PROGRAMMING IN ACCESS-CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENTS

INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

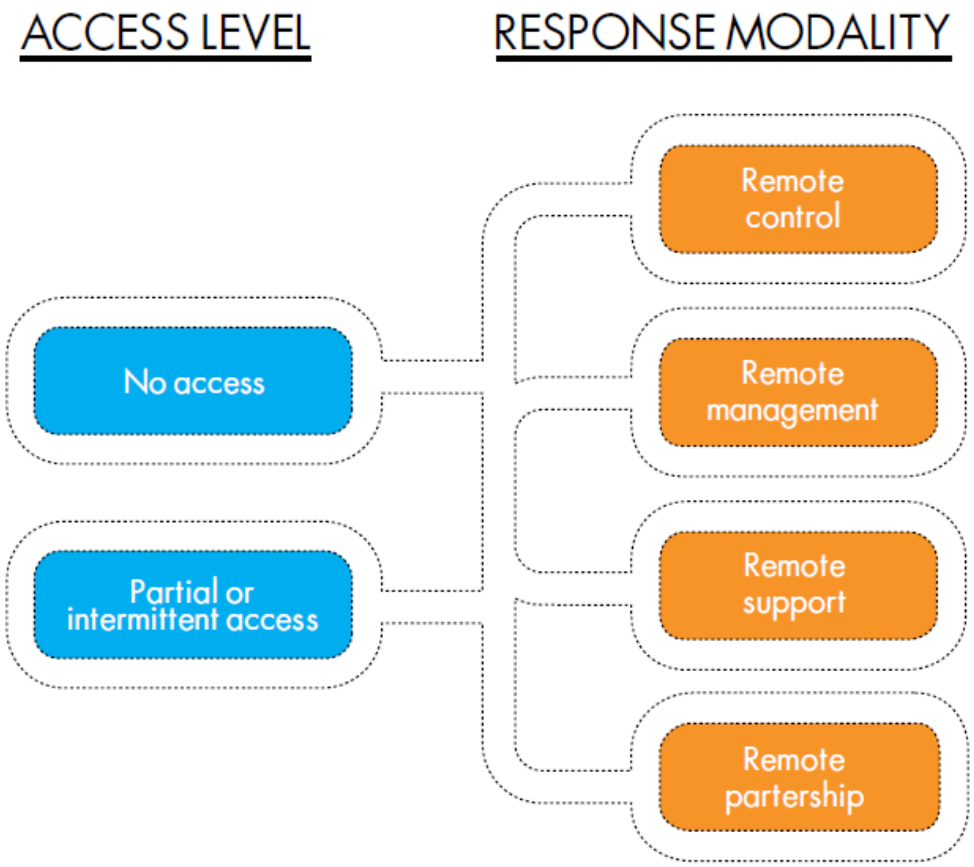
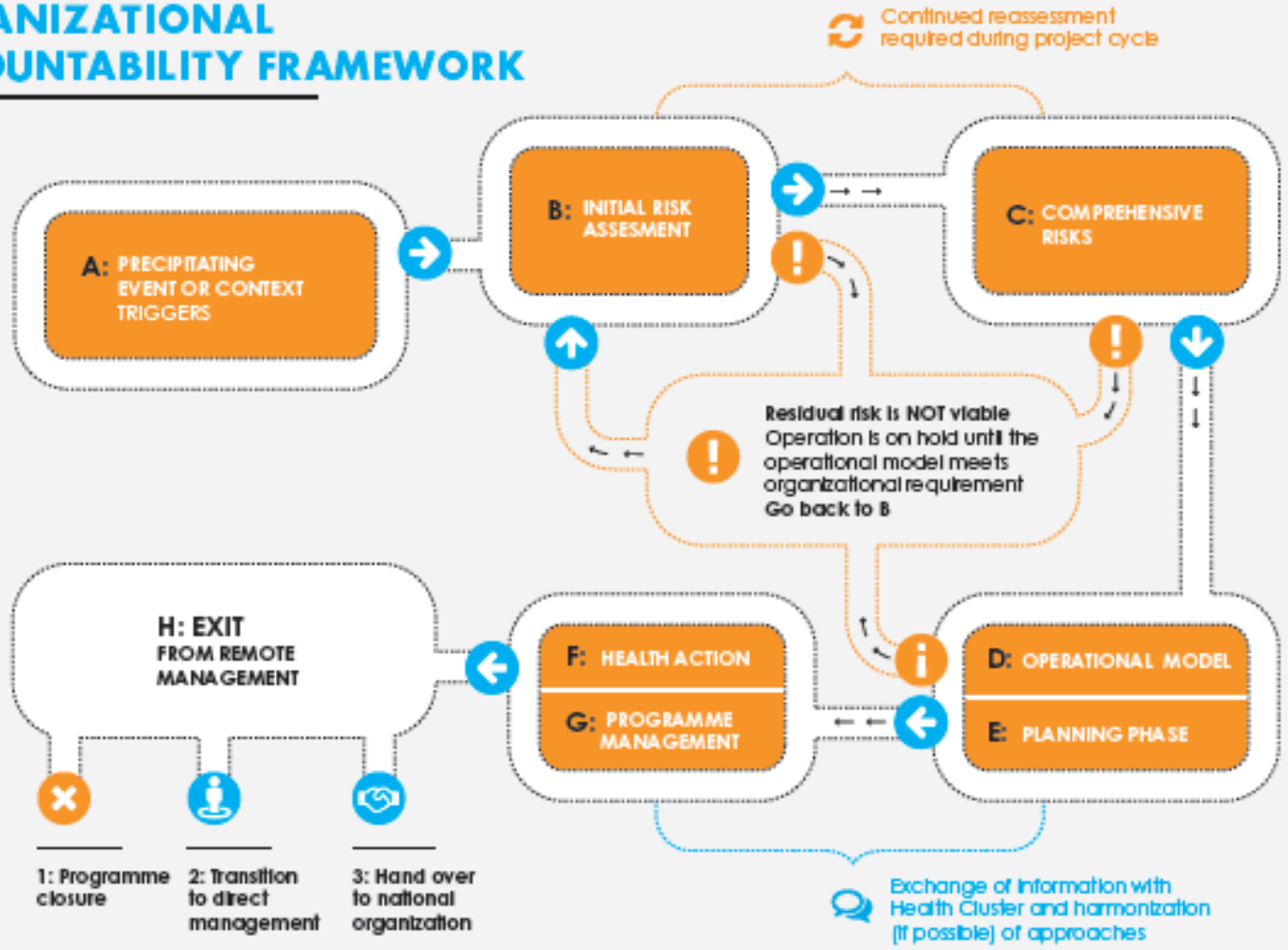

