Nepal Red Cross Society

Operational Approach

to

Risk Reduction, 2019

Introduction

This approach has been aligned with NRCS risk reduction policies and strategy framework-2023. This forms basis for risk reduction programmes/projects development, implementation and Monitoring/ Evaluation at all levels.
Obviously, this is one of the three papers in its family. NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy Framework-2023 guides National HQs, provincial committees, district chapters, sub-chapters and Junior/Youth Red Cross circles to develop and implement interventions that contribute to reduce risks through development of safer and resilient communities, all under one clear programme approach that encourage a uniform way of working. It recognizes that disaster is a risk driver to the vulnerable people. In addition, there are other risk drivers such as political, socio-economic, technological and environmental conditions. The risk reduction policies, strategies and the operational approach contribute to build up resilience against these drivers and reduce risk levels.

Emerging trends on disasters, climate change patterns and recent political changes in Nepal present Nepal Red Cross Society with several opportunities, but some challenges as well. Taking this context into reference, this operational approach provides a guide as to how NRCS could achieve its aims as outlined in its policies and strategy framework. This approach identifies core elements of the Risk Reduction Strategy Framework (2019-2023) that should be common to all NRCS's resilience building work for risk management. An internal strategic review carried out recently indicated that there exists a gap been what is being practiced through disaster risk reduction and what is expected for risk reduction by the NRCS leadership in wider context, therefore, this approach paper contributes to bridge the gap.

Approach for risk reduction

Risk is perceived as an interaction between vulnerability and capacity. Consequently, in past years, focus was on addressing risks through vulnerability reduction. However, as vulnerability-focused risk reduction approach undermines community's strengths considering community members as passive recipient of external support, it is considered as its limiting factor. In overcoming this limitation, resilience-focused risk reduction approach was developed over the years. NRCS, therefore, has planned a three stage process to step into resilience-focused risk reduction approach as given below:

- Initial stage: continue to engage in core disaster risk reduction actions, but also make improvements in the disaster risk reduction interventions (early stage)
- Capacity building stage: link up disaster risk reduction with resilience building approach and invest in capacity building as well
- Final stage: Step into resilience building approach for risk reduction

It is obvious that disaster is only one of the many other underpinning factors for increasing risks such as political, economic, social, technological, environmental etc. Therefore, in risk reduction efforts, all these risk factors are also taken into account. Through this approach, NRCS envisions that the communities would have capacity to create resilience for themselves. While doing so, the communities will develop their competence for having adequate knowledge about their risks, analyzing their risks, working together with external agencies to reduce risks and in case there will be any impact of any residual risk (e.g. emergency), they will be able to respond to it. As a result of all these strengths, NRCS anticipates that they will be living in a cohesive neighborhood, their access to economic opportunities will have been improved, the infrastructures will have been accessible and well maintained, they will have capacity to manage their natural assets and they will be well connected with external world so they could seek help when urgent. In line with this, NRCS DM department has set its mission to empower vulnerable people to effectively respond and adapt to changing circumstances and to develop skills, capacities, behaviors and actions to deal with disaster and emergencies, which is guidepost to NRCS in its efforts to resilience building. In this process, NRCS will abide by its seven fundamental principles, with high emphasis upon the Humanity, Impartiality and Independence. And, NRCS believes in transparency and its accountability towards all stakeholders as well.
The approach within this document has been prepared with significant consultation with departments and leadership of the NRCS. It's starting point is to define the three step process as stated above along with minimum capacity appropriate for NRCS at all levels: NHQs, Provincial Committees, District Chapters, sub-chapters and Junior/Youth Red Cross Circles to deliver effective resilience building for risk reduction.

It also aligns NRCS to efforts across the humanitarian sector in Nepal to take a more consistent approach to risk reduction/ resilience building. It is intended that this approach acts as a guide for Nepal Red Cross to follow at all levels. More detailed guidance how risk reduction/ resilience building can be implemented in practice will be guided by revised risk management tool kit.

With the support of its partners, NRCS has for many years taken disaster risk reduction and other projects at community level, increasingly integrating DRR with other sectors like water and sanitation and health in communities. In these projects, the NRCS follows a service-led model adopting a community centered participatory approach. In addition, NRCS has moved from sole rural focus to urban centers as well.

