



## **Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Revised version in the framework of the DIPECHO Action Plan 2013-2014 South America

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## Index

<b>I. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. FUNCTIONAL-CONCEPTUAL APPROACH .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>III. CATEGORY TABLES, GUIDING QUESTIONS, VARIABLES AND RELEVANCE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A. Apparent and immediately recognizable signs of hazard and exposure.</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B. Drivers of risks in the country and their configuration in the territory.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>C. Current capacities for risk management .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>D. Enabling regulations.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>E. Trends and future prospects.....</b>	<b>15</b>

## I. INTRODUCTION

Established in December 1999, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), is the designated focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster risk reduction, ensuring synergies between UN disaster reduction activities and regional organizations, and socio-economic and humanitarian activities.

The disaster preparedness programme of the Department of Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), known as DIPECHO (Disaster Preparedness ECHO), seeks to limit the negative impact of disasters through prevention and strengthening the responsiveness of authorities and affected populations.

Since 1994, ECHO has allocated € 65.5 million to disaster preparedness in South America and € 112.5 million to respond to disasters and emergencies in the region. Humanitarian aid is a concrete expression of the fundamental values of the European Union: solidarity with the most vulnerable populations, respect for human dignity, equality and tolerance.

One of the main challenges that the region is facing, is the generation of advocacy processes that successfully **permeate the regional public investment policies and the decision-making processes**. For this purpose, reports, criteria and indicators have been consolidated to improve the understanding of risk and generate baselines of a more suitable scale for national and local management.

The first version of the Set of Criteria and Guidelines, developed in 2012 by the consultant team through FundaCrid and known as 'Criteria for prioritizing actions for disaster risk reduction at the national level in Latin America and the Caribbean' was prepared through the UNISDR in the framework of the DIPECHO projects for South America and the Caribbean and subject to a consultation process with the participation of DIPECHO partners and national systems in South America, Central America and the Caribbean.

The current version reflects a change of approach based on lessons learned through the development of Country Documents that is produced in the three sub-regions, and led by national risk management systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. These Country Documents are based on a Common Format and intended as guiding documents on the current situation of DRR in each country, and as a core element of sustainable development.

The improved Guidelines are directed to the technical staff and decision makers and aim to facilitate the identification of priority areas for planning DRR programme actions in

## **Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Latin America and the Caribbean, and is a tool of special interest because of the direct link with documents generated by countries in the framework of DIPECHO.

The design of these instruments is the **final output of a process of consultation and follow-up** by different stakeholders in Latin America and the Caribbean through forums, interviews and workshops that contributed to a multi-sectoral dialogue that inform and refine the content.

The current edition is the product of the joint work of the liaison officers in the DIPECHO framework and is based on the identification of lessons learned through the development of Country Documents under the leadership of national systems and with the participation of the DIPECHO partners, representatives of relevant sectors and other stakeholders based on the criteria of each country and the DIPECHO framework between 2011 and 2013.

This tool, which includes the Set of Criteria and Guidelines for Application, has been made possible through funding from the European Union's Disaster Preparedness Programme of the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (ECHO), known as DIPECHO

Please contact the UNISDR Regional Office for the Americas at [eird@eird.org](mailto:eird@eird.org) for queries and to share your experiences using the tool.

## II. FUNCTIONAL-CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

The Set or Matrix of Criteria —the implementation of which is addressed in this guide— is an instrument designed to accompany *ex-ante* analysis processes to build Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) planning profiles, based on observation and rapid analysis of relevant information available from national and international information sources. This means that it does not seek a high degree of synthesis, and is structured so that the development of an exhaustive study is not necessary. The instrument is designed for medium-term programme *ex-ante* processes and, therefore, is not suitable for project monitoring, performance measurement or *ex-post* assessments.

The criteria are structured in the form of questions about key issues, whose assessment allows for orientation on critical situations, and the state of emergency that they are currently in; highly relevant, relevant but not critical, or situations that have low priority.

Note that this ranking is not an index, and does not seek for numeric aggregation of weights and criteria's resulting from a number of indicators that is specific for each location or country. The criteria that are presented here are fundamentally based on pre-existing, easy accessible data that are internationally recognized and produce warning signs for specific situations.

