** Go beyond reporting on what has happened or is happening and provide actionable information (e.g. what people can do to protect themselves or take action).
- 3. Balanced portrayal:** Inform on both the scale of the disaster and the efforts being made for recovery and aid, avoiding undue emphasis on one at the expense of the other.
- 4. Short-format content:** Use concise formats and plain language to communicate key messages quickly during emergencies.
- 5. Clear instructions:** Provide clear, actionable, and achievable guidance on evacuation routes, safety measures, and emergency contacts. Note that advice needs to be tailored to different population groups.
- 6. Unified messages across platforms:** Maintain consistent and coherent messaging across all media or platforms used, including media's online channels if they exist.
- 7. Mobile-first design:** Optimize content for low-bandwidth mobile users (e.g. text-only alerts, compressed images) or crisis situations with limited internet connectivity, if relevant.
- 8. TV & radio simulcasts:** Verbally describe key visuals and avoid "as you can see" language (e.g. replace phrases like "look at this damaged dam" with descriptive narration). Use audio cues for urgency if breaking news graphics appear.

## D

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY



- 1. Sourcing:** Show how disasters affect different groups differently. Ensure a significant portion of interviewees and sources represent at-risk groups.
- 2. No tokenism:** Co-create stories with representatives of marginalised groups as resource persons or experts, not just as victims or part of a quota.
- 3. Gender-responsive reporting:** Recognise and address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls regarding disaster-related issues.

Actively include women representatives of authorities, experts and communities in interviews. Frame women as leaders when relevant (e.g. "community leader" and not "mother of two").

- 4. Tailored messages:** Develop messages on topics of interest and concern for at-risk groups, e.g. children, older persons, and persons with disabilities.
- 5. Tackle generational apathy:** Use relatable role models or influencers to engage younger audiences, especially teenagers. Tailor content formats and platforms to youth media habits.
- 6. Multilingual reporting and accessibility:** Ensure broadcasts are accessible in multiple languages if they exist in your territory of operation, and consider including sign language and subtitles, as far as resources allow. When developing visuals, consider the needs of persons who are colour blind. When developing digital content, follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- 7. Geographical diversity:** Allocate resources to report in rural and remote areas, especially in the aftermath of a disaster.

## E

## INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING



Investigative reporting plays a key role before and after disasters strike. It helps assess the effectiveness of disaster response, strengthens accountability and identifies systemic issues that drive disaster risk. This proactive approach not only contributes to preventing recurring tragedies but also empowers communities to demand better preparedness from those in power. However, investigative reporting on disasters is an inherently challenging undertaking, as its scrutiny sometimes invites criticism. Establish transparent communication channels with technical agencies to foster trust without compromising your editorial integrity. Use verified data and expert corroboration to bolster your findings and counter claims of bias.

- 1. After the acute phase of an emergency:** Highlight inefficiencies and accountability gaps in alerts, rescue, and relief operations, guiding authorities and aid agencies. After the peak emergency phase, probe root causes of disasters and damage (e.g. failed levees, deforestation, corruption, inaction or inefficiency in aid distribution) and pair disaster impacts with questions about systemic issues (e.g. "Why did the dam break? Investigators cite poor maintenance"). Choose the best time to run accountability stories.
- 2. In quiet times:** Collaborate with authorities to map and report on exposed areas and communities. Investigate community adaptations to hazards, assess preventive measures, and evaluate reconstruction plans for resilient infrastructure. Explore if new developments are risk informed and describe potential consequences of those that are not risk informed. Research public records to examine risks and gaps. Follow up on preparedness actions and analyse whether lessons from past disasters were applied to improve readiness.

## F

## SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM



Solution-oriented journalism shifts the narrative from passive victimhood to actionable resilience stories. It highlights successful actions and strategies that mitigate risks, address vulnerabilities, and facilitate response and recovery. This approach not only counters “disaster fatigue” but also fosters hope, by demonstrating that disaster risks can be reduced through collective action, policy change, and innovation.