NRCS has established as a regular partner to many actors within and outside the Red Cross movement. The approach outlined here aims to encourage all these partners to support a more efficient and coherent approach of community resilience building, based upon a clear appreciation where the NRCS can add most value and building on the presence and capacity of its network across the whole country.

The combination of developing core provincial committees, district chapters and sub-chapter capacity to deliver minimum risk reduction activities for both response and day- to- day risk reduction, should be seen as complementary to NRCS's on-going capacity to deliver projects. The former enables NRCS to work towards providing a consistent and predictable minimum role across Nepal, the latter, enables it and its partners to deepen engagement with vulnerable communities when project resources are available.

In both the cases, NRCS recognizes that it has an important role in ensuring the risk faced by vulnerable populations are addressed within the broader sustainable development planning process in Nepal.

Alongside these two approaches sits a commitment by NRCS to support national efforts to mainstream risk reduction in development planning process at all levels.

NRCS recognizes that a network of seven provincial committees and 77 district chapters cannot operate at the same level, therefore, NRCS wants to support all of them to move towards achieving a minimum level of performance and delivery. This approach will provide the following support to all the NRCS structures:

- define NRCS scope of engagement in risk reduction/ resilience building interventions,
- clarifies relationship between different components of resilience building such as disaster risk reduction, organization preparedness, response and recovery,
- demonstrates alignment between NRCS and National and global priority actions on risk reduction/ resilience building
- repositions NRCS clearly in Nepal in terms of partnership and resource mobilization
- harmonizes a project management under a programme approach at all levels
- provides a reference to NRCS departments to follow a consistent approach of risk reduction/ resilience building
- Measure progress against strategic outcomes
- Show how NRCS is including key elements of a disaster risk reduction such as early warning, climate change, food security, and economic security, cash-based interventions in its work

NRCS's risk reduction work aspires to promote social inclusion, elderly care, child protection, reduce gender-based violence in its working areas. It works to increase participation of marginalized and discriminated communities.

While developing NRCS policy documents, efforts were made to align these documents with the following frameworks:

- IFRC framework for Community resilience
- Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2075 (Nepal Govt.)
- Disaster Risk Reduction policy-2015 and National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2018-2030 (Nepal Govt)
- Road Map to community resilience, IFRC , 2016
- Nepal Red Cross Society Operational Approach to Disaster Risk Management 2014
- Disaster Management Strategic Framework 2010-2015 (NRCS)
- IFRC Strategy 2020
- CBHFA Community tools
- Community Based Risk Management Implementation Field Practitioner Guidelines, NRCS
- NRCS Health Strategy
- 2016-2020
- Linking Risk Reduction and Community Resilience , June 2018
- Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Natural Hazards Science
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

- IFRC Strategy 2030 (discussion paper)
- Global Agenda for Climate Change Adaptation

Context

Hydro-meteorological, geo-physical and biological disasters are recurring phenomenon in Nepal that impose serious risks to the communities. In addition, changes in social, economic, cultural, technological and environmental elements also pose risks to them. In Federal structure, municipalities are entrusted as responsible government structures for local development and risks management. However, municipalities are still in the process of making, therefore, adequate capacity is yet to develop. NRCS has gained significant experience in managing risk reduction interventions. Disaster risk reduction, emergency response and recovery, health and care in communities, water and sanitation, first-aid, livelihood and community level capacity building are some of the examples, which contribute to resilience building efforts of the communities.

The purpose of this approach paper is to show how NRCS resilience building can contribute to risk reduction following a consistent and unified approach. In the new context where municipalities are entrusted to play vital role in risk reduction, NRCS could collaborate with them for concerted efforts.

