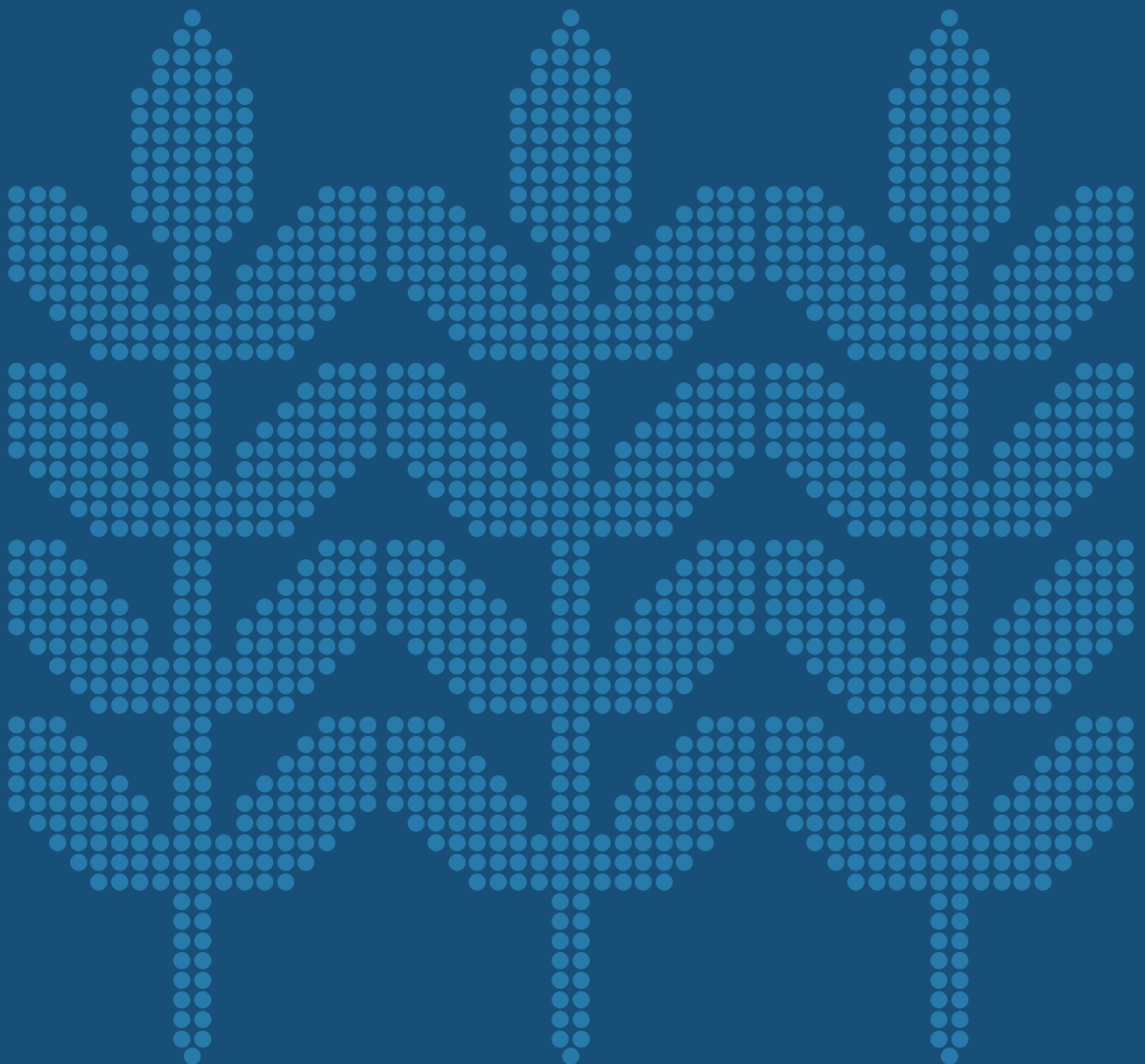


# Making Business Continuity Planning Easy & Accessible

A Practical Guide for African Suppliers  
in the Agri-Food Sector





## Description of the project

This guide has been developed by Partner Africa and Sentinel Africa as part of the 'Securing workers' rights in a COVID-19 context in East African agriculture supply chains' project. The project is managed by the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and is part of the Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility (VSCF).

The Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility (VSCF) is a rapid COVID-19 response facility set up by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and managed by Mott MacDonald Ltd. The Facility partners with 20 UK and international retailers and brands, and 9 not-for-profit organisations, supporting over 100 suppliers across Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Myanmar, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. It will provide economic, social, and health benefits to around 1 million women and men directly and indirectly.



## About Partner Africa

Partner Africa, a UK-registered NGO, is a pioneer in the field of ethical, responsible business solutions. We work across 50 countries in Africa and the Near East to safeguard workers' rights and improve working conditions in global supply chains, while facilitating access to markets.

Through our Auditing and Advisory service lines, we deliver innovative and impactful social compliance and sustainability solutions to a range of sectors across the continent of Africa, helping clients understand and manage complex supply chains and navigate global trade responsibly. Through our project delivery service lines, we implement donor-funded projects and deliver technical assistance aimed at promoting decent work and improving labour standards.



## About Sentinel Africa

Sentinel Africa Consulting Limited is a Risk Management Consultancy headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. Our vision is to be the advisor of choice and we aim to achieve this by obsessively going about making our clients and partners win.

Our view on risk management is two-fold;

- The protection of value
- The growth of value

And as such we have defined a modus operandi for carrying out our activities;

Understand. Tailor. Embed.

# Welcome to this guide

African agri-food suppliers operating in global supply chains need to be resilient to internal and external shocks and stresses which can disrupt the functioning of value chains. For example, a shortage of raw materials, shipment and export challenges or adverse weather conditions can impact the business operations of suppliers and limit their ability to maintain the supply of produce to customers. The need for supplier resilience has been especially highlighted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has had an unprecedented impact on global supply chains.

Effective Business Continuity Planning (BCP) can enable suppliers to navigate these external shocks and help them adapt to the changing environment while remaining a strong and productive business in times of crisis. The ability for a supplier to continue its business operations not only benefits its buyers and customers, but also secures the jobs and livelihoods of their workers.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

ACCESSIBLE GUIDANCE



3 TEMPLATES + 1 TOOL



HOW TO IMPLEMENT BC PLANNING

## Who is this guide for?

Understanding that access to effective Business Continuity Planning training, mentorship and support is unaffordable for many African suppliers, Partner Africa and Sentinel Africa have developed this guide and toolkit to make Business Continuity Planning easy and accessible for African based suppliers in the agri-food sector.

This guide outlines how suppliers can implement Business Continuity Planning into their business operations and supports suppliers to:

- ✦ Understand the concept of Business Continuity
- ✦ Understand why Business Continuity Planning is important for businesses
- ✦ Identify the potential impacts of a disruption to business operations, activities and products
- ✦ Identify, analyse and respond to internal and external risks to prioritised business operations, activities and products
- ✦ Determine and select strategies to implement before, during and after a disruption
- ✦ Develop a Business Continuity Plan to increase resilience against future shocks and disruptions

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# What is Business Continuity?



**The capability of an organisation to continue the delivery of products and services within acceptable time frames at predefined capacity during a disruption.”**

ISO 22301, THE MANAGEMENT STANDARD THAT SPECIFIES BUSINESS CONTINUITY REQUIREMENTS

A disruption to your business can happen at any moment. A flood, a pandemic, too little rainfall, violent uprisings, losing a key employee, sickness among your workers, lack of quality produce; it can all have an impact on your produce and operations. Business Continuity is about having a pre-drafted plan in place to deal with these disruptions and building resilience against them. It entails the capability of your business to manage these disruptive incidents and to continue delivering your products (from beans to flowers) and services (such as selling these products to your buyers) within acceptable timeframes and to the same capacity as before that particular disruption.

