

# Humanitarian Needs Assessment & Information Management

*UMass Amherst – March 2, 2021*

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General Secretariat for Civil Protection, Greece

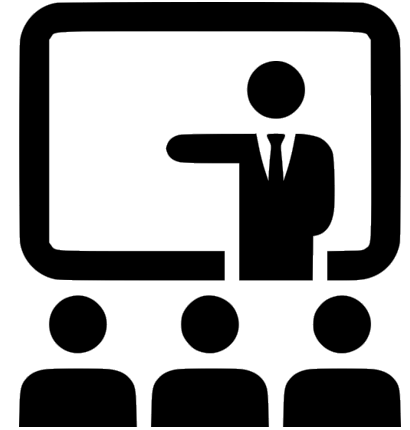
Deputy Secretary General for Civil Protection



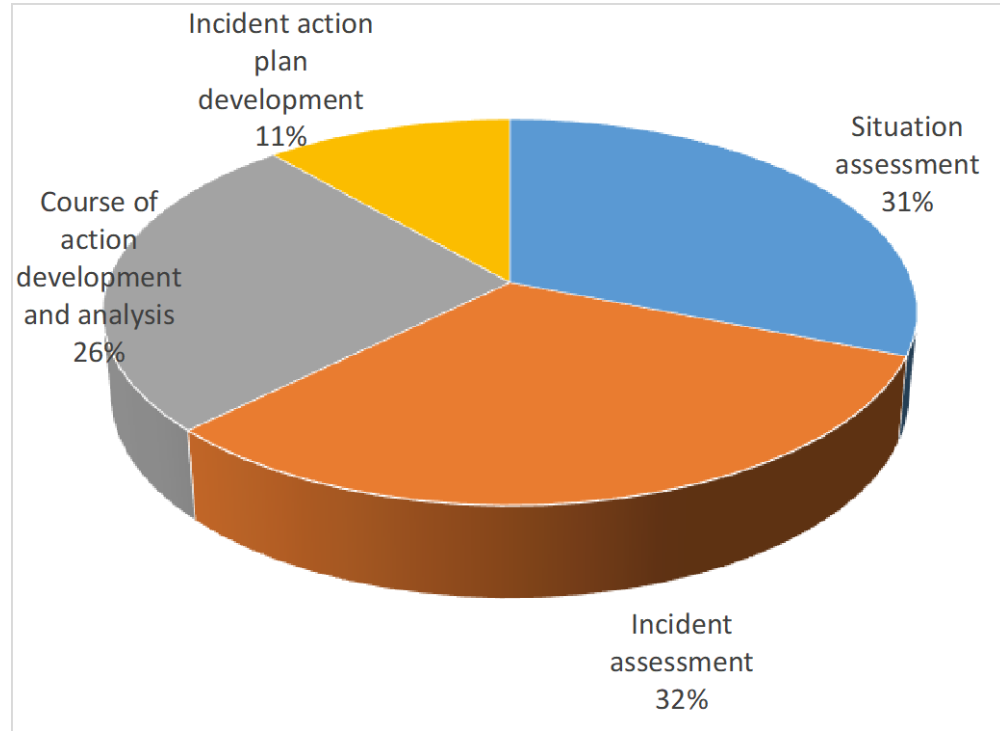
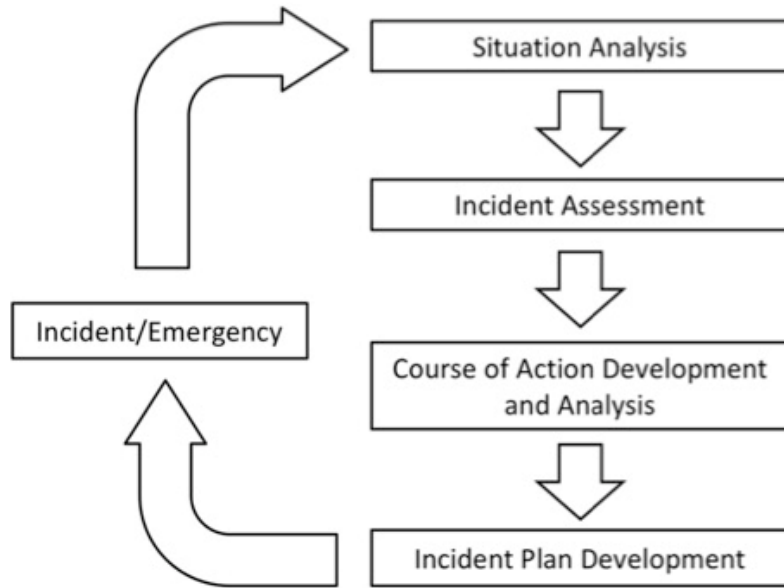
# 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War



- The role of needs assessment and information management in response planning
- Needs assessment and information management challenges
- How does a needs assessment work?
- Collecting and analyzing information



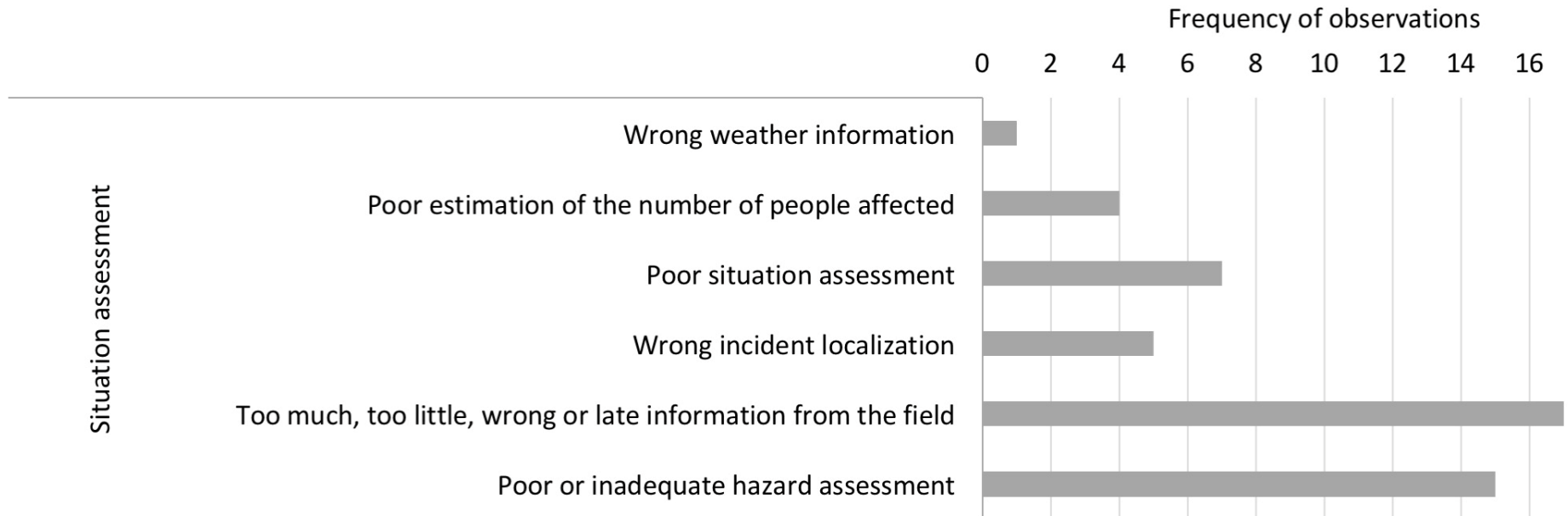
# Twenty Challenges in Response Planning



(Source: Karagiannis & Synolakis, 2017)