Objectives

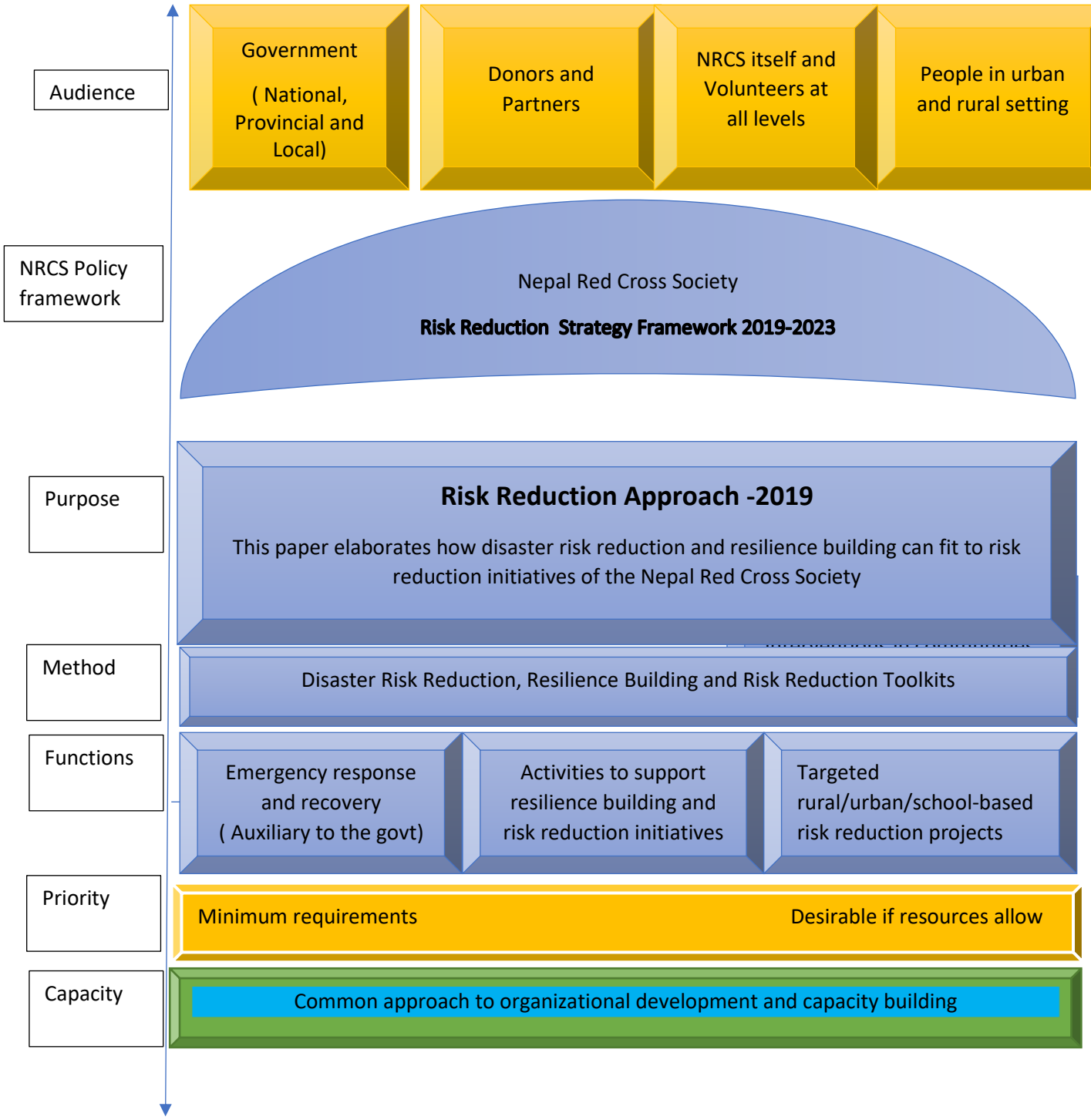
To bring clarity to NRCS's current and future engagement with risk management within the context of Government's policies and Movement policy and partnerships

1. To set the scope and approach for NRCS's resilience building work based on its mandate and capacities, and show how NRCS is contributing, in a unified way, towards the broader process of building the resilience of most vulnerable and reducing their risk levels,

2. To position NRCS to access sustainable resourcing from government and other partners, to support its work at all levels based on a clear demonstration of value and NRCS's impact in communities

2. Conceptual framework

Description of how the different elements of NRCS's resilience building/ risk reduction approach fit together :



1. **Areas of interventions**

NRCS has significant experience in the fields of community-based disaster risk reduction, emergency response, recovery and community programming. In addition to fulfilling its auxiliary role to the government in times of emergency for relief and recovery operations, it can draw upon a range of capacities to respond to identified needs at other times. These include, community health and care, first aid, water and sanitation, hygiene promotion, livelihoods, Junior Red Cross and youth, and, of course, community-based risk reduction. Some of these capacities are stronger and more available in the NRCS than others. Similarly, the potential of these capacities should be balanced by the reality of a volunteer-based organization working in 77 districts.

In addition to directly implementing projects, **NRCS' core mandate is to act as an auxiliary to the local and national governments in times of emergency and disaster**. NRCS has been well known for its effective engagement in this role in the past. NRCS recognizes the need to ensure that its response and recovery capacity is best used in line with recognized standards and good practices within the sector. It also sees the inherent benefit of relationship building with municipalities vulnerable to disasters and other risks in non-disaster time through strengthening risk reduction governance, engagement of private sector, policy advocacy and community-based risk reduction interventions as well.

However, what is also important is to note that all these activities, both during emergency and non-emergency periods, are managed by volunteers, therefore, the interventions should be designed ensuring that they are deliverable by the Volunteers rather than over relying on professional staff members. In consideration with these realities, the following three approaches will be followed by the NRCS for the entire management of the risk reduction/ resilience-based projects:

Approach 1: Minimum approach to risk reduction/ resilience building when risk reduction or resilience building is not a core, but complementary component

Approach 2: Common approach to risk reduction/ resilience building for all projects when risk reduction or resilience building is a core component

Approach 3: NRCS contribution to deliver National Disaster Risk Reduction Policies and Plans of the government

Approach 1: Minimum approach to risk reduction/ resilience building when risk reduction or resilience building is not a core, but complementary component

Seven provincial structures of the NRCS are in the process of making. Therefore, their role in risk reduction or resilience building is yet to clarify. However, it is presumed that the provinces would co-ordinate with the National Headquarters and the District Chapters within the organizational network. In addition, they are also expected to play an important role in coordinating with provincial government and other relevant agencies within their jurisdictions.

However, the district chapters and to some extent sub-chapters are fully engaged in risk reduction or resilience building over the years. Therefore, the following table lays out minimum capacities of District Chapters and sub-chapters as identified by NRCS. These are in line with government policy, and NRCS' own Risk Reduction Strategic Framework. They are presented in sequential order so that District Chapters and sub-chapters can be supported to

build capacity in a gradual manner, starting with level -1 NRCS's auxiliary role in times of disaster. The following should be considered when looking at this list:

- Capacity building will be focused on district chapter and sub-chapter levels using NRCS's DREC, OCAC, BOCA tools as main tools to identify current gaps and needs
- Capacity building should be based on need and district chapters may be prioritized for headquarters support to ensure process is manageable. The process should be led by the district chapters and their risk reduction/ resilience building work to be accountable, independent and locally resourced,
- Engagement with level 2 and Level 3 (refer to the following table) should be balanced by evidence that local government is providing the commitment and resources to support risk reduction in development
- District chapters are responsible for capacity building of sub-chapters on risk reduction/ resilience building in line with their local context. But, NHQs, project partner, provinces and District Chapters all have a role to play in supporting the process of moving capacity down to sub-chapters
- All new NRCS DRR / Risk Reduction/ Resilience building related projects should ensure that these priorities are built in to the assessment and design process

Level 1: Minimum organizational capacities for risk reduction /resilience building/ auxiliary role

Minimum capacities	Why	Alignment with NRCS policy
District Disaster Response team	For prompt response to emergency situation	NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy
First aid capacity at district level	For prompt response to emergency situation	NRCS Development Plan
Contingency plan	To develop capacity to respond to priority disasters	NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy
Joint interventions on risk reduction between NRCS and Municipality/ Rural municipality	To follow NRCS mandate as an auxiliary to the government	NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy
General DP capacity at district level/ sub-chapter level	To develop emergency response capacity of NRCS	NRCS Risk Reduction Policy
Emergency fund at district level	To develop emergency response capacity of NRCS	NRCS Risk Reduction Policy
Availability of data for risk reduction planning and programming	To support future planning process	NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy

Minimum organizational capacity to support the above activities at district chapter and sub-chapter levels such as basic structure for risk governance and skilled volunteers pool	For an effective risk governance	NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy

Level 2: capacities to support government to mainstream risk reduction in development planning

