

# Level One: Internal preparation

This level outlines the first steps a National Society should undertake to prepare itself to do EVCA. It will help you understand the different roles of the National Society, community and other stakeholders in the EVCA and guide you through the sensitisation process. Then it will guide you through the steps of creating the national EVCA team.

## Step 1. Get prepared within your National Society

### 1.1 Understand the roles of different stakeholders in the EVCA

**The EVCA should not be a stand-alone process carried out solely by the National Society.** Inclusive participation of the community is fundamental for the process to be truly empowering and have a sustainable impact, while engaging a range of other stakeholders can help ensure the community's action plan is implemented.

It is crucial for stakeholders in an EVCA to understand each other's roles. These roles can, of course, evolve during the EVCA process based on interest and capacity.

#### National Society

**The National Society's role is above all as a facilitator of community participation and empowerment.**

This facilitation role includes the following:

- **Facilitate and encourage community members to speak, listen and analyse the data they generate.**
- Ensure that the most vulnerable people in the **communities are well represented** in the process.
- **Facilitate access to resources** (financial, material, human) to enable the community to implement their action plan.
- **Strengthen the relationship between the community and local government officials** using its auxiliary role. This fosters communication and accountability, and thereby helps the community to access services to which it is entitled.
- **Bring other stakeholders together to connect the community** with a network of potential sources of support for the EVCA and any actions that result from it.

A National Society must be prepared and **committed to support communities for several years** until they are in a position to find their own long-term solutions.

In the traditional VCA practice, the National Society has been very prominent in leading the process and providing resources. As we move towards the resilience approach reflected in the Roadmap to Community Resilience, the role of the National Society will become less prominent to ensure that the communities assume a central role.

The ultimate goal is that communities own, lead and proudly benefit from the entire process of risk reduction and resilience building with limited support from external organisations. [Read more on the key services in the Roadmap to Community Resilience.](#)

## **Community**

**The community's role is as the driver of the EVCA process.**

The EVCA should **not be a National Society or donor-driven data collection** exercise in which the **community members only play a minor** or passive role. Hence the EVCA is different to a baseline survey which aims to collect data to measure the success of a project. Instead, the **EVCA is a learning process and the first step towards encouraging risk reduction actions. The role of the community should grow throughout the EVCA process**; while its starting point will depend on the existing leadership capacities within the community, everyone in your National Society should be committed to the ultimate goal of the community making and implementing its own risk reduction plan. The community's role should be to:

- Identify and analyse their risks, with support of the National Society and other stakeholders.
- Develop a risk reduction plan based on their priorities.
- Mobilise local resources (human, material and financial) to implement their plan.
- Execute their plan (which could include demanding the services they are entitled to from the government and other relevant actors).
- Monitor and evaluate their progress towards risk reduction and generate lessons to improve future actions.



**Within the community**, it is important that leaders involve people from all social and economic groups and in particular the most vulnerable ones. If the EVCA is not inclusive, it risks reinforcing unfair power structures and deepening the vulnerability and marginalisation of some groups, such as women, older people, people living with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities and others.

## **Other stakeholders**

**The role of other stakeholders in the EVCA is as contributor and/or enabler.**

Stakeholders such as local government, relevant ministries, meteorological offices, NGOs, the private sector and academic institutions must be brought into the process from the beginning. The **role of the different stakeholders will depend on their competencies and interests** and should always put the communities' interests first.

Here are some of the roles that different stakeholders could have in the EVCA:

- **Government** (local government, municipality): provide technical support, make resources available and create an enabling environment for effective risk reduction and climate change adaptation interventions.
- **Meteorological office**: provide an overview of weather and climatic information in the past, present and future as well as scientific early warning information and relevant early action recommendations.<sup>5</sup>
- **Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)**: support the community to take forward the risk reduction plan.

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<sup>5</sup> How can climate change be considered in VCA? 2012.

- **Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs):** support the community to implement part of their action plan by providing resources and technical support, and help share experiences and lessons.
- **Academic institutions:** contribute innovative ideas and new thinking into the community and generate and share lessons. These could be used as evidence for advocating and lobbying around specific issues.
- **Research organisations:** conduct research on the effectiveness of the risk reduction and adaptation measures and generate objective evidence on the challenges and underlying causes of people's vulnerabilities.
- **Media:** awareness raising/sensitisation and broadcasting communities' challenges – give the community a voice.
- **Private sector:** local businesses or national businesses can support communities through funding, provision of inputs, technical support etc.