- 1. In emergencies:** Dedicate a specific proportion of disaster coverage to effective disaster response efforts, showcasing good practices and innovations that could be replicated.
- 2. In quiet times:** Report on successful community-driven initiatives (e.g. community-led early warning systems), resilience-building projects led by the government or civil society, climate-adaptive infrastructure, effective coordination across sectors in relief efforts, and policies in place that enhance DRR. Promote proactive solutions and highlight models that could be replicated, exploring new technologies or strategies to address climate impacts and improve resilience. Report how other cities or countries are preparing for similar hazards.

## IV. COORDINATION WITH AUTHORITIES AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Disaster management is a complex process, led by government authorities and involving stakeholders across different sectors, including national agencies, relief organisations, scientists, local authorities and communities, UN entities such as UNDRR, WMO, ITU and UNESCO, and media. The media have great potential to help break down information silos across sectors. A coordinated approach can not only strengthen the media’s function as a watchdog by providing balanced oversight and accountability but also leverage the expertise and resources of the other stakeholders to enable comprehensive disaster communication. Ultimately, this synergy builds trust, enhances resilience, and ensures that community needs are met during emergencies. However, partnerships cannot be built in the middle of a crisis—trust and collaboration must be established before disasters strike. This section recommends actions to improve coordination with key stakeholder groups but also provides inspiration for new stories and programmes.

## A

## STATE ACTORS



Early warning and DRR are vital national security concerns traditionally led by government agencies with access to real-time data and coordination resources. Strengthening cooperation between the media and state actors is crucial to ensure timely, accurate communication during disasters, leveraging the government’s operational expertise alongside the media’s watchdog function. Yet, government bodies may view media scrutiny as adversarial, while media outlets sometimes struggle with restricted access to information and officials, which can hinder joint efforts. Proactive dialogue, strategic planning, and continuous advocacy are necessary to foster trust between the media and governments in this area and align both parties for effective disaster response and preparedness.

- 1. Establish direct and regular communication** channels for timely updates between media and disaster management agencies.
- 2. Assign specific staff** (ideally outside the newsroom) to streamline communication with government authorities during disasters and implement a scrupulous verification protocol to avoid bias.
- 3. Create formal working groups** to improve coordination and trust between media and alert-issuing agencies.
- 4. Emphasise that the media are strategic partners** for disaster management rather than mere messengers.
- 5. Collaborate** on public DRR awareness campaigns and safety messaging when relevant and appropriate.
- 6. Explore partnerships** with disaster management authorities and meteorological agencies to host automated weather stations at media premises to gain hyperlocal data and improve early warning systems.
- 7. Conduct joint simulation** and table top exercises to test and improve response systems.
- 8. Engage credible experts** to expand on official information on disasters.

## B

## RESCUE AND RELIEF ORGANISATIONS



Rescue and relief agencies such as police, fire brigades, health agencies and humanitarian organisations are able to provide real-time information about ongoing humanitarian efforts, resource availability, and the needs of affected populations. Collaborating with them helps ensure information produced is relevant and can effectively reach those in need. At the same time, when a relief effort is ineffective, compromised by corruption, or fails to meet the needs

of affected communities, impartial reporting can foster accountability.

1. **Establish clear editorial independence** when engaging with response agencies. Communicate from the outset that collaboration with them does not compromise independent reporting or critical oversight.
2. **List relevant organisations** and establish direct communication channels to ensure real-time updates on humanitarian efforts and resource availability.
3. **Create mixed media-humanitarian committees** and meet regularly to increase mutual understanding of principles, capacities and constraints, build trust, and co-design crisis communication strategies and pre-written scripts.
4. **Work with official relief agencies** and non-governmental organisations to cross-check facts and verify information in order to provide accurate, up-to-date information to the public.
5. **Partner with relief organisations** to report on the on-the-ground situation, aid distribution, and the specific needs of affected communities, and to piggyback on their distribution or translator networks.
6. **Highlight and share success stories** of relief efforts that have had a positive impact. Report on failures and shortcomings in the event of ineffective relief efforts or inaction.