ACCESS LEVEL
RESPONSE MODALITY
No access
Partial or intermittent access
Remote control
Remote management
Remote support
Remote partership

Table 1. Benefits and challenges of remote operation

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
• The start or continuation of assistance, services and flow of funding in situations that do not allow direct access • The retention of local knowledge, making it easier to return to traditional programming when access is restored • Opportunities for closer community involvement and local ownership of programmes • Building the capacity of field staff, which contributes to sustainability • Continued visibility for the organization, which can increase local acceptance of both current and future programming	• Maintaining humanitarian principles without experienced staff in the field • Maintaining quality of assistance • Avoiding corruption and aid diversion • Finding, vetting and training appropriate staff and partners, given limited options • The need for significantly expanded planning and guidance • Additional costs, including staffing, planning and monitoring • The need for comprehensive, continuing risk management • Maintaining strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E), compliance, accountability and advocacy, without the physical presence of experienced staff • Maintaining good awareness of the situation in the field throughout the remote organization

REMOTE MANAGEMENT: ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

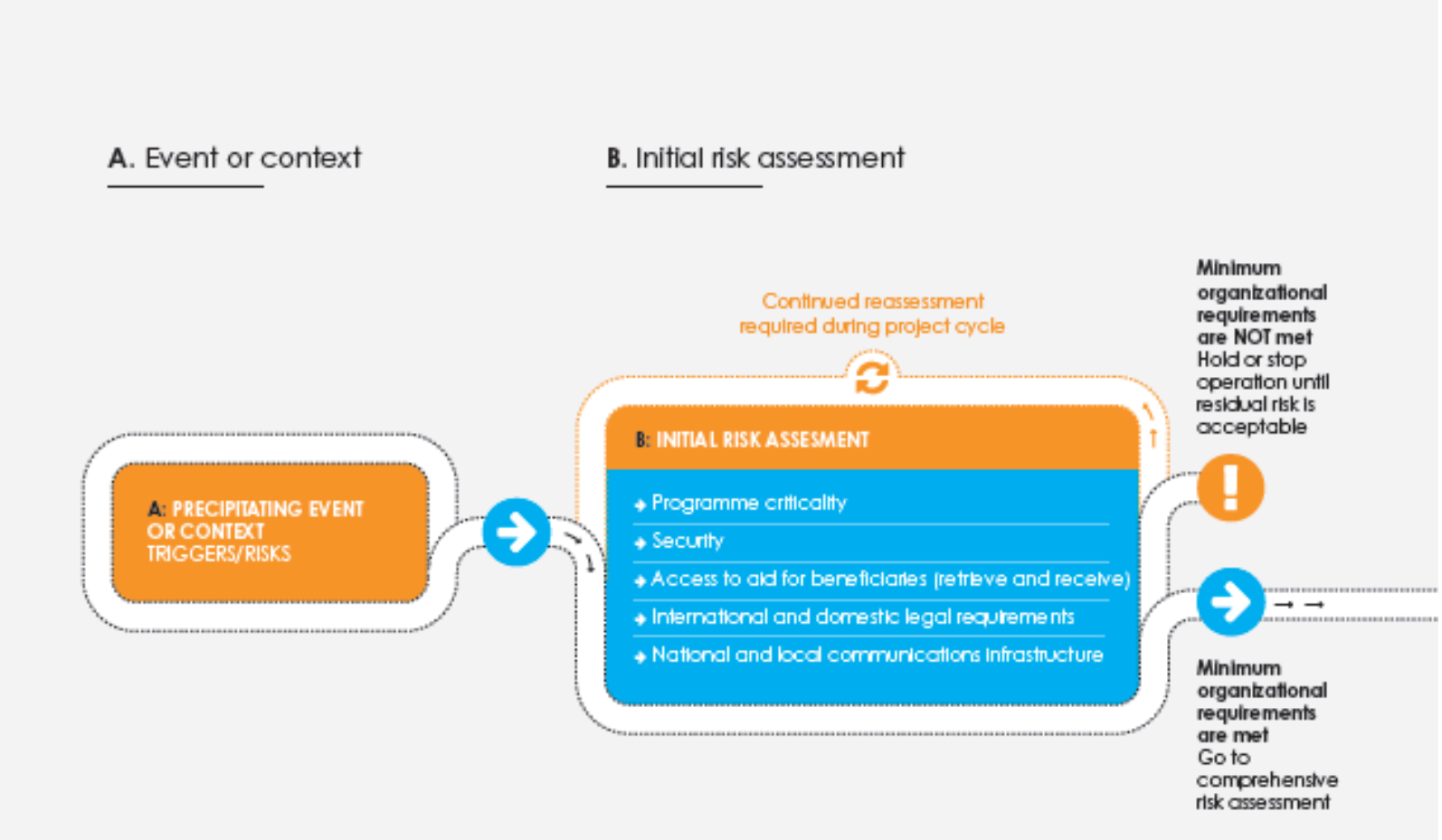


A. Precipitating Event or Context Triggers/Risks

This section discusses both the way in which remote operations tend to begin, and the points at which aid agencies should ideally begin considering remote operations. Details discussed include:

- assessment of levels of access constraint;
- triggers that lead an organization to consider remote operation;
- situations where remote operation is not appropriate;
- alternatives to remote operation, including access negotiations, “bunkerization”, and building community acceptance.

B. INITIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

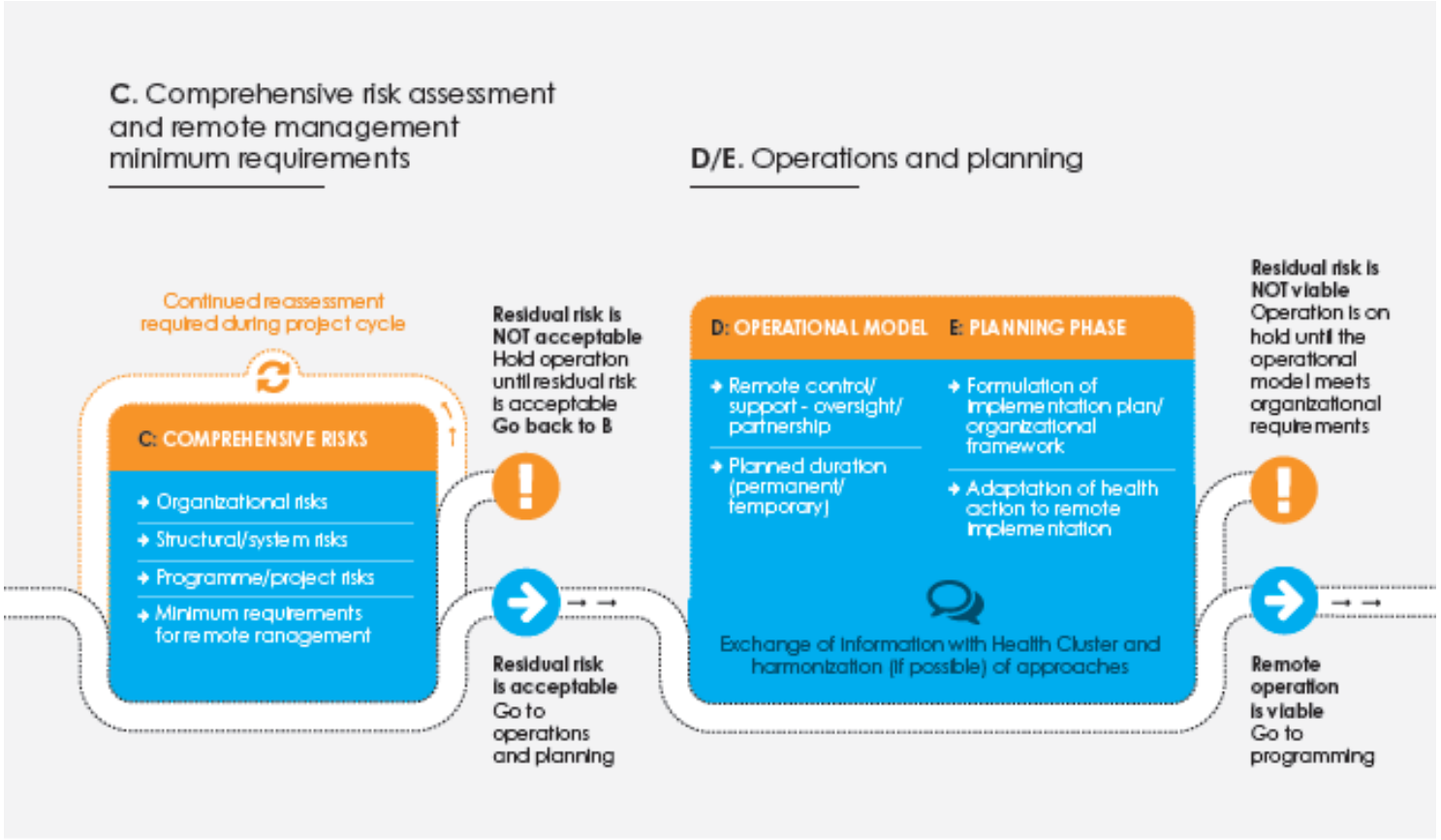


B. INITIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

A quick risk assessment, based on easily available information from the organization's previous experience, documents, local authorities, and other humanitarian actors is required to determine if the situation meets five minimum requirements for remote operation.

- **The programme is critical (lifesaving).**
- **The security risk is acceptable (risk to organization and beneficiaries).**
- **Access is sufficient to deliver aid, and for beneficiaries to access programming.**
- **International and domestic legal requirements can be met.**
- **The infrastructure in the area of need is sufficient to allow communication between a remote agency and an operating agent.**

C. COMPREHENSIVE RISK ASSESSMENT



C. COMPREHENSIVE RISK ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW OF MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Defines categories of risk (organizational, operational, programmatic) and presents one possible method for conducting such an analysis. It also defines necessary outcomes to support decision-making during programme inception, development, operation and closure.

Subsection C.1 lists the categories of risks that should be assessed, and provides lists of specific risks and detailed examples that are particularly relevant to remote operations.