# The case for needs assessment

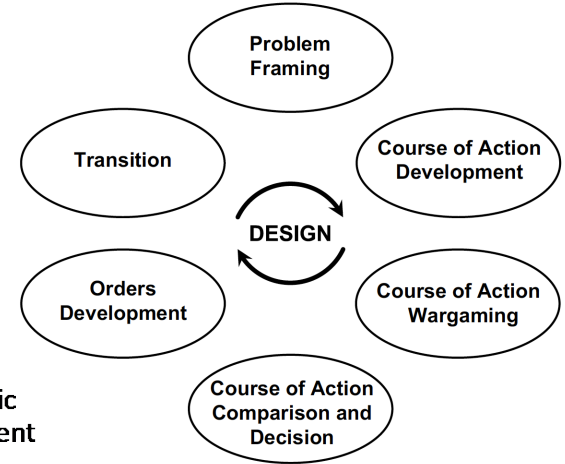
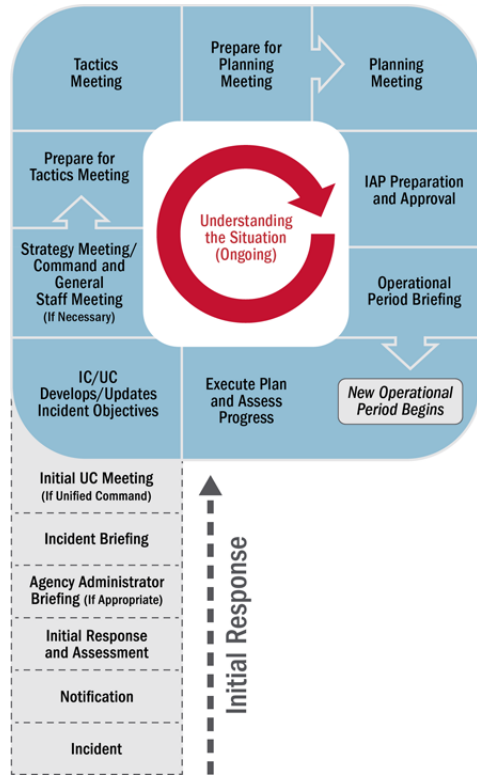


(Source: Karagiannis & Synolakis, 2017)



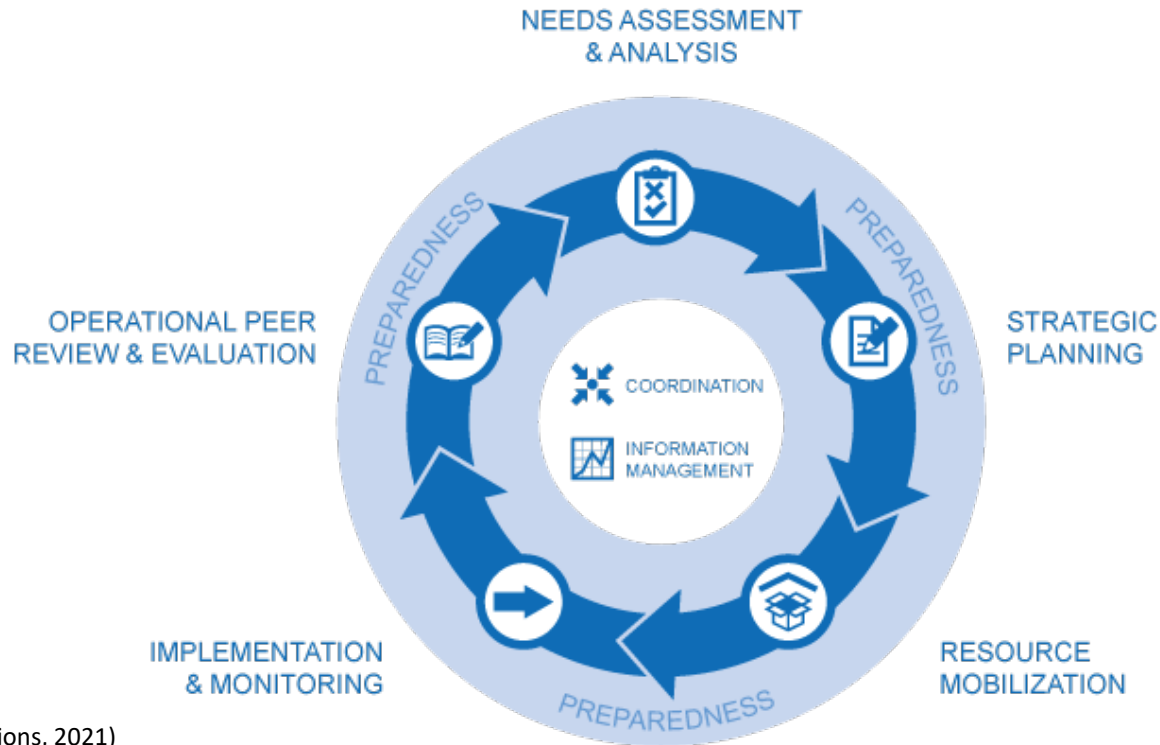


# Incident/Response Planning Processes



(Sources: FEMA, 2019; USMC, 2010; NATO, 2013)

# Humanitarian Program Cycle



(Source: United Nations, 2021)

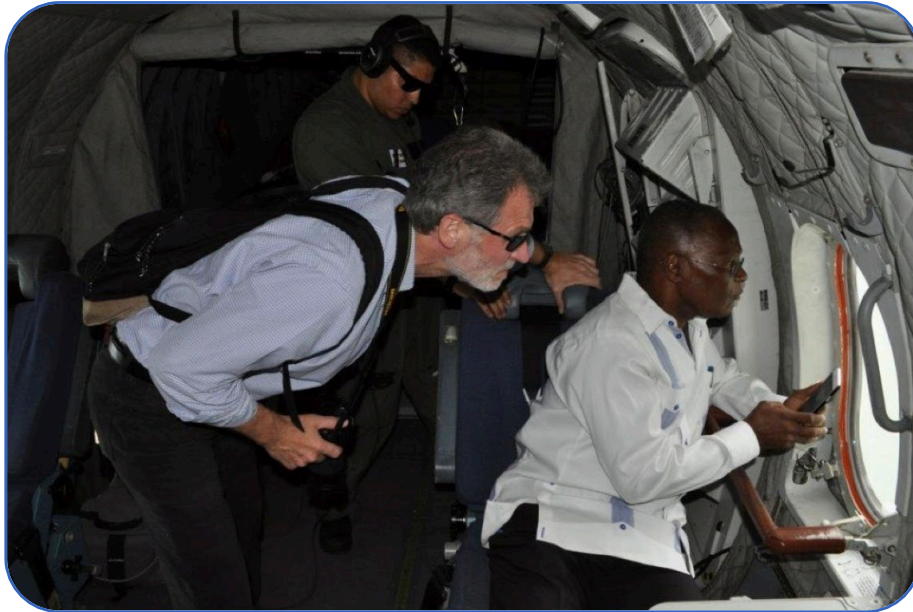








# A typical misconception...



# Make sense, not data!

## Observations



## Conclusion



**It's  
raining!**

## Interpretations

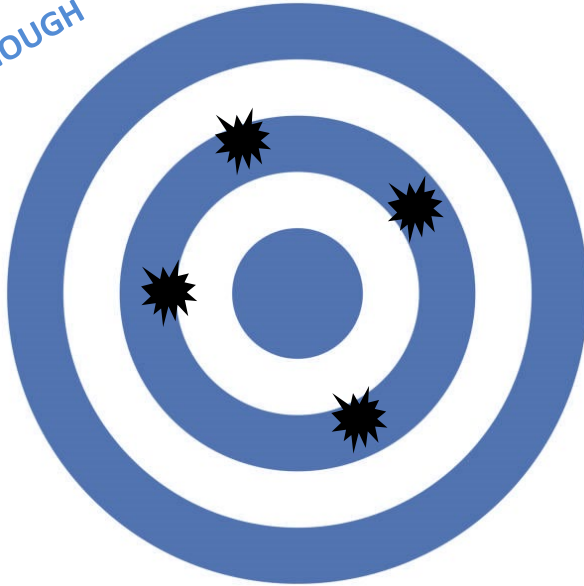


**Get your  
umbrella!**



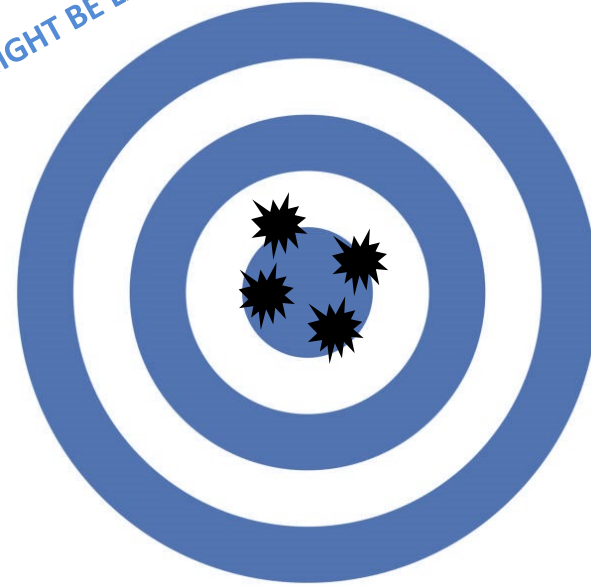
# How much is good enough?