## C

### SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND MEMORY INSTITUTIONS

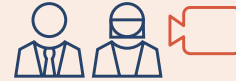


Since DRR is rooted in scientific knowledge, it is essential for the media to engage with scientific experts such as climate scientists, meteorologists, and DRR specialists. This helps media outlets provide evidence-based and data-driven insights on risks, forecasts and impacts of disasters. Scientists can also support the media in translating complex disaster-related issues into easy-to-understand content. Memory institutions such as museums, public libraries, and archives often serve as trusted community hubs with access to historical disaster records, local knowledge, and education. Partnering with them can help the media gain localised insights into disasters and discover cost-effective solutions to sometimes high-cost initiatives.

1. **Maintain a database** of experts for quick access during crises.
2. **Partner with scientists** to translate complex data (e.g. satellite imagery, risk models) on climate and disaster risks into accessible, actionable information.
3. **Organise interviews** and consultations for accurate forecasts, risk assessments, and mitigation strategies.
4. **Develop content** informing on innovative scientific solutions for long-term DRR efforts.
5. **Collaborate with public libraries** in co-financing disaster awareness and prevention initiatives.

## D

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND COMMUNITY LEADERS



Disaster communication must be localised to align with language, culture, and traditions. Engaging local authorities and community leaders (e.g. traditional and Indigenous leaders, heads of community-based organisations and disabled people's organisations) ensures messages are relevant and actionable. Local leaders and authorities are often the closest to the affected populations and can provide valuable insights into the community's evolving needs, helping the media tailor early warnings for maximum effectiveness. In some contexts, working with community leaders is indispensable for reaching people in remote areas. Before engaging with the leaders, be aware of the power dynamics within the communities and determine whether there are groups that are marginalised or forgotten by the community leadership.

1. **Work with local authorities and community leaders** to understand the unique risks and needs of communities and design disaster-related content that resonates with them.
2. **Collaborate with local officials** to create location-specific early warnings.
3. **Ensure two-way communication** by establishing open channels for feedback, allowing communities to voice concerns and ask questions.
4. **Highlight local efforts and needs** by showcasing the work of local authorities and community groups, reinforcing the importance of community-led DRR efforts.
5. **Engage traditional and Indigenous leaders** in identifying and communicating traditional knowledge systems in disaster preparedness and community resilience building.
6. **Engage religious and traditional leaders** to influence communities to take preventive action and to act when a disaster response is launched.

## E

### NGOS SUPPORTING AT-RISK GROUPS



Partnering with NGOs that work with at-risk groups is crucial for ensuring media content is accessible and relevant to these population groups. These organisations can help media better understand the unique challenges faced by at-risk groups such as women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and displaced persons. More details about vulnerable groups are provided in [Section V](#).

1. **Partner and collaborate with relevant NGOs** to gain insight into the specific needs of vulnerable populations and create tailored content to address them.
2. **Work with NGOs to make content accessible** to marginalised groups, such as providing information in multiple languages, using accessible formats (e.g., audio, braille, or sign language), and utilising platforms that are widely available to these communities.
3. **Co-create campaigns with NGOs** to highlight important issues, such as challenges for women and persons with disabilities during evacuation, and raise public awareness about resources and services available to vulnerable groups.

## F

## OTHER MEDIA ORGANISATIONS



Collaborations between media organisations on disaster reporting exist in several countries and have resulted in higher quality and impact of reporting, through the sharing of resources, expertise, and content. Working with other local, national, and international media outlets can enable a more coordinated response, ensure diverse perspectives in reporting, amplify the voices of affected communities, and reach a larger audience. This is particularly important in complex or cross-border disaster situations.

1. **Establish communication channels** and schedule periodical meetings to align coverage strategies and share resources.
2. **Put in place an emergency editorial board** to jointly handle high-impact emergencies.
3. **Partner with media outlets** in neighbouring regions/provinces or countries to cover disasters and disaster risks that affect multiple regions or countries. Engage in regional working groups if they exist.
4. **Partner with national, local, and community media outlets** to cover local and hyperlocal disaster-related issues.
5. **If you are a TV broadcaster**, partner with a radio station to rebroadcast your audio feed during disasters.
6. **Pool resources** and conduct joint in-depth investigative projects to address disaster risks and cover regional, national or international DRR efforts.
7. **Organise joint training programmes** and workshops to strengthen disaster reporting skills and improve technical capabilities.

Overall, it is important to note that coordination with authorities and stakeholders must not compromise media independence; media should retain final editorial control.