Final Step of CRA: Re-evaluation of the minimum 5 requirements for remote operation with 2 additional requirements: the need to identify an operating agent that can implement programming on the ground, and the need for an external verification network for triangulation of monitoring.

Subsection C.3 details the process of coordination with other health actors within the United Nations system, which should begin as soon as the comprehensive risk assessment is completed, and the decision is made to begin actively planning a remote operation.

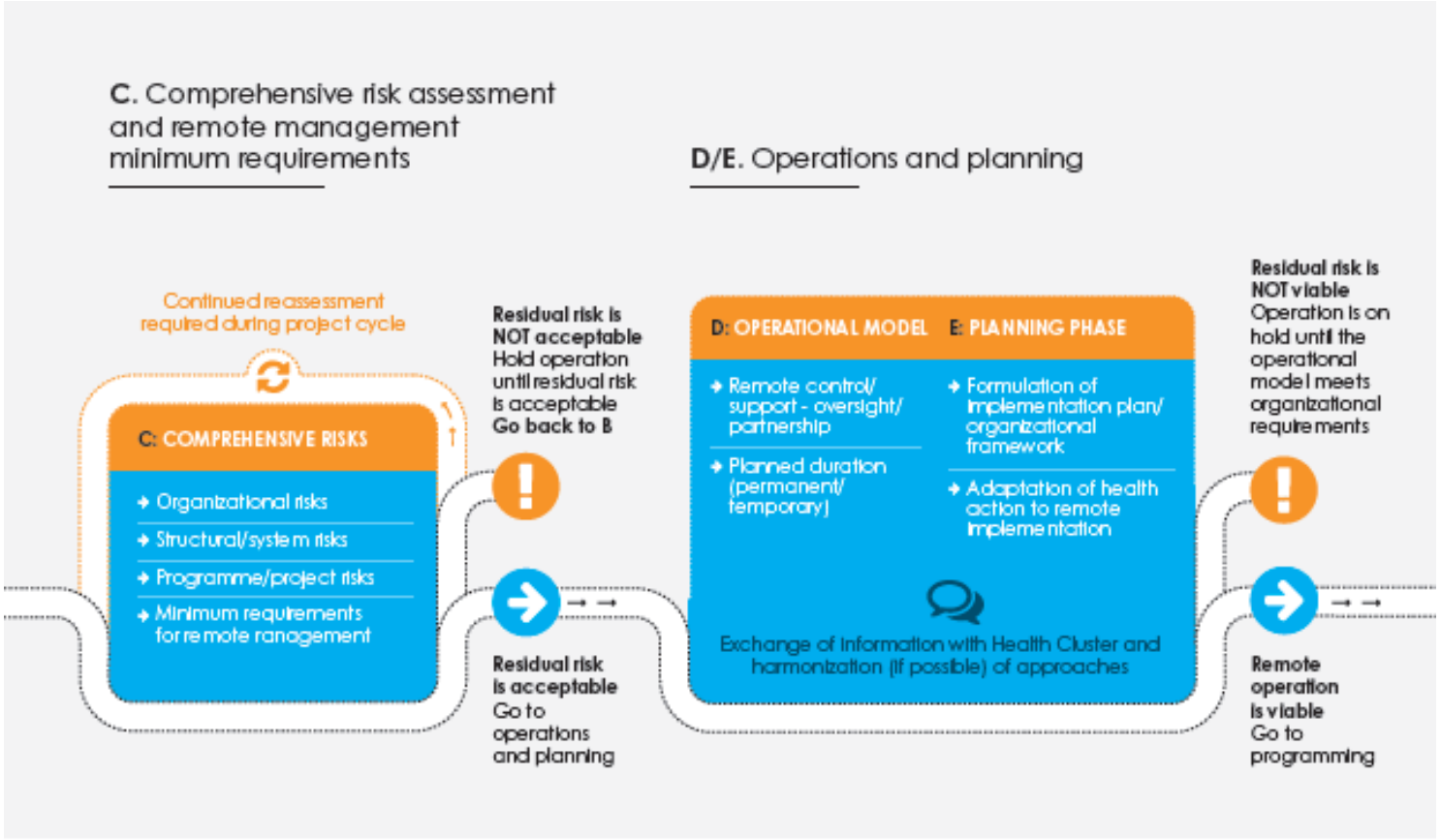
COORDINATION is critical

Coordination is critical at the inception and throughout this process

Coordination may be with other health actors within the UN system or other coordination modality set up by the local government