## Why is Business Continuity Planning important for your business?

**“A Business Continuity Plan is documented information that guides an organisation to respond to a disruption and resume, recover and restore the delivery of products and services consistent with its Business Continuity objectives”**

ISO 22301, THE MANAGEMENT STANDARD THAT SPECIFIES BUSINESS CONTINUITY REQUIREMENTS

The needs and expectations of internal and external stakeholders and customers (such as your suppliers, buyers, wholesalers or retailers) often remain unchanged - even during disruptions (as you might have noticed during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic). In times of a disruption, it is therefore important to have a plan ready that will help you mitigate the most severe risks that this disruption is posing to your products, activities and operations to survive the shocks. Business Continuity Planning builds resilience in key pillars of your business and will allow you to thrive and withstand threats and disruptions. Whether you are a large business, a small supplier or a smallholder farmer, a Business Continuity Plan will help you manage any disruptive incidents to your business.

### BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING:

- ✦ Better and holistic understanding of your business
- ✦ Maintenance of your critical activities
- ✦ Protection of your employees and workers
- ✦ Contributing to social sustainability in your business
- ✦ Predictable and effective response to crises
- ✦ Protection of your reputation and brand
- ✦ Respect of interested parties and stakeholders
- ✦ Confidence of clients, customers and buyers
- ✦ Cost reduction
- ✦ Competitive advantage
- ✦ Legal/regulatory compliance
- ✦ Contract compliance

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# CASE STUDIES

Two African based suppliers in the agri-food sector share their stories below on why Business Continuity Planning is important for their business. Both of them have received training and support with Business Continuity Planning.

The tools and templates referred to in the stories below are all incorporated in this handbook, together with instructions on how to use them, to make them accessible for everyone.

## **“I now understand the importance of having a Business Continuity Plan much better.”**

“Before I attended the training, AAA Growers Limited had not documented a Business Continuity Plan. I had thought about it, but I did not have the exposure and knowledge on how to document one. The training was very valuable to us. It was an eye opener, giving me new insights, information, tools and templates on how to develop a Business Continuity Plan. I could not have drafted my Business Continuity Plan without the training and those tools.

I now understand the importance of having a Business Continuity Plan much better. As an organisation, we need to focus on the future, and we need to forecast. If we don't have a plan in place and we face a disruption, we might not survive. With Business Continuity arrangements and planning ahead of time, we can still manage our operations and still do business in the event of a disruption. My key take away is the importance of being prepared for times of trouble and coming up with alternative ways of handling that problem and having options on what to do next, to stay afloat and to continue running your organisation. The plan will absolutely make us better resilient against Covid-19 and any other disruptions.

My main advice to other suppliers would therefore be to come up with a Business Continuity Plan if you do not already have one. If you are not prepared for a disruption, you are bound to go under and collapse. If you are well prepared ahead of time, and something happens, you can continue your operations.”



**Geoffrey Gomisie Amulavu,**  
Group Compliance Manager,  
AAA Growers Limited


“To comply with several industry benchmark standards (such as BCR), it is a requirement to have some kind of contingency plan in place outlining measures to take in case of a fire or a power outage. However, the Business Continuity Planning training and the tools that were provided enabled us to go beyond a contingency plan and to start drafting a Business Continuity Plan. This is very important for us because disruptions are bound to happen, and we need to make sure that we don't stop producing when they do.

A Business Continuity Plan makes us resilient to a disaster in a holistic way. It makes us look at reputational, organisational and company impacts, plans for alternative options to keep delivering our products and determines who handles what and who talks to the media for example. It will truly benefit our workers too for it will make them aware of the alternative methods put in place and how to adapt to a disruption. It is holistic also in the sense that we are not only looking at impacts to one particular packing hall or pack house, but all the way to our suppliers for raw materials (without raw materials there is no processing) and other critical processes and equipment (such as critical machines necessary for processing).

A Business Continuity Plan will also help strengthen resilience against COVID-19. Some issues we have faced during the outbreak of COVID-19 are for example restrictions of movement, rerouting and rescheduling of flights because of airport delays and spoiled produce. A Business Continuity Plan can help with these disruptions, because you will already know in such a situation where to go and what other options you have to bring you back to normal. For example, it can outline other airport or logistic methods available to you or list alternative homes to your product to see if you can sell it to someone else, locally perhaps.”



**Kelly Sidani,** Technical  
Manager, East African  
Growers



**“Recent events have highlighted the fragility of global supply chains, and we would therefore encourage all suppliers to consider undertaking Business Continuity Planning. Understanding and preparing for potential issues reduces the impact of interruptions in your supply, which benefits you and your customers whilst also providing additional security for workers.”**

# How to implement Business Continuity Planning?

Implementing Business Continuity is simpler than you might think.

You will need to outline:



YOUR KEY PRODUCTS  
AND SUPPLIES



YOUR KEY ACTIVITIES  
(SUCH AS HARVESTING,  
GRADING OR PACKING)



YOUR RESOURCES TO  
DELIVER THEM (SUCH  
AS YOUR INPUTS)

You will then need to:



CONSIDER THE RISKS TO THESE KEY  
PRODUCTS & ACTIVITIES AND HOW  
YOU WILL RESPOND TO THEM

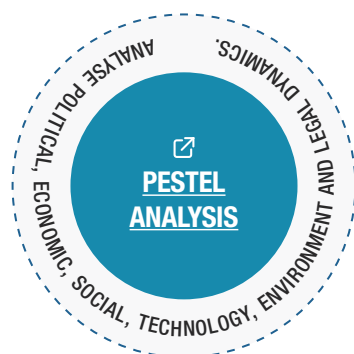
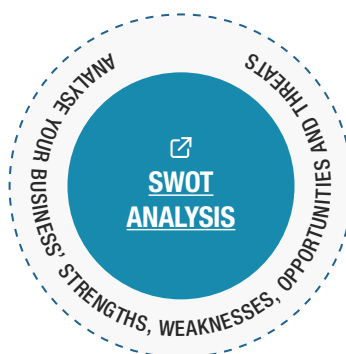


TO MAINTAIN DELIVERING YOUR  
PRODUCTS IN THE EVENT OF A  
DISRUPTIVE INCIDENT

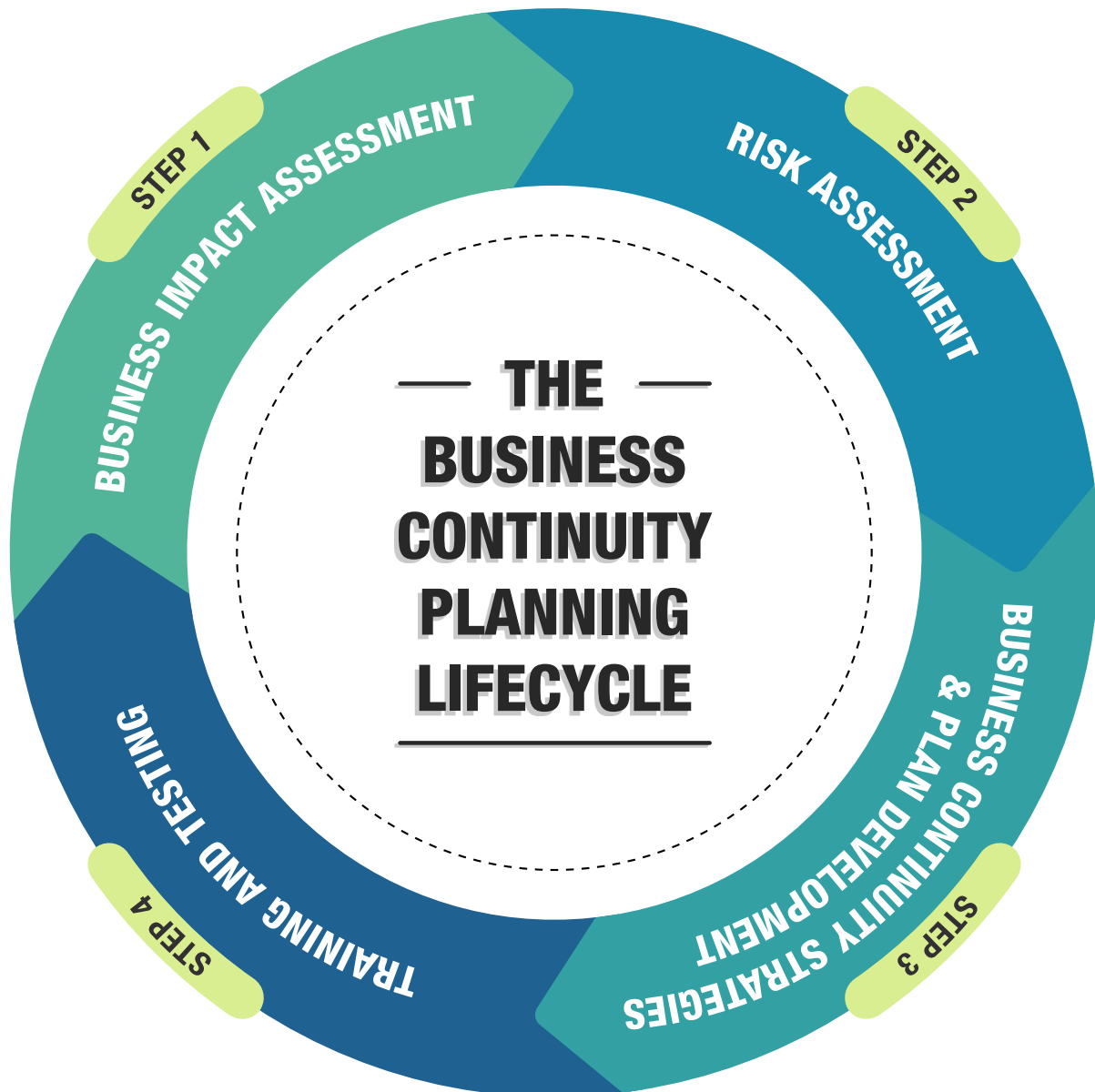
This handbook identifies four steps of the **BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING LIFECYCLE** and provides you with accessible guidance and templates on how undertake each step.

Before heading to the different steps of the Lifecycle, it is important that you fully understand your business and operating context. Your mission, vision, purpose and values need to be aligned with your Business Continuity objectives. Internal and external issues may also have an impact on the type of plan and strategies that you will adopt that would best suit your business.

YOU COULD USE THE FOLLOWING APPROACHES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS AND THE CONTEXT:



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**STEP 1 BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSIS (BIA)**

Identify the potential impacts of a disruption to your business operations, activities and products.

**STEP 2 RISK ASSESSMENT**

Identify, analyse and respond to internal and external risks to your prioritised business operations, activities and products.

**STEP 3 BUSINESS CONTINUITY STRATEGIES AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

Determine and select strategies you will implement before, during and after a disruption, and document them in your Business Continuity Plan.

**STEP 4 TRAINING AND TESTING**

Test, train, maintain and continuously improve your Business Continuity Plan.

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## STEP 1

# Business Impact Analysis (BIA)

**A Business Impact Analysis is the process of analysing the impact over time of a disruption on the organisation”** | ISO 22301, THE MANAGEMENT STANDARD THAT SPECIFIES BUSINESS CONTINUITY REQUIREMENTS



**TOOLBOX**

**TEMPLATE 1: BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSIS**

**TOOL 1: IMPACT TABLE**

A Business Impact Analysis (BIA) will help you identify the impact of a disruptive incident on your business over a certain time period and determine prioritised and critical activities. It helps to collect information required for developing recovery strategies.

To go through the BIA process, follow the below guidance and questions to fill in the specially designed **BIA template listed in the toolbox**:

**1**

### BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

**What are your key business activities (such as planting, growing, harvesting, grading, packing and dispatching)?** Please list them under ‘**1 Business Activities**’ and give a short description of each activity. The activities that you list in the table will automatically reappear in the subsequent tables under 2.1-2.5 and 3.1-3.2.

For the benefit of this exercise, a business activity is a definable group of processes carried out by a whole number of people and that, when executed, lead to the timely delivery of your products.

**2**

### IMPACT

**What would be the impact on the organisation if each activity cannot be carried out over time?** List the financial, operational, reputational, legal/regulatory and health and safety impacts under ‘**2 Impacts**’. The impact can be indicated on a scale of 1-5 (from minor to intolerable), using the **Impact Table Tool listed in the Toolbox**.

List also the immediate (0-1 hour), short-term, medium-term and long-term impacts (rows H-R), as the impacts can increase over time.

**NEXT UP IS NUMBER 3 →**

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## STEP 1 CONTINUED

3

### RECOVERY REQUIREMENTS

How many staff carry out these activities daily during business as usual? What is the smallest number of staff required to undertake each activity, without accruing penalties or threatening revenue or the organisation's reputation? Write this down under '[3.1 Staffing Requirements](#)'.

What is the target time to recover each activity (also referred to as Recovery Time Objective (RTO))? And what is the maximum time that your organisation can be without each activity before it threatening your organisation's viability (also referred to as Maximum Tolerable Outage)? Use the multiple-choice drop-down menu to make a choice varying between less than 1 hour, within 1 week or up to above 5 weeks under '[3.2 RTO and Maximum Tolerable Outage](#)'.

What are your frequently used applications or systems (such as payroll software)? What is the maximum amount of data that you can afford to lose of each of these applications? And what is the impact on working of the loss of access to an application over time? Use the multiple-choice drop-down menu to document it under '[3.3 Systems & Applications](#)'. The table below explains the options provided in the drop-down menu:

ACCEPTABLE DATA LOSS	IMPACT ON WORKING
NU - NOT USED	4 = Manageable without service
N/A - DATA NOT HELD ON SYSTEM	3 = Disruptive without service   Work prioritised, backlog building
5 - UP TO 1 MONTH OF DATA LOSS	
4 - UP TO 1 WEEK OF DATA LOSS	2 = Critical without service   Extra staff required, stop some services
3 - UP TO 1 DAY OF DATA LOSS	
2 - UP TO HALF A DAY OF DATA LOSS	1 = Disastrous without service   Impact may not be recoverable
1 - NO DATA LOSS ACCEPTED	

What equipment is required to carry out your activities? Under '[3.4 Equipment Requirements](#)', indicate your current equipment requirements, then assume that your current equipment is unavailable and indicate the quantities you would need to support your key activities, over time.

4

### DEPENDENCIES

Which internal divisions/department/teams do you depend on to carry out your activities? Is this dependency critical, important, significant or insignificant? What do they supply? And who depends on the outcome of your activities? List them under '[4.1 Internal Dependencies](#)'.

What external supplier or service providers do you depend on to carry out your activities (e.g. equipment providers, raw material suppliers)? Is this dependency critical, important, significant or insignificant? What do they supply? And what external customers depend on the outcome of your activities (such as your buyers)? List them under '[4.2 External Dependencies](#)'.

## STEP 2

# Risk assessment

**Risk Management is the process of identifying, analysing and evaluating the risks of prioritised activities being disrupted, so that you can take appropriate action to address the risks.”** ISO 31000, FOR RISK MANAGEMENT



TOOLBOX

TEMPLATE 2: RISK ASSESSMENT

TOOL 1: IMPACT TABLE

As an African based supplier in the agri-food sector, you could for example face some of these risks listed below:

### INTERNAL RISKS



STAFF  
UNREST



SYSTEMS  
FAILURE



EQUIPMENT  
FAILURE



BUILDING  
STRUCTURAL FAILURE



STAFF  
SICKNESS



FIRE

### EXTERNAL RISKS



REGULATORY  
CHANGES



CLOSURE OF THE  
AIRPORT/ AIRSPACE



TRANSPORT  
DISRUPTION



TERRORISM



FOREX RATE  
FLUCTUATIONS



FLOODING



PANDEMIC



ADVERSE WEATHER  
(E.G. EXTREME DROUGHT)



SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTION  
(DISRUPTING SUPPLY OF RAW MATERIALS  
OR CREATING PRODUCE SPOILAGE)



PESTS & DISEASES  
(E.G. LOCUST)



POLITICAL  
UNREST

It is important to conduct a risk assessment, because it will not only help you to identify those risks, but also to respond to those risks to reduce and mitigate them by listing risk control measures. To undertake a risk assessment, use the [Risk Assessment template in the toolbox](#). Two risk scenario examples have already been outlined in the template (when there is a risk of a fire destroying company property or a risk of a supplier failing to deliver a product as agreed).

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## STEP 2 CONTINUED

You should follow the following steps to adequately fill in the **risk register (sheet 3 of Template 2: Risk assessment)**:

**1** Identify the risk in column A. What could go wrong in the future or what has been going wrong in the past that could reoccur?

**2** Identify the vulnerabilities or weaknesses that would give rise to the risk in column B. What weaknesses or vulnerabilities within the internal and external environment would expose the organisation to the risk?

**3** List already existing controls that you have in place to manage the risk in column C.

**4** What is the probability of the risk to occur and what would be the impact? Select a number from 1-5 using the Probability-Impact Matrix on sheet 2 and the **Impact Table in the toolbox**. Fill in columns D and E and it will automatically calculate for you the criticality of the risk in columns F and G.

**5** Determine the acceptance of the risk or the treatment that the risks require in column H using the drop-down menu. Will you treat, tolerate, transfer or terminate the risk? The below table gives a description of those decisions.

RISK DECISION	DESCRIPTION
<b>TREAT</b>	Decision to introduce or alter controls so it will reduce the risk level to acceptable limits
<b>TOLERATE</b>	Decision to accept the risk at its current level
<b>TRANSFER</b>	Decision to share the risk with external parties through insurance or outsourcing
<b>TERMINATE</b>	Decision to cancel the activities that give rise to the risk

**6** Who is ultimately accountable for ensuring the risk is managed appropriately? List the risk owner in column I.

**7** What additional controls can you implement to further reduce the risk level? List them in column J.

**8** Who will be responsible for the implementation of the agreed action plan? List that person in column K.

**9** List the date when you want the action plan to be fully implemented in column L.

**10** List the costs of implementing the additional controls, if there are any, in column M.

**11** Estimate the level of the risk after implementing the additional controls in column N.

**12** Track the status of implementing the additional control measures, in column O. This is part of risk monitoring.

## STEP 3

# Business Continuity Strategies and Plan Development



### TEMPLATE 3: BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Based on the output of the BIA and Risk Assessment, you will need to determine actions that are needed to protect your prioritised and critical activities by selecting the most appropriate recovery solutions. The strategies need to ensure resilience in key pillars of your business to enable

the timely delivery of your products and services.

The implementation of these strategies is what will be documented in organisation's Business Continuity Plans. Use the [template in the toolbox](#) and adapt it to your context.

#### A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN IS USUALLY A DOCUMENT OF MULTIPLE PAGES, CONTAINING AT LEAST:

- ✦ Purpose and scope
- ✦ Document owner and maintainer
- ✦ Roles and responsibilities of all individuals with a role in its implementation
- ✦ Recovery strategies and tactics

Find below some examples of strategies and tactics that you, as an African based supplier in the agri-food sector, could use and could document in your Business Continuity Plans.

#### STAKEHOLDERS

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
DIVERSIFICATION	Providing produce and services to multiple buyers
POST-INCIDENT ACQUISITION	Providing produce and services to new buyers

#### BUILDINGS AND FARM SITES

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
MULTI-SITE OPERATIONS	Multiple farms where same crop grows in parallel or diversification of crops on multiple farm sites
POST-INCIDENT ACQUISITION	Premises acquired which may or may not already have facilities required to undertake activities
RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT	Arrangements and agreements with another farm that has similar processing facilities
REMOTE WORKING	Where applicable operations continue remotely

#### (SAFETY) EQUIPMENT & FARM MACHINERY

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
DUPLICATION	Multiple operational equipment available at the same time
POST-INCIDENT ACQUISITION	Equipment acquired/ leased from suppliers

#### PEOPLE

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
SUCCESSION PLANNING	Identifying high-potential employees, evaluating and developing their skills, and preparing them for advancement
CAPACITY BUILDING	Multi-skill training of each individual worker
POST-INCIDENT ACQUISITION	External people skilled in undertaking activities can be hired
JOB ROTATION	Employees are shifted between two or more assignments (e.g. spraying, grading, packing, harvesting) at regular intervals of time in order to expose them to all aspects of the business
OUTSOURCING	Engaging a third-party individual or organisation outside of your business, to handle staffing requirements

## STEP 4

# Training and Testing

Training and testing are the final important step of the Business Continuity Planning Lifecycle. Firstly, it is important to create awareness of your Business Continuity Plan throughout your business, to gain buy-in from management, different departments as well as your staff. They should all be trained on the purpose of the Business Continuity Plan, so everyone is aware of the importance of having

such as plan in place and is able to provide input to identify improvement opportunities of the plan. Secondly, your plan cannot be considered reliable or effective until you have tested and exercised it. Testing and exercising shall enable you to validate your plan. Below are some of the types of Business Continuity exercises you could carry out, depending on your business' maturity.

### TYPES OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN EXERCISES

EXERCISE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGE	DISADVANTAGE
<b>ORIENTATION</b>	Distribute plan for review	Ensures plan addresses activities	Does not address effectiveness
<b>DISCUSSION-BASED</b>	Bring staff together to inform them of the plan and their individual responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Useful for training purposes</li> <li>✦ Embedding BCM in your organisation's culture</li> <li>✦ Cheap and easy to prepare</li> </ul>	Does not address effectiveness
<b>TABLE-TOP EXERCISE</b>	Scenario based and brings staff together (in a roundtable for couple of hours) to take decisions as a scenario unfolds (realistic to that of a real incident)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Efficient in rehearsing key staff</li> <li>✦ Efficient to validate plan</li> </ul>	Difficult to develop a realistic scenario
<b>DESKTOP</b>	Thorough look at each step of the Plan	Ensures planned activities are accurately described in the Plan	Does not address practical effectiveness
<b>FUNCTIONAL EXERCISE</b>	Full test, but primary processing does not stop	Ensure high level of reliability without interrupting normal operation	Expensive since all personnel are involved
<b>FULL-SCALE EXERCISE</b>	Disaster is replicated to the point of ceasing normal operations	Most reliable test of the Plan. Some components, such as evacuation, can only be tested in such a way	Need to make sure that your business has necessary capacity to run the exercise without disrupting your ability to deliver key products




Changes in the internal and external environment will require reassessments. For example, if you decide to grow different crops or sell to different buyers in the future, any disruptions to those crops should be incorporated into the

Business Impact Assessment and Risk Assessment. Your Business Continuity Plan should therefore continuously be reviewed and be kept up to date. It is therefore that we refer to a Business Continuity Planning Lifecycle.

**“The COVID-19 pandemic is having an unprecedented impact on businesses worldwide and the fresh produce industry is no exception. Businesses are having to adapt rapidly to new ways of operating whilst maintaining continuity of supply. Given the justifiable concern around COVID-19 all businesses need to review their continuity plans urgently to ensure they reflect the most up to date information. A carefully thought-out Business Continuity Plan will make coping in a crisis easier, it will also enable you to minimise disruption to your business and provide confidence amongst your customers and employees.”**

# Additional Information

## References

- ✦ [ISO Guidelines on Business Continuity Management Systems](#) 
- ✦ [ISO Guidelines on Risk Management](#) 
- ✦ [FAO - Agriculture and Food Insecurity Risk Management in Africa](#) 

### Want to know more?

Do you want to know more about Business Continuity and how to implement it in your business?



Please contact Sentinel Africa via [their website](#) 

Do you want to know more about social sustainability within supply chains and how to protect and secure the jobs and livelihoods of workers?



Please contact Partner Africa via [advisory@partnerafrica.org](mailto:advisory@partnerafrica.org) 