## V. LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

At-risk groups, such as women, children, older persons, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, and residents of informal settlements, are often the hardest hit during a disaster. However, they are not only vulnerable; they are also key sources of resilience, knowledge, and lived experience. They may not all wish to be portrayed as victims or may consider risky to be visible. Disaster reporting must be inclusive, reaching vulnerable groups and addressing their specific needs, while also both respecting privacy rights and benefiting from the unique insights that disadvantaged communities can offer, in areas such as early warning, community response, and environmental stewardship. Effective editorial and technical planning considering these population groups is essential for delivering accessible, understandable, and actionable information to them and including their voices and perspectives in production processes. This requires proactive measures during quiet periods. Establishing these systems and relationships in advance prepares media outlets to support all segments of society in all phases of disasters, ensuring no one is left behind. Several UN entities working with at-risk groups, such as UN Women, UNICEF, UNHCR, and IOM, are valuable sources of information and knowledge for the media.

## A

## REACHING AT-RISK GROUPS, INCLUDING PEOPLE LIVING IN REMOTE AREAS



1. **Map at-risk groups in advance.** Collaborate with disaster management authorities and use geographic information system (GIS) technology to identify remote settlements, areas without any means of connectivity, and areas prone to isolation during disasters.
2. **Coordinate with disaster management authorities** and collaborate on non-media disaster communication mechanisms, such as SMS alerts, posters, and door-to-door information distribution, by feeding information to these channels to reach communities with limited access to traditional media.
3. **Work with humanitarian agencies** and trusted local figures such as local authorities, community leaders and community organisations to amplify messages (more details are provided in **Section IV**). Remember the importance of independence and impartiality in this endeavour.
4. **Identify and train community volunteers** as “information liaisons” to relay critical updates.
5. **Deploy staff** to gather and relay real-time updates from remote areas, using mobile broadcasting units.

## B

## DEVELOPING CONTENT FOR AND WITH AT-RISK AUDIENCES



1. **Engage with at-risk groups and relevant organisations**, including UN entities, as well as the gender and disability focal points of organisations with which you are in contact, during non-crisis periods to understand their specific needs regarding disaster preparedness as well as their preferred methods of communication. Collaborate with groups such as women's organisations or disability equality advocates to create disaster-related content that addresses the unique risks they face.
2. **Ensure accessible content**, notably sign language interpreters, subtitles, and simplified language, to support those with visual, auditory, or cognitive disabilities. Ensure websites and mobile apps meet accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.0). Regularly create and test visual aids and key messages for clarity, particularly for people with low literacy levels, including older persons and children.
3. **Prepare content in multiple languages** and dialects spoken by diverse population groups covered by the outlet. Pay attention to lesser-used languages if they exist in your territory of operation. Work with local leaders to develop culturally sensitive messaging that resonates with different communities.
4. **Design disaster preparedness content** tailored to vulnerable groups, with content and format that meet each group's respective needs. Focus on actionable information and practical advice such as emergency kit preparation and identification of safe shelters.
5. **Establish systems to gather feedback** from marginalised communities after each disaster or alert, and use this feedback to improve future content and communication methods.
6. **Use UNESCO's *Practical Manual on Disability Equality in the Media*.**

## VI. STAFF TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Properly trained staff are an integral part of a disaster prepared media institution. Skilled staff can navigate high-stress disaster situations with composure, balancing personal safety with the urgency to inform, while trauma-informed protocols ensure staff resilience long after emergencies subside. This section outlines how to build a dedicated disaster task force, cultivate crisis-ready teams through training and simulations, and support staff after traumatic events. Consider seeking support from media development organisations, academia or government agencies if your organisation doesn't have the capacity to implement these actions.

## A

## APPOINTMENT AND TRAINING OF A DISASTER MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE



1. **Formally form a cross-departmental task force** to implement the DPRP. This team could be the same as the one formed to develop the DPRP.
2. **Appoint a leader and a deputy** (in case the leader is incapacitated) and assign specific roles to each member of the task force; the leader and deputy should ideally sit outside the newsroom. Define clear roles for an emergency response and rapid reaction.
3. **Establish clear communication channels**, set regular meetings, and create a centralized platform for real-time updates and coordination of the team's work.