The document is organized into five categories with guiding questions. The answer to these questions is assessed according to its level of relevance: in the priority level, in an intermediate level that could turn into priority level and needs to be monitored, and a situation that is not considered critical, but needs monitoring to ensure external trends do not negatively influence the situation. The categories are:

### 1. Apparent and immediately recognizable signs of hazard and exposure:

This category focuses on the obvious manifestations of disasters, without entering into a more complex risk analysis. The criterion is essential as it provides a first insight into the country situation and its sub-national and local levels. This criterion should be considered as an element of decision-making in the short term.

### 2. Drivers of risk in the country and their configuration in the territory<sup>1</sup>:

This refers to political, social and economic conditions underlying the social construction of risk. This concept stems from two central ideas: (i) the understanding of risk as a process, i.e. with a specific background and therefore not a spontaneous or casual situation, but rather a phenomenon that occurs when certain conditions of territorial sustainability are ignored in the development process; and (ii) that the processes underlying the construction of risk are

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<sup>1</sup> The term territory refers to the sub-national level which can be a district, parish, municipalities, community, etc based on the administrative division of a country.

## Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean

essentially social, despite the fact that physical phenomena associated with disasters may be natural

### 3. Current capacities for risk management:

This category is extremely important as it prioritizes observations about hazard and exposure: for example, a country with less hazard but unprepared compared with another with high risk of hazards but highly prepared. These conditions are observable through national and international reports and refer to how a country has or has not developed capacities at the national and sub-national level.

### 4. Enabling regulations:

This refers to the existence of a regulatory framework for action on imminent risk conditions that facilitates and strengthens the capacity to manage risk. These regulations must be found within the legislation on disaster risk, but above all, in sector-specific and municipal regulations, customs codes, health legislation, building regulations and others.

### 5. Trends and future prospects:

This category is designed to identify risk trends, particularly through the availability and management scenarios and forecasts on issues such as climate change. Every criterion question must be assessed and analyzed separately as each country is embedded in its history and political and legal structure, and this might be the reason to assign different levels of importance to the same situation.

Relevance	Color code
HIGHLY RELEVANT OR PRIORITY LEVEL: implies a determining state or condition for programmatic intervention for this area or criterion in the territory under review.	Red
RELEVANT / OBSERVABLE: represents a condition that must be carefully observed and compared with other inputs in order to make a final decision on whether to intervene.	Yellow
LOW RELEVANCE / NON-PRIORITY: implies an ideal or acceptable condition for the criteria evaluated in the territory, i.e. there is not a priority condition for programmatic intervention in the medium term.	Green

Under the present set of criteria of the criteria matrix, a guide of implementation is presented to support the users of the instrument, that takes into account the particularities and differences between territories and countries.

### III. CATEGORY TABLES, GUIDING QUESTIONS, VARIABLES AND RELEVANCE

<b>A. Apparent and immediately recognizable signs of hazard and exposure</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
<b>1. In the selected geographical areas, where there is a potential for destructive impact and/or a record of impacts, what are conditions that best describe the hazard and their monitoring?</b>	<i>a. Hazard/danger</i> <i>b. Record of impacts</i> <i>c. Monitoring of the hazard/danger</i>	a. There are areas with recurring events, and there are records of previous impacts that have caused damages and losses, but do not have a map of the hazard (and/or danger) or forecasts based on probabilistic criteria.	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are areas with recurring events, and there are records of previous impacts that have caused damages and losses, there is a mapping of hazards and multi-hazards (and/or danger) or forecasts based on probabilistic criteria, but this information is outdated. An expert assessment is required to determine current conditions.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. The historical and instrumental records do not show potentially destructive events, corroborated by the hazard (and/or danger) studies. There are zones with recurring events, and there are records of previous impacts that have caused damages and losses. There is a mapping of the hazard (and/or danger) or forecasts based on probabilistic criteria and with updated information.	<b>Green</b>
<b>2. In the territorial areas selected, are there geo-referenced and territorially disaggregated</b>	a. Geo-referenced records of impacts associated with seasonal events	a. There are zones without records of recurring impacts from seasonal phenomena. Recurring impacts are considered critical and high priority, although still without	<b>Red</b>

**Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

<b>A. Apparent and immediately recognizable signs of hazard and exposure</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
<b>records of frequent impacts of hazards related to seasonal events (droughts, floods or landslides)?</b>		detailed studies.	<b>Red</b>
		b. Existing information but without territorially disaggregated information on the impact of disasters. The existence of this type of information is essential to improve the quality of decision-making.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. There is territorially disaggregated data, and work is being carried out with risk management scenarios.	<b>Green</b>
<b>3. In selected territorial areas, are there studies and action plans on multi-hazard or trans-border hazard conditions, including extreme climate variability events such as the impacts of climate change?</b>	a. Exposure to trans-border hazards, multi-hazards and impacts of climate change b. Impact scenarios c. Action Plans	a. Historical information and hazard studies show the existence of multi-hazard zones or areas, but integrated scenarios and studies are not conducted for multi-hazard, trans-border hazards and/or impacts of climate change. There are no action plans.	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are clearly identified trans-border hazards (hurricanes, floods in major basins, droughts, volcanoes, and others), as well as risk scenarios and impacts of climate change, but has no actions plans that respond to the identified hazards and studies.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. The multi-hazard, trans-border hazards and impacts of climate change are well identified both at trans-boundary and national and local levels, with	<b>Green</b>



**Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

<b>A. Apparent and immediately recognizable signs of hazard and exposure</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
		corresponding scenarios and action plans.	

<b>B. Drivers of risks in the country and their configuration in the territory</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
<b>4. In the selected areas, what are the characteristics of environmental degradation in areas with historical impacts or influenced by hazards?</b>	a. Interaction of environmental degradation (*) and hazards  (*) For the purposes of these Guidelines, environmental degradation will be understood as the actions that produce impacts such as deforestation; inadequate watershed, wetland and slope management; water stress (including water for irrigation and livestock); soil erosion, poor waste and pollution management.	a. Environmental degradation (*) presents high indicators of impairment that generate severe impacts and can interact with the hazards, increasing the exposure and vulnerability of the population.	<b>Red</b>
		b. Environmental degradation (*) can be severe but management measures are applied that reduce the negative impacts and interaction with hazards (decreased exposure and vulnerability), or environmental degradation is not severe and its interaction does not generate increased exposure and vulnerability.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. Environmental degradation (*) produces low impacts, indicators are below national/regional averages. There is no interaction between the impacts of environmental degradation and the hazards. There is a significant investment to improve environmental conditions, producing a decrease in exposure and vulnerability.	<b>Green</b>

**Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

<b>B. Drivers of risks in the country and their configuration in the territory</b>			
<p><b>5. What is the composition of the population in terms of their socio-economic conditions and their exposure to hazards in the selected area?</b></p>	<p>a. Socio-economic situation of the exposed population</p>	<p>a. Socio-economic indicators (**) are predominantly low in exposed populations (over 50 % of the population in the selected area).</p> <p>(**) Indicators will be selected based on those identified in the Development Plan in force in each country, considering at least some indicators of poverty, health and education.</p>	<b>Red</b>
		<p>b. The socio economic indicators selected (**) are low for 20 % to 50 % of exposed populations.</p>	<b>Yellow</b>
		<p>c. The socio-economic indicators (**) are low for less than 20 % of the exposed population.</p>	<b>Green</b>
<p><b>6. In the selected territorial area, what are the essential conditions and access to services, and which are exposed to hazards?</b></p>	<p>a. Access to basic services (***) b. Exposure of essential services (***)</p> <p>(***)For the methodological purposes of these Guidelines, the essential services will be defined by consensus of the participants in the evaluation, however the following should be considered: water, health, sanitation, communication</p>	<p>a. The population without access to essential services (***) exceeds 50 % in areas exposed to hazards from the selected areas. Essential services are highly vulnerable and have high exposure to identified hazards.</p>	<b>Red</b>
		<p>b. The population without access to essential services (***) is between 20% and 50% of the population in areas exposed to hazards from the selected areas. Essential services are vulnerable and exposed to the identified hazards, but actions are being developed for their management. The percentage of the population without access to improved sanitation infrastructure, to improved water sources and communication channels is equal to or less than the</p>	<b>Yellow</b>

Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean

<b>B. Drivers of risks in the country and their configuration in the territory</b>			
	and road network)	national/regional average.	
		c. The population without access to essential services (***) is less than 20% of the population in areas exposed to hazards from the selected areas. Essential services are less vulnerable and exposure to the identified hazards is less.	<b>Green</b>
<b>7. In the selected territorial area, what are the conditions and the implementation of the regulatory framework related to the Risk Management and Environmental Management, especially in those areas exposed to hazards?</b>	a. Implementation of the Regulatory Framework b. Accountability mechanisms for DRM and Environmental Management	<p>a. There is no enabling regulatory framework for DRM or for Environmental Management in the selected territorial area (or national, regional or local regulatory framework), especially when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) there is no legislation governing the use and safe and orderly occupation of the urban and rural territory,</li> <li>(ii) not regulated protection and watershed management, ecosystems, slopes and overall atmosphere,</li> <li>(iii) the building and planning codes for reducing risks are not applied</li> </ul> <p>There are no formal accountability mechanisms by State agencies for Risk Management and Environmental Management.</p>	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are enabling regulations for Risk Management (safe and orderly use and occupancy of urban and rural territory, protection and management of watersheds, slopes, ecosystems and environment, building and planning codes to reduce risks), but low or emerging implementation. Formal accountability mechanisms by State agencies are not implemented for Risk Management and Environmental Management.	<b>Yellow</b>

**Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

<b>B. Drivers of risks in the country and their configuration in the territory</b>			
		<p>c. There are enabling regulations for Risk Management (safe and orderly use and occupancy of urban and rural territory, protection and management of watersheds, slopes, ecosystems and environment, urban planning and building codes to reduce risks) and for environmental management implementation is effective in the selected territorial area. Formal accountability mechanisms by State agencies are implemented for Risk Management and Environmental Management.</p>	<b>Green</b>
<b>8. How are the processes of use, occupation and transformation of land in urban areas exposed to hazards in the selected territorial areas?</b>	<p>a. Use, occupation and transformation of territory at the urban level in areas exposed to hazards</p> <p>b. Control mechanisms for the occupation, use and</p>	<p>a. There is a high and increasing occupation of urban areas at risk (over 30% of the population of the analysis area) without planning processes or control over the implementation of the urban and rural land use planning regulations. Lack of physical control mechanisms for the occupation, use and transformation of urban landscape.</p>	<b>Red</b>
		<p>b. Moderate occupation of at-risk urban areas (between 5 % and 30 % of the population in the selected area) without planning processes or control with an increasing trend towards (unsafe) squatting in hazard-prone urban and suburban areas subject. Regulations and monitoring mechanisms are only partially implemented.</p>	<b>Yellow</b>
		<p>c. Little occupation of at-risk urban areas (less than 5 % of the population in the selected area) and with effective control processes and mechanisms for urbanization and future population settlement.</p>	<b>Green</b>

**Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

<b>C. Current capacities for risk management</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
<b>9. Are there capacities and decentralized structures for emergency and disaster response appropriate for existing hazards in the selected area?</b>	a. Emergency and disaster response capacities	a. Areas with recurrent events and/or at high risk of disaster lack structures for preparedness and response, or these are emerging and have limited capacities (there are no integrated response plans or institutional and community-based preparedness plans).	<b>Red</b>
		b. Institutional response structures are present but lack plans, their capacity is limited to certain institutions but not integrated into the system. Community and institutional preparedness for emergencies and/or disasters exist in some institutions and communities.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. A coordinated and participatory structure operates as part of the national system with deconcentrated and decentralized structures, community and institutional preparedness for emergencies and/or disasters is part of the system.	<b>Green</b>
<b>10. Mechanisms for coordination of local governments (consortia, associations and commonwealths) based on basins, ecosystems productivity, etc. are in place in the selected area?</b>	a. Coordination Mechanisms of local governments for DRM and Environmental Management	a. There are no coordination mechanisms of local governments in place for DRM and Environmental Management.	<b>Red</b>
		b. Coordination mechanisms of local governments are in place but not include DRM and Environmental Management among their priorities.	<b>Yellow</b>
		a. There are municipal associations or commonwealths in place that have coordination mechanisms for DRM and Environmental Management.	<b>Green</b>

**Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

<b>C. Current capacities for risk management</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
<b>11. What are the conditions of the resources for preparedness and emergency or disaster response/ management of relevant governments in the selected territorial areas? (Processes may be implemented by the central government)</b>	a. Resources for response b. Structured processes for response	a. Governments do not have the funds, resources and/or streamlined and timely administrative processes for the preparedness and management of/response to disasters or emergencies.	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are legal frameworks in place that enable the allocation or reallocation of resources once a disaster or emergency has occurred; access to resources is not streamlined or administrative processes are ineffective.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. Governments have funds and streamlined and timely administrative processes for preparedness and management/response to disasters or emergencies.	<b>Green</b>
<b>12. What is the status of early warning and monitoring systems that enable the analysis, monitoring and generation of timely information for decision-making and notifying communities about hazard conditions in the selected area?</b>	a. Status of early warning and monitoring systems (EWSs)	a. Areas of recurring impact or high exposure do not have early warning and monitoring systems in place; gaps in coverage and information delivery delays.	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are early warning and hazard monitoring system(s) in place, but they lack a multi-hazard approach and/or they are not linked to the National Early Warning System, if any; no clear criteria for management and territorial prioritization for proper and timely dissemination of warning or appropriate and timely information.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. There are multiple coordinated warning and monitoring systems and/or a consistent and proper warning system, providing full coverage in the selected area that	<b>Green</b>

**Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

<b>C. Current capacities for risk management</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
		includes multi-hazard criteria and is integrated to the National Early Warning System with effective mechanisms for disseminating appropriate and timely warnings and information.	

<b>D. Enabling regulations</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
<b>13. Are there appropriate legal frameworks for DRM? What is the state of implementation of these national, sub-national or local instruments (laws, regulations, decrees, etc.)?</b>	a. Validity of the legal frameworks b. Implementation of legal instruments for DRM	a. Non-existent regulations and legal instruments for DRM or their validity is not consistent with national and international legal frameworks. Legal frameworks may exist in the said conditions, but they are not implemented.	<b>Red</b>
		b. Regulations and legal instruments exist for DRM, consistent with national and international legal frameworks, but they are not implemented.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. Regulations and legal instruments exist for DRM, consistent with national and international legal frameworks and are duly implemented.	<b>Green</b>
<b>14. What are the characteristics and conditions of inter-agency structures (platforms, management committees, coordination meetings, etc.) for coordination and decision-making in the selected area?</b>	a. Characteristics of the coordination structures for DRM	a. There are no inter-agency structures linked to form a coordination and participation system, platform or body.	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are inter-agency structures linked to form a coordination and participation system, platform or entities, but its activation, capacity and work are limited and temporary (often activated only in case of	<b>Yellow</b>

**Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

<b>D. Enabling regulations</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
		emergency)	
		c. There are inter-agency structures linked to form a coordination and participation system, platform or entities with sound institutional capacities and ongoing operations.	<b>Green</b>
<b>15. What are the characteristics of the sectoral capacity (regulation, technical and resources) in the selected area?</b>  (Sectoral is understood as the ministries, public companies, institutions, etc.)	a. Sectoral capacity for DRM	a. Critical sectors have not assumed roles and responsibilities for DRM.	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are some sectoral institutions with internally assigned Risk Management responsibilities and specific planning but limited in terms of DRM as an comprehensive process of territorial development or focused primarily on the to disasters or emergencies.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. Sectoral bodies have assumed their roles and responsibilities with a vision of DRM as a key and integrated component and have the structure, experience and good practices for Disaster Risk Management.	<b>Green</b>
<b>16. What are the characteristics of the legal bodies for the decentralization of DRM towards territorial governments?</b>	a. Legal decentralization of responsibility towards local governments	a. There is no legal framework for DRM, or policy instruments that allocate responsibilities and resources to territories or local governments.	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are legal bodies that clearly define the responsibilities and powers of territorial authorities, however, they are unknown to the authorities, are not implemented and/or resources are not allocated.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. Advanced level of decentralization including the responsibilities of sub-national governments in risk management and the allocation of resources.	<b>Green</b>



**Criteria Identifying Key Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean**

<b>E. Trends and future prospects</b>			
<b>Guiding question</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Criteria to be considered for decision making</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
<b>17. What is the degree of integration of scenarios about the impacts of climate change in the Risk Management Strategies of the selected area?</b>	a. Integration of climate change scenarios in DRM strategies	a. There are no scenarios for the impacts of climate change.	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are scenarios about the impacts of climate change, but they are not coordinated or integrated into the risk management strategies.	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. There are scenarios about the impacts of climate change in Risk Management strategies.	<b>Green</b>
<b>18. What is the status of mechanisms for risk trend analysis, and its relation to similar observatories or similar mechanisms for the analysis of development trends in the selected area?</b>	b. Status of the risk analysis mechanisms and relationship with the analysis of development trends	a. There are no such mechanisms. There are no trend analysis, forecasts or risk scenarios.	<b>Red</b>
		b. There are mechanisms for risk trend analysis, but they are not linked to the development analysis and observatories	<b>Yellow</b>
		c. There are mechanisms for the analysis of development, the environment and risk and integrated scenarios of development trends are being developed.	<b>Green</b>