Coordination is important with all multisectoral partners and stakeholders to leverage on others strengths and experiences to improve the response - this is potentially even more critical than in normal programming as it may be possible to utilize other partners for deliveries or triangulation of data which are not within the health sector

D. OPERATING MODEL



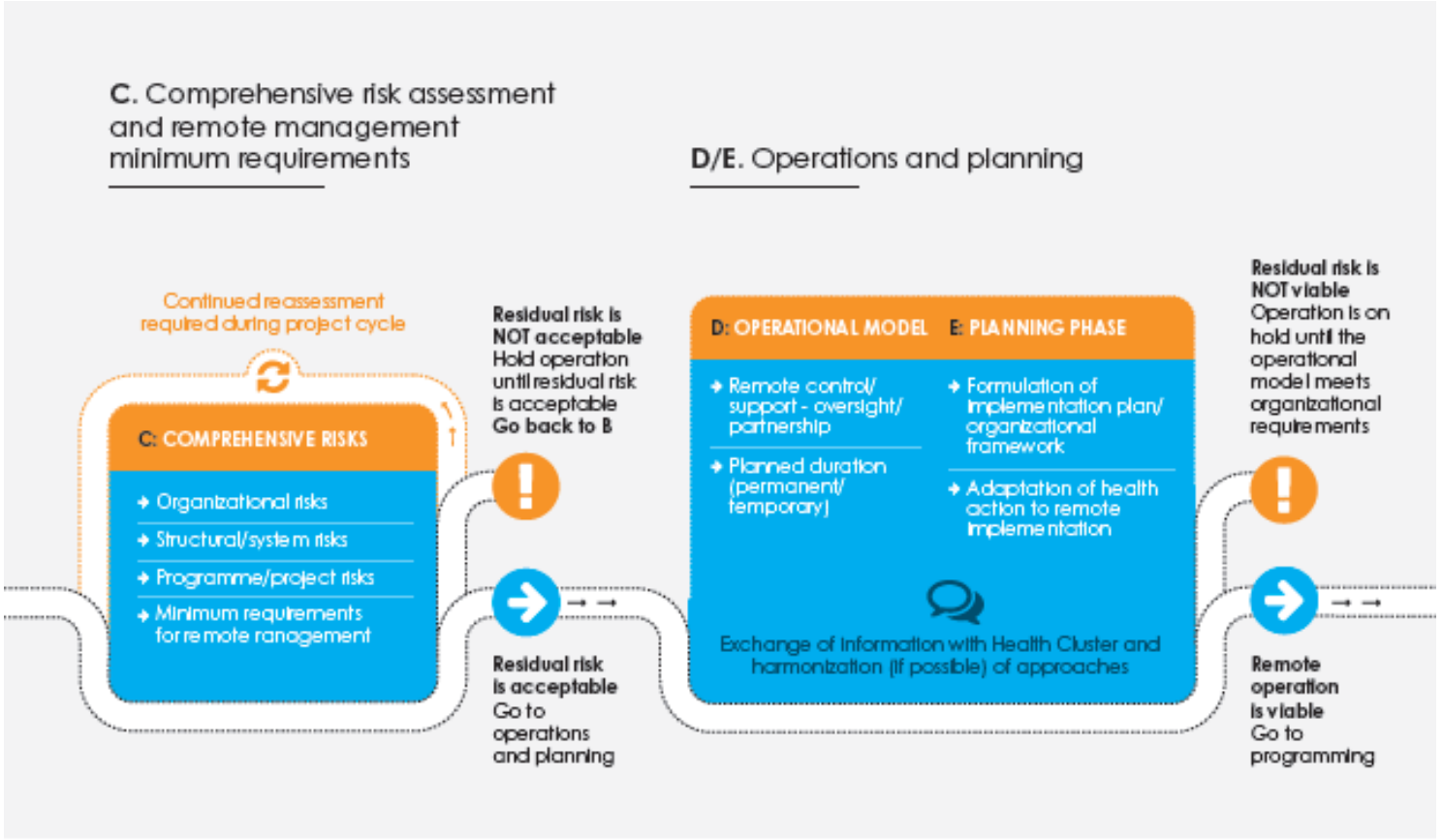
D. OPERATING MODEL

- The first major planning decision: the choice of a modality (or modalities) of remote operation that will be appropriate to the context.