## B

## TRAINING ON DISASTER PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS



1. **Educate staff on common disaster types**, effects of climate change and their trends and impacts in the country or region.
2. **Organise training** by disaster management authorities on DRR mandates and national protocols on disasters.
3. **Familiarize staff** with the DPRP in place, including business continuity plan, assigned roles and responsibilities, editorial policies about disaster reporting.
4. **Conduct disaster simulation drills** to test team coordination and practice emergency response, including early warning dissemination and emergency reporting.
5. **Include training** on how to navigate and manage external pressure and sensitive contexts while safeguarding editorial integrity, as well as how to counter disinformation campaigns during disasters.
6. **Set up mentorship programmes** to help new journalists and editors understand disaster reporting.

## C

## TRAINING ON EFFECTIVE AND SAFE DISASTER COVERAGE



1. **Train journalists and reporters** on safety and survival skills for field reporting during disasters.
2. **Offer workshops on investigative disaster reporting**, ethical, and trauma-informed reporting, crisis communication, and cybersecurity best practices (more details are provided in **Section III**).
3. **Educate staff** on collaborating with first responders and humanitarian agencies (more details are provided in **Section IV**).
4. **Train media teams** on engaging at-risk populations with sensitive and inclusive reporting strategies, including the “do no harm” approach. (more details are provided in **Section V**)
5. **Introduce alternative broadcasting methods**, digital technologies, and AI tools for effective disaster coverage (more details are provided in **Section I & VII**).
6. **Prepare staff with newsroom-tailored cybersecurity training**, including recognising phishing and cyberattack attempts and securely handling sensitive information.

## D

## POST-DISASTER RECOVERY AND LEARNING



1. **Offer training** on self-care and mental health support for journalists covering traumatic events, and inform your about existing global resources in this area.
2. **Facilitate peer debriefing sessions** to improve future disaster responses.
3. **Use analytic tools** to assess media performance and audience feedback after a disaster.
4. **Provide refresher courses** and ongoing training to continuously enhance skills and readiness.

## E

## SUSTAINING THE PLAN IN THE EVENT OF STAFF TURNOVER



1. **Conduct immediate knowledge transfer** through mandatory onboarding sessions for new hires, and pairing incoming staff with experienced mentors.
2. **Record video walkthroughs** or written debriefs from departing staff on lessons learned from past disaster responses.
3. **Ensure all DPRP materials** (e.g. chain of command, emergency contact lists, PSA templates...) are up to date and accessible to new staff.
4. **Review the disaster management task force** to fill gaps left by departing staff, ensuring all critical functions (e.g. spokesperson, tech backup lead) are covered.
5. **Conduct a house-wide disaster simulation** within 30 days in the case of significant turnover to identify gaps in new teams’ readiness.

## VII. LEVERAGING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Digital innovation can serve as a force multiplier for the media to facilitate and innovate in disaster reporting, and deliver timely, accurate, and actionable information on disasters. Digital tools, including AI, can help media decode multilingual risk narratives, detect public needs among vast datasets, and develop compelling investigative stories enriched with hazard models. They can help merge speed with precision, by identifying and countering false information and harmful content. At the same time, these tools can amplify misinformation and harmful content when used carelessly or unskillfully, when exploited by ill-intentioned actors for targeted propaganda, or when algorithms prioritise engagement over accuracy.

AI-generated content is prone to errors and bias. It is crucial to note that the use of AI tools and automation must respect ethical principles—check the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, to start with—and be accompanied by human oversight and validation. If you are not sure about a certain tool or the content it generates, simply do not use it. Always test tools before a disaster strikes. This advice applies to all action points listed in this section.

A

## DISASTER VISUALISATION AND HAZARD IMPACT MODELLING—TO BE DONE JOINTLY WITH TECHNICAL AGENCIES



1. **Use AI tools** to analyse and transform complex datasets into easy-to-understand charts, graphs, infographics, and videos.
2. **Use satellite imagery and drones** to capture real-time images and videos of disaster-affected areas, even in inaccessible regions. Partner with risk modelers to show future impacts of rising sea levels and extreme weather.
3. **Use Generative AI** to produce engaging explainers, showing scenarios like wildfire progression or earthquake hazards. When applicable, clearly label these as illustrative and not predictive.
4. **Create interactive maps** to show disaster zones, evacuation routes, and resource distribution.
5. **Leverage Augmented Reality** to provide immersive visualizations of disaster causes and impacts, such as flood levels or earthquake damage.