GOOD ENOUGH



**Accurate  
Not precise**

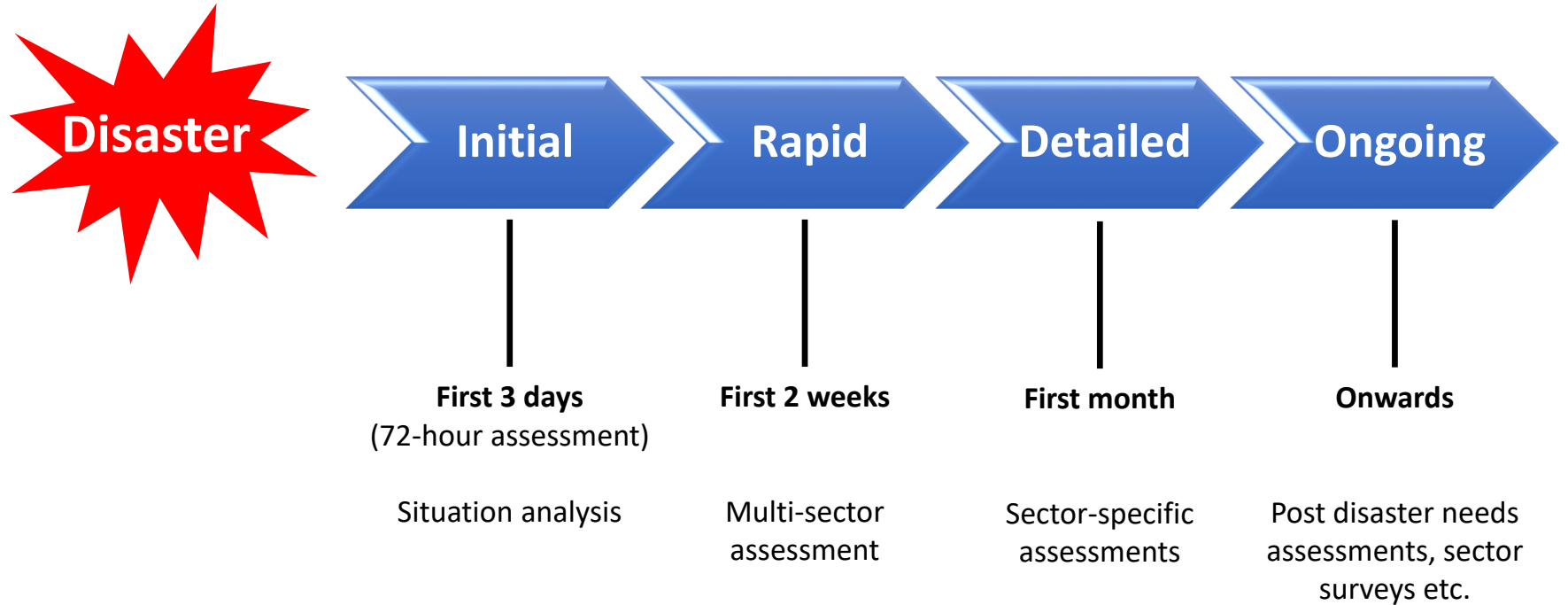
MIGHT BE LATE!



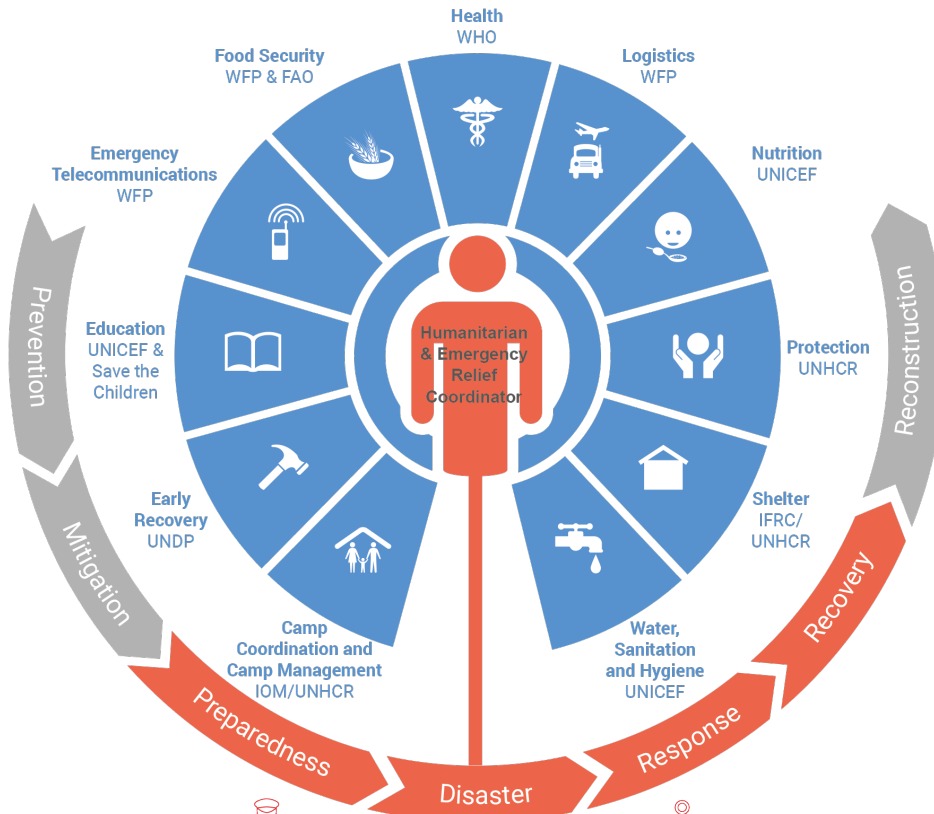
**Accurate  
Precise**



# Disaster needs assessment timeline



## United Nations Cluster Approach





# Emergency Support Functions

- ESF #1: Transportation
- ESF #2: Communications
- ESF #3: Public Works and Engineering
- ESF #4: Firefighting
- ESF #5: Information and Planning
- ESF #6: Mass Care, Emergency Assistance & Human Services
- ESF #7: Logistics
- ESF #8: Public Health & Medical Services
- ESF #9: Search and Rescue
- ESF #10: Oil & HazMat Response
- ESF #11: Agriculture and Natural Resources
- ESF #12: Energy
- ESF #13: Public Safety & Security
- ESF #14: Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure
- ESF #15: External Affairs



National Response  
Framework

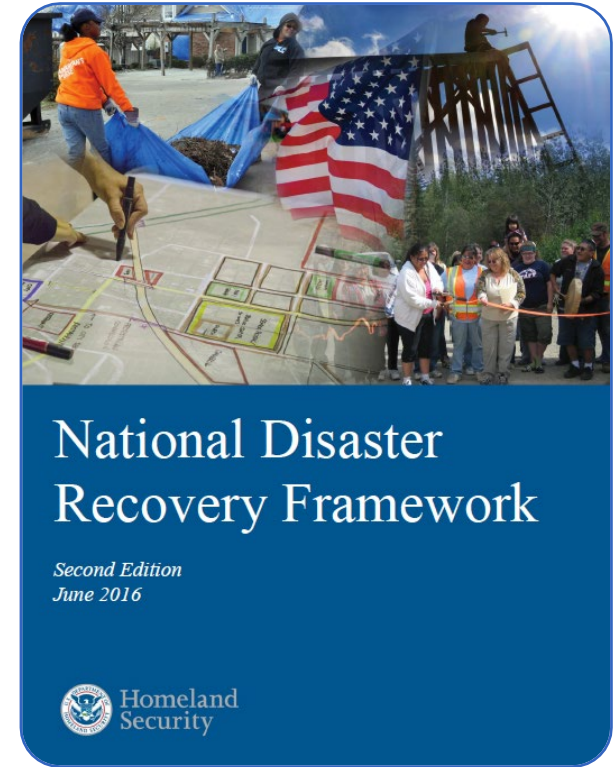
Fourth Edition  
October 2019



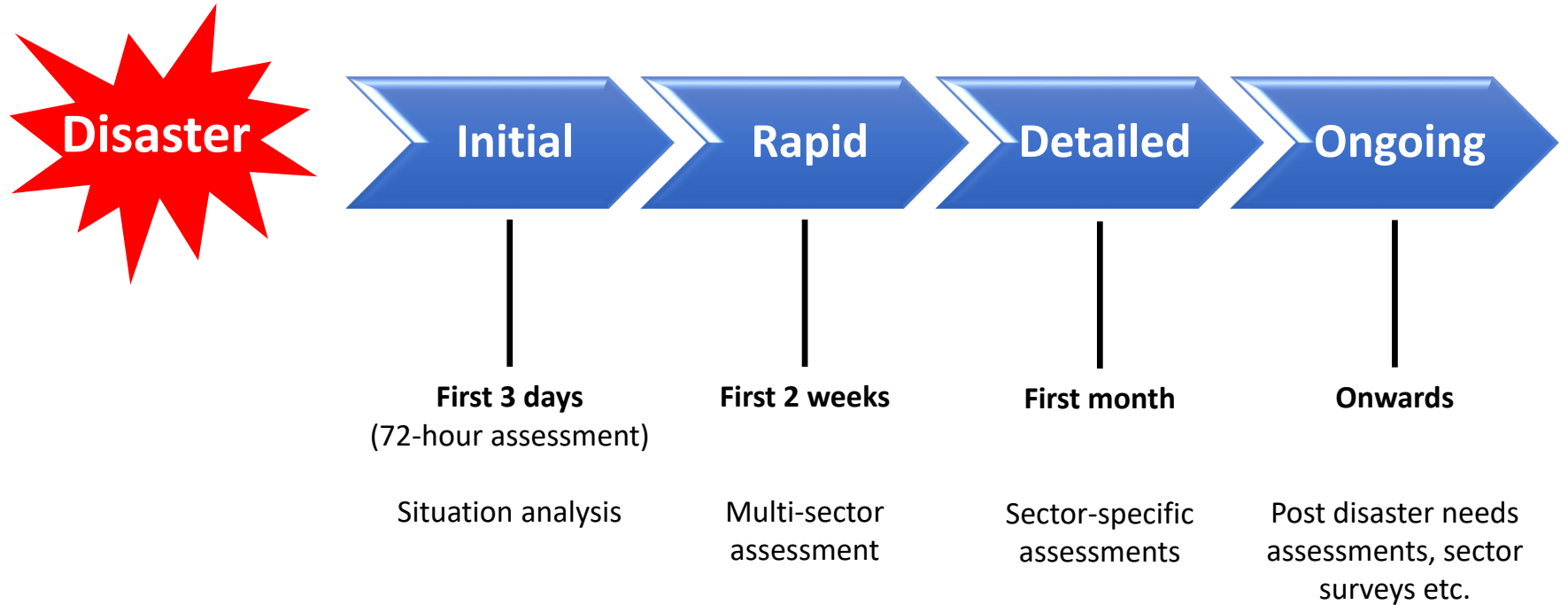


# Recovery Support Functions

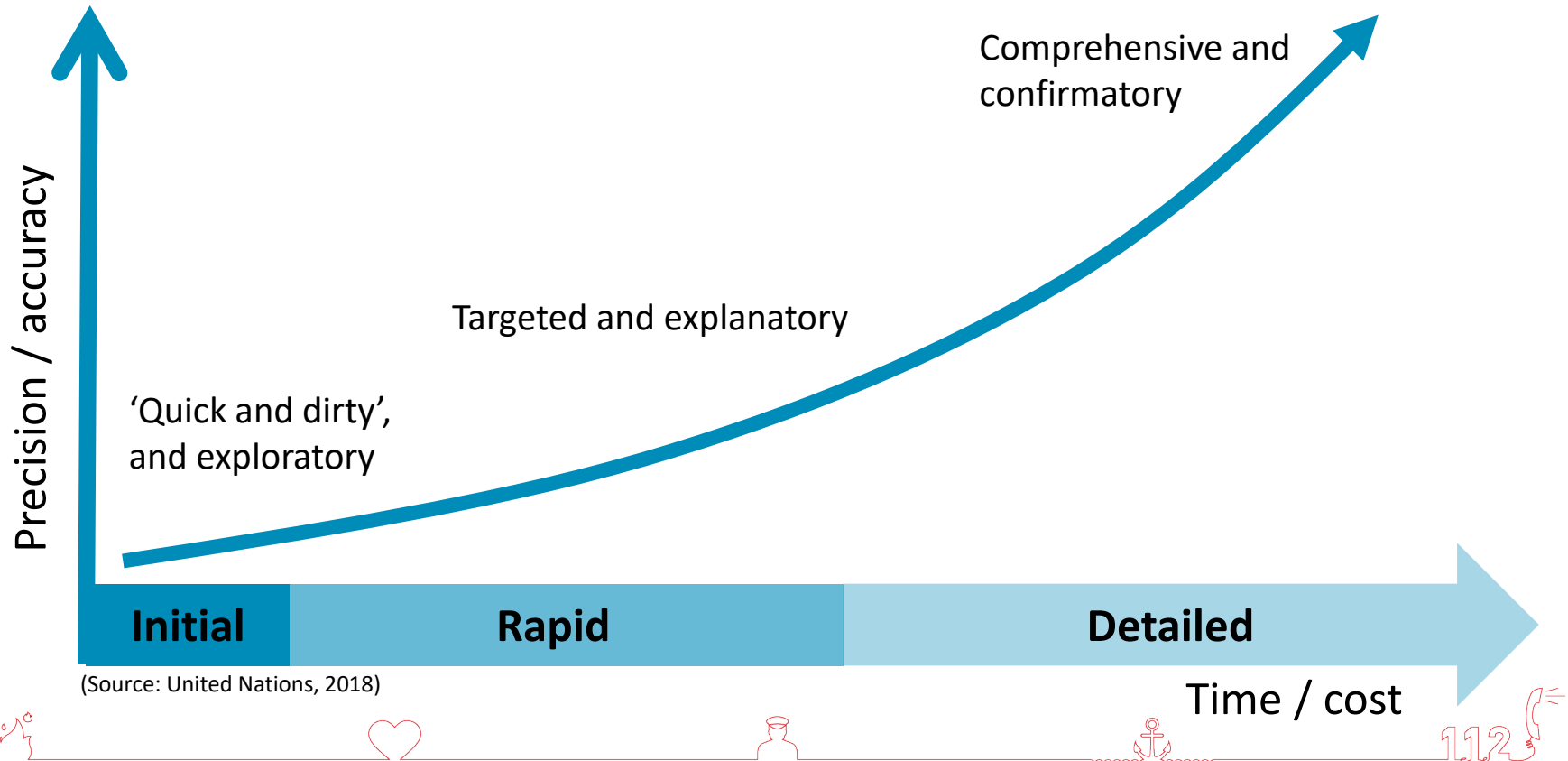
- Economic Recovery
- Community Planning and Capacity Building
- Housing Recovery
- Health and Social Services
- Infrastructure Systems
- Natural and Cultural Resources



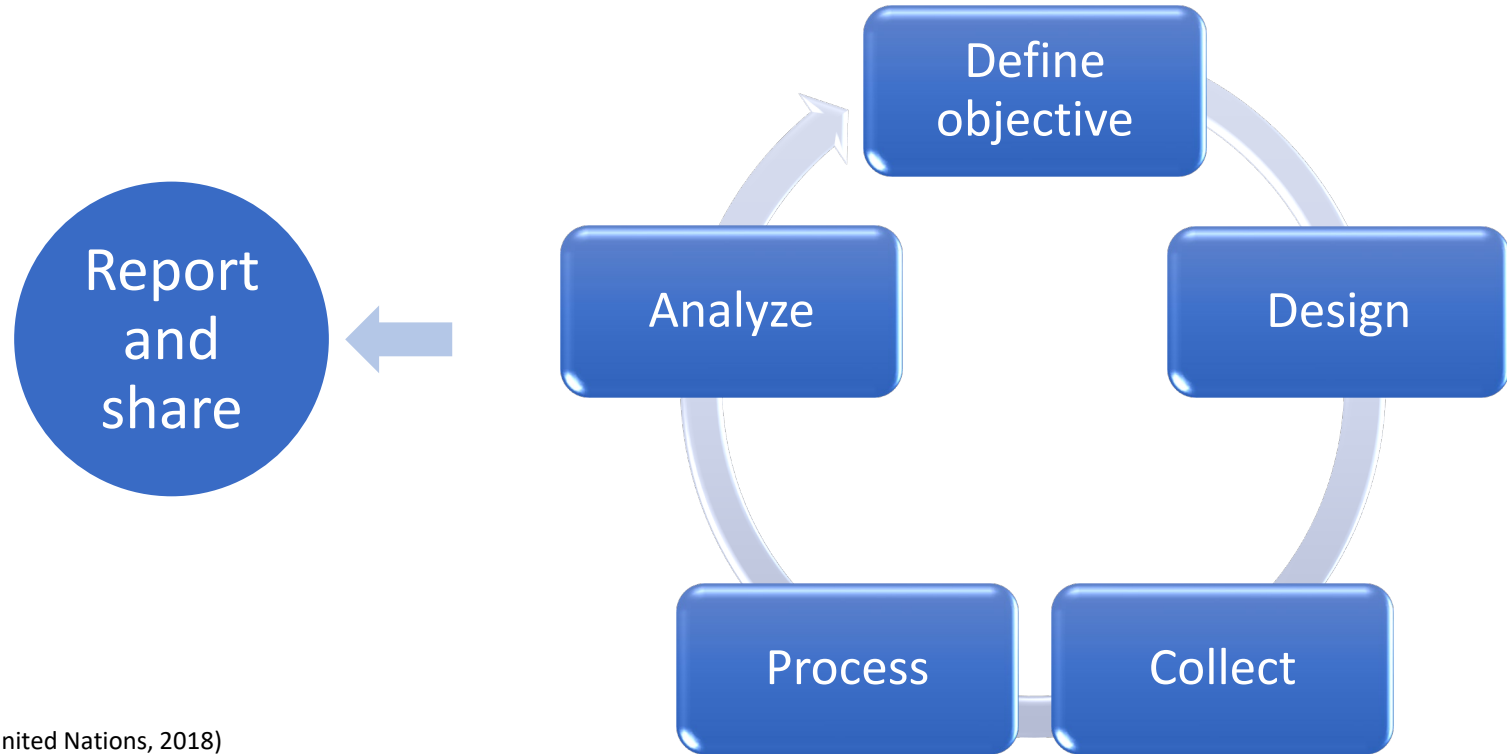
# Disaster needs assessment timeline



# Assessment types



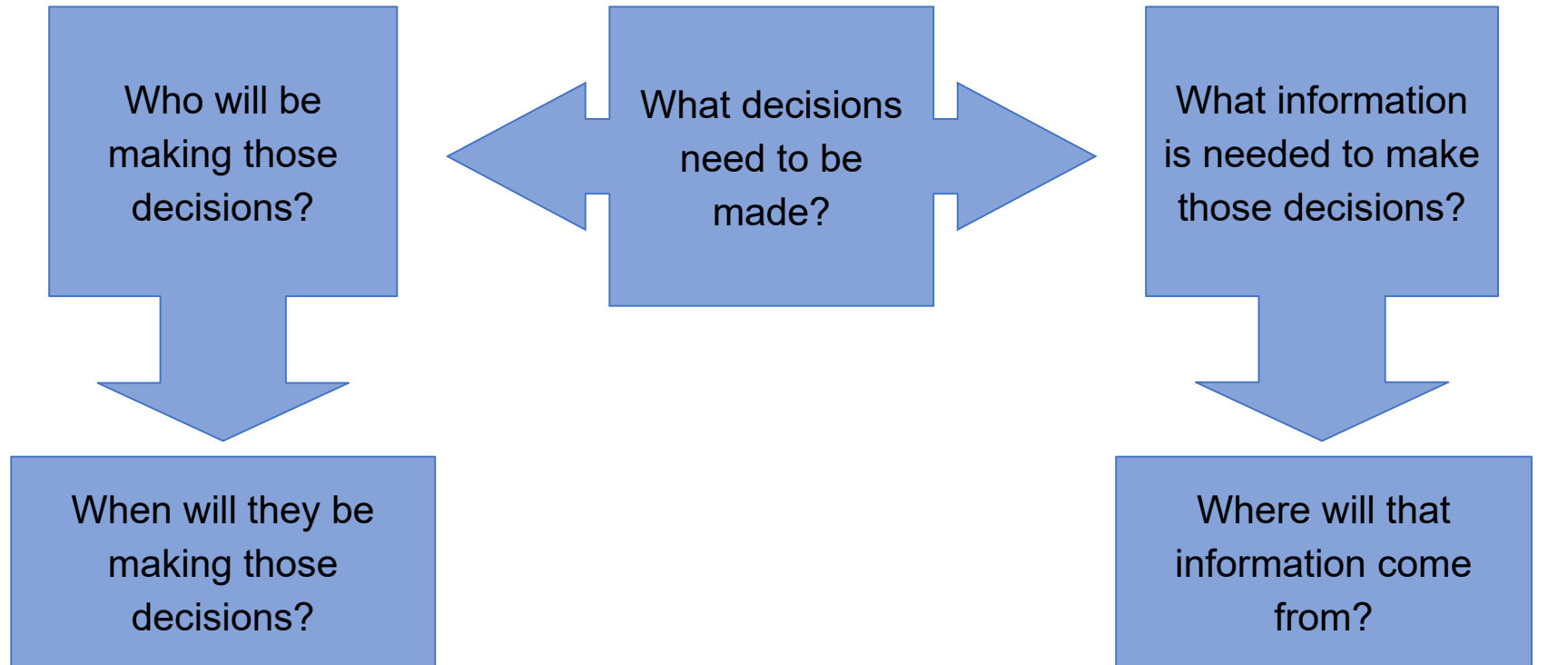
# How do assessments work?



(Source: United Nations, 2018)



# What do you need to know?





# Information sources

## Primary data

- Data collected directly through field work
- Data you collected yourself
- Not analyzed

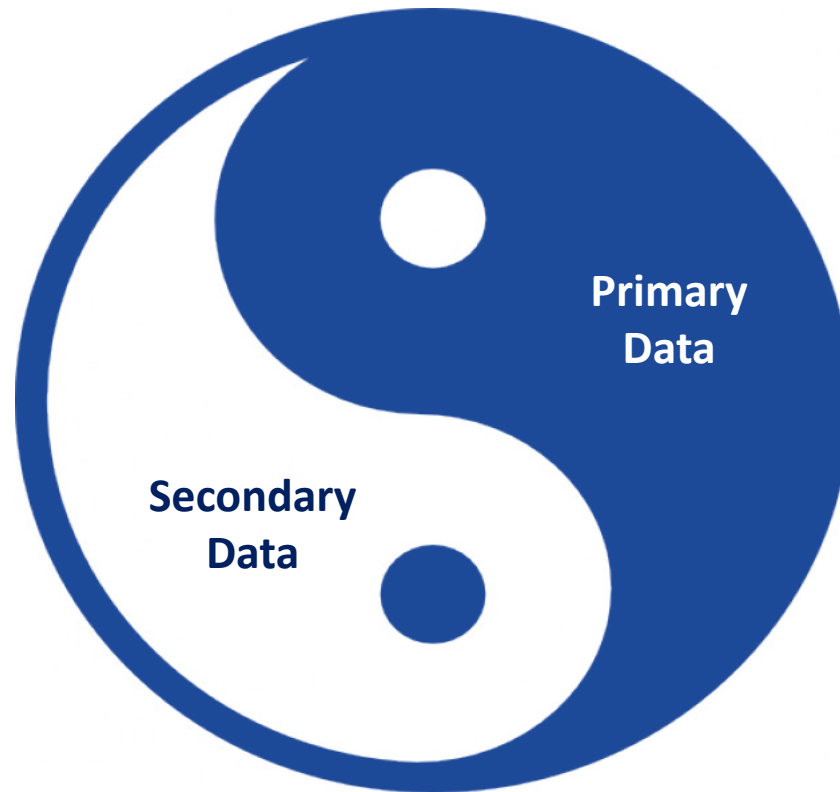
## Secondary data

- Data collected by someone else
- May have been analyzed

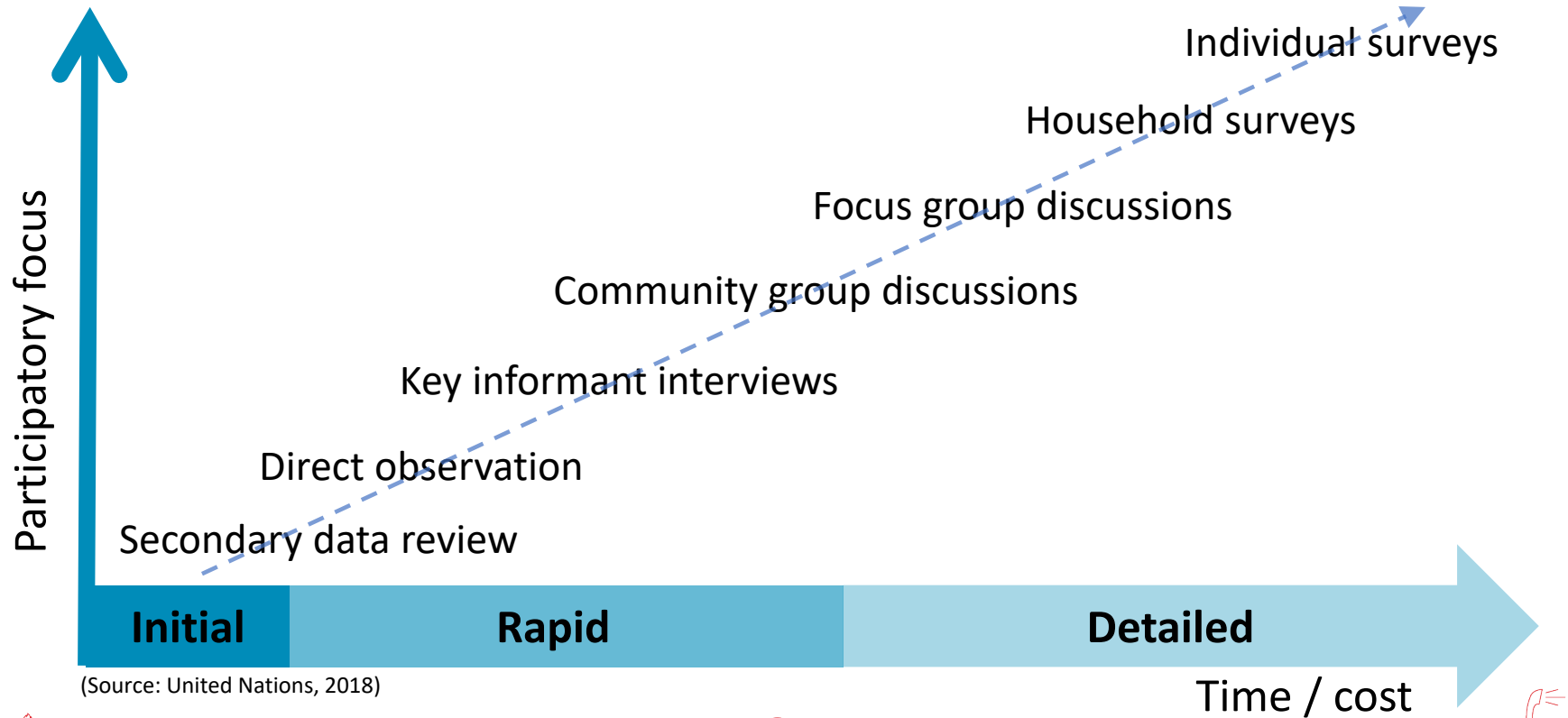




# You need both!



# Data collection techniques





# Primary Data: Direct Observation

- Observe people's physical condition and activities
- Ask questions
- Visit homes, shelters, water sources, clinics, distribution centers
- Observe children, the elderly and the sick
- Observe the daily lives of women (female interviewers)
- Observe the services, vehicles, sanitation systems
- Make sketches, take photographs or use videos.



# Interviews, Discussions & Surveys

## 1. Individual interviews

## 2. Community group discussions

General community information

## 3. Focus group discussions

Information on specific social groups, e.g. by livelihood activities and capabilities

## 4. Household surveys

First-hand experience of living conditions

## 5. Key informant interviews

Technical information provided by key informants from relevant sectors (e.g. health staff)

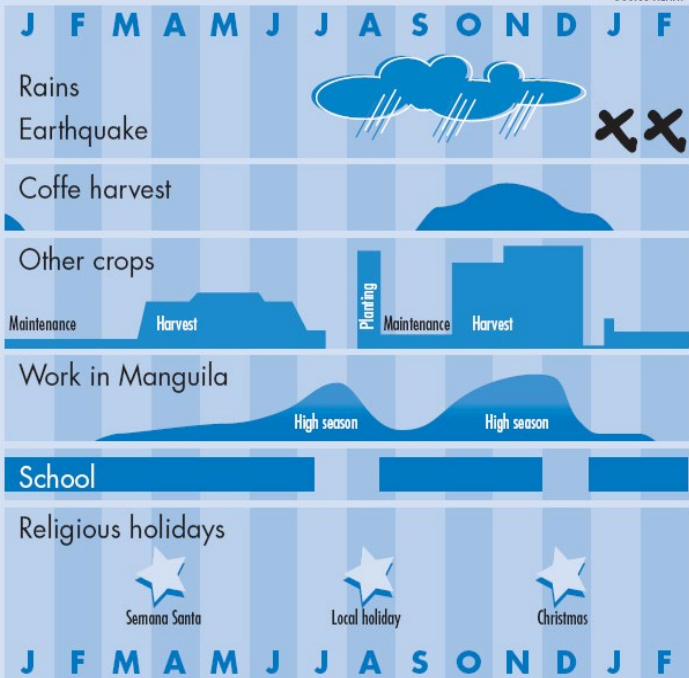
(Source: IFRC & ICRC, 2008)



# Interviews, Discussions & Surveys

**Figure 7. Seasonal calendar**

Source ALNAP

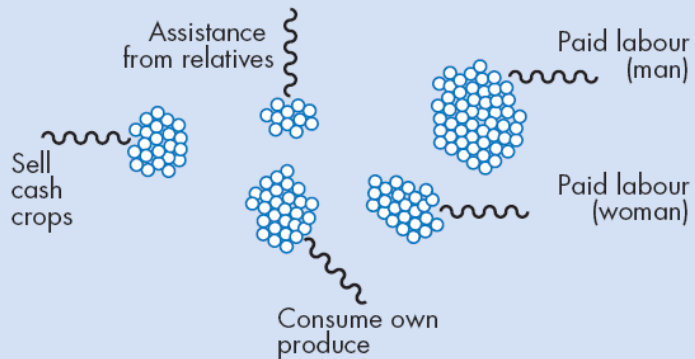


**Figure 8. Historical timeline**



Source ALNAP

**Figure 9. Proportional piling**



(Source: IFRC & ICRC, 2008)



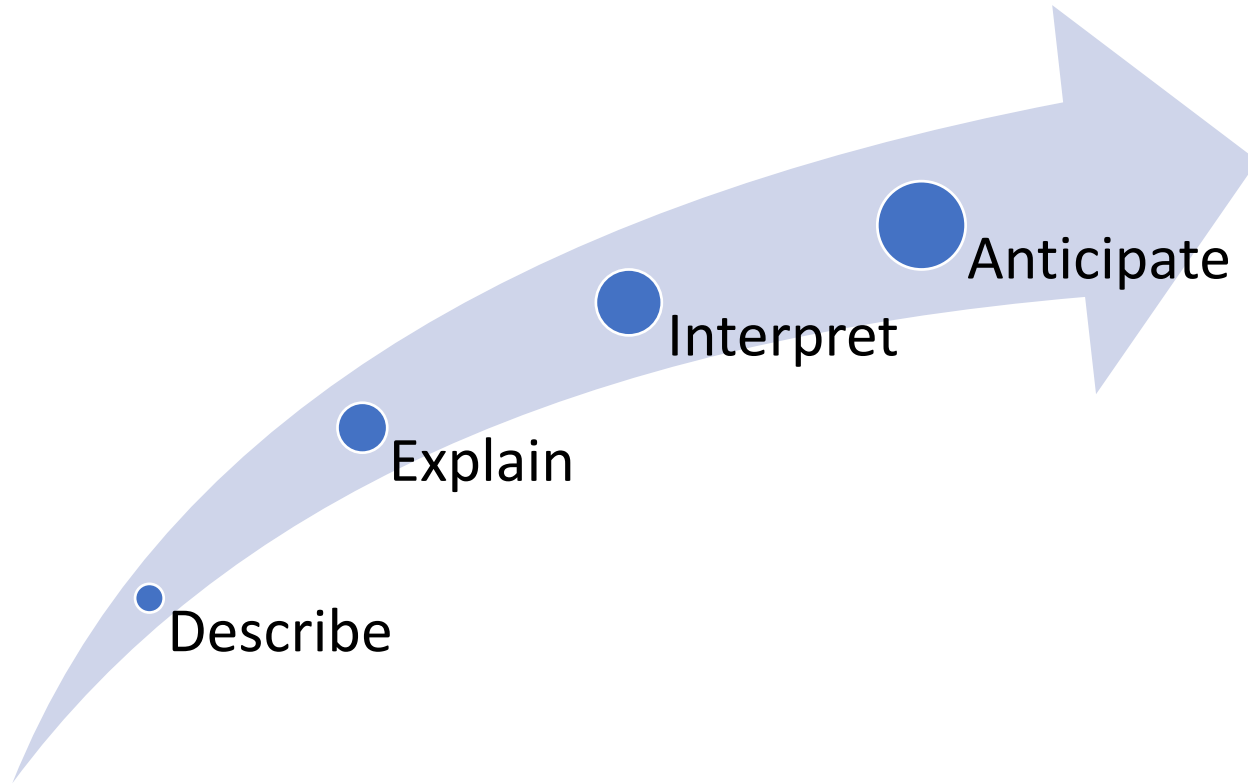
# Sources of bias

- Spatial
- Project
- Person
- Season
- Mandate or specialty
- Political
- Cultural
- Class or ethnic
- Interviewer or investigator
- Key informant
- Gender
- Time of day or schedule
- Sampling



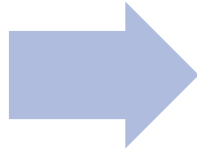


# Analysis in 4 steps



## Summarize

- Population
- Sector
- Geographical region



## Compare

- Across time
- Across geographic areas
- Across sectors



# Summarization = Identification



## ➤ Population

- May be everyone in a particular region (quite rare)
- Often information is only available on a particular group



## ➤ Sector the data relates to

- Based on clusters, sectors, ESFs etc.
- May be multi-sector



## ➤ Geographic area from which the data were drawn



# Establishing rates...

Affected people



**= RATE**

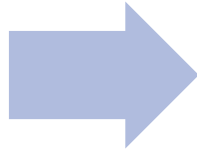


Number of people living in an area (all sectors)



## Summarize

- Population
- Sector
- Geographical region

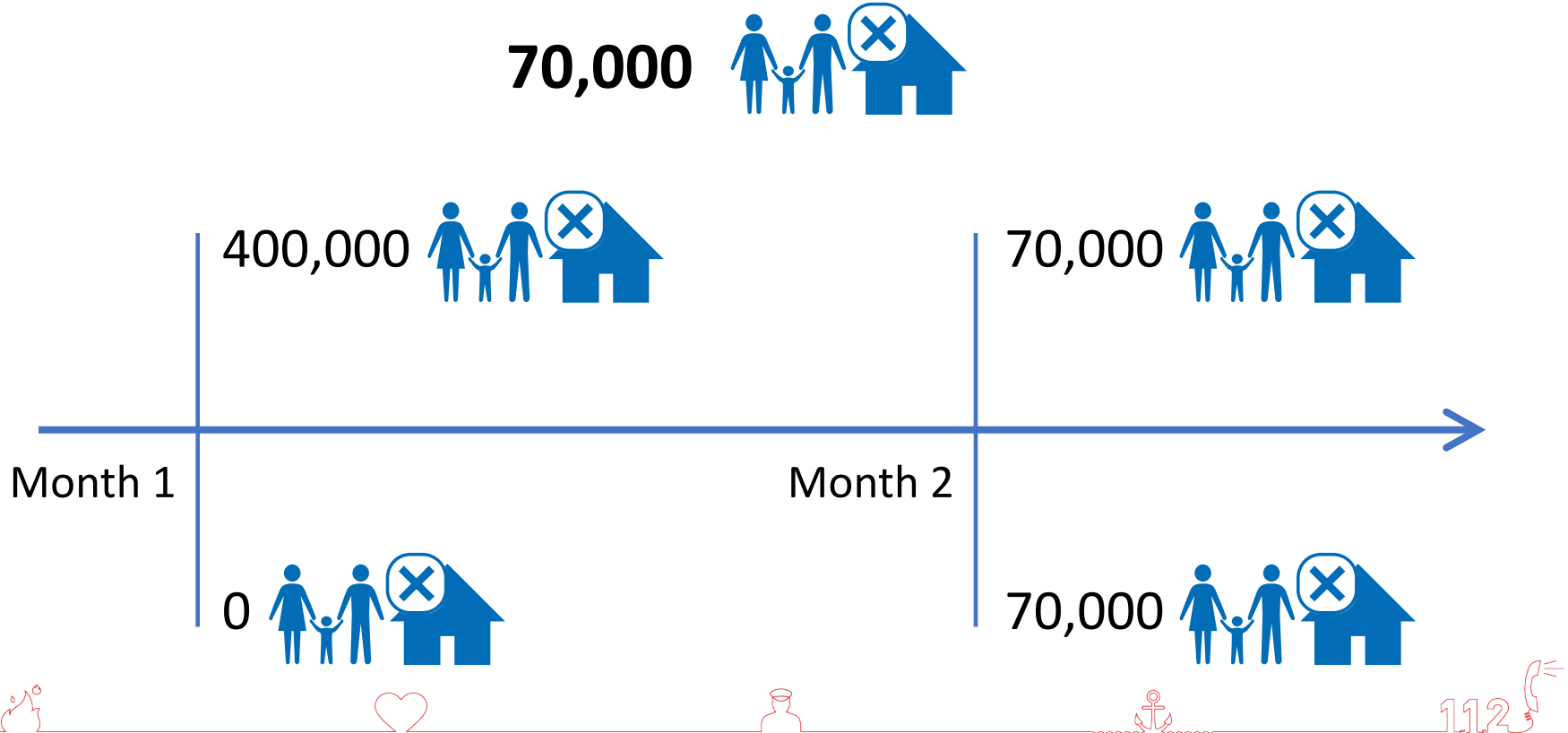


## Compare

- Across time
- Across geographic areas
- Across sectors



# Comparison over time





# Comparisons



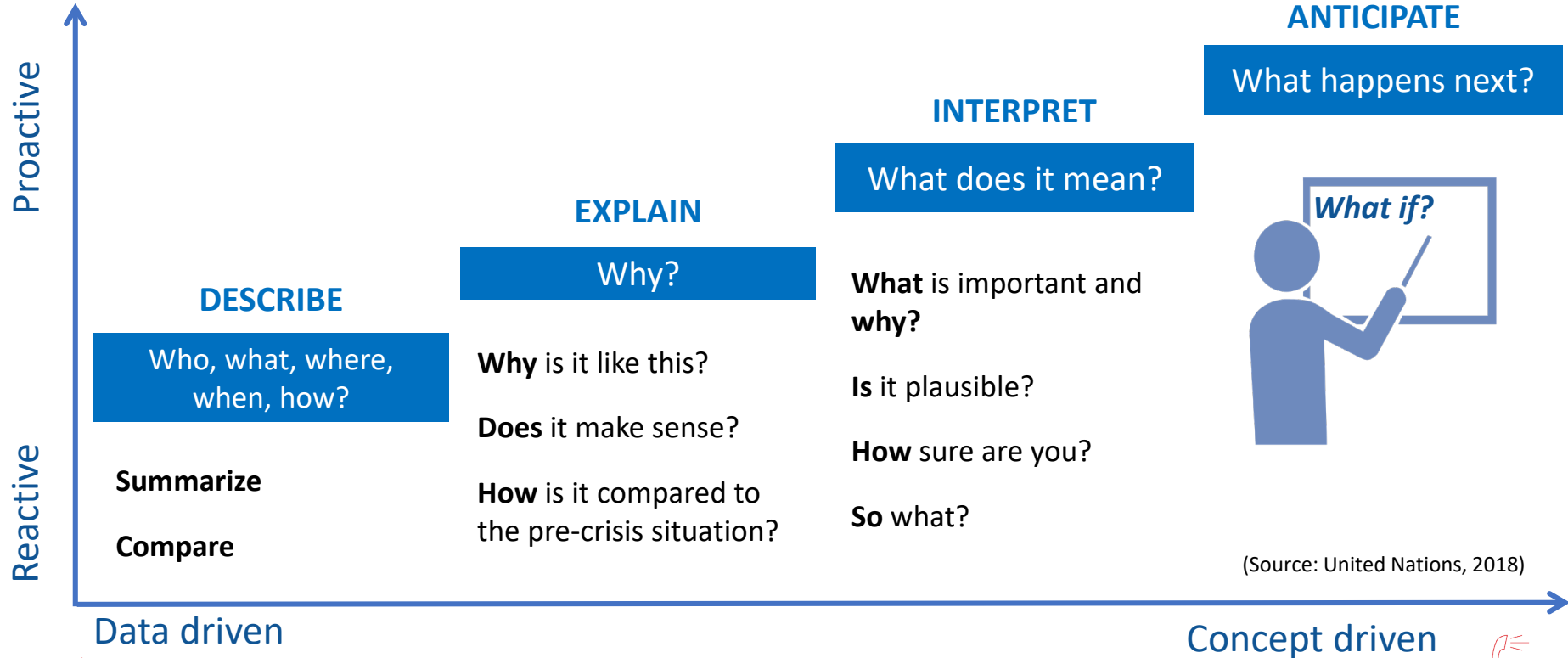
> 65 years old



< 20 years old



# Information analysis in a nutshell



# Information analysis key principles



Be prepared



Dedicate staff



Know what you  
need to know



Judge your  
data

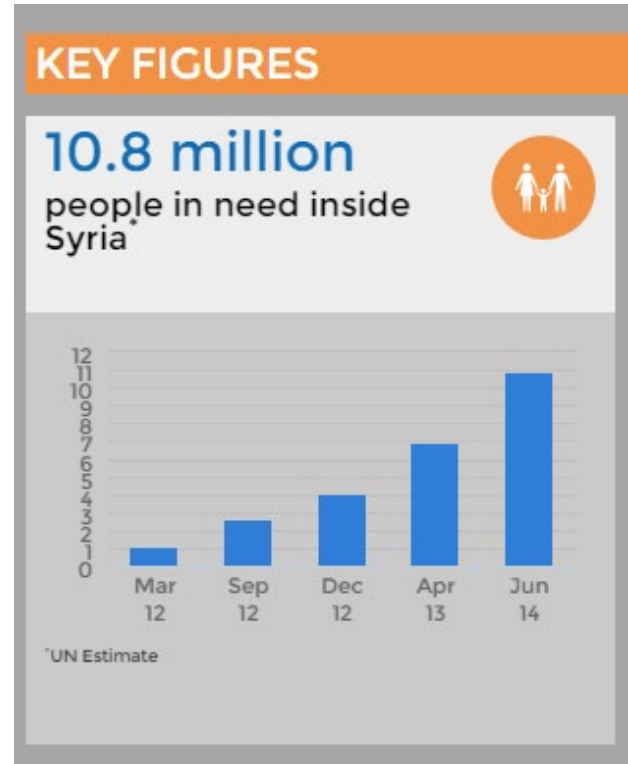


Be cautious with  
figures



# The devil is in the details!

Statistical Snapshot*		
Residing in Central African Republic [1]		
Refugees [2]		14,322
Asylum Seekers [3]		2,636
Returned Refugees [4]		1
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) [5]		894,421
Returned IDPs [6]		0
Stateless Persons [7]		0
Various [8]		0
Total Population of Concern		911,380
Originating from Central African Republic [1]		
Refugees [2]		252,865
Asylum Seekers [3]		7,475
Returned Refugees [4]		1
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) [5]		894,421
Returned IDPs [6]		0
Various [8]		0
Total Population of Concern		1,154,762
Notes + * As at January 2014		



# Information analysis key principles



Be prepared



Dedicate staff



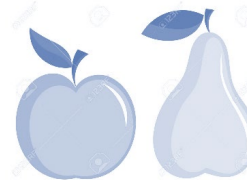
Know what you  
need to know



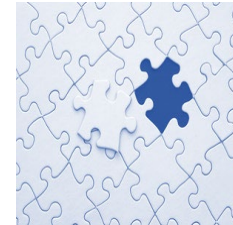
Judge your  
data



Be cautious with  
figures



Ensure  
comparability



Be aware of  
your gaps



# Information analysis key principles



Be prepared



Dedicate staff



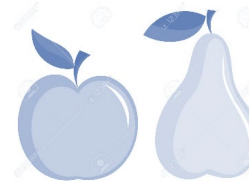
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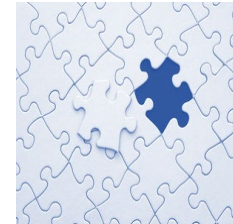
Judge your  
data



Be cautious with  
figures



Ensure  
comparability



Be aware of  
your gaps



# Summary

- Needs assessment and information management drive disaster response efforts
- The precision and accuracy of information management increase with the time available.
- Initially, time is of the essence: you will have to rely on secondary data
- Build your data collection efforts with time.
- Don't just collect and present data, analyze!
- Analysis = Describe + Explain + Interpret + Anticipate



# Thank you for your attention!



Decision making