- This decision is based primarily on:
  - Communications and transportation infrastructure (subsection B.5)
  - Availability and capacity of operating agents (subsection C.2.2)
  - Planned duration of the operation, which is discussed in (subsection D.1)

- 4 major operating modalities are described with the risks and benefits of each:
  - Remote Control
  - Remote Management
  - Partnership
  - Support

E. PLANNING PHASE



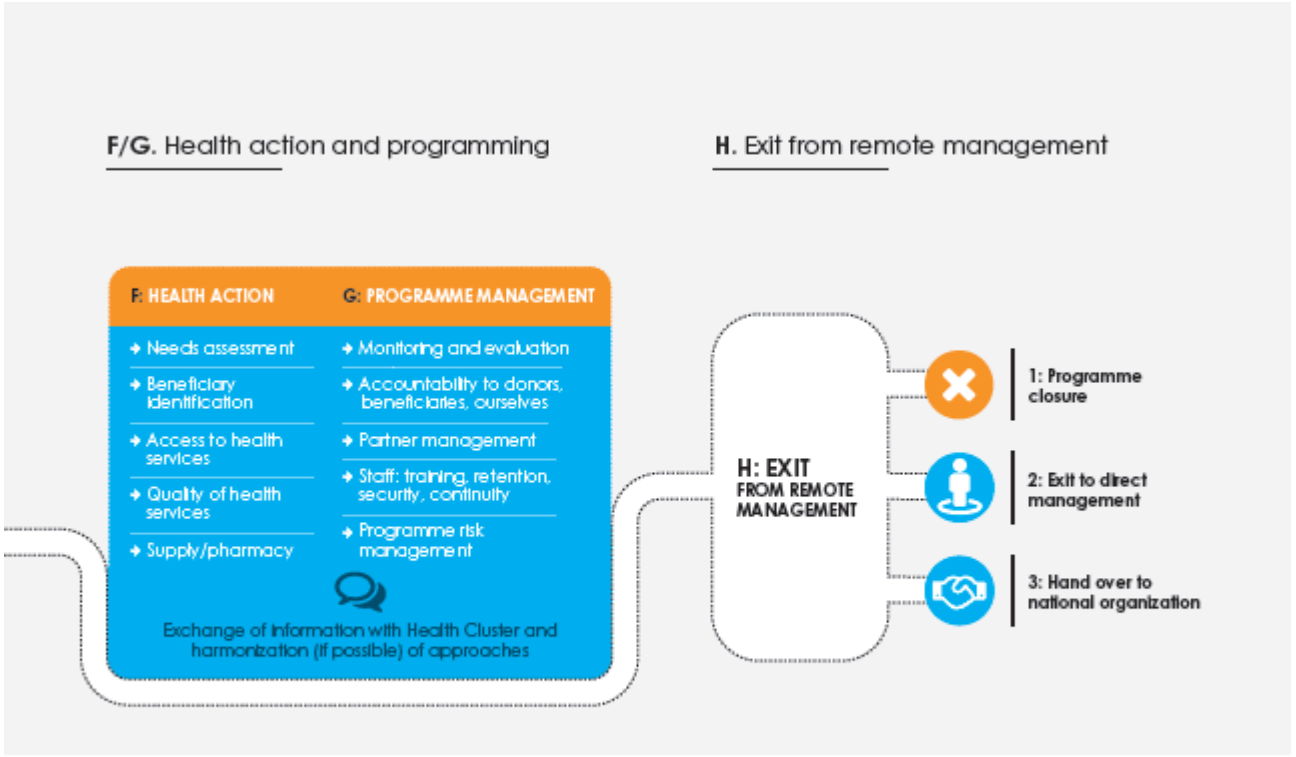
E. PLANNING PHASE

Based on typical programme planning, the tool highlights specific things to consider for remote implementation such as :

- the adaptation of programming for remote operation;
- budgetary analysis;
- formalizing remote operation structures;
- revising standard operating procedures;
- developing frameworks for M&E, accountability, and staff and partner training;
- scheduling ongoing programme review.

Initial considerations are also made for the adaptations of health programming for remote action

F. HEALTH ACTION