B

## FACT-CHECKING AND DATA-DRIVEN REPORTING



1. **Employ AI-powered methodologies** like reverse image search, metadata analysis, and geolocation to verify the authenticity of photos, videos, and claims.
2. **Use Natural Language Processing** to scan and analyse large volumes of text, audio, and video from multiple sources for relevant information on disasters.
3. **In collaboration with technical agencies**, leverage AI to analyse geographic and environmental data to identify high-risk areas and vulnerable populations and develop stories highlighting disaster risks.
4. **Use Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) tools** to gather data from public sources for investigative reporting on disaster progression, recovery efforts, action and inaction from authorities.
5. **Use social listening tools** to monitor social media and detect misinformation.

C

## UNINTERRUPTED COVERAGE DURING EMERGENCIES



1. **Establish dedicated live-streaming channels** on multiple platforms to ensure a redundant, continuous stream of real-time coverage that bypasses potential disruptions to traditional broadcast signals.
2. **Automate multi-channel distribution workflows** to push verified alerts and content simultaneously to social media, streaming platforms, and media partners, with priority rules for life-saving messages.
3. **Use automated systems**, when human operations are no longer possible, to ensure continuous production and delivery of critical updates during emergencies, to be done mandatorily with human oversight and validation and in accordance with the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP).
4. **Scan government reports**, sensor networks, and social media feeds etc. to detect disaster developments and provide instant updates to newsrooms, after validation by disaster management authorities.
5. **Automate** the generation of news updates and summaries from structured data, for human review.

D

## AI-POWERED MULTILINGUAL AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION



1. **Use Speech-to-Text and Text-to-Speech AI** to convert audio into text and vice versa, to assist visually impaired audiences and those who prefer text content.
2. **Use automated translation and subtitling tools** to ensure emergency alerts and preparedness content are accessible across multiple languages. Carefully review the quality of automated translation by native speakers before publication.
3. **Create sign language avatars** to translate disaster-related news for the hearing-impaired community. Test translation samples with deaf users to ensure relevance and accuracy.
4. **Analyse online audience preferences** and deliver disaster-related content in preferred languages and formats.
5. **Adapt web pages and content** into low-bandwidth formats.

## E

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT



1. **Deliver location-specific news and alerts** to audiences based on their geographic location.
2. **Use AI to curate disaster-related content** tailored to individual user preferences and behavioural patterns.
3. **Analyse** public inquiries and trending conversations on social media and track public sentiment on climate and disaster topics across different languages, to help media outlets identify community needs and respond to specific concerns.
4. **Create specific online platforms**, polls and other interactive features for audiences to ask questions, provide support to affected communities and share experiences. Ensure proper moderation of online discussions to avert misinformation or hate speech.
5. **Leverage AI analytics** and geotagged audience data to target dissemination and predict demand hotspots, ensuring rigorous privacy safeguards and transparent consent practices.



## IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN ONCE DEVELOPED

The last thing you want is to develop a plan and leave it to gather dust on a shelf. Making the DPRP part and parcel of organisational policies, securing both human and financial resources and their effective allocation are indispensable to ensuring that the plan is actionable and sustainable. The successful implementation of a DPRP involves clear, structured steps for both internal and external coordination. Some actions listed in this section are also key to the development process.

## A

## ENSURE LEADERSHIP ENDORSEMENT AND COMMITMENT



1. **Demonstrate how a DPRP benefits the media institution**, ensuring business continuity, protecting staff, and maintaining audience trust during crises. Use case studies and data on past disruptions to highlight risks and the need for preparedness.
2. **Organize briefings or scenario-based exercises** to illustrate vulnerabilities and show how an effective DPRP can mitigate operational disruptions.
3. **Define leadership roles** within the disaster preparedness and response framework, ensuring executives understand their responsibilities and are actively involved in decision-making.