Minimum capacities	Why	Alignment with NRCS policy
Raising awareness of risk reduction -advocacy at district, municipalities, ward and community levels	To increase level of understanding on risk reduction/ resilience building in NRCS at all levels and municipalities	NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy
Advocacy to municipality and other agencies for risk reduction mainstreaming/ awareness raising	To develop a concerted effort on risk reduction / resilience building	Nepal Government's Disaster Risk Reduction Policy
Facilitator role with municipalities	To support community-based risk reduction, risk governance and resilience building process	Nepal Government's Disaster Risk Reduction Policy
Private sector engagement in crises period	To ensure that basic lifesaving services are available in market during crises period as well	NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy
Facilitator role for risk financing	To ensure that the communities at great risk of an impending disaster (e.g. flooding) receive financial assistance for relief purpose well before the disaster strikes	NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy

Level 3: Capacities to support roll out of risk reduction policy down to community level

Risk assessment at community level	To ensure development planning is risk informed	NRCS Risk Reduction Strategy
Supporting government at all levels on risk reduction planning process	To support government mechanisms especially municipalities for risk informed planning process	In line with existing 14 step planning process of the NRCS on disaster risk reduction
Using the NRCS network to act as a link between the government structure down to community level and ensuring relevant risk reduction plans	Use NRCS relationships with stakeholders to encourage a consistent quality approaches and more efficient use of resources	NRCS risk reduction strategy
• Establish JRC at schools • Establish First aid capacity at sub-chapters level	To gain out each to the vulnerable communities	Youth engagement strategy and Health Strategy

Level 4 : desirable capacities

- Local risk reduction/ resilience building activities initiated by district chapters and sub-chapters
- Increasing access to local risk profile data
- Active engagement with the Federal government on resilience building/ disaster risk reduction
- Orient municipalities and other partners on risk reduction and resilience building
- Local level technical role in early warning system to link up communities with national level early warning system
- Local stakeholders orientation on climate change

Approach 2: Common approach to risk reduction/ resilience building <u>for all projects when risk reduction or resilience building is not a complementary, but a core component</u>

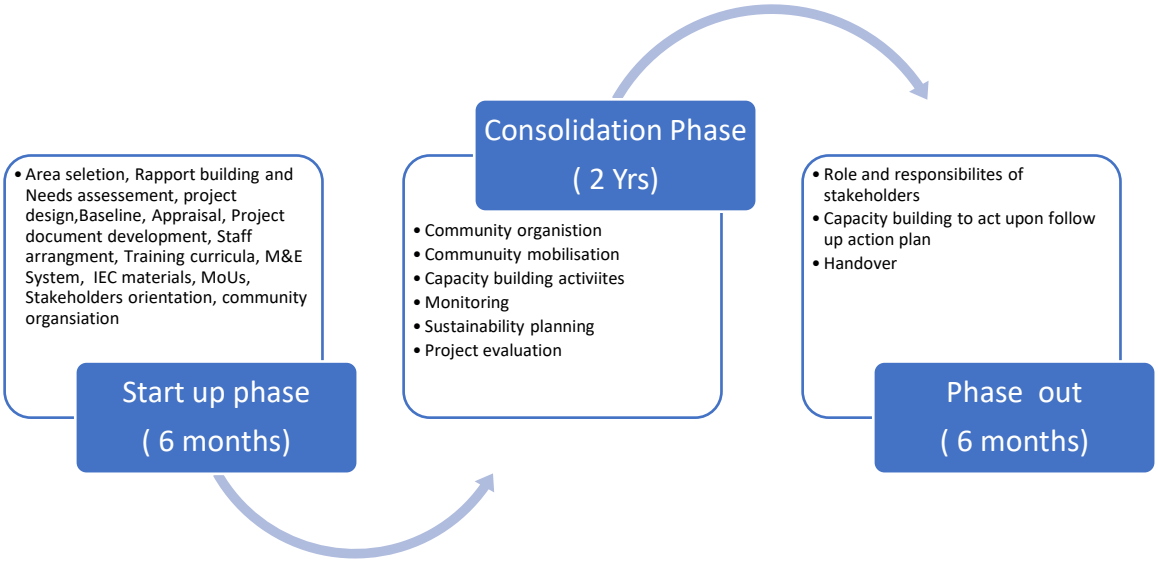
NRCS runs several projects on risk reduction. For one project, risk reduction or resilience building is core component (as described above), however, for others they consider risk reduction or resilience building as a complementary component to their core component. In relation to the later approach, NRCS will be driven by the following ambitions:

- demonstrably build and strengthen community resilience
- ensure participation, and promoting the interests of, the most vulnerable groups and individuals
- working with communities, from the beginning, following a participatory approach that strengthens ownership of the most vulnerable groups and individuals
- Responding to community-identified needs in line with NRCS capacities
- Supporting communities to link up their plans with municipal plans
- Ensuring that the NRCS plans are well-aligned with the government plans at all levels
- Capturing good practices and scaling-up them
- Strengthening NRCS capacity in addressing needs and aspirations of vulnerable people during disaster and non-disaster times, using its own resources

Ways of working

NRCS will review and update its current tool kits. Key features of NRCS's approach to engaging with communities through projects, whether in urban, rural or school settings follow and are based around the key elements of its risk reduction /resilience-based approach.

1. **Project cycle**
   NRCS, in general, will define a three years project cycle as follows:



2. **Area selection :**

The targeted communities have the highest level of vulnerabilities as identified through community experience and scientific knowledge

3. **Rapport building and understanding the community :**
   Any project identified together with a community should be guided by its clear exit strategy. This process is expected to manage community expectations and well establishing linkages between the community and external stakeholders

4. **Community situation analysis**
   - Risk reduction assessments should be based on analysis of context at local levels, and clearly linked to evidence of vulnerability and general needs. It should be in a minimum understanding of the resilience context
   - Where capacity permits, NRCS will seek to build in other sector specific interventions in response to the needs. Other priority needs should be fed in to the Municipality's annual plan
   - Consider climate change related data as well in the above planning process
5. **Community-based risk reduction/resilience planning**
   - The local community level plans or school-based JRC plans are informed by assessment findings and community actions are developed with the full involvement of all relevant stakeholders
6. **Establishment of local level structures and JRC circles in schools**
   - Any new community structures will be stablished in line with the government policy. A participatory process will be followed. Similarly, to act upon resilience building, schools will be encouraged to strengthen/ activate Junior Red Cross Circles
7. **Community-led risk reduction/ resilience building actions**
   - Where the need is identified, support the organization of community preparedness in hazard prone municipalities
   - Build-in a defined local role in early warning systems, in line with national agreements and local capacity and context
   - Engage with or promotion of mitigation activities within the NRCS capacities and community priorities
   - Document good practices and lessons learned to feed into annual lessons learned workshop. Establish clear linkages between Annual Operational Plan and NRCS Risk Reduction Strategic Framework 2019.
   - Coordinate with relevant agencies, municipalities and the government on policy matters. Key outcomes such a systematic approach could be as follows (ref: IFRC framework for community resilience,2014)[1]:

     -people are able to assesses and manage the risks facing them,
     -everyone has opportunities to learn new skills, build on past experiences, and share and apply this knowledge in practice
     -everyone has access to sustainable water and sanitation system
     -everyone has access to a secure and nutritious food supply
     -everyone has access to health care system

     -communities provide protection and security for all of their members and have capacity to draw on formal and informal community networks of support to identify problems, needs and opportunities, establish priorities and act for the good and inclusion of all in the communities

[1] *These outcomes will be well aligned with the minimum characteristics of a resilient society as recommended by the government of Nepal.*

-Communities have well planned, well maintained and accessible infrastructures and services
-Communities have the ability or support to use, maintain, repair and renovate the public infrastructure and system
-Communities have appropriate safe, secure and affordable shelter, water and sanitation systems, transport and energy systems as well

-Communities provide a diverse range of employment and income opportunities
-They are flexible and resourceful communities have the capacity to accept uncertainties and respond (proactively) to change

-communities recognize the value for their natural assets
-communities manage their natural assets
-they have ability to protect, enhance and maintain their natural assets

-communities have capacity and capabilities to sustain and build on good relationships with a range of external actors who can provide a wider supportive environment
-communities have access to a network of external actors willing/able to supply tangible forms of support to the community

- Actively engage in establishing linkages between key actors working on risk reduction / resilience building

Approach 3: NRCS contribution to deliver National Disaster Risk Reduction Policies and Plans of the government

This section elaborates how NRCS could well maintain its alignment of its efforts to deliver the National plans at all levels of the organization. JRC, sub-chapter, District chapter, Provinces and National HQs will have different levels of engagement in the process as follows:

Keys:

Junior Red Cross (JRC), Sub-chapter (SC), District Chapter (DC), Provincial committees (PC),NHQs (HQS)

Govt priority 1: Awareness about disaster risk reduction	**Govt priority 2: Strengthening DRR governance at federal, province and municipal levels**	**Govt priority 3: Investment on resilience building for risk reduction**	**Govt priority 4: For relief, recovery and rehabilitation, follow " build back safer" approach**
Disaster risk assessment (SC, PC, DC,HQs)	Institutional capacity strengthening (HQS, PC, DC, SC)	Investment on resilience building (NHQS, DC, SC)	Preparedness for effective disaster response (NHQS, DC, SC, PC)
Inter-agency coordination for Disaster risk assessment (DC,PC,HQs)	Hazards Monitoring mechanism HQs	Increasing public investment on resilience building (x)	Multi-hazard early warning system (HQs, DC, SC)

Disaster Management Information System (PC, HQs, DC)	Capacity building, co-ordination and collaboration for strengthened DRR governance (HQs, PC, DCs)	Investment of private sector on risk reduction (HQS, PC,DCs,SC)	Community-based disaster risk reduction (HQS,PC,DCs, SC)
Capacity building for awareness generation on DRR (HQs, PC,DC,SC,JRC)	Ensuring social inclusion in DRR (DC, SC)	Safety net interventions for resilience building (DC,SC)	Information and dissemination system (HQs, PC, DC,SC)
			Search and rescue, Recovery and Reconstruction (Build back better) (HQs, PCs, DCs)

8. Enabling environment

- Consider Gender and Social Inclusion as a strong element in the project
- Build programme / projects on climate change
- Consider wider learning of NRCS and other's good while designing a project
- Make use of organization development tools (OD tools) while planning for capacity building of organization network at all levels
- Design all projects for a cycle of three years based on three phases of the project
- Risk reduction / resilience building interventions in urban settings are more complicated as compared to rural settings. Therefore, a system-based approach will be followed while designing and implementing such interventions.

9. Partnership modalities

Currently, two models are in practice

- NRCS implements projects without technical assistance from partners such as Restoring Family Links, and
- NRCS implements projects with technical support from partners

Within the NRCS network, the following models are in practice:

- Projects-led and implemented by Headquarters,
- Led by HQs, but implemented by district chapters (mostly)
- Led by HQs, implemented by district chapter with other consortium members (e.g. Surkhet)
- Partners liaise with HQs, but implemented by district chapters
- Direct coordination by DCs with other partners and implemented by DC

Despite all these practices, NRCS prefers to align with the first two models so NRCS's could optimize its value addition. Gradually, NRCS will develop institutional capacity for joint interventions at local levels as well.

10. Quality assurance, accountability and sustainability

NRCS will develop a mechanism in order to maintain its quality standards. Nepal Government's quality standards on resilience building (minimum characteristics of a resilient community) and IFRC's outcomes of resilience building (ref above to **Community-led risk reduction/ resilience building actions)** will be considered will be referred to while developing key performance indicators. The existing Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting system will be integrated with all risk reduction/ resilience building interventions.

11. Sustainability of NRCS model

This will depend on improved capacity of district chapters and sub-chapters to mobilize resources (particularly financial) at municipal level. In consideration with current role of municipalities in disaster risk reduction and community resilience building, there are emerging opportunities to develop joint projects at municipalities level. Therefore,

- it is important that partners invest on capacity building of chapters and sub-chapters to build up local level capacity for long term sustenance,
- use common capacity assessment tools such as BOCA tools for developing capacity building plan
- resourcing from Federal and municipal governments to support disaster risk reduction/ resilience building mainstreaming process; with focus on risk assessment, capacity building of municipality and community level structures, forecast based financing, early warning system, women leadership development in DRR etc.
- focus on strengthening coordination with local government in line with existing plans and policies