

# Managing Exercises



The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past and present. This handbook was produced on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

Australian Disaster Resilience  
Handbook Collection

# Managing Exercises

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# Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection

The Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection provides guidance on national principles and practices for disaster resilience.

The Handbook Collection:

- provides an authoritative, trusted and freely available source of knowledge about disaster resilience principles in Australia
- aligns national disaster resilience strategy and policy with practice, by guiding and supporting jurisdictions, agencies and other organisations and individuals in their implementation and adoption
- highlights and promotes the adoption of good practice in building disaster resilience in Australia
- builds interoperability between jurisdictions, agencies, the private sector, local businesses and community groups by promoting use of a common language and coordinated, nationally agreed principles.

The Handbook Collection is developed and reviewed by national consultative committees representing a range of state and territory agencies, governments, organisations and individuals involved in disaster resilience. The collection is sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs.

Access to the Handbook Collection and further details are available on the Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub (the Knowledge Hub): [www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/handbooks](http://www.knowledge.aidr.org.au/handbooks)

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Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers

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Community Recovery

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Disaster Resilience Education for Young People

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Tsunami Emergency Planning in Australia

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# Background

## Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide consistent national guidelines for the design, planning, conduct and evaluation of emergency management exercises. It introduces the principles, processes and documentation required for exercising. The concepts and principles contained in this handbook are also incorporated in the 'Design emergency management exercises' unit within the Public Safety Training Package.

## Context

This handbook contributes to Priority 4 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, identifying the importance of promoting:

'regular disaster preparedness, response and recovery exercises, including evacuation drills, training and the establishment of area-based support systems, with a view to ensuring rapid and effective response to disasters and related displacement, including access to safe shelter, essential food and non-food relief supplies, as appropriate to local needs'. (p. 21)

It also contributes to the Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework components of *Plan and Coordinate Capabilities and Partnerships* through assisting with the practice and the implementation of plans through simulations and exercises to build confidence in partners and the arrangements (p. 21). Additionally, it supports continuous Improvement through assisting with *Utilising simulation, experimentation and exercises to understanding the effectiveness of the Framework and its components* (p. 23).

## Audience

This handbook provides foundational guidance and is intended to be applicable to a wide audience. This handbook is designed for any organisation (e.g. government, business, not-for profit) or community group that seeks to conduct emergency management exercises, as well as providing guidance to the emergency management sector and emergency management organisations. A collaborative approach between organisations and groups, based on a common framework, is strongly encouraged.

The content in this handbook is intended to be applicable from local to national scale exercises. This handbook enables a first-time practitioner to conduct a basic discussion style, functional or field exercise. It provides consistent foundational guidance for more advanced practitioners, recognising that additional experience and specialist knowledge will usually be required to manage larger or more complex exercises. Experienced practitioners may also adapt elements of this handbook to suit specific contextual, organisational or jurisdictional requirements.

## Supporting resources

The content in this handbook is supported by a suite of complementary resources. These resources include templates, case studies and toolkits for specialised exercising areas, such as recovery exercising and lessons management. These can be found on the AIDR Knowledge Hub: [knowledge.aidr.org.au](https://knowledge.aidr.org.au)

The *Recovery Exercising Toolkit* (Recovery Toolkit) is a companion resource to this handbook and contains evidence-based guidance and specialised resources that allow for a dedicated focus on recovery and an in-depth exploration of recovery issues over time. The toolkit can be used to support exercise management programs to include a recovery exercise component whenever exercises are conducted.



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## What is an exercise?

An exercise is a controlled, objective-driven activity used to practice, test, evaluate or explore future plans, processes or capabilities of an organisation or group. In this context, a capability is the power or ability to do something. Capability includes skills, knowledge, and abilities, as well as infrastructure and equipment.

To be effective, exercises must be tailored to meet an identified need, a stated aim and objectives. Exercises should be conducted at all levels of an organisation and involve all relevant stakeholders. Exercises provide an opportunity to ensure that disaster risks and consequences are understood, and that relevant plans, processes and capabilities are in place to mitigate these risks.

## Why conduct exercises?

Exercises are an essential component of preparedness for the prevention of, response to and recovery from disasters. Regardless of the size or type, exercises are useful to:

- meet regulatory, assurance or portfolio goals
- enhance capability through a cycle of continuous improvement
- enhance preparedness
- evaluate plans
- explore current and future issues
- promote awareness
- develop or assess competence
- demonstrate capability
- develop networks and practise interoperability
- validate training
- identify gaps in knowledge, processes or capabilities
- evaluate equipment, techniques and processes
- build individual and collective resilience
- incorporation or confirmation of previous lessons identified through previous exercises or operations
- understand roles and responsibilities.

## Exercising framework

Exercise management does not occur in isolation. Exercising is often aligned with the functions of portfolio management and evaluation, preparedness, systemic disaster risk reduction, emergency management and lessons management. Every exercise will involve one or more of these dimensions. Specialist knowledge may be sought from one or more of these domains, as required.

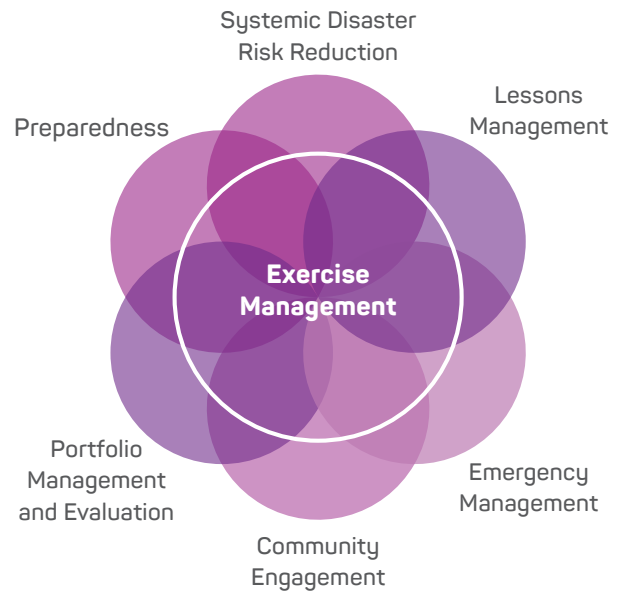


Figure 1: Exercise management framework

## Exercising in a cycle of continuous improvement

A common approach is to conduct exercises as part of a cycle of continuous improvement. Figure 2 represents a cycle of continuous improvement. The cycle begins by 'identifying the need, to plan. For example, a community is located on a floodplain and therefore a risk exists. The lead organisation (in this example an emergency management organisation) plans for the hazard, conducts training of emergency services and engages community stakeholders.

During the cycle, a community may be impacted by a hazard and a response occurs. This response is then evaluated, and gaps in knowledge and capabilities are identified. Plans, policies, and procedures are reviewed accordingly and actions to improve performance are implemented. When an exercise is conducted, a simulated event is substituted for a real incident.

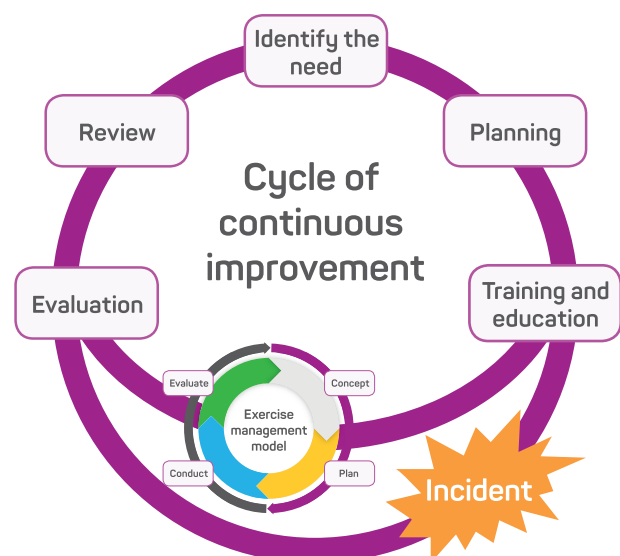


Figure 2: Cycle of continuous improvement

**Dive Deeper:**

*Systemic Disaster Risk* (AIDR 2021) [knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-systemic-disaster-risk](https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-systemic-disaster-risk)

*Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework*  
[www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/australian-disaster-preparedness-framework.pdf](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/australian-disaster-preparedness-framework.pdf)

*Emergency Planning* (AIDR 2020) [knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/emergency-planning-handbook](https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/emergency-planning-handbook)

*Lessons Management* (AIDR 2019) [knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/lessons-management-handbook](https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/lessons-management-handbook)

*Community Engagement Handbook* (AIDR 2020)  
[knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-community-engagement](https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-community-engagement)

*Commonwealth Evaluation Policy and Toolkit*  
[www.finance.gov.au/about-us/news/2021/commonwealth-evaluation-policy-and-toolkit](https://www.finance.gov.au/about-us/news/2021/commonwealth-evaluation-policy-and-toolkit)

## Characteristics of exercises

Exercises can take many forms and vary in complexity and scale. Figure 3 illustrates some of the characteristics that affect exercise size and complexity. Exercises with characteristics at the edges of the diagram will normally be larger and more complex, while exercises with characteristics

at the centre of the diagram will normally be smaller and less complex. However, any combination is possible.

An example of a small, single organisation exercise may be an emergency management organisation practicing the setup of an emergency operations centre. Large exercises usually involve more than one organisation and may include regional, national or international participants.

Discussion exercises, functional exercises and field exercises are commonly used exercise types:

- A discussion exercise is designed to stimulate discussion of issues or to assess capabilities, plans, arrangements, policies, and procedures. Discussion exercises might include seminars, presentations, hypotheticals and immersive simulations and two-way conversations.
- A functional exercise is designed to test or practise individual functions such as command, planning or intelligence.
- Field exercises are generally a large scale, complex activity conducted in ‘real time’ under simulated conditions. Field exercises involve the deployment of personnel and other resources.

The guidance in this handbook is provided to enable the conduct of exercises of varying scale and complexity. The principles and phases are common to all types of exercises. However, not all the detail presented in the handbook will be applicable for organisations or groups intending to conduct a small scale, discussion exercise.

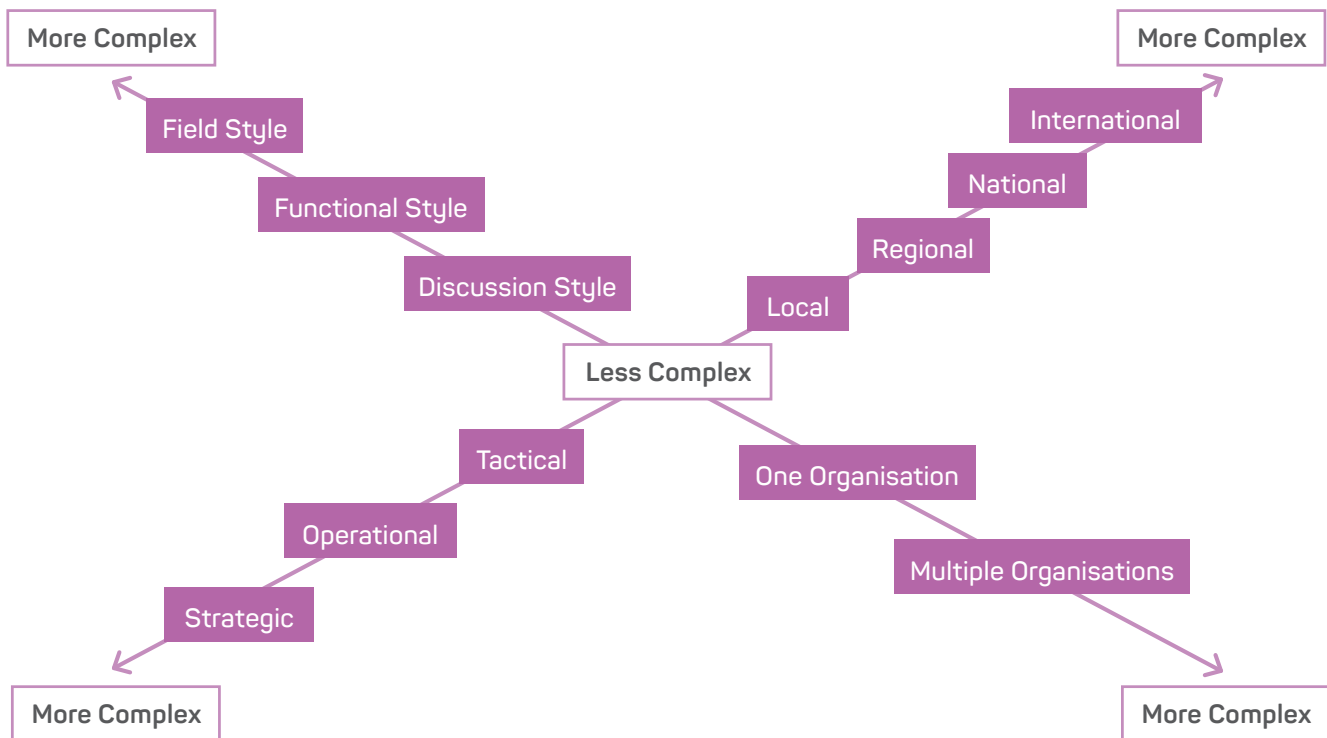


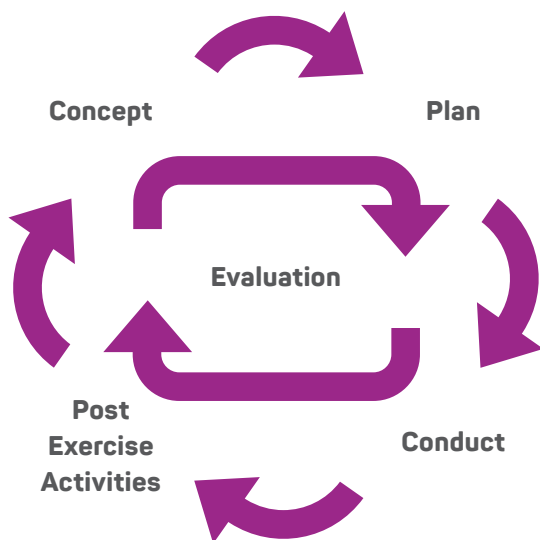
Figure 3: Exercise characteristics, complexity, and scale

## Exercise management model and phases

A successful exercise is dependent on the adoption of an appropriate exercise management approach and structure.

All exercises have four phases: concept development, planning, conduct and post exercise activities. While final evaluation occurs during the post exercise phase, evaluation should be embedded at each phase of the exercise. Figure 4 illustrates the exercise management model with the four exercise phases and their relationship to evaluation.

Exercise evaluation should include an analysis of the management of the exercise, and of the participants' responses to the developing scenario. Evaluation outcomes should contribute to organisation or group learning and performance improvement.




**Figure 4:** Exercise management model: the four phases and the relationship to evaluation

Exercise management ensures that:

- exercises are appropriate to organisational, cultural, environmental or risk context
- exercises reflect organisation and community engagement and needs
- exercises align to a stated aim and objectives
- exercises are coordinated and conducted in a safe and systematic way
- resources are used effectively and efficiently
- evaluation occurs throughout
- lessons learnt are captured
- opportunities for learnings are identified.

An exercise manager, or management team, should always be appointed. For larger field exercises the exercise management team should incorporate experience in project management, stakeholder engagement, risk management and evaluation.



# Chapter 2: Exercise context

## Overview

The exercise context is important in defining how an exercise is managed. This context may include:

- an organisations' management context:
  - regulations
  - assurance regimes
  - recommendations
  - strategies, plans or programs
  - capabilities and resources available
- risk and uncertainty
- community priorities and engagement
- resources.

The exercise context guides the subsequent phases in the exercise management cycle. For example, there may be specific higher-level priorities or objectives that must be included. Similarly, if the exercise is part of a wider program of improvement or learning it may need to align with other organisational guidance, timeframes and evaluation processes.

The exercise context should not be taken for granted and should be reviewed prior to, or as part of, the exercise concept development phase.

### Dive Deeper:

*The Department of Home Affairs Crisis Appreciation and Strategic Planning (CASP) guidebook* has further guidance on understanding context [www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/casp-guidebook.pdf](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/emergency/files/casp-guidebook.pdf)

## Management context

Exercises are often managed as part of an integrated program of activities and are linked to other organisation programs such as preparedness or disaster risk reduction. Exercises are often closely linked with an organisations' lessons management process.

Early and frequent engagement with senior management and government in exercising is critical for any large organisation, inter-jurisdictional or multi-level exercise program. Senior management should provide overarching strategic guidance or direction for the cycle of exercise products and overall preparedness efforts. If an organisation or community group has limited experience in conducting emergency management exercises, advice should be sought from local government or local emergency management organisations.

Program management involves a collaborative approach that integrates organisations, jurisdictions (if relevant), resources and individuals to identify and achieve exercise program priorities. Exercise planning teams must ensure they are aware of and consult with any related programs.

A program of exercises uses various types of exercises, aligned to a common set of exercise program priorities and objectives within a cycle of exercises. Exercises in a program should increase in complexity over time. An effective exercise program maximises efficiency, resources, time and funding by ensuring a coordinated and integrated approach to building, sustaining and delivering capabilities.

Capabilities are central to what is being exercised. Using a capability-based exercise model that is focused on assessing performance against capability-based objectives, allows organisations to use exercises to examine current and required core capabilities. This will identify any gaps in capability that need to be validated through exercising.

### Dive Deeper:

*Lessons Management* (AIDR 2019) [knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/lessons-management-handbook](http://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/lessons-management-handbook)

## Risk and Uncertainty

*Systemic Disaster Risk* (AIDR 2021) highlights that 'current approaches to disaster risk reduction are being challenged in a world of more frequent and compounding hazards'.

Emergency management practitioners, communities and diverse sectors speak differently about disaster risks and often operate in silos. There is a need to understand risks as part of systems, not as individual hazards, and how elements are connected to and influence each other. There is a need to work collaboratively across sectors and society. Improving collaboration requires increased efforts to create common terminology and to provide open access data to support knowledge sharing, encourage lateral collaboration and to speed up the pace of learning.

Organisations need to consider the entire emergency management continuum which includes disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in order to consider risks and consequences across all levels of government, industry and the community. Exercising is a critical factor in enabling collaboration and understanding of risk and consequence. Creating a common understanding of collective risks and ongoing collaboration across all sectors, and with community, will improve mitigation and disaster preparedness.

It is easier to respond to something that has happened in the past, than to imagine something in the future. As well as testing current capabilities, exercises should also explore novel climate change and disaster scenarios. Techniques such as forecasting, simulation or scenario planning can help work through future uncertainties.

### Dive Deeper:

*Systemic Disaster Risk* (AIDR 2021) [knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-systemic-disaster-risk](http://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-systemic-disaster-risk)



## Community

The Australian Emergency Management Principle of Shared Responsibility identifies that 'Everyone understands their own responsibility in an emergency, and the responsibility of others. Communities and individuals understand the risk. This encourages all stakeholders to prevent, prepare for, and plan for how they will safely reduce their risk, respond to, and recover from an emergency situation'.<sup>1</sup> Community engagement is a critical component of encouraging shared responsibility within emergency management, reducing disaster risk and strengthening resilience. Ideally, communities will be engaged continuously throughout the exercise management cycle. Acknowledging community expertise supports meaningful engagement and develops trust and social cohesion. Exercise management should consider the potential effects of differences and inequalities in society. This includes effects related to race, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, socio-economic status or ethnicity. Community engagement must be ethical, transparent and proceed from a position of trust.

## Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations arise throughout emergency management and may be present in exercise management. Decisions about what should be prioritised in exercising for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery of emergencies may look at considering:

- ethical
- pragmatic
- economic
- political
- cultural
- justice (social, environmental etc)
- other considerations.

Where relevant, these considerations should be included in exercise planning discussions and should consider input from numerous perspectives.

The following are three examples of how these considerations might be relevant in practice:

- Decision making processes regarding priorities, funding and/or resource allocation involve ethical considerations, particularly considerations of justice.
- Emergency responders may be faced with various ethical and pragmatic triage decisions including which communities to help first, which individuals to treat first, and when to withdraw to provide assistance elsewhere.

- Policies and mandates of organisations can create ethical challenges, such as how public health measures or mandatory evacuations require all members of a community to act in certain ways, whether they want to or not.

### Dive Deeper:

*Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience* (AIDR 2020) presents nationally agreed principles of community engagement for disaster resilience and provides high-level guidance to support those who engage with communities. [knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-community-engagement](https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-community-engagement)

Further guidance on ethical considerations can be found in: [knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/8581/aidr-knowledge-networking-croweller-slides.pdf](https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/8581/aidr-knowledge-networking-croweller-slides.pdf) and *Ethical Principles on Disaster Risk Reduction and People's Resilience*: [www.coe.int/t/dg4/majorhazards/ressources/pub/Ethical-Principles-Publication\\_EN.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/majorhazards/ressources/pub/Ethical-Principles-Publication_EN.pdf)

## Resources

Effective resource management is essential to the success of an exercise program. Exercise managers should maintain awareness of available resources and expected expenditures. In developing and maintaining an exercise program budget, exercise program managers must work with stakeholders to identify financial resources and define the monitoring and reporting requirements for individual exercises.

Exercise program managers may consider other resources that can support exercises, such as:

- people (e.g. volunteers; actors and creative artists; community, business, First Nations leaders; local government representatives; subject matter experts (SME); and emergency services and community services stakeholders, e.g. schools, health services)
- information technology (e.g. modelling and simulation capabilities)
- exercise tools and resources (e.g. document templates)
- materials from previous exercises
- training courses
- in-kind support, mutual aid agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, and Memoranda of Agreement
- technical assistance
- equipment and props (e.g. smoke machines, mannequins, moulage kits).

<sup>1</sup> AIDR (2023) Australian Emergency Management Arrangements

## Evaluation

Evaluation offers a range of powerful tools to make assessments about the value of any set of procedures, activities, strategies, projects, policies, programs, organisations or systems.

It is critical that evaluation management begins at the start of the exercise cycle and is not added as an afterthought. In the context of this Handbook, evaluation relates to evaluation of a single exercise or program of exercises.

Exercising should be undertaken in support of program objectives and broader organisation or group objectives. Therefore, input from portfolio management and evaluation staff should also be sought.

The benefits of evaluation include:


- It supports good practice and integrates well when embedded with stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, project management and continuous improvement approaches.
- It can clearly demonstrate what has been happening, what works and does not work for whom, in what context and why.
- Evaluation provides a transparent mechanism for accountability for business structures (including government, NGOs and community organisations) by assisting with monitoring progress and meeting reporting requirements.
- It enables good governance, sound decision-making and smart resource allocation.
- It encourages evidence-based policy and practise by assessing data from a range of sources.
- It improves program and policy design by 'starting with the end in mind' resulting in clearly defined intended outcomes and ensuring alignment with organisational activities.
- It can empower people whose voice might otherwise not be heard by including them in evaluation activities and giving them a say about decisions or services that affect their lives.

To be effective, evaluation needs to be integrated into all phases of exercise management. In the concept development phase, a decision will need to be made on whether to conduct evaluation internally, request assistance from organisation evaluators or to commission an independent evaluation team. If the exercise is conducted as part of a wider exercise or preparedness program, an evaluation plan may already be in place and will need to be complied with.

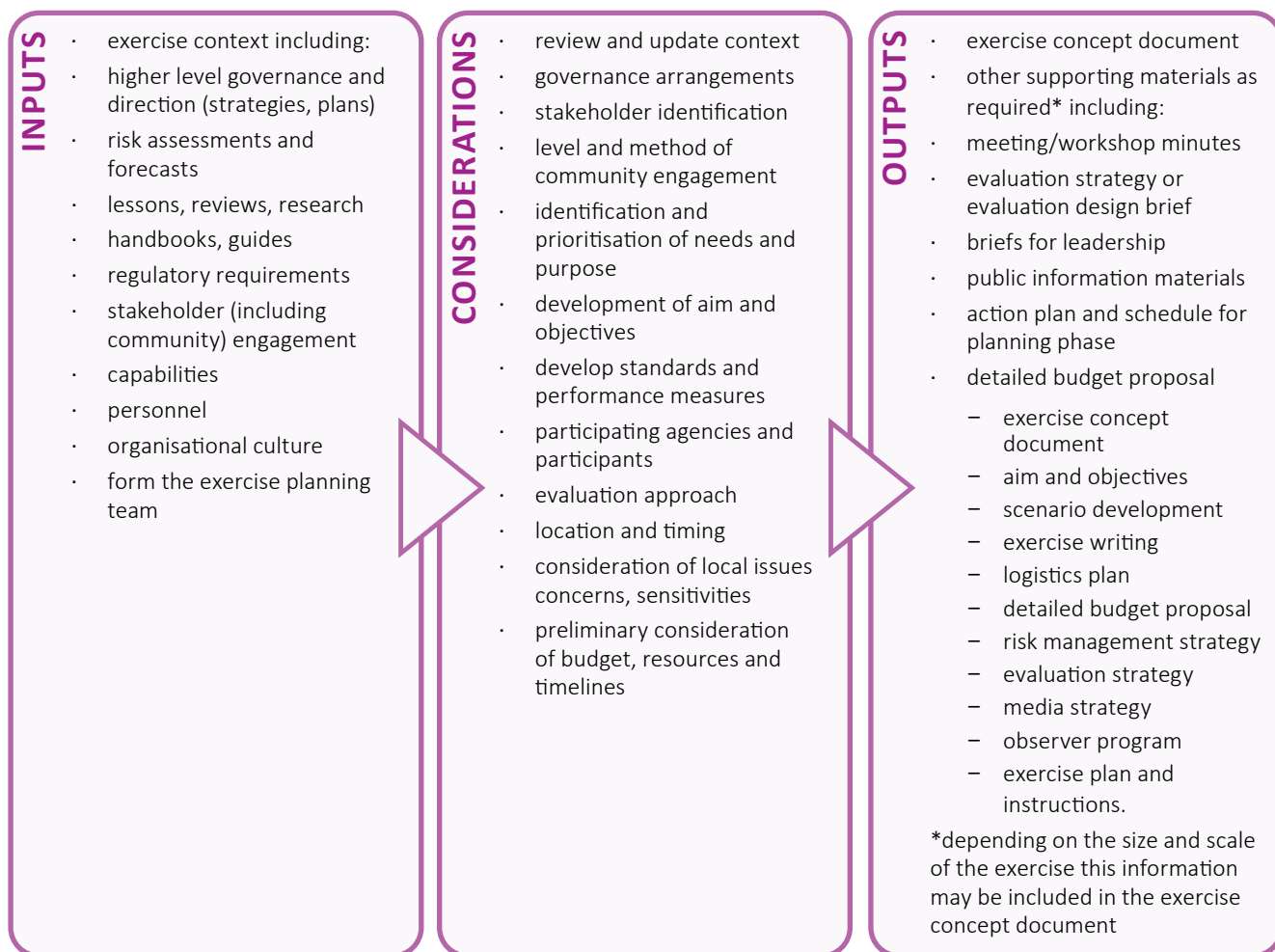
If an external evaluation is commissioned, those commissioning the evaluation should prepare a briefing document or terms of reference that states:

- the rationale, purpose and scope of the evaluation
- the key questions to be addressed based on the performance measures
- any preferred approaches
- issues to be considered
- the intended audiences for reports of the evaluation.

Commissioned evaluators have an obligation to identify all stakeholders in the evaluation and to assess the potential positive and negative implications. Guidance on evaluation is found in Chapter 7.



# Chapter 3: Exercise concept



**Figure 5:** Inputs, considerations and outputs of the concept phase

## Overview of concept phase

The concept development phase is crucial to exercise management. It will identify or reaffirm the need for an exercise and ensure the appropriate level of authority to conduct the exercise is in place. Obtaining the appropriate level of authority helps to gain the commitment to provide the resources and funding needed for exercise planning, conduct and evaluation. Figure 5 shows the inputs, considerations and outputs of the concept phase.

During the concept development phase, the exercise planning team members use the guidance of senior leaders and program priorities, as well as stakeholder and community engagement, to shape an individual or series of exercises. Involving risk and hazard assessments, plans, policies and procedures, grant or cooperative agreements, and relevant evaluation or incident reports, the exercise planning team members ensure that exercises assess and validate the organisation's capabilities. The aim and objectives, the scope, style, evaluation approach and participants are identified. The concept development phase then concludes with the production and approval of an exercise concept document.

## Identify the need for an exercise

Identifying the need for an exercise is about providing an answer to the question, 'Why conduct an exercise?'

The need for an exercise will be influenced by:

- an understanding of the needs and potential gaps in an organisation or group
- the required and actual level of capability
- the level of funding and resources available.

The need for an exercise need may also be influenced by:

- recommendations from past exercise evaluation or disaster inquiry outcomes
- operational observations or lessons from previous emergencies
- review or change of management arrangements, policies or plans
- a change in levels of risk or uncertainty
- new equipment, procedures or practices
- personnel requirements (e.g. training, practice and/or assessment)

- legislative or regulatory requirements
- higher level direction
- new or emerging research.

Together, these factors determine the need for an exercise. Once the need is determined, the exercise aim, objectives and scope are then developed.

Alternatively, it may be determined that an exercise is not the most effective or efficient way to address the need identified. It may be more appropriate to conduct training, education or risk reduction activities to address gaps.

## Form the exercise planning team and associated management roles

All exercises require a coordinated approach to design, conduct and evaluation, supported by an exercise planning team. Exercise planning team functions may include the following:

- risk assessment
- engagement
- writing
- finance and budget
- planning and logistics
- evaluation
- media
- legal.

## Exercise management roles

Consideration of exercise management roles, including the exercise planning team begins in the concept phase. The capacity of the exercise planning team is a critical consideration for the scope of any exercise.

### Exercise director

The exercise director provides strategic oversight and direction on the planning, conduct and evaluation of the exercise. The exercise director is responsible for approving:

- the aim, objectives and supporting documentation
- the concept document
- the exercise plan and exercise instructions.

The exercise director provides the authority to conduct the exercise, however they do not have a hands-on role in the planning or conduct phases. The exercise report will be provided to the exercise director at the conclusion of the exercise.

In multi-organisation exercises there is often more than one exercise director. It is normal for each of the major organisations in the exercise to provide an exercise director.

## Exercise planning team

The planning team consists of those directly involved in the planning of the exercise and should include representation from any participating organisations or groups. The planning team is chaired by the exercise controller. An overview of all exercise team roles can be found in Chapter 6.

The planning team assigns management roles and responsibilities in accordance with the exercise planning governance structure. It identifies which functions are required for the exercise, takes into account the considerations, and develops the outputs (figure 5).

## Exercise writing function

Depending on the complexity of the exercise, the planning team will establish one or more writing teams. The writing team reports to the exercise planning team. For a small exercise, a writing team may comprise of only two or three people. For a large exercise there may be numerous people. The team(s) should include subject-matter experts to ensure accurate, realistic, and sufficient documentation is prepared.

Examples of subject matter that may require specialised writing teams include:

- scientific information (e.g. plume or fluvial modelling, human behaviours)
- investigation
- intelligence
- development of a casualty bank
- media.

The writing team is responsible for:

- the detailed development of the master schedule of events (MSE)
- the scenario
- any supporting documentation required as reference material during the conduct of the exercise.

To ensure continuity, members of the writing team(s) should be appointed to roles in the Exercise Control (EXCON) team when conducting the exercise.

## Exercise evaluation function

Evaluation roles should be involved during the planning process and be appointed early in the concept phase. It can be beneficial to have evaluation team members with and without relevant subject matter expertise. Where possible, exercise evaluation team members should not have any other exercise related appointment.

In a larger exercise, an exercise evaluation coordinator may be appointed. The exercise evaluation coordinator is responsible for planning and coordinating all aspects of the exercise

evaluation, including evaluation of exercise management, and documenting the findings in a post-exercise report.

Key evaluation considerations in the planning phase include:

- being clear about the evaluation type
- being clear about the evaluation purpose
- confirming evaluation criteria and performance measures
- ensuring all persons (including participants) who might be affected by whether or how an evaluation proceeds, have an opportunity to identify ways in which any risks might be reduced
- data collection and storage considerations
- ethical considerations.

Evaluation planning may be captured in the exercise plan or in a separate evaluation plan.

## Exercise media/public relations function

The media coordinator or team reports to the exercise planning team. The media coordinator or team is responsible for developing the communications plan and implementing the real and pseudo media strategies. If not already involved in exercise planning, consideration should also be given to alerting local police, fire services, 000 call centres and ambulance services, and local community of exercise dates and times.

## Real media function

The real media function is responsible for the media and public information strategies throughout the planning and conduct phases of the exercise. This may include:

- briefing government, industry partners and stakeholders
- developing a public information strategy
- developing talking points for those who might be interviewed by the media.

Clear and early identification of a consistent message is essential. The real media function is also responsible for managing any media issues that may arise during the exercise.

## Pseudo media (simulated media) function

The pseudo media function is responsible for writing media inputs and coordinating the extent of pseudo media required for the exercise. Pseudo media can add realism and pressure to exercise scenarios. It may include pre-written news reports, live footage or online reporting. Involving local media in this function can add to realism, as well as serve to be educative for media outlets.

## Observer function

The exercise planning team needs to consider whether an observer program is appropriate. The observer function

is responsible for coordinating the exercise experience for observers, including prominent observers.

This involves balancing expectations, exercise requirements, organisation interests, security restrictions and available resources. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- arranging transport and accommodation
- managing cultural and protocol considerations
- the reception of visiting personnel
- organising social and after-hours activities
- defining observer functions
- ensuring observers are clearly identified
- ensuring observers interact with exercise participants in a safe and pre-agreed manner.

## Safety function

Conducting an exercise creates potential risks. Safety risks may be physical, psychological, cultural, or moral. To ensure safety, the following should be considered before the exercise is conducted:

- Has a risk management plan been established?
- Has expert input been obtained on all types of risks?
- Is everyone trained to perform their tasks?
- Have clear safety briefings been delivered and understood?
- What Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) exists to cover safety issues, and do they apply during the exercise?
- Are safety officers in place to monitor safety during the exercise?
- What contingency plans have been prepared?

## Legal and ethics function

The exercise planning team will identify the need for exercise-related legal or ethics advice. These requirements could include, but are not limited to:

- contingent liability and insurance policies
- applicable legislative issues
- liaising on unique 'legal' issues pertaining to the exercise
- ethics requirements if capturing observations from human subjects.

## Community engagement

Communities are the first responders in any emergency and are increasingly interested in being involved in exercises. Communities are at the centre of disaster risk reduction and emergency management. The shared responsibility principle notes the importance of individuals and communities being involved in risk reduction activities. Communities and their knowledge, values and priorities should be included in exercise management.

Community engagement includes:

- identifying community stakeholders
- choosing a community engagement strategy and approach
- providing a safe space for engagement
- ensuring power imbalances are minimised and all voices are heard
- conduct and evaluation of engagement.

Include First Nations Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation representatives where possible. This is particularly important where exercise scenarios occur in locations of significant cultural heritage.

Consider using local creative arts groups to help with design and execution of the exercises.

**Dive Deeper:**

*National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* [www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018)

The Arts House project, Refuge demonstrated how community, arts and emergency services can work together to exercise local plans. [www.artshouse.com.au/artist-opportunities/refuge](http://www.artshouse.com.au/artist-opportunities/refuge)

**Dive Deeper:**

Further guidance on community engagement can be found in *Community Engagement for Disaster Resilience* (AIDR 2020) [knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/7989/aidr\\_handbookcollection\\_communityengagementfordisasterresilience\\_2020.pdf](http://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/7989/aidr_handbookcollection_communityengagementfordisasterresilience_2020.pdf)

## Developing the exercise aim

The exercise aim is a statement of intent that gives direction to what will (or is desired to be) achieved by the exercise. The aim statement can be as generic or as specific as required to meet the needs of the exercise.

There should only be one aim for an exercise. A clear aim leads to a series of objectives that will suggest the most appropriate style, size and complexity of the exercise.

The essential components of an exercise aim are ‘purpose’ and ‘context’. For example:

- [purpose]: test the response to a passenger plane crash at the airport
- [context]: in accordance with the airport emergency plan.

The aim should begin with a verb and be positive, clear, concise and achievable. The following table provides a list of commonly used verbs and their application.

**Table 1:** Exercise verbs

Verb	Definition/application
<b>Test</b>	To evaluate the abilities, aptitudes, skills or performance of a capability or aspects of that capability in addressing a task or a challenge or combination of both.
<b>Assess</b>	To determine the value, significance or extent of, or to appraise a capability, plan, process or procedure.
<b>Practice</b>	To improve a capability's performance.
<b>Develop</b>	To grow into a more mature or advanced state of a capability, plan, process or procedure.
<b>Review</b>	To exercise in the context of going over a plan, process or procedure with a view to improve it, or ensuring that it is contemporary best practice.
<b>Explore</b>	To examine the potential of a capability, plan, process or procedure.
<b>Validate</b>	To establish the soundness of, or to corroborate a plan, process or procedure.
<b>Demonstrate</b>	To display or exhibit the operation or use of a capability, resource, procedure or process.

## Examples of exercise aim statements include:

*For an emergency response exercise:*

**Exercise aim:** Practise the local State Emergency Service unit’s response to a severe storm in accordance with unit standard operating procedures.

*For a recovery exercise:*

**Exercise aim:** Explore short, medium, and long-term recovery considerations in the context of a flooding emergency.

## Exercise objectives

Exercise objectives are specific statements describing what is to be achieved by individuals, groups or organisations participating in the exercise. While there should only be one exercise aim, there may be numerous exercise objectives.

Exercise objectives:

- must be set and agreed on very early in the concept development phase
- must be clear and concise
- should be simple and written in commonly understood language
- should not include words such as ‘timely’, ‘effective’ and ‘efficient’ unless those terms can be quantified and measured.

A common approach to writing objectives is the use of the SMART model. This is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Task-related. The application of SMART objectives in this context is:

- **Specific:** emphasises the need to be specific. This means the objective is clear and unambiguous, without vagaries or platitudes. To make objectives specific they must state exactly what is expected.
- **Measurable:** emphasises the need for including criteria for measuring progress towards attainment of the objective.
- **Achievable:** emphasises the importance of objectives that are realistic and attainable within the parameters imposed by the exercise.
- **Relevant:** emphasises the importance of making objectives relevant to the exercise aim and the needs of participants.
- **Task-related:** emphasises the need for objectives to be based around activities that can be performed by exercise participants and observed by EXCON team members, so that progress can be made towards achieving the objective being measured.

## Examples of objectives using the SMART Model are:

*For an emergency response exercise:*

<b>Exercise aim:</b>	Practise the local State Emergency Service unit’s response to a severe storm in accordance with unit standard operating procedures.
<b>Exercise objectives:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practise the establishment of an incident management team (IMT) in accordance with standard operating procedures.</li> <li>2. Assess the documentation of the incident action plan (IAP) by the planning cell in accordance with Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) doctrine.</li> <li>3. Practise the delivery of briefings by IMT members to staff.</li> </ol>

*For a recovery exercise:*

<b>Exercise aim:</b>	Explore short, medium and long-term recovery considerations in the context of a flooding emergency.
<b>Exercise objectives:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outline the local recovery arrangements.</li> <li>2. Explore roles and responsibilities of local government, non-government and community organisations in recovery in the different time frames.</li> <li>3. Identify areas for development.</li> </ol>

## Standards and performance measures

It is essential that a range of measures be developed that allow the exercise to be evaluated and reported on by the evaluation team. These measures should be used by the:

- exercise planning team to design, plan and conduct the exercise

- exercise facilitators to guide participants
- exercise evaluators to measure performance during the exercise.

Standards, where they exist, provide evaluators with a benchmark to assess performance. Standards are used to quantify the objectives and reflect aspects of tasks or capabilities that are critical to successful performance. It can also be useful to break objectives down into smaller



component sub-objectives to assist evaluators understand the focus areas for evaluation.

Standards may be sourced from organisation SOPs, policies, approved single- or multi-organisation plans or doctrines, such as the Australian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS), or recognised Australian or International Standards. Measures may be developed from standards,

as well as existing procedures or protocols. In the absence of standards, the exercise planning team may need to work with relevant organisations or teams to define the measures to be used to assess performance.

## Examples of objectives and sub-objectives are:

### *For an emergency response exercise:*

<b>Exercise aim:</b>	Practise the local State Emergency Service unit's response to a severe storm in accordance with unit standard operating procedures.
<b>Exercise objectives:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Practise the establishment of an incidents management team (IMT) in accordance with standard operating procedures.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Incident management structure is established in accordance with AIIMS.</li><li>b. Incident controller sets objectives.</li><li>c. Cells within the structure communicate with each other.</li></ol></li><li>2. Practise the documentation of the incident action plan (IAP) by the planning cell in accordance with Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) doctrine.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. IAP includes a statement of the current situation and predictions of its likely development.</li><li>b. IAP describes objectives and strategies.</li><li>c. IAP outlines management structures.</li></ol></li><li>3. Practise the delivery of briefings by IMT members to staff.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. A suitable briefing format is used.</li><li>b. Briefing includes the current situation.</li><li>c. Briefing includes key safety issues.</li></ol></li></ol>

### *For a recovery exercise:*

<b>Exercise aim:</b>	Explore short, medium and long-term recovery considerations in the context of a flooding emergency.
<b>Exercise objectives:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Outline the local recovery arrangements.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Local government recovery arrangements are outlined.</li><li>b. Business recovery arrangements are outlined.</li><li>c. Community organisation recovery arrangements are outlined.</li></ol></li><li>2. Explore roles and responsibilities of local government, non-government and community organisations in recovery in the different time frames.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Issues are examined from multiple perspectives.</li><li>b. Shared approaches are identified and agreed.</li><li>c. Novel ideas are considered.</li></ol></li><li>3. Identify areas for development.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Capability issues are identified.</li><li>b. Resource issues are identified.</li><li>c. Learning actions are identified.</li></ol></li></ol>

## Scope

The exercise scope defines the boundaries of the exercise.

The scope should:

- be broad enough to achieve the objectives
- identify who and what is to be included
- identify who and what will not be included
- consider the level of commitment of participating organisations
- ensure the exercise is safe for participants
- be open to adjustment
- consider the level of involvement of participants (e.g. emergency management organisations only, up to an incident control centre, or district/regional, state or national coordination centre).

## Examples of exercise scope statements

*For an emergency response exercise:*

<b>Exercise aim:</b>	Practise the local State Emergency Service unit's response to a severe storm in accordance with unit standard operating procedures.
<b>Scope:</b>	The scope of this exercise includes existing members of the local unit of the State Emergency Service and procedures as described in the local unit's SOPs. The exercise will not include higher levels of management within the service (above the unit level), members of the public or other organisation personnel.

*For a recovery exercise:*

<b>Exercise aim:</b>	Explore short, medium and long-term recovery considerations in the context of a flooding emergency.
<b>Scope:</b>	The scope of this exercise includes representatives from local government, emergency management organisations, local business, and local community groups. The exercise will not include the general public.

## Concept phase evaluation requirements

Evaluation needs to be included at all phases of the exercise management cycle. An analysis of the aim and objectives during the concept phase will determine the evaluation requirements. The analysis includes considering the evaluation plan, tools and the number of evaluators needed to effectively collect data and analyse information.

Discussion exercises may not require the same level of evaluation planning as functional or field exercises. More complex exercises involve multiple evaluators, possibly in different locations, and require more detailed planning to ensure the evaluation is coordinated.


## Exercise concept document

Using the proposed exercise need, aim, objectives and scope, the exercise concept can now be further developed and documented. The exercise concept document is used to obtain the direction and authority to conduct the exercise.

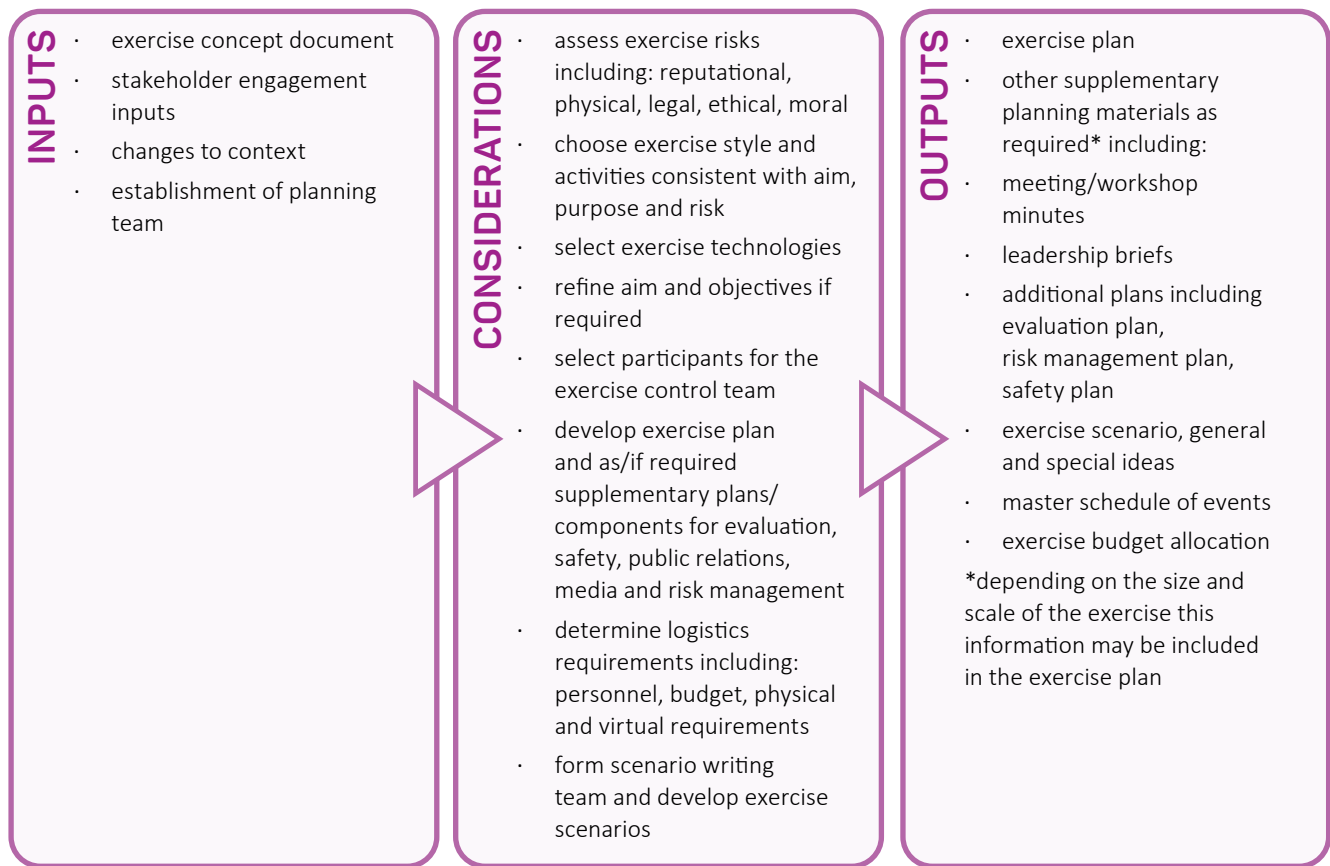
The exercise concept document should include details of the following:

- exercise need
- exercise aim
- exercise objectives
- exercise scope
- participating organisations
- governance and management structure (for planning the exercise)
- public engagement and information requirements
- risk management plan including relevant consideration of ethics and safety (physical, psychological, cultural)
- proposed evaluation methodology
- proposed budget
- proposed timelines
- version control table.

A template exercise concept document is included as Appendix 6 in the companion templates document.



# Chapter 4: Exercise planning



**Figure 6:** Inputs, considerations, and outputs of the planning phase

## Overview of the planning phase

After the exercise concept document has been developed, the exercise planning team develops the plan and documentation to conduct the exercise. The planning team need to consider any additional stakeholder engagement or a change in the exercise context before proceeding to the planning phase.

Planning involves finding a balance between objectives, risks, and resources. Planning will normally require several meetings to agree to the final exercise plan. This should be factored into the time frame. Figure 6 illustrates the inputs, considerations, and outputs of the planning phase.

## Choosing a suitable exercise style

Exercises can be simple or complex. There are three main exercise styles:

- discussion (DISCEX)
- functional
- field

The aim and objectives of the exercise will help to determine the appropriate exercise style or styles. The planning team does not have to restrict itself to only one style. Progressive exercise programs or using several different styles can be useful.

It may be appropriate to conduct a series of exercises to build capability starting with simple exercises and then build to more complex exercises.

The style that is chosen will be influenced by other factors such as:

- skills or experience of the exercise planning team
- training needs
- community expectations
- the commitment of key team members
- venue availability
- availability of participants
- other commitments
- lead-time
- time available to conduct the exercise
- resources available
- budget
- risk assessment.

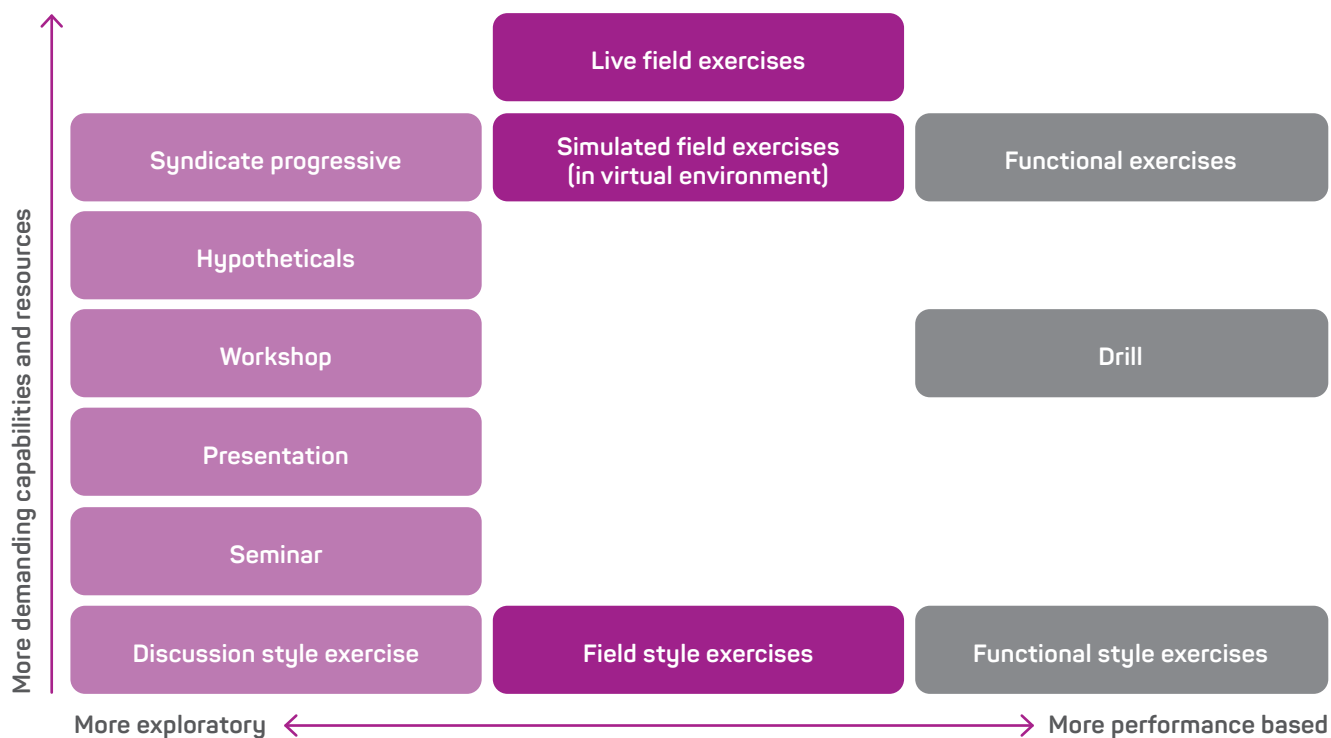


Figure 7: Styles and types of exercises

## Discussion style exercises (DISCEX)

Discussion style exercises include seminars, presentations, hypothetical, syndicate progressive exercises and workshops.

Discussion style exercises are built around the discussion of a scenario. Participants can explore issues in depth and provide verbal responses to situations. Discussion style exercises are useful for developing agreed approaches to events, assessing the effectiveness of plans, building relationships, and exploring novel ideas or approaches to managing emergencies. Discussion style exercises often involve personnel who work at a strategic level brainstorming solutions to problems.

Discussion style exercises are a cost-effective and efficient exercise method. They tend to be more free flowing, informal and exploratory than other exercise types. They can be conducted away from operational environments, often needing only a room and a whiteboard. They may be conducted face-to-face or online. They may be conducted as a stand-alone exercise, a prelude to a functional or field exercise, or part of an exercise program.

Discussion style exercises are an effective way to exercise as they provide the opportunity for exploration and facilitate a conceptual understanding of issues.

### Seminars

Seminars are informal discussions, unconstrained by real-time portrayal of events and led by a presenter. They are generally employed to orient participants to, or provide an overview of legislation, strategies, plans, policies, procedures, protocols,

response resources and concepts and ideas. Seminars usually involve examining a plan or procedure using a scenario and then discussing its key features.

Seminars may be useful to:

- induct new personnel
- train or assess personnel
- highlight key elements of a plan
- examine a plan.

### Presentation

A presentation is a discussion forum where participants present an action plan relevant to their organisation or groups operational function. The organisation or group is given a problem or issue in advance so it can prepare its presentation.

Presentations can lack realism and immediacy, but they can provide a useful review of existing procedures and encourage the development of new approaches. Presentations can be written and conducted with short lead times and are cost and time efficient. They are useful as learning activities, particularly when they are used to explore responses to a simulated threat or scenario in a non-threatening environment. Presentations may be useful to:

- consider strategic or tactical issues
- focus attention on the resources available at a given time and date
- share resource and procedural information
- build networks and develop a shared understanding of different capabilities and approaches
- make a presentation to stakeholders.

## Workshops

Workshops differ from other discussion exercises. The focus is on achieving or building a product (e.g. a draft plan or policy). Workshops can be employed as part of a graduated series of activities to determine solutions to exercise and operational problems.

A workshop may also be used to produce SOPs. To be effective, workshops must be highly focused on a specific issue, and the objectives must be clearly defined.

## Hypothetical

A hypothetical is a style of discussion exercise where problems are posed by a facilitator and considered by a panel of individuals 'on their feet'. The facilitator keeps the activity moving by asking probing questions and introducing unexpected events as the scenario unfolds.

Hypotheticals are often conducted in front of an audience of emergency managers and other stakeholders. They require careful preparation and a relatively longer lead-time than other discussion exercises. They are relatively inexpensive to prepare and run, although an experienced and effective facilitator may be hard to find.

Hypotheticals are a particularly effective way to build a shared understanding of different approaches to problems. They are also useful for simulating operational stress by requiring participants to analyse complex problems and develop appropriate responses in real time.

This exercise type may be useful:

- when you intend to give little or no prior notice of problems to be resolved
- to share resource and procedural information
- to make a presentation to an audience
- to assess a decision maker's ability to 'think on their feet'
- if you seek to create a degree of operational stress.

## Syndicate progressive

Syndicate progressive exercises introduce problems of developing complexity to be considered by groups in syndicate. The term progressive refers to the graduated development of complexity that will usually occur in an emergency and which may be replicated in the exercise via a series of special ideas.

Each problem contains a statement and three or four questions designed to focus syndicate attention along a desired path. For example, given a particular set of circumstances, a series of problems could focus on prevention, preparedness, response and then recovery. Syndicate exercises are relatively inexpensive to run but require careful preparation, especially if they are being conducted in a virtual or hybrid environment.

They are useful for exercising groups of strategic managers or team leaders. They promote sharing experiences and build common approaches to complex problems by ensuring multi-organisation representation in each group. Syndicate exercises have a strong learning focus as they encourage participation in small groups. This exercise type may be useful to:

- progress through phases of a problem, event or course of action
- encourage understanding of another organisation's roles and responsibilities
- obtain different possible solutions to a common problem
- bring together differing backgrounds and experience levels
- examine strategic, political or complex issues.

## Functional exercises

Functional exercises are designed to test or practise a particular function or role, for example, command, planning or recovery. Functions within the environment are conducted as if a real event was happening outside. Functional exercises are normally run in real time.

Scenario information is given to participants in a manner like they would receive it 'in the real world', be that via phone, email or web-based incident management systems. The input of scenario information is managed by the EXCON team, under the direction of the exercise controller, in accordance with the order and timeframe detailed in the Master Schedule of Events (MSE). Participants' performance is monitored by exercise facilitators and the tempo of the exercise can be increased or decreased by regulating the flow of exercise inputs. The aim and objectives of the exercise will determine the amount of interaction the facilitators have with exercise participants.

The exercise planning team should be aware that large functional exercises may be complex to prepare and manage. The complexity can lie in developing realistic problems and occurrences in the writing of the scenario. Likely responses must be planned for, and contingencies made for unexpected actions. Functional exercises can generate significant administrative work, both in preparation and conduct. They can be expensive to prepare, but their major advantage is that they can be played out many times with different participants, enabling standardisation and promoting consistency.

This exercise type may be useful:

- to practise, develop or assess procedures within a functional centre
- to practise, develop or assess decision-making skills within a centre
- to assess the interaction of the functional centre with field teams and other functional centres
- where there is no need to activate resources external to the centre
- when there are insufficient funds to activate resources external to the functional centre.

Any exercise regime has a place for both functional and field exercises. Functional exercises are generally constructed to place emphasis on control and coordination, and it is this level that they are most suited to. The actions of notionally deployed organisations can be predetermined to bring out specific lessons at the higher levels. Functional exercises can be specifically designed to test higher decision-making levels without deploying tactical-level units, therefore this style of exercise can be cost-effective.

## Drill-style exercises

Drill-style exercises are a coordinated, supervised activity employed to test a single specific operation or function in a single or multi-organisation environment. Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, develop or validate new policies or procedures, or practise and maintain current skills.

Drills are used to:

- create a narrow focus, measured against established standards
- provide immediate feedback and the opportunity to reset and rerun the exercise multiple times
- provide a realistic operational environment
- consider performance in isolation.

## Field exercises

Field exercises involve the deployment of participants to a simulated incident or emergency. These exercises may involve elements of functional exercises and often test control arrangements as well as 'on the ground' skills.

Complex field exercises can be very expensive given the number of people involved. A major field exercise will need an exercise planning team to write it and numerous directing staff to develop the concept and conduct the exercise. Developing the exercise concept can be time and resource intensive, generating a significant administrative load and demanding highly skilled team members. Despite these disadvantages, major field exercises are an effective way to simulate the likely events and occurrences in emergencies that may rarely occur, but for which responders need to be prepared. In some circumstances, they are the only chance for participants to apply some of their skills or work with other organisations or in a realistic setting.

This exercise type may be useful:

- to practise, develop or assess the competencies of on-ground participants
- to evaluate the effectiveness of inter-organisation coordination and cooperation
- to evaluate the activation of an emergency plan
- to consolidate a progressive exercise program
- if your objectives require deployment of field participants.

## Exercise tools and technologies

There are several web and system-based proprietary products available to support the conduct of simulations and exercises. Exercises can also be supported by virtual or augmented reality technologies, machine learning and data capture technologies. Other tools can include boxed games, card sets, creative media and props. Tools may assist in exploring creative, artistic, ethical or cultural considerations.

## Exercise scenario

While a problem statement or set of questions can be sufficient to frame the problem or set the scene, larger exercises usually require an exercise scenario to be developed. Writing of the exercise scenario cannot begin until the aim, objectives, scope and style have been finalised and approved. Given the aim, objectives, scope and style of the exercise to be conducted, the exercise scenario is developed with a 'general idea' and 'special idea(s)'.

The writing team is a key element of developing an exercise. Writing an exercise scenario requires distinct skills and knowledge. For small exercises, this may be drawn from the planning team members. For larger exercises the writing team may be drawn from several organisations and locations.

## General idea

The general idea is a broad statement of background information designed to provide exercise participants with the knowledge that would be available during a real incident or emergency. The general idea is usually issued to participating organisations or individuals well in advance of the event as part of the exercise briefings.

The general idea may also give detailed information about specific industries, local events or background information on particular hazards (i.e. chemicals or seasonal threats).

The town of Dingo Creek is situated on the Long River. It has a population of 5,000 and is an important rail and road transport hub for the surrounding rural district. It is located 800 km from the nearest capital city and has a small airport. The town has a significant flood threat and hazardous materials are regularly shipped by road and rail through the district. A small full-time fire brigade is supported by a volunteer brigade. There is a strong State Emergency Service unit in the town. The hospital has 20 beds with a well-equipped emergency room, while the attached ambulance station has two cars and two permanent officers. The police station has a sergeant and three constables. The shire headquarters are located on the town's main street, along with most of the town's commercial premises. There is a Main Roads works depot in the industrial area on the town's outskirts; nearby is a regional abattoir.

Other industry in the district centres on agriculture, transport, and distribution. Tourism is a growing industry, with two large caravan parks established on the banks of the river.

## Special ideas

Special ideas are used to drive the exercise. They provide realistic problems, incidents or information for participants to react to as they would in their role or during an event.

A chronological sequence should be prepared to provide information as the exercise unfolds. Participants with specific roles are issued with special ideas at predetermined times to control the flow of events.

The term 'special ideas' is predominantly used in discussion exercises. The terms 'inputs', 'injects' or 'serials' are often used in the context of functional or field exercises.

Special ideas are used to:

- progressively develop the exercise scenario
- provide additional information to participants
- pose problem(s) for participants to solve
- place limits on participants' actions
- force action by participants.

Some examples of special ideas follow:

- At 2230 hrs a flood warning was issued for the Long River, advising that moderate flooding would occur over the next 36 hours.
- At 0928 hrs a semi-trailer crossing a low-lying causeway was washed off the road, spilling its load into the rising flood waters.
- At 1100 hrs a family refused to leave the caravan park, claiming their van was too valuable to leave behind and their car was being repaired.

- At 1352 hrs the ambulance reported it was bogged 15 km north of town on the North Road with a pregnant woman on-board, going into labour.
- At 1612 hrs a fire was reported in the Commercial Hotel.

Whatever the exercise writers decide to 'inject', this should be as brief and to-the-point as possible.

## Exercise inputs

Exercise inputs, also known as exercise injects or serials, are used in all types of exercise activities and provide additional information to support the developing scenario. These are often simulated and can be in the form of a telephone call, pseudo media such as a news report or other simulated medium. They should be arranged in a chronological order and the details recorded on the master schedule of events (MSE).

## Developing the master schedule of events (MSE)

The MSE is prepared by the exercise planning team and is used to:

- detail the sequence of events, particularly on the day of the exercise
- indicate the timing of each event
- identify who is responsible for tasks
- provide EXCON team members with a 'script'
- provide guidance for the pace and direction of the exercise.

Managing timing is an integral part of the MSE. Some exercises require time to be compressed. For example, a flood discussion exercise might require a period of 48 hours to be compressed into six hours to achieve the outcome required. Alternatively, a field exercise requiring participants to apply practical skills may need to run in real time (or extended time) to meet its objectives. Varying time must be managed carefully given that, for example, compressing time too much can seriously reduce realism.

An effective MSE should contain:

- serial or inject number
- timing of each inject
- intended responder to the event
- short summary of the event (scenario information)
- desired or expected outcome
- link to relevant control document (if applicable) or other serials
- EXCON member (or functional area) responsible for the inject
- notes section to record completion time or other instructions.

Suggested templates for a MSE can be found at Appendix 10 and 11 in the companion templates document.



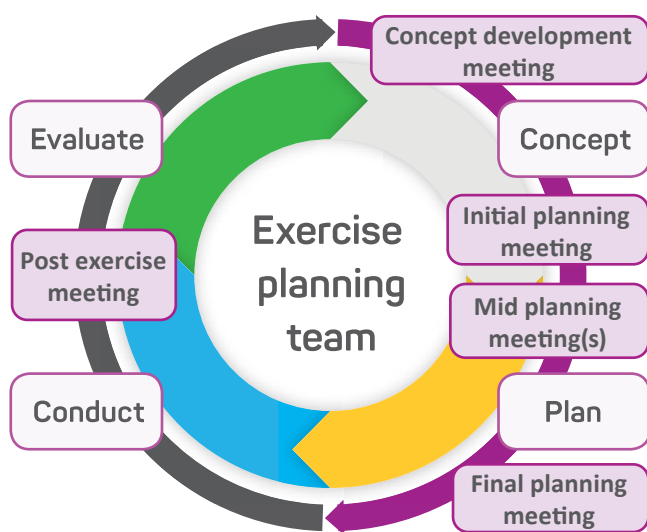
The complexity of the MSE will depend on the size and scale of the exercise. While the MSE should be prepared for a discussion exercise, it will be a much simpler document.

The exercise controller uses the MSE to manage the exercise while it is happening. They will ensure any problems are rectified and make alternative arrangements to keep the exercise flowing. The exercise controller can modify the flow and progress of the exercise to ensure the objectives are met. This may require a temporary halt to the exercise, making changes in its direction, speeding it up or slowing it down.

When developing an exercise it is important for the planning team to anticipate and analyse the potential range of possible responses to a given inject. In some cases, 'branches' of alternative serials may need to be designed to accommodate the range of possible directions an exercise may take.

## Planning meetings

The planning team has primary responsibility for the design, conduct and evaluation of the exercise. This responsibility is managed through a range of planning meetings. The diagram below provides an overview of exercise meetings in the exercise cycle.



**Figure 8:** Schedule of exercise planning meetings

## Concept development meeting

The purpose of the concept development meeting is to discuss, consider and agree on the broad exercise concept. It should confirm the need and answer the question, 'Why do we need to conduct an exercise?'

Consideration may be given to the exercise aim, objectives, evaluation methodology, key dates, exercise localities and participants.

The outcome of the concept development meeting should be general agreement on the exercise concept and sufficient guidance to develop a concept document (see section on exercise documentation).

## Initial planning meeting

The initial planning meeting is perhaps the most important of the planning meetings. It provides the broad agreement on the exercise framework and enables further planning to proceed. The purpose of the initial planning meeting is to identify how the approved exercise concept will be implemented to achieve the exercise objectives.

The exercise concept document must be used as the basis for discussions and as many stakeholders as practicable should be included in this process. The outcome of the initial planning meeting should be broad agreement on the exercise parameters and sufficient guidance to develop the exercise plan.

## Ongoing planning meetings

The purpose of planning meetings is to discuss and refine exercise management arrangements and review the status of exercise planning. These meetings also allow for the identification and management of any issues that arise. Depending on the complexity of the exercise it may be necessary to conduct several planning meetings. Specialist function teams (such as the writing team[s]) may need to meet separately and more often.

Planning meetings should:

- be scheduled and planned
- have compulsory attendance
- be minuted and use action items to ensure identified activities are completed on time.

Planning meetings are more effective when stakeholders ensure the same representatives attend throughout the planning process.

## Final planning meeting

The purpose of the final planning meeting is to review all exercise planning. It will confirm that planning is complete, and that all arrangements are in place for participants, exercise team members and logistics. The scenario and all documents should be validated – this can be achieved by conducting a trial run of part or all the exercise.

Introduction of any new planning detail should be avoided at this stage. The meeting should identify any outstanding issues and allocate responsibility for their resolution. The final planning meeting should be held several weeks before the exercise and preferably before related activities begin (i.e. workshops or training).

## Post-exercise meeting

The purpose of the post-exercise meeting is to finalise the exercise evaluation and related activities. This will include the exercise evaluation and any subsequent reporting activities that need to be undertaken. The post-exercise meeting may also identify issues and suggest opportunities for improvement for future exercises. A draft exercise report should form the basis of discussions at this meeting.

## Risk management

Risk is inherent in every activity. The Australian and New Zealand Standard for Risk Management, AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management Guidelines define risk as ‘the chance of something happening that will have an impact on objectives’. It also states that risks can have a positive and a negative effect on outcomes.

Most legislation reflects the importance of managing workplace risk by requiring employers to adopt a systematic approach to managing risks to health and safety in the workplace and to eliminate any foreseeable risk if not reasonably practicable to control the risk. The employer must also consult with employees when decisions are made that could affect their health or safety.

Risk management is about identifying potential variations from what we plan or desire, and managing those variations to maximise opportunity, minimise loss and improve decisions and outcomes. Managing risk means identifying and taking opportunities to improve performance, as well as taking action to avoid or reduce the chances of something going wrong.

In the context of designing, conducting and evaluating exercises, a systematic risk management approach will reduce the degree of uncertainty and increase decision-making accuracy and the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Exercise planners should consider risks that may occur during the conduct of the exercise (e.g. safety of venues), as well as risks to the exercise itself (e.g. impact of a real event, industrial action, cyber-attack) as part of the risk management process. The simulation of potentially traumatic events could cause psychological harm or distress for exercise team members and participants particularly if they may have experienced the scenario type. The risks to all participants, including staff and role players must be considered.

The development and maintenance of a risk management plan and risk register is an integral part of the planning process. Exercise planners should refer to available materials that are specific to risk management for more guidance.

## Other planning issues

### Exercise venue

The planning team will need to secure an appropriate venue for the exercise. The type of venue will differ depending on the style of exercise. Planners should consider availability and suitability when choosing a venue, considering factors such as:

- occupational health and safety
- visibility of exercise activities to the public/media
- realism
- vulnerability to damage
- rehabilitation issues
- access (e.g. wheelchair access, security access to buildings/rooms)

- cultural appropriateness
- available technology (e.g. microphones, speakers, information systems, screens)
- available services (e.g. power, toilets, internet connectivity).

It is essential to conduct a site inspection before the exercise. A professional assessment or inspection may be required to assess a venue’s suitability or risk. A contingency plan may be required in case a venue becomes unavailable.

When conducting a field exercise at a venue it is vital to ensure that arrangements or agreements are in place in relation to:

- legal indemnities
- responsibility for damage or restoration.

## Finance

All stakeholders should have a clear understanding of the financial arrangements in place for the exercise, including:

- management of any exercise budget
- guidelines for exercise expenditure
- approval and payment of any overtime
- responsibility for the rehabilitation of damaged facilities.

## Real media releases

Real media releases may be issued before, during or after an exercise. Media releases are useful to inform the wider public about the event and any disruptions it may cause, or to raise the profile of the participating organisations or groups.

## Notification to residents

Residents and businesses close to the exercise site should be advised of the forthcoming event. Notification is a matter of courtesy, good public relations, and an opportunity to identify unforeseen stakeholder issues. This is especially important if the exercise could disrupt normal day-to-day activities.

## Community engagement

Ideally, communities will be engaged continuously throughout the exercise management cycle. As a minimum the local community needs to be engaged so it understands and is aware of any impact or disruption the exercise may cause.

Exercise planners should consider whether it is appropriate to include the community in the actual conduct of the exercise. Community involvement (e.g. in a community evacuation exercise) promotes resilience in the community by raising awareness of local plans and encouraging preparedness. Community members or representatives can be involved throughout the exercise management cycle and can provide invaluable advice about possible exercise needs that exist or plans that the community would like to practise or test.

Ideally, engagements will be done in conjunction with local government and other community groups who will already have channels such as regular information sessions, radio slots and local newsletters which can be used to reach the wider community.

## Selecting role players

Having people 'role play' disaster affected individuals, or other relevant roles can add realism to an exercise. However, it does add an extra element of risk that needs to be managed. When selecting people to 'role play', the following should be considered:

- A Casualty Bank should be created as part of the exercise design. The Casualty Bank should be reviewed and endorsed by appropriately qualified experts to guide expected management and outcomes.
- Some individuals may react adversely to receiving moulage (make-up simulating injuries) and being placed in a scenario that might cause them to recall traumatic experiences. Exercise planners should ensure appropriate support and psychological first aid is available if required.
- Role players should be fully briefed and understand the nature of the required role prior to formal recruitment.
- Role players should not have experienced a major incident in the past that is still a sensitive issue for them.
- Role players should not have any underlying mental or physical health conditions that would impede their ability to fulfill their requirements as a role player.
- Role players should not be on medication that may affect their role.
- Inclusion of minors and vulnerable persons in an exercise requires robust planning to meet legal and other regulatory requirements, such as obtaining parental/guardian consent and working with children checks.

Ideally, there will be a role allocated within the exercise management team to directly monitor safety of, and exercise objective compliance by, the role players.

Exercise team members should investigate the respective workplace and occupational health and safety legislation or other relevant legislation to determine the extent to which their duty of care applies to role players and obtain advice about issues such as insurance coverage.

### Dive Deeper:

For further advice on the inclusion of minors and vulnerable persons in exercises see:

National Standards for Working with Children Checks  
[www.childabuseroyalcommissionresponse.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/FinalNationalStandards-WorkingwithChildrenChecks\\_0.pdf](http://www.childabuseroyalcommissionresponse.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/FinalNationalStandards-WorkingwithChildrenChecks_0.pdf)

Governance toolkit: safeguarding vulnerable people  
[www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/governance-toolkit/governance-toolkit-safeguarding-vulnerable-people](http://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/governance-toolkit/governance-toolkit-safeguarding-vulnerable-people)

The Vulnerable people in emergencies policy: hiding vulnerable people in plain sight (Don Garlick, 2015, AJEM). [knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/ajem-jan-2015-the-vulnerable-people-in-emergencies-policy-hiding-vulnerable-people-in-plain-sight](http://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/ajem-jan-2015-the-vulnerable-people-in-emergencies-policy-hiding-vulnerable-people-in-plain-sight)

## Evaluation in the planning phase

Once evaluation requirements have been determined, the evaluation coordinator manages the development of the evaluation plan and the identification, training and briefing of evaluators. The evaluation requirements determine how many evaluators will be needed, what kind of subject-matter expertise they require, how they are assigned during an exercise, and what kind of training and briefing they need before the exercise. Further details are provided in chapter 7.

## Transition from planning to conduct

The skills and roles required during the exercise conduct phase may differ from those needed during the planning phase. Roles required for the conduct phase should be identified in the planning phase. Detailed explanation of the roles required during the conduct phase can be found in Chapter 6.



# Chapter 5: Exercise documentation



Figure 9: Schedule of exercise documents

## Introduction

The management and conduct of exercises are a complex task. They require appropriate rigor to be applied to the development, handling and storage of exercise documentation.

Exercise documentation provides information for those involved in designing, conducting, participating in and evaluating the exercise. Good documentation facilitates future use and sharing of the exercise with other stakeholder groups, providing a valuable return on the time invested.

Exercise planning teams should be aware of any relevant regulatory requirement or other organisation requirements for managing documents including:

- The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth)
- The *Archives Act 1983* (Cth)
- The *Federal Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

Exercise documentation is essential for several reasons:

- verbal instructions by themselves are not a reliable record and are nearly impossible to replicate for future exercises
- documents form a permanent record of what has been planned and undertaken
- documents guide the conduct of the exercise and support succession planning
- documents are an important tool to support the briefing of exercise participants and other key stakeholders
- documents help to gain commitment and support for exercise conduct, including financial support.

This section provides a framework for the different documents that may be useful to manage an exercise.

## Exercise management documents

The amount of documentation and the detail required will vary depending on the size and complexity of the intended exercise.

As a guide, you should consider obtaining or generating the following:

- exercise scoping documents
- exercise concept document
- planning meetings agenda and minutes
- exercise plan
- detailed scenario documents
- exercise instructions
- post-exercise report.

Each of these documents plays an important role in the management of exercises and will contribute significantly to the success of your exercise.

## Exercise scoping documents

Exercise scoping documents will help you to answer the question, 'Why do we need to conduct an exercise?' and may consist of previous exercise and incident debriefs that identified areas of performance needing attention.

## Exercise concept document

The exercise concept document is the authority to conduct the exercise and provides a broad overview of what is to be achieved and how. The document's purpose is to provide a conceptual framework around the planning of an exercise. It will provide background information, objectives, governance structure, an overview of the scenario and key participating organisations.

The concept document will be approved by the exercise director or directors, giving the planning team the authority to formally begin planning activities.

A suggested template for a concept document is available at Appendix 6 in the companion templates document.

## Planning meetings' agenda and minutes

During exercise planning it is vital that records of all proceedings are kept. Minutes of any meeting form useful background for decisions and make writing future exercises easier. Minutes should record decisions, allocate tasks to specific individuals and provide action deadlines.

Suggested templates for a range of meeting agenda are available at Appendix 1-5 in the companion templates document.

## Exercise plan

The purpose of the exercise plan is to outline the method by which the exercise will be designed, conducted and evaluated. The exercise plan describes the aim, objectives and evaluation measures for the exercise. It should provide guidance on all issues relating to the design, conduct and evaluation of the exercise.

It should also outline the program of related activities with proposed dates and sequence of events. Proposed participants and exercise management arrangements should be identified in addition to planning milestones and resource considerations.

While the exercise concept document serves as the initial overview and authority to start exercise planning, the exercise plan is developed in the planning phase and may need to be updated as planning progresses. The exercise plan will not be distributed to exercise participants, however, some of the information will need to be reproduced in the relevant exercise instructions.

A suggested template for an exercise plan is available at Appendix 7 in the companion templates document.

## Detailed scenario documentation

The type and size of the exercise will influence the required level of scenario documentation. As a guide the following should be considered:

- detailed description of the scenario (including general and special ideas)
- MSE (including exercise timings and sequence of inputs)

- control documents – any information that participants require to support their decision-making (e.g. plans or weather forecasts)
- background information and profiles (e.g. information on people, businesses or places mentioned in the scenario and inputs).

Any scenario documentation should be clearly marked as 'exercise material only'.

## Exercise instructions

Instructions are provided to exercise participants and exercise team members in advance of the exercise. While all instructions will contain similar information, they may need to be tailored to meet the needs of different exercise roles. They should provide enough information and be accompanied by any pre-reading that the participants or team members require to take part in the exercise.

Exercise instructions (also known as the participant's handbook) for participants may include:

- joining and administrative instructions
- exercise overview
- contact information
- situation (general idea)
- other information as required.

Other specific exercise instructions may need to be created for:

- evaluators
- EXCON team members
- observers.

## Evaluation documentation

The evaluation documentation will be prepared during the planning phase of the exercise and may include a range of documents, checklists and templates provided to participants, facilitators, observers and evaluators to collect appropriate information.

Further detail about evaluation can be found in chapter 7. Suggested templates for evaluation documentation can be found at Appendix 14-21 in the companion templates document.

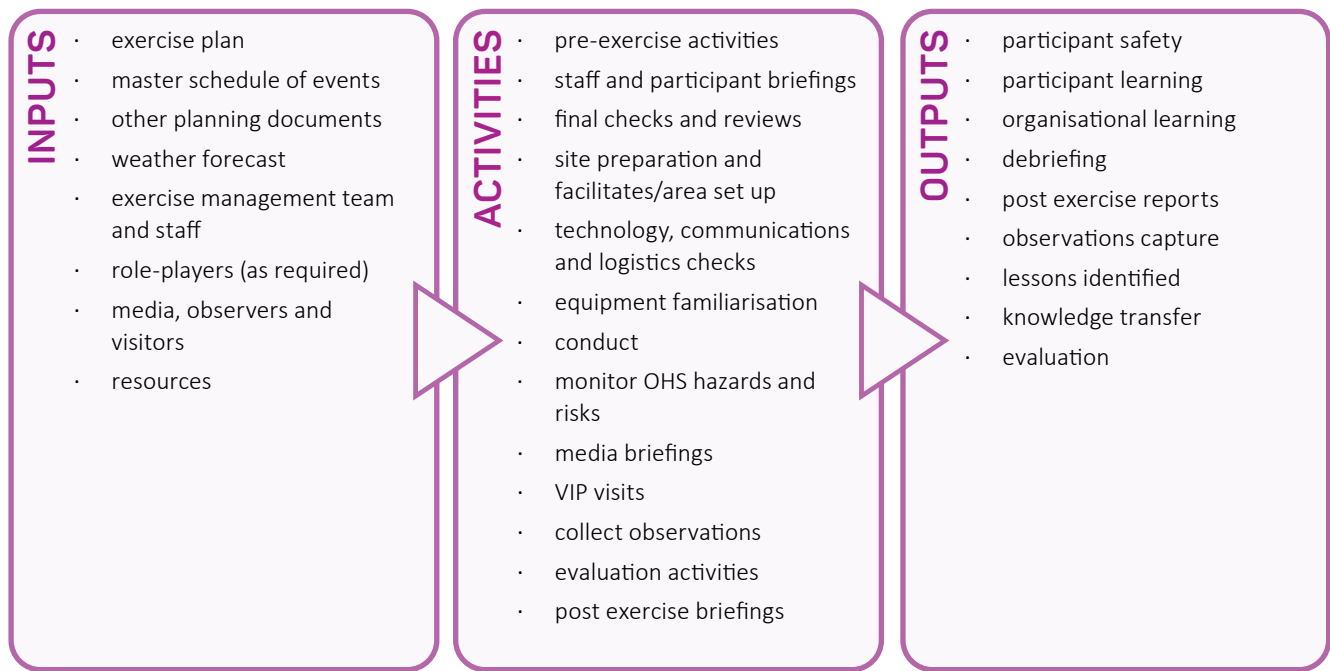
## Post-exercise report

The author(s) of the post-exercise report will be determined by the exercise director(s) and will include input from the evaluation team. The post-exercise report should include:

- a description of the exercise
- a narrative of key events
- an evaluation summary addressing the attainment of the exercise aim, objectives, and standards
- key observations and possible treatment options.



# Chapter 6: Exercise Conduct



**Figure 10:** Inputs, activities and outputs of the conduct phase

## Overview of the conduct phase

The exercise conduct phase includes starting, managing and ending the exercise. The principles outlined during the conduct phase can be applied across discussion, functional and field exercises.

Regardless of the size of the exercise being conducted, exercise managers should be aware of a range of exercise management activities to be managed, including but not limited to:

- pre-exercise activities
- briefings for exercise team members, role players, observers and participants
- final checks and reviews
- monitoring occupational health and safety (OH&S) issues, hazards and risks
- briefings during conduct
- VIP/media visits
- ensuring collection of observations and data
- facilitating evaluation activities
- debriefings.

## Pre-exercise activities

A range of pre-exercise activities will need to occur before an exercise begins. These activities are required to prepare participants for their involvement in the exercise. These activities may take the form of:

- notifications – organisation/political/senior officials/ community/media

- rehearsals/new training
- final review of exercise documentation
- final technology and communication requirements and checks
- establishing facilities
- equipment familiarisation
- discussion exercise(s), seminar(s) and/or workshops
- development or review of plans and procedures.

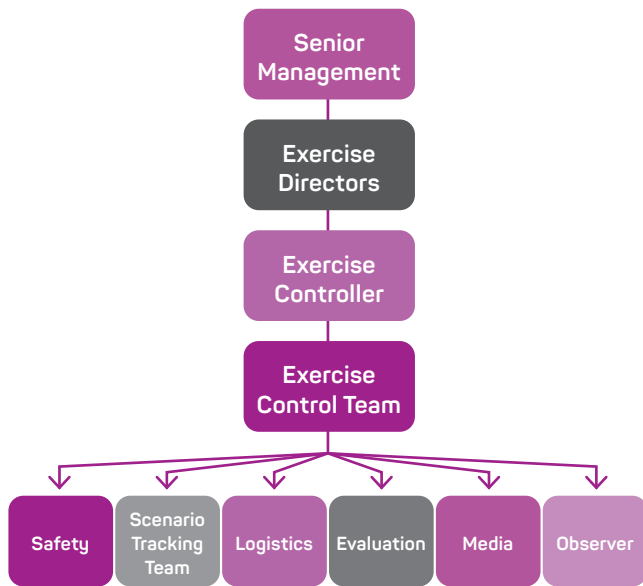
## Exercise control team roles

The people who run and support exercise conduct are called the EXCON team or staff. They can be drawn from the participating organisations, volunteers and community, or business groups. EXCON team members should be identified early to allow for clear lines of authority, responsibility, and communication to be established, as well as enable the rehearsal of EXCON functions. EXCON team members should avoid any unnecessary interference with exercise participants during the exercise and should be clearly identifiable by wearing tabards or lanyards.

The role of the EXCON team is to ensure the exercise is conducted in a safe and effective manner. They should monitor participants, help create a realistic atmosphere, keep the exercise running smoothly, make rulings for participants, introduce scenario information and guide participants towards achieving the stated objectives.

The generic exercise control structure provides an overview of common roles in exercise management. Some functions are common to all exercises, others are only relevant in limited circumstances.





**Figure 11:** Exercise control structure

## Exercise controller

The exercise director(s) appoints an exercise controller who is in turn responsible for selecting and appointing people to the functions required to conduct the exercise. The exercise controller is responsible for:

- managing all exercise conduct activities to ensure adequate opportunities to achieve the exercise objectives
- safety and risk management during the conduct phase in accordance with the approved plans.

## Exercise control (EXCON) function

The exercise controller leads the EXCON team, which is responsible for:

- overseeing the conduct of the exercise
- ensuring participants have the opportunity to achieve the aim and objectives
- managing the MSE
- simulating activities not performed by the participants
- contributing to the post-exercise report.

## Safety officer(s)

Safety must take precedence over exercise activities and safety officers must immediately intervene if safety is compromised. Depending on the size of the exercise, more than one safety officer position may be required. These officers will report to a chief safety officer who is directly responsible to the exercise controller. Safety officers should be located and monitor activity wherever field activities are being conducted.

## Scenario tracking team

The scenario tracking team monitors the progress of the MSE and injects scenario information wherever required to progress the exercise. It may also simulate the roles of organisations that are not participating in the exercise.

## Logistics

A logistics officer may be appointed to coordinate and manage logistic requirements. This may involve:

- liaising with venue owners or operators
- coordinating catering and welfare requirements
- arranging transport of participants and equipment
- commissioning the construction of props, models or other elements required for the scenario
- procuring additional equipment, consumables, and resources (e.g. lighting, portable toilets)
- setting up registration or administration areas for exercise control.

## Evaluation roles in the conduct phase

The exercise evaluation coordinator or team will manage the evaluators during the conduct of the exercise. This includes ensuring that evaluators are able to move between venues to observe key parts of the scenario and be present at the various debriefs. The evaluation coordinator also ensures the relevant evaluator reports are submitted in a timely fashion at the conclusion of the exercise. Further detail on the role of evaluators is detailed in chapter 7.

## Media

The media function is responsible for handling any real media requirements during the exercise. This includes distributing a media release before the exercise begins (if necessary) and coordinating exercise footage and interviews to promote the exercise in news media.

## Observers coordinator

Exercises may attract observers, ranging from prominent VIPs to members of participating organisations. To ensure observer safety and minimise disruption to the exercise, appointing an observers coordinator should be considered to ensure:

- an observers program is developed
- a set of joining instructions is distributed, detailing a meeting time and place on the day, along with an overview of the exercise
- where possible an exercise viewing area is established, where observers have access to the exercise, but can in no way interfere with proceedings
- any personnel escorting observers are thoroughly briefed on the exercise scenario, its aim and objectives.

EXCON team members are allocated responsibilities that may include meeting and escorting observers to predetermined viewing areas, explaining the exercise aim and objectives, providing a running commentary on the exercise and answering observers' questions.

## Mentors

Exercise participants or EXCON team members who are new to their roles may be assigned mentors or 'buddies'. A mentor is an experienced role model and trusted adviser who offers their knowledge and experience and provides advice to guide and support the mentee.

## Other possible roles

Depending on the size and complexity of the exercise it may be necessary to appoint team members to fulfil other roles.

**Exercise facilitator** – discussion exercises are usually led by an expert facilitator or facilitation team. The exercise facilitation team is responsible for ensuring that discussion is inclusive, remains focused on exercise objectives and proceeds in a safe and ethical manner. Specialist facilitation support for psychological safety may need to be considered when exercise discussions may cover sensitive topics.

**Role player manager** – role players are integral to the conduct of many field exercises, but they must be closely managed. Success of an exercise can depend on how well role players are briefed and work within the parameters of the exercise. The role player manager's duties can include:

- ensuring role players are registered on arrival
- pre-exercise role player briefings, including details of expected 'role' behaviour and possible reactions during the exercise
- coordinating moulage
- positioning the role players pre-exercise
- managing role player welfare (e.g., hydration, shade, warmth, sunscreen) during the conduct of the exercise
- arranging for debriefing and deregistration of role players at the conclusion of the exercise.

**Time keeper(s)** – where there is an identified need to 'jump time' (that is to change the timings or context of time during an exercise) it is crucial that EXCON, role players and participants are all adequately and clearly informed and aligned to a new time period. This may require timing and other exercise hardware to be physically changed to reflect the shift in time.

**Role players** – provide realism and create an emotional perspective to the exercise. They adopt the roles of casualties and bystanders, and other people affected during an exercise. Role players are often made up to appear injured (known as moulage). Sometimes they are used to act as media representatives or political figures, particularly in field exercises. All role players must be registered before they are deployed into the exercise and then deregistered before leaving the exercise area.

Following the exercise, a formal debriefing for role players provides them with a vital forum to share their experiences of the exercise. A unique insight into how the responders dealt with the situation can also be gained.

It is important to allow role players to de-role following an exercise. That is, they need to go through a process of 'stepping out of character' to minimise any unexpected psychological effects. This can occur naturally as part of the exercise debrief or may require a conscious activity where the role player has been in-role for some time, or the role has been particularly demanding.

Role players are often volunteers who have given up their time to support the exercise conduct, it is therefore important to ensure that role players are acknowledged and thanked for their participation in the exercise and contribution to the stakeholder learning experience.

**Staging area manager** – manages the deployment of participants from a predetermined staging area during field exercises.

**Security** – manages access to exercise sites.

**Damage control** – in all field deployment exercises the damage control officer is responsible for assessing, recording, and reporting on any damage caused during the exercise. In some instances, any such damage may need to be repaired and the venue or site returned to pre-exercise conditions. The damage control officer should ensure that pre- and post-exercise venue inspections are completed.

**ICT officer or team** – if the exercise is being conducted partially or fully in a virtual environment or communications requirements are substantial, then an ICT officer or team will be required. The ICT and communications team manages systems being used during the exercise. If the exercise is digitally recorded then the ICT team must consider the privacy, security and other legal requirements of data capture and sharing.

## Briefings

For the best opportunity to achieve the objectives and ensure a successful exercise, it is essential that briefings are conducted for participants, role players, the EXCON team, evaluators, and observers. All exercise briefings should follow a consistent format for ease of understanding, as well as support any exercise instructions people have received before the exercise.

Briefings should be accurate, concise and sequential. The SMEACSQ format is recommended because it presents the important information in a logical sequence and is currently used by many emergency management organisations. SMEACSQ stands for:

- **Situation** – describes what has happened and perhaps what has been done
- **Mission** – describes what is to be achieved (aim, objectives)

- **Execution** – how objectives are to be achieved (what needs to be done, not how to do it)
- **Administration and logistics** – administrative and logistical arrangements (e.g. transport, catering)
- **Command and communication** – command structure and communication arrangements for the exercise
- **Safety** – including welfare and ‘No Duff’ explanation (see definition on page 34)
- **Questions** – provides an opportunity for participants to ask clarifying questions.

Specific briefings will be required for the different functional roles being undertaken during the conduct phase. Consider specific briefings to the following groups:

- EXCON team members
- observers
- role players
- participants
- evaluators
- media.

## Exercise Control (EXCON)

Briefing exercise team members is essential to allow them to clarify their role during the exercise and ensure they understand the scenario and how it will unfold. In some cases, it may be appropriate to conduct a rehearsal with EXCON team members to confirm timings and familiarise them with the exercise environment.

Exercise briefings usually include details relating to the general idea, special ideas, MSE and safety instructions, and amplify information contained in the exercise instructions and/or exercise plan. The EXCON briefing should include the:

- exercise aim and objectives
- key aspects of the scenario
- roles and responsibilities of EXCON team members
- communications plan (including organisational structure)
- information, communication, and technology systems
- intervention strategies (circumstances under which EXCON will intervene and re-guide participants)
- actions in the event of unforeseen circumstances
- post-exercise requirements.

Individual EXCON team members may receive separate instructions tailored for their specific function, such as:

- evaluator instructions
- site staging instructions
- arrangements for the media and observers
- timekeeper
- mentor
- damage control
- specific safety instructions.

## Participants

Briefing of exercise participants is essential to allow them to engage effectively in the exercise. The briefing should include:

- exercise aim and objectives
- evaluation focus and expectations
- roles and responsibilities during the exercise
- exercise scope and rules
- information, communication and technology systems
- actions in the event of unforeseen circumstances
- ‘No Duff’ arrangements
- post-exercise arrangements
- safety.

## Safety Briefing

The safety briefing should include information relating to:

- site-specific considerations (e.g. hazards, out of bounds)
- ‘No Duff’ arrangements
- identifying, managing, and reporting hazards
- the process for reporting any injuries experienced during the exercise
- monitoring environmental conditions
- monitoring the welfare of all participants throughout the exercise (including stress-related health issues).

## Evaluators

In addition to the general briefing about the aim and objectives of the exercise, evaluators need to understand their role as articulated in the exercise evaluation plan. This may include:

- observing participants’ responses and recording their observations
- observing and assessing processes, procedures, and techniques
- evaluating and reporting on the achievement of objectives.

## Observers

Observers need to be briefed on any restrictions placed on them. It should be highlighted that they are only observing the exercise and should not provide input at any time during the exercise, other than for a safety issue.

Observers can also provide neutral observations relevant to the evaluation and may be given the opportunity to provide their observations to the lead evaluator or report writer. Insights from observers may also provide additional support to the recommendations for future improvement.

## Role players

It is essential that role players are fully briefed on their involvement before the exercise begins, particularly on use of the term 'No Duff'. Role players should be informed that they may withdraw from the exercise if they feel unsafe, unwell or anxious about events. The role player briefing should include the withdrawal process.

### 'No Duff'

All messages relating to authentic injuries or incidents must be prefixed by the word 'No Duff'. Should such an event occur, the safety officer, in consultation with the exercise controller, may pause or stop the exercise to manage the real event.

## End exercise (ENDEX)

The exercise controller will formally communicate the end of exercise to all exercise team members and participants.

## Starting the exercise - final checks

For the exercise to start effectively, several activities need to be completed just before the scheduled start time. These may include:

- final test of information, communication, and technology systems
- last-minute briefing for all exercise team members, confirming readiness to proceed
- positioning simulated casualties, props, and special effects
- positioning of EXCON team members and support personnel
- positioning of exercise participants
- advice to the exercise controller that all is ready.

An exercise can start in many ways, but it must be coordinated by the exercise controller. Discussion exercises usually begin with the facilitator introducing the subject to the participants. Functional exercises may be started by an incoming message or a written script that normally introduces the first piece of scenario information. Usually, field exercises will begin via a radio or telephone message that an incident has taken place, followed by some type of response by a participating organisation.

## Managing the exercise

The exercise is managed by EXCON team members in accordance with the MSE. The exercise controller can call a temporary halt to the exercise to change its direction, speed it up or slow it down to ensure the exercise objectives can be achieved.

EXCON team members support the exercise controller by ensuring that all is proceeding well at each location and that

appropriate inputs occur in accordance with the MSE. EXCON team members need to be prepared to react to participant responses and take appropriate action.

The EXCON team should conduct regular briefings to ensure effective management of the exercise; that is, momentum is being maintained and the objectives are being achieved. By maintaining communication, EXCON maintains control and oversight of exercise activities. Situational awareness may also be achieved by:

- monitoring the actions of participants and role players
- audio, video and/or other information technology aids
- field reports from exercise team members.

The exercise management strategy should be linked to the exercise aim and determine the intervention strategy for EXCON team members.

EXCON team members may:

- pause and guide (if participants and exercise activities are moving away from the objectives)
- stop, debrief and reset (if exercise activities move well outside of the intended objectives)
- stop the exercise (in the event of a major safety issue).

EXCON team members may also:

- let mistakes run to see if the participants can overcome barriers to the achievement of the objectives
- let perceived mistakes run to see if the participants develop a new method for achieving the objectives. Is it actually a mistake, or is moving outside the expected response actually the best course of action?

## Exercise conduct issues

### Exercise communication

A communications plan is developed and used to identify the appropriate lines of communication for relevant personnel. There will normally be two components to exercise communications: one for participants and one for EXCON. EXCON team members need to be in contact with one another throughout the conduct stage of the exercise. This is often achieved by using mobile phones and/or a separate radio network (control network). Normal communication protocols are appropriate for the control network. It is crucial that exercise team protocols are identified and agreed to before the day of the exercise and communicated to all members of EXCON.

It is preferable for EXCON team members to have a phone network uninterrupted by external calls. Receiving other business calls during an exercise can be extremely distracting and disruptive to the exercise.

Participants' communication is normally on radio channels monitored by exercise team members and other organisation personnel. To avoid confusion with real events, exercise

messages sent on normal organisation communications channels must be prefixed by the word 'exercise'.

In field and functional exercises, maintaining a separate communications network between the participants and EXCON needs to be considered. This provides a platform for the managed introduction of exercise special ideas and/or serials and serves as a control mechanism for the exercise controller.

## Site security

Exercises may need to be cordoned off from the public. Equipment, props and other resources may also need to be protected. A security coordinator may be appointed to:

- manage site access
- coordinate protection of physical assets
- establish perimeters
- prevent unauthorised filming and photography and the disclosure of operational procedures.

If the exercise has a digital or virtual component, information and cyber security may also need to be managed.

## Identification of exercise team members

In all exercises the proper identification and roles of EXCON team members is essential. This serves to differentiate them from participants and role players and, in large multi-organisation exercises, to identify particular roles. This is normally achieved using tabards, lanyards, name plates or arm bands depicting role title (e.g. safety officer).

## Managing real events

The term 'No Duff' should be used to indicate that a real event or injury has taken place. It will then be the decision of the exercise controller as to whether the exercise needs to pause or stop.

## Evaluation in the conduct phase - observe the exercise and collect data

Exercise observations and data collection can differ between discussion and functional or field exercises. These are records of the noteworthy facts or occurrences from the exercise. They form the evidence for the evaluation conclusions.

Important observations should be recorded in terms of (a) what worked well and why, and (b) what didn't work well and why. This identifies both good performance and areas for improvement to support the learning and development of individuals and capabilities.

Initial analysis and summarising of data can include use of the P2OST2E elements of capability to help identify the root causes of any observed issues or performance gaps.

See the P2OST2E table in Appendix 19 in the companion templates document.

## Finishing the exercise – ENDEX

Finishing the exercise is a controlled activity. The exercise controller is responsible for finishing the exercise in a pre-arranged manner and communicating an appropriate message to all participants. An accepted term for concluding the exercise is 'ENDEX'.

The exercise may end in accordance with:

- a designated time, according to the MSE
- achievement of all objectives
- completion of designated tasks
- if it is not safe to continue with the exercise
- if other activities (including a safety breach or actual responses) hinder the progress of the exercise or render the objectives unachievable.

In any case the exercise controller must consider strategies, should it be necessary, to terminate the exercise before the pre-arranged time.

During a field exercise a progressive stand-down of participants/capabilities can begin when they have achieved their respective objectives, if it does not affect the continuing functions of other participants and has been approved by the exercise controller. It is important not to overlook the activities required to restore the exercise site and return equipment to its pre-exercise state. While this will largely be the responsibility of logistics, the time and effort required should not be underestimated and those involved must be given every opportunity to participate in designated post-exercise activities.

## Debriefing the exercise

An essential component of a successful exercise is the ability to debrief the activities of the conduct phase. A series of debriefs will be required at the conclusion of an exercise. Depending on the scale of the exercise these may include:

- informal 'hot' debrief (immediately post-exercise) for:
  - participants
  - EXCON
- formal debriefs for:
  - role players
  - organisation-specific debrief
  - a formal multi-organisation debriefs involving all participants and EXCON team members
  - exercise management debrief.

In all cases the debrief must be planned and communicated to all those who need to be involved.

While briefings usually start with general information and then become more detailed in subsequent briefings, the reverse is the case with debriefs. That is, detailed information is collected at a lower level, with that information contributing to higher-level and subsequent debriefs.

## Informal 'hot' debrief

An informal 'hot' debrief immediately following ENDEX should be provided for all participants and EXCON team members to capture information and feedback while it is still fresh in people's minds. This debrief would normally be conducted by the team leader or supervisor of a functional area or capability to help identify issues or concerns. The hot debrief enables all participants to gain an insight into how the exercise was conducted and how their role may have influenced the exercise.

The hot debrief should include but be not limited to:

- what worked well
- what didn't work well
- safety issues
- what, if any, immediate action is required
- identified opportunities for improvement.

It may not be possible or appropriate to capture the responses of all participants in a face-to-face forum. Consideration should be given to the development of a participant survey, which can be completed remotely and collated as part of the exercise evaluation.

## Formal debrief


Conducting a formal debrief after the exercise provides an opportunity for key organisation representatives and exercise staff team members to highlight areas of concern, as well as the positive outcomes of the exercise. This debrief is more formal and detailed than the hot debrief and is led by an experienced facilitator. It should focus on strategic multi-organisation aspects of the exercise that may require further discussion and clarification, and possibly recommend future actions.

Participants' contributions to debriefings can be verbal or written. In either case, information collected at formal debriefings must be recorded so it can be used in the exercise report. As with briefings, a standard format for debriefings should be adopted and an agenda distributed and followed.

At the start of any debrief the facilitator should clearly state the aim and objectives of the debrief. The following is a guide to the issues that may be covered in an exercise debrief:

- analyse the exercise to determine what worked well, what didn't work well and areas for improvement without apportioning blame
- address specific questions that arise from the achievement or non-achievement of objectives
- acknowledge good performance
- seek constructive information
- focus on improving procedures and training
- explore the appropriateness and effectiveness of the exercise itself
- record relevant information to enable reports to be compiled
- summarise major points and suggest follow-up action.

Debriefs are not to be confused with the evaluation process. However, the outcomes will form part of the data collected for completing the post-exercise report.



# Chapter 7: Exercise evaluation and other post exercise activities



**Figure 12:** Inputs, considerations and outputs of the evaluation and post activity phase

## Types of post exercise activities

Post exercise activities will depend on the size of the organisation and the purpose for which the exercise is conducted. Post exercise activities are conducted to:

- seek feedback and assess the conduct of the exercise
- seek feedback on participant experiences
- evaluate the exercise objectives
- transfer learnings into lessons management systems.

Post exercise activities will always include a post activity report or briefing.

In larger organisations post exercise activities may be undertaken as part of an organisation’s preparedness, program management, continuous improvement, capability development and learning programs. In smaller organisations, the exercise team may be responsible for post activity actions. As part of the exercise concept phase, exercise managers will have clarified their responsibility for post exercise activities.

## Feedback on exercise conduct

The exercise should be reviewed by the exercise team (outside of the exercise outcomes) to look at aspects such as the pre and post planning, conduct of the actual exercise and any incidents. The aim is to learn and improve how exercises are conducted.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is a type of critical thinking. It involves systematically collecting, analysing, and using information to enhance learning and decision making. Evaluation should be:

- rigorous in design
- involve data collection and analysis to the extent required by the intended use of the evaluation
- adhere to the highest standards of validity and reliability

- be appropriate to the intended use to increase the accuracy and credibility of the information produced.

The process for evaluating an exercise should start with the initial concept meeting and continue until the final debriefings have been completed, reports are issued, and corrective actions are agreed on. If the exercise is part of a larger program, the evaluation will be ongoing.

Conducting a thorough evaluation is not a minor undertaking. Evaluation and may require dedicated team members as well as careful consideration to ensure that data can be collected, and evaluation questions answered.

Evaluation can include input from all aspects of the exercise and should be informed by:

- outputs from the exercise planning process and planning meetings
- observations from exercise team members
- outputs from the exercise debriefs
- observations/reports from the exercise evaluator(s).

The output from the evaluation could be an independent report or for a small exercise it may be included as a section in the exercise report. This might include observations, findings, treatment options or recommendations based on the information gathered during the exercise.

The exercise evaluation should include two components:

- Exercise outcomes (participants’ performance against objectives)
- Exercise management (what you as an exercise management team have learned and would improve).

For each of these components, the exercise report should attempt to answer the following questions:

- What did we plan to do (what were the objectives)?
- What did we achieve (were objectives met? If not, how did the outcomes differ)?



- Why did it happen (what led to the objectives not being achieved as planned)?
- What can be done differently in the future (what improvements need to be made)?

Outcomes from an exercise should contribute to an organisation's preparedness, learning and improvement.

## Evaluating objectives

Sound objectives are essential to a successful exercise and to its evaluation. An effective exercise planning team will produce achievable, measurable objectives. Evaluators should help with this process. In some cases, evaluators will need to identify objectives that need to be revised or improved to meet the required outcomes.

Evaluators may be placed in the situation of being brought into an exercise late in the planning process, where the existing objectives are not achievable or measurable and will therefore need to be revised. In this circumstance, evaluators have an ethical obligation to advise the exercise management team and help develop revised objectives.

The focus for evaluators during any activity should be on reporting against the objectives. On occasion, evaluators may identify aspects outside the objectives that merit reporting, but this is generally the exception rather than the rule.

In addition to the design of robust objectives, it is critical to identify the ways that the achievement of the objectives will be measured. This can be done via performance measures or standards, which may:

- exist as part of current SOPs, or
- need to be developed before the activity is conducted.

It may be that for the testing of new SOPs, such standards need to be developed as a product of the activity, or through interaction with the relevant organisation. These will subsequently need to be tested and evaluated for their validity.

Standards provide evaluators with a benchmark against which to assess performance and are used to quantify the objectives to reflect aspects of the task that are critical to successful performance. These aspects will determine what evaluators will measure and use as evidence to support their conclusions about performance during the activity.

## Evaluation process

An evaluation should be planned, conducted and reported in a way that respects the rights, privacy, dignity and entitlements of those affected by and contributing to the evaluation.

There are four stages in the exercise evaluation process:

- plan and coordinate the evaluation
- observe the exercise and collect data
- analyse the data
- develop the exercise report.

These four stages begin with pre-exercise evaluation planning and conclude with the development of the exercise report. By using an exercise evaluation process, exercise planners ensure the exercise aim and objectives inform a focused evaluation, which produces actionable outcomes.

Managing a successful exercise evaluation includes:

- appointment of an evaluation coordinator
- examination and review of exercise objectives to determine the requirements of the evaluation
- development of an evaluation brief or plan
- identification, training and briefing of evaluators.

The evaluation coordinator should be a member of the exercise planning team and be familiar with:

- the identified need, aim and objectives of the exercise
- plans, policies, and procedures of the participating organisation(s)
- inter-organisation coordination issues
- data collection and analysis techniques.

## Identifying evaluators

Evaluators need appropriate expertise in evaluation. They also need to either have subject-matter expertise or be able to identify requirements for and manage subject-matter experts to help the evaluation where required. An evaluator may also be called on to provide impartial and supportive guidance. The role of evaluator is not meant to be adversarial or confrontational. Training in psychological first aid may be helpful.

Evaluation needs to be considered in the exercise management process from the initial concept development. During this phase, evaluation needs to inform and support the development of the aim and objectives. Exercise planners need to revisit objectives throughout the planning process to ensure they can still be achieved.

External evaluators may contribute their subject-matter expertise from outside the organisation to be evaluated and must therefore understand jurisdictional and organisational variations.

## Assigning evaluators

During field exercises, evaluators will be assigned to observe different activities based on their subject matter expertise. They may be assigned to look only at individual tasks or capabilities. They may be asked to look at organisations or at particular functions across the exercise or organisations (e.g. command within an organisation or command, control, coordination, communication and information management across an organisation or across multiple organisations).

A field exercise MSE provides a timeline and location for all expected exercise events. Reference to a MSE can help the evaluation coordinator determine the times at

which specific evaluators should be at certain locations. Evaluator assignments should be decided on, recorded and communicated to evaluators before the exercise is conducted.

## Briefing and training evaluators

Evaluators will need to be briefed and may also need to be trained before the exercise. Briefing and any training should address all aspects of the exercise, including the exercise aim and objectives, the scenario, participants, evaluator roles, responsibilities and assignments. During or before the training, evaluators should be provided with copies of the following materials to review:

- exercise documents, such as the scenario for discussion-based exercises or the exercise plan, evaluation plan and MSE for field exercises
- evaluation materials and tools and evaluator assignments
- appropriate plans, policies, procedures, legislation and agreements of the exercising organisation(s).

Any training provided should also address the roles and responsibilities of evaluators during the various stages of an exercise.

Evaluator responsibilities include the following:

- Pre-exercise:
  - examine the exercise aim, objectives and exercise instructions
  - identify key and trigger points of the activity
  - develop a data collection plan to enable objective reporting on the performance of capabilities against the stated objectives (through demonstrated performance and evidence).
- During exercise:
  - gather evidence to be able to demonstrate or report on performance within the specific capability
  - participate in scheduled meetings and briefings as required
  - act as a forward observer for EXCON team members to report on activities in real time versus exercise time
  - where requested and after consultation with EXCON team members, provide injects to the exercise to help exercise flow
  - be contactable
  - provide feedback to participants and clarify observations made (e.g. through hot debrief)
  - assess situational awareness of participants
  - assess flow of information and analyse root cause of problems
  - consult with other evaluators about the effect of good or poor performance.

- Post-exercise:
  - compile and review the data collected to make comments and recommendations
  - analyse and summarise outcomes
  - develop treatment options
  - identify good as well as poor performance
  - transfer and articulate findings in the post-exercise report.

## Conduct evaluator briefings

The evaluation coordinator should brief evaluators to ensure roles, responsibilities and assignments are understood. For functional and field exercises, this briefing often includes a tour of the exercise site so that evaluators become familiar with the venue and know where they should position themselves to best observe exercise activity.

## Development of an evaluation plan

The evaluation plan is developed in parallel with the exercise plan. An evaluation plan should contain the following:

- exercise information
- aim, objectives, scope and focus of the evaluation (these may be different from those of the exercise)
- key evaluation questions
- methods for data collection and analysis
- security, safety, and ethics
- risk management strategy
- evaluator preparation (e.g. training, briefings)
- reporting requirements
- timeframes
- aide-memoires
- evaluation tools.

Evaluations involving interviews or focus groups on sensitive topics run the risk of causing psychological distress in participants and sometimes in evaluators. Areas of potential trauma should be avoided where possible. Where they must be addressed, mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure psychological first aid, counselling and support is available for participants and evaluators if required. Protocols for terminating interviews if distress occurs should be built into the evaluation design.

An evaluation plan template is provided at Appendix 14 in the companion templates document.

Evaluation materials can also include:

- evaluation plan
- data collection tools
- information for evaluators
- evaluation report templates.

Evaluation templates that may be populated with the questions or objectives of the evaluation have been provided (Appendix 17). These can form a useful guide for evaluators to ensure they are gathering the correct evidence to evaluate performance relative to the objectives.

Some example evaluation questions are provided at Appendix 20 in the companion templates document.

## Guidance for templates

Once the evaluation plan is written it can be submitted to the relevant approving body for sign off. The data collection plan template is simply a means for evaluators to develop an aide-memoire for themselves to ensure they are:

- observing the correct activities
- in the right place at the right time
- covering all the information required to report against the objectives
- aware of any relevant standards or measures that need to be applied to performance.

When completed before an exercise, they may also identify issues or questions that must be resolved before the exercise starts so that the evaluation can be conducted effectively.

The evaluator report template provides guidance on what needs to be reported against following the exercise and contains several important sections that are briefly described here.

The evaluation plan and the evaluator report template can be found at Appendix 6 and Appendix 18 in the companion templates document.

## Information for evaluators

This refers to any SOPs, jurisdictional, capability or other materials relevant to the exercise that evaluators need to be aware of to conduct the evaluation accurately and meaningfully. This information may be given in various forms, including printed and electronic documents or verbal briefings.

## Evaluation considerations for different styles of exercises

### Discussion exercises

Discussion exercises tend to focus on higher-level issues involving the plans, policies, and procedures of an organisation or jurisdiction. Many discussion exercises therefore break participants into syndicate groups to facilitate smaller group discussions. In these smaller group discussions,

evaluators and scribes may need to be present to record proceedings and capture observations and outcomes.

After the syndicate groups have finished their discussions, the entire group usually reconvenes in plenary to address any multi-organisational issues or conflicting opinions. Although individual evaluators are assigned to record discussions within a designated group, all evaluators should capture the information aired in this open discussion.

A debrief with the exercise planning team, facilitators and evaluators should be held immediately afterwards to collect observations and thoughts about the exercise conduct. This will provide an opportunity for evaluators to clarify any points.

Following the exercise, evaluators may also supplement the data collected during the discussions by collecting additional data from participants through interviews or questionnaires.

### Functional or field exercises

Evaluation of field exercises requires observations to take place where the exercise activities are occurring. After an exercise, the information recorded by evaluators is used to analyse whether the activities and tasks were successfully performed, and the objectives achieved.

During exercises, evaluators need to keep accurate records of their observations. Evaluators should take detailed notes as well as consider other means of recording data, such as the use of personal recording devices. Any electronic recording of exercises should be in accordance with the policies and procedures of the participating organisations.

Because numerous exercise activities may be occurring simultaneously, evaluators need to plan to be placed to observe those activities most relevant to the objectives they are evaluating.

Some examples of evaluators' observations include:

- any deviations from plans or procedures
- timeliness of response and completion of tasks
- effectiveness of, or shortcomings in, command and control
- processes and arrangements that work well and should be maintained and/or enhanced
- creative, adaptive problem solving
- equipment issues that affect participant efforts
- exercise management issues that affect the ability of participants to achieve objectives.

Evaluators should not interfere with or disrupt the conduct of the exercise. However, it may be necessary for an evaluator to interact with participants during the exercise if they have a question about something observed. These questions should not influence the way participants respond to the scenario and be as brief as possible.

## Collecting supplementary data

The evaluation team may wish to collect additional data immediately after the exercise. Useful sources of information could include logs, message forms and maps. These records can help evaluators validate their observations and identify any effects of inaccurate information on performance.

## Issues

Issues are a matter drawn from the evidence (observations) collected that need to be further considered. These are generally negative, flagging problems associated with performance.

## Opportunities for improvement

Opportunities for improvement are potential solutions for addressing any issues identified during the activity. These are optional rather than mandatory. They should only be included if they are concrete, realistic and feasible. Each of these areas is reported in relation to each objective, and for each there is also a section detailing whether the objective was achieved or not (or partially), accompanied by a summary of why (or why not).

The report is prefaced with an executive summary that provides a short statement of:

- what the exercise was
- what was being evaluated
- whether the capability was successful overall in the achievement of its objectives
- what the identified issues were and what the opportunities for improvement are.

## Evaluation in the post activity phase - analyse data

During data analysis, the evaluation team consolidates the data collected during the exercise and identifies demonstrated strengths and opportunities for improvement. If using a lessons management approach, the Observation-Insight-Lessons Identified-Lessons Learned (OILL) process should be followed. Functional and field exercises tend to yield higher amounts of data than discussion-based exercises and therefore require a more comprehensive data analysis phase.

## Identifying root cause and developing recommendations

To ensure the exercise evaluation process produces a report that is useful and outlines actionable outcomes for improving an organisation's capabilities, it is critical for evaluators to discover not only what happened, but why it happened. Each task not completed as expected offers evaluators the opportunity to search for a root cause. A root cause is the source of, or underlying reason behind an identified issue.

To arrive at a root cause, an evaluator should attempt to trace the origin of each event back to earlier events and their respective causes. Root cause analysis may also require the review and evaluation of an organisation's emergency plans, policies and procedures.

Uncovering root causes enables the development of opportunities for improvement or recommendations that can be described in the subsequent exercise report. While these are based on the evaluation team's experience and best judgement, the responsibility for implementing recommendations ultimately lies with the participating organisations.

## Conducting analysis

Following any debriefs, evaluators should review their notes and begin to develop preliminary analyses of the exercise.

When conducting an analysis, evaluators should consider:

- Were the objectives achieved?
- Were organisations able to successfully fulfil their roles and responsibilities? If so, why? If not, why?
- What went well?
- What were the key decision or trigger points?
- Were any resource issues identified?
- Do the current plans, policies and procedures support an effective response to an event?
- Were participants familiar with the relevant plans, policies, and procedures?
- Were there any multi-organisation coordination issues that need to be addressed?
- What should be learned from this exercise?
- What strengths were identified?
- What areas for improvement were identified?

## Developing the exercise report

Exercise evaluation should result in the development of an exercise report, however brief, that describes what happened, identifying good performances, opportunities for improvement and makes recommendations.

For a small exercise there may be one evaluator who produces a one-page report. For a large exercise there may be several individual evaluator reports that need to be analysed and summarised into the final exercise report.

The evaluation team may be asked to draft the exercise report. Exercise reports should be produced to effect change and improvements. Reports do not have to be extensive to achieve that. Exercise reports should clearly identify areas or issues to be improved. They should include enough context for each issue or provide links to that context (e.g. individual evaluator reports as annexes). If opportunities for improvement or recommendations are identified, they can be included.

The exercise report should contain the following:

- introduction – executive summary
- background – aim, objectives, scope, participating organisations, budget
- evaluation – commentary on objectives (observations, opportunities for improvement, recommendations)
- conclusions.

A template containing a suggested format is included at Appendix 21 in the template companion document.

The exercise director is responsible for finalising the exercise report and submitting it to those responsible for approving and releasing it, and then sending it to those responsible for resolving the opportunities for improvement or recommendations that have been identified.

## Resolution of evaluation findings

The resolution process should involve at least the following steps:

- Identify the findings/issues, the opportunities for improvement or implementation activities required.
  - Where issues have been identified and verified, existing opportunities for improvement should be considered as well as alternatives that are appropriate to the organisation and its development goals.
  - ‘Closing the loop’: if opportunities for improvement or recommendations are not adopted these should be noted with a rationale for not adopting them.

- Finalise the report.
- The draft report should be reviewed, and any necessary amendments made so it can be finalised and distributed to the appropriate individuals, participants or organisations.
- Track implementation of the corrective action plan.
  - Where a corrective action plan has been developed (i.e. a plan for implementing remedial training/equipment enhancements/revised SOPs), an individual should be asked to track the plan’s progress or specific actions within it. That is, the corrective action plan should have a timeline for implementation and those responsible should report on progress at appropriate intervals to ensure the momentum in enhancing the capability (through addressing identified performance problems) is not lost.

# Glossary

## **Aim**

A statement of intent that gives direction to what will or is desired to be achieved by the exercise.

## **Casualty Bank**

A list of patients that can be used to simulate casualty care and casualty management. Each patient is assigned an injury and/or illness profile and possibly basic medical history. There may also be casualties that are assigned 'uninjured' or have psychological or social needs that need to be addressed by exercise participants.

The casualty bank can be used to create realistic injuries and illnesses in live 'actors', be assigned to props like mannequins or used in tabletop exercises. A casualty bank will ideally have been reviewed and endorsed by appropriately qualified experts prior to exercise use.

## **Community**

A social group with a commonality of association and generally defined by location, shared experience or function and with a number of things in common, such as culture, heritage, language, ethnicity, pastimes, occupation or workplace.

## **Community Engagement**

Community engagement is defined as the process of communities and partners working together to build resilience through collaborative action, shared capacity building and development of strong relationships built on mutual trust and respect.

## **Community Led Exercise**

Community-led approaches are community centred, responsive, and flexible, engaging with the community and supporting them to take action. In the case of exercises, this may involve community leaders taking on exercise planning and direction roles

## **Cultural Safety**

An environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.<sup>2</sup>

## **Damage Control Officer**

A member of the exercise team members whose role is to manage damage to resources or the environment before, during and after an exercise.

## **Disaster Risk Management**

Disaster risk management is the application of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk and manage residual risk, contributing to the strengthening of resilience and reduction of disaster losses.

## **Discussion Exercise (DISCEX)**

An exercise built around discussion of a scenario – providing an opportunity to explore issues in some depth and give verbal responses to situations.

Discussion exercises are designed to stimulate discussion of issues. They may be used to assess plans, policies and procedures.

## **Drill Exercise**

A coordinated, supervised activity employed to test a single, specific operation or function in a single or multi-organisation environment. Drills are commonly used to provide training on new equipment, develop or validate new policies or procedures, or practise and maintain current skills.

## **Ethical**

Right/morally acceptable or wrong/morally unacceptable.

## **Emergency**

An event, actual or imminent, which endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, and which requires a significant and coordinated response. Note, there are jurisdictional legislative variations.

## **Emergency Management**

A range of measures to manage risks to communities and the environment; the organisation and management of resources for dealing with all aspects of emergencies. Emergency management involves the plans, structures and arrangements which are established to bring together the normal endeavours of government, voluntary and private organisations in a comprehensive and coordinated way to

2 R Williams, 'Cultural Safety – what does it mean for our work practice?' (1999) 23(2) Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health 213, p 213.

deal with the whole spectrum of emergency needs including prevention, response and recovery.

## ENDEX

A code word that can be communicated to exercise participants to indicate the end of the exercise.

## Exercise

A controlled, objective-driven activity used for testing, practicing or evaluating processes or capabilities.

## Exercise Controller

The person who manages the conduct phase of an exercise.

Exercise Control (EXCON) team members – also known as directing staff

A term for the person or persons who manage the conduct phase of the exercise.

## Exercise Director

Provides strategic oversight and direction for the planning, conduct and evaluation of the exercise. The exercise director is responsible for approving the aim and objectives of the exercise, as well as its supporting documentation, including the concept document, exercise plan and exercise instructions.

## Exercise Planning Team

The person or group of people who have overall responsibility for the detailed planning of the exercise.

## Evaluation

1. Post-disaster appraisal of all aspects of the disaster and its effects.
2. A time-bound exercise that attempts to assess systematically and objectively the relevance, performance and success, or the lack thereof, of ongoing and completed activities. Evaluation is undertaken selectively to answer specific questions to guide decision makers and/or managers, and to provide information on whether underlying theories and assumptions used in program development were valid, what worked, what did not work and why. Evaluation commonly aims to determine the relevance, validity of design, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of a program.
3. An evaluation is a structured, evidence-based analysis that draws together data (quantitative and/or qualitative) to answer questions about the effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness, impact and sustainability of an intervention (in this case a community engagement process), using clear criteria and standards for assessing the success of the program against particular desired outcomes.
4. Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of the design, implementation or results of a government program or activity for the purposes of continuous improvement, accountability and decision-making. It

provides a structured and disciplined analysis of the value of policies, programs and activities at all stages of the policy cycle.

## Evaluator

Members of the exercise control team members responsible for assessing performance against the exercise objectives (previously referred to as umpires).

## Field Exercise

An exercise that involves the deployment of personnel to a simulated incident or emergency.

## Finding

A factual statement based on empirical evidence gathered through monitoring and evaluation activities. Findings are objective conclusions based on the analysis by subject matter experts. A finding does not suggest a specific course of action. A finding may be a lesson that has been identified.

## Functional Exercise

A functional exercise is designed to test or practise individual functions such as command, planning or intelligence.

In a functional exercise, participants actually undertake the particular functions or tasks they would perform as part of the role(s) they are playing in the exercise. Functional exercises normally take place in a simulated operational environment (e.g. a control centre or command post), are usually conducted in real time, and scenario information is fed to the participants in a manner similar to the way they would receive it 'in the real world'.

## General Idea

A statement designed to provide participants with the background information which would normally be available as general knowledge in a real incident or emergency.

## Hazard Management Agency

A hazard management agency is the public authority or person responsible for a particular aspect (or aspects) of each defined hazard.

## Hypothetical Exercise

A type of discussion exercise where problems are posed by a facilitator and considered by a panel of individuals 'on their feet'. The facilitator keeps the activity moving by asking probing questions and introducing events, often unexpected, as the scenario unfolds. Hypothetical exercises are often conducted in front of an audience of emergency managers or stakeholders. Hypothetical exercises require highly skilled facilitators with subject-matter expertise.

## Justice

Disaster justice is an emerging field of study focusing on the role of societies, specifically their governing structures, in creating and perpetuating vulnerabilities, inequalities and injustices that are magnified by natural hazards.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Lukasiwicz A & Dovers, S (2018) *The Emerging Imperative of Disaster Justice*.

## Knowledge Management

An integrated, systematic process for identifying, collecting, storing, retrieving, and transforming information and data assets so they are readily accessible to improve the performance of the organisation. Knowledge management includes understanding data (by classification and rational presentation), synthesising it (by selection, analysis, interpretation, adaptation, or compression), making it useful by presenting arguments, matching needs and problems, assessing advantages and disadvantages) and considering options for selection. The basic tenets of knowledge management are to improve decision making, foster innovation, build relationships, establish trust, share information and improve lessons management systems.

## Lesson

A lesson is knowledge or understanding gained by experience. The experience may be positive (a good practice) or negative (a gap in performance or doctrine). Successes and failures are both considered sources of lessons.

## Lessons Management

A component of knowledge management that seeks to introduce better practice and improvement opportunities for an organisation's systems and processes. Lessons management broadly involves collecting and analysing information and data to develop, implement, validate and share changes intended to improve efficiency and/or effectiveness.

## Master Schedule of Events (MSE)

A detailed list of all activities and actions (script or running sheet) that need to occur for the exercise objectives to be achieved.

## Moulage

The make-up applied to exercise role players as simulated casualties, to add realism.

## No Duff

The preferred term for indicating that a real event or injury has occurred during an exercise.

## Notional Events

EXCON may deem an event that would occur in a real event but is unable to be undertaken in the exercise for practical reasons, as notional – in that it is deemed to have occurred but does not.

## Objectives

Exercise objectives are specific statements describing what is to be achieved by individuals, groups or organisations participating in the exercise.

## Observation

A record of a noteworthy fact or occurrence as seen during an activity or operation. In the context of an evaluation, it is the evidence or data collected by an evaluator – that is, what is seen or discovered (observed) during the evaluation. Observations can be of good practices to be sustained, or of opportunities for improvement. The analysis of accumulated observations provides for the development of insights and findings from which recommendations may be developed.

## Preparedness

The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organisations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters.

## Presentation

A discussion forum where participants present an action plan relevant to their organisation or groups operational function. The organisation or group is provided with the scenario and problems or issues in advance so that it may prepare its presentation.

## Psychological Safety

Steps taken to eliminate or minimise psychosocial hazards, which are anything that can cause psychological harm.<sup>4</sup>

## Recovery

1. Recovery is the coordinated process of supporting affected communities in reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of psychological, social, economic, environmental and physical wellbeing in the aftermath of a disaster or terrorist event.
2. The restoring or improving of livelihoods and health, as well as economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities, of a disaster affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and 'build back better', to avoid or reduce future disaster risk.

## Recovery Exercise

An exercise that provides the opportunity for a dedicated focus on recovery that goes beyond immediate relief and early recovery and allows for an in-depth exploration of recovery issues over time.

## Resilience

The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform, and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.

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<sup>4</sup> Safe Work Australia



### **Role Players**

Those who adopt the roles of casualties, affected persons or bystanders.

### **Root Cause Analysis**

The analysis used to identify the root causes of raw observations

### **Safety Officer**

A designated member of the EXCON team members that monitors all aspects of safety.

### **Seminar**

Informal discussions, unconstrained by real-time portrayal of events and led by a presenter. They are generally employed to orient participants to, or provide an overview of legislation, strategies, plans, policies, procedures, protocols, response resources and/or concepts and ideas.

### **Special Ideas**

Special ideas (sometimes known as 'exercise serials', 'narratives' or 'inputs') are used to outline the developing exercise scenario. They provide the additional information or direction that participants require to react, as they would in real life.

### **Syndicate Progressive Exercise**

A type of discussion exercise where participants are divided into groups and a series of questions or problems, based on a developing/progressive scenario, are posed by a facilitator. The word progressive refers to the graduated development of complexity that will usually occur in an emergency and which may be replicated in the exercise via a series of special ideas.

Each step of questions or problems are discussed 'in syndicate' with a response being provided back to the larger group. During the discussion, exercise facilitators help the syndicate groups by answering questions and guiding them to ensure they stay on track and achieve the exercise objectives.

### **Systemic Risks**

Systemic risks emerge from the interactions of climate change and natural hazards, with the complex, interdependent and interconnected networks of social, technical, environmental and economic systems. These risks are not necessarily obvious using traditional hazard-by-hazard risk assessments and revealing them requires an understanding of the degree of magnitude of failure across these systems that could suddenly or gradually exceed society's capacity to cope.

### **Systemic Disaster Risk Reduction**

A risk reduction approach that goes beyond hazard-by-hazard approaches to assessing risk. It guides leaders and decision makers from all sectors to adopt a mindset focused on systemic risks, to know why that is important to disaster risk reduction and resilience, and how to apply that thinking to their work. It has been developed to promote and guide consideration of systemic risk and resilience analysis as part of any decision, review, update or development of contemporary practical instruction or risk assessment processes.

### **Workshop**

A type of discussion exercise that focuses on achieving or building a product (e.g. a draft plan or policy). Workshops can be employed as part of a graduated series of activities to determine solutions to exercise and/or operational problems.

A workshop may also be used to produce standard operating procedures (SOPs).

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