## B

## SECURE ESSENTIAL RESOURCES AND TOOLS



1. **Allocate budget:** Dedicate part of the organisation's budget to disaster preparedness, including for staff training, equipment, and technology upgrades. Build a timeline for budget commitment.

2. **Prioritise spending:** Allocate funds to critical disaster preparedness areas, focusing on essential technologies, staff training, and operational continuity.
3. **Human resources:** Ensure your staff is adequately trained in disaster reporting, crisis communication, and using the necessary technology.
4. **Technical resources:** Invest in essential tools like backup power, communication systems, and software for real-time reporting.
5. **Digital tools:** Map open-source applications and AI tools useful for implementing the DPRP, install required software, or purchase necessary licenses for paid tools.
6. **Insurance coverage:** Obtain equipment and business interruption insurance to protect assets and revenue streams during crises.

## C

## MOBILIZE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IF THERE ARE FUNDING GAPS



1. **Apply for grants** from international and development organisations.
2. **Partner with the private sector** and tap into their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes.
3. **Consider selling advertising space** to agencies during peak hours that attract high audiences.
4. **Offer opportunities to donors** to have branded/ sponsored programmes or sections.
5. **Develop joint projects** with humanitarian agencies where media supports disaster response messaging in exchange for financial or technical support.
6. **Apply for funding** from local or national disaster management agencies that invest in crisis communication.
7. **Work with the World Broadcasting Unions** and media associations as vehicles for fundraising.

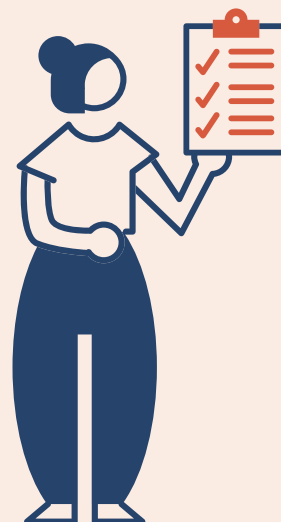
## D

## CONDUCT REGULAR REVIEWS AND UPDATES



1. **Review and update the DPRP regularly**, at least every two years. In the case of a media institution located in or covering areas with higher disaster risks, for example a coastal area, make it an annual exercise.
2. **Revise the plan** whenever there are significant changes, such as advances in climate science, new technologies, evolving community needs, or updated disaster management protocols.
3. **Ensure readiness** by keeping the plan on hand for quick reference.
4. **Evaluate the effectiveness of your response** after every disaster event. Identify gaps, gather feedback and implement improvements to the DPRP.

It goes without saying that funding sources, be them from governments, private sector or other sources, must respect editorial independence and support pluralistic media landscapes.





With the support of the UNESCO Multi-Donor Programme on  
Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP)

This Model Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan for Media Institutions was developed as part of UNESCO's actions to bolster media institutions and professionals in crisis preparedness and response. UNESCO is the specialized UN agency with a mandate to promote freedom of expression, support the development of free, independent and pluralistic media, protect the safety of journalists, and foster media and information literacy.

#### AUTHOR:

Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

#### UNESCO EDITORIAL COORDINATORS:

Mirta Lourenço, Sylvie Coudray, Xu Jing

#### CONTRIBUTORS:

Aida Sahraoui Soler, Al Amin Yusuph, Alan Gabrielli Azevedo, Anthony Frangi, Antonia Eser-ruperti, Dian Kuswandini, Doris Maritza Delgado, Elena Napoles Rodriguez, Ezra Eeman, Fabian Randerath, Fanny Langella, Gerard Guèdègbé, Harry Lock, Irene Scott, Irmgarda Kasinskaite, Jay Ralitera, Lisa Robinson, Misako Ito, Natalia Ilieva, Russell Isaac, Safâ Boukhibiza, Savyasaachi Jain, Shimakawa Eisuke, Soichiro Yasukawa, Sonia Gill, Walter Welz

#### GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Yarza Twins

Published in 2025 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

© UNESCO 2025

CI-2025/FMD/MDE/CPR/8



This document is available in Open Access under the Attribution ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>). By using the content of this document, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (<https://www.unesco.org/en/open-access/cc-sa>).

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.