## **1.2. Ensure commitment by your National Society**

Over the last decade, the VCA has become quite well known in many National Societies. This does not necessarily mean that everyone in the National Society fully understands what is involved in carrying out a VCA, nor the extent of the obligations and responsibilities which will fall to branches and communities.

Doing EVCA requires a strong commitment by the National Society to support communities. Therefore, it is very important that those who are proposing the exercise ensure all relevant people within the National Society are committed to engage in and support the process - including board members, management, technical staff from different teams and volunteers.

To start the sensitisation process, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who should be sensitised?
- What do you want them to know?
- Who can help to sensitise the different groups?
- When is the best time to talk with people and/or make presentations? You may want to organise a presentation during regular activities/meetings of the board.

Keep in mind these tips:

- Sensitising the leadership of the National Society is of particular importance so that they understand the commitment that is necessary from a National Society when approaching community work. Connect the different steps of the EVCA with the Roadmap to Community Resilience and the strategic plan of the National Society whenever possible.
- **Let the EVCA sell itself.** Remember that the EVCA is a powerful process if what you aim to do is empower communities to reduce their risks and strengthen their resilience.
- **Practice** giving the sensitization presentation. Think about the questions that people might ask you and make sure you can answer them.
- Disseminate information about the EVCA directly to the branch volunteers.

- You may wish to identify people in your National Society who would be interested in the EVCA and ask them to help spread the word about the utility of the process.
- Be creative in the way you do sensitization!

Before going any further, it is important that your **National Society's senior management** is aware of the commitment it involves and approves the EVCA. This ensures political support to move ahead with the process.

### **1.3 Create the national EVCA team**

If the National Society already has a VCA team, you may need to reactivate the team and update them about the new developments within the EVCA process and Roadmap to Community Resilience.

Your EVCA team will consist originally of people from your National Society headquarters and other interested stakeholders at the national level. Once the regions and communities where the EVCA will be done are selected (see Step 2.1), the EVCA team will expand to incorporate the facilitating team at the sub-national level. The facilitating team will include staff and volunteers from the branches, community members and other interested local stakeholders.

Tips for creating the national EVCA team:

- To ensure that the EVCA process is multi-sectoral and that there is institution-wide support for the proposed actions by the communities, the national EVCA team should include a **representative from each technical department** in the National Society (such as health, DRM, livelihoods, shelter, etc.)
- There must be a **leader** or leaders in charge, who ensure that the process advances. The leader (or at least one of the leaders) should have received formal training on the EVCA methodology.
- Experience has also shown that an **EVCA mentor** (i.e. someone who has carried out several VCAs for other National Societies) is an asset within the national EVCA team, although this is not mandatory. This person can help the National Society make plans, share lessons learned, and anticipate and resolve the challenges that will arise over the course of the EVCA process.
- Gender and inclusion elements are also very important to keep in mind. There should be a good **balance of gender and diversity in the team**. It is also important that there are team members with **skills or experience in gender- and diversity-sensitive** programmes.
- It is important to **invite national-level external stakeholders and government** to be part of the national EVCA team. This will ensure better dissemination of the results, increase the chances of obtaining funding for projects and secure multi-sectoral and multi-institutional acceptance and replication of the EVCA process.



**Key message: Engaging the different stakeholders from the start is very important. The better you do this, the better the results and potential support for the risk reduction action plans will be. The more people within a National Society are involved with the EVCA process, the less chance of surprises and the better chance of success.**

Tasks for creating a national EVCA team:

- Draw up terms of reference to clarify the roles and responsibilities (division of tasks) of all those involved, including for the following roles: team leader, facilitators, note takers, logistics.
- Obtain a clear commitment from those involved; this could be done in writing if everyone agrees.
- Outline what is needed for the team to function (time, resources, communication channels, etc.).
- Identify potential problems that could occur and possible solutions to them (e.g. relations between different levels).

Once you have assembled the national EVCA team, you may need to refresh their knowledge on the EVCA, depending on the team's experience. Kindly note that a proper training is planned later in the preparation stage for the local EVCA team (Step 2.5).

Now that you have engaged and sensitised stakeholders and created a national EVCA team, it is time to define where to do the EVCA and start preparing for the assessment.