

Step 1: Identify impacts and risk

As the goal of early actions in FbF is to prevent or reduce the humanitarian impact of extreme weather events, it is of crucial importance to understand the impact that the hazard in question causes, how and to whom.

Quantitative approaches can answer questions such as, how many people are impacted? How much damage is caused? What type of damage has occurred in the past and to whom? Qualitative questions reveal why and how people are affected and which impacts are most difficult for households to overcome. We've included a range of tools and methods to support you in identifying the priority impacts of the hazard that your EAP seeks to address below.

Method A: Review of historical (and current) data

When available, historical and current data from the government and national ministries are a valuable source of information regarding the impacts of past events and current exposure and vulnerability of populations at risk.

The following ministries may have relevant information regarding general or sector-specific disaster impacts and risk factors:

- National Disaster Management Agency (Disaster Risk Management Agency)
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Transportation
- Ministry of Climate/Energy
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry responsible for infrastructure/land use and/or housing
- Ministry for water and sanitation
- Agency responsible for national statistics
- Department of welfare
- National Research Institutions

In addition to government entities listed above, the following international databases and offer comprehensive country-specific impact data:

- [DesInventar](#)
- [EM-DAT](#)

For data on risk factors, these information management sources may also be useful:

- [INFORM index](#)

- ThinkHazard – GFDRR
- HDX
- OpenStreetMap
- ALNAP

Method B: Literature review

A literature review allows you to gather relevant information from existing work (such as reports, studies, policies and other documents) to identify impacts and potential early actions. Systematic reviews of international disaster response and risk reduction literature can also identify relevant actions that have been tested in other humanitarian settings and to gather evidence about whether, when, why, and how such interventions are effective in preventing or addressing disaster impacts relevant to your context. When reading through contingency plans, policy documents, studies, or reports on past disasters, consider the following:

- How have people prepared and responded to this hazard in the past?
- Could any of these responses be implemented before the event occurred in order to reduce later impacts?
- Could these preparedness actions be reinforced or improved with FbF?
- What evidence is there that this action will work?

In the case of literature reviews of existing FbF examples:

- Are the early actions and lessons learned identified in the literature review transferable to the context of the EAP that is in the process of being developed?

Method C: Semi-structured, key informant interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conversations using a guide or a list of questions that need answering but that allow for the conversation to unfold more naturally. They differ from structured interviews or surveys (in which questions are asked in specific way and answers are often pre-determined) in their open-ended nature.

Especially in contexts, where little literature or data on past impacts is available, semi-structured interviews with government and disaster management officials, community leaders, staff and volunteers of response agencies and RC and civil society can help you gather information on priority impacts. After identifying the key impacts and risk factors, semi-structured interviews with sector-specific experts are extremely valuable to probe deeper into potential early actions.



Practical Guidance 1: How many interviews are enough?

Depending on the time and resources available, it is best to continue to conduct interviews until subsequent interviews no longer yield new information, and additional responses could be inferred based upon existing data and understandings (this is called saturation). In some instances, you may also exhaust the list of relevant informants.

In the Mozambican context it was not possible to reach saturation in every sector that is impacted by floods and cyclones. Due to time constraints, the FbF team focused instead on interviewees from the sectors most aligned with the Mozambique Red Cross capacities and priorities. Examples of semi-structured interview guides for government stakeholders, community leaders or members (if applicable), and sector-specific experts are available [here](#).

Arielle Tozier de la Poterie explains how to identify impacts and select early actions for an EAP, and talks about experiences made in Mozambique:

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hx4jnU-4iA>

How does this translate in an urban context?

The Vietnamese Red Cross (VNRC) together with the GRC, IFRC, and the Climate Center started the FbF project focusing on heat waves in Vietnam in 2018. This was the first to bring FbF into an urban context. But, in a densely populated city with 16 million people, how do you find out who is most vulnerable and how extreme heat impacts them? The VNRC launched the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey, randomly sampling 1200+ respondents in specific areas of Hanoi. Based on resident's understanding of heat wave impacts, results from the KAP study were used to inform the selection of the early actions.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wU1OkRUDnWs>

Method D: Focus group discussions

A focus group is a guided discussion, preferably conducted with a relatively homogenous group of individuals. You can conduct focus groups at various levels, including with national stakeholders, provincial or district officials, community leaders, or groups of practitioners.



Practical Guidance 2: Interviews or Focus Groups?

While interviews can help you to triangulate information from different sources, given limited resources or availability, it is not always possible to interview everyone individually. In such cases, small group interviews, or focus groups, can yield a wider range of opinions in a short period of time. However, care must be given to the selection of participants, power dynamics, gender, and age in order to ensure that everyone feels free to participate openly and honestly.

Both approaches seek to understand what disaster impacts are more common or likely, who and what is likely to be affected, as well as, existing coping capacities, responses, and potential early actions. In all cases, ask participants what kinds of actions might be taken before an event to reduce the damage and what kinds of resources or support would be needed to execute these actions.

Method E: (Post-disaster) Community visits

Walking through a community with leaders or representatives can be a valuable way to contextualize and deepen understanding gained through interviews and focus groups. Both structured transect walks (see VCA) or less formal tours of a community allow the team to observe local conditions first hand, hear stories, and ask questions that might not arise in a more formal setting. Although visits shortly after an extreme event allow for direct observation of impacts, walking through disaster-prone communities can provide valuable insights at any time.

It is always important to be respectful in the timing of your focus group or visit, and consult local leaders-representatives beforehand. For example, when visiting Nampula, Mozambique shortly after a tropical depression, local officials requested a walk through the village with local leaders rather than conduct a focus group (as planned) so as not to raise expectations of assistance.

Method F: Stakeholder workshops

Stakeholder workshops are valuable to elicit opinions and ideas while reinforcing the concept of FbF and their engagement in the EAP process. They can be used to identify which are the priority impacts that can be tackled by the FbF system and also to prioritize early actions, revise theories of change (see [M&E guideline](#)), and discuss how to operationalize early actions. Practical Guidance boxes 3 and 4 and the resource links below provide examples of workshop formats to identify, prioritize, and critically examine potential early actions.



Practical Guidance 3: Sample 1-day Provincial Workshop Agenda based on Activities Mozambique

- Presentation: Overview of the concept of FbF
- Presentation: Update on the FbF Protocol development

Break

- Review of research findings and impacts of floods
- Individual Activity: Questionnaire asking stakeholder to rank priority impacts

Lunch

- Group Activity 1: Ranking of key impacts in small groups (we divided participants according to the district from which they came)
 - Presentation of ranking to the group
- Group Activity 2: Small group brainstorming and prioritization of actions that could be taken to address the priority impacts (RC Climate Centre game “Ready”)
 - Presentation of actions to the group



Practical Guidance 4: Sample 2-day National Workshop Agenda based on Activities in Mozambique

Day 1

- Registration and official opening

Break

- Presentation of the Protocol
- Questions and answers
- Individual Activity: Questionnaire asking stakeholder to rank impacts (see Appendix F)

Lunch

- Presentation of the research findings: primary impacts and evidence for potential early actions
- Group discussion: what early actions are missing?
- Individual Activity: Post all potential early actions (including those added by small groups) on

the wall and have each person vote (with stickers) for the 3 priority early actions by placing their stickers on the appropriate paper.

Day 2:

- Presentation of results of Day 1
- Individual questionnaire results: which impacts were prioritized?
- Results of early action prioritization: which early actions did the stakeholders prioritize?
Based on the above, which actions will the group recommend

Break

- Group work – Revising and Refining the Theory of Change:
 - As many 1.5 hours sessions as needed (with lunch as appropriate) to workshop key Theories of Change in small groups
 - In Mozambique, we divided participants according to their expertise, so that WASH experts were working on WASH-related theories of change, shelter experts on shelter, and so on.
 - Disaster managers more generally were divided evenly among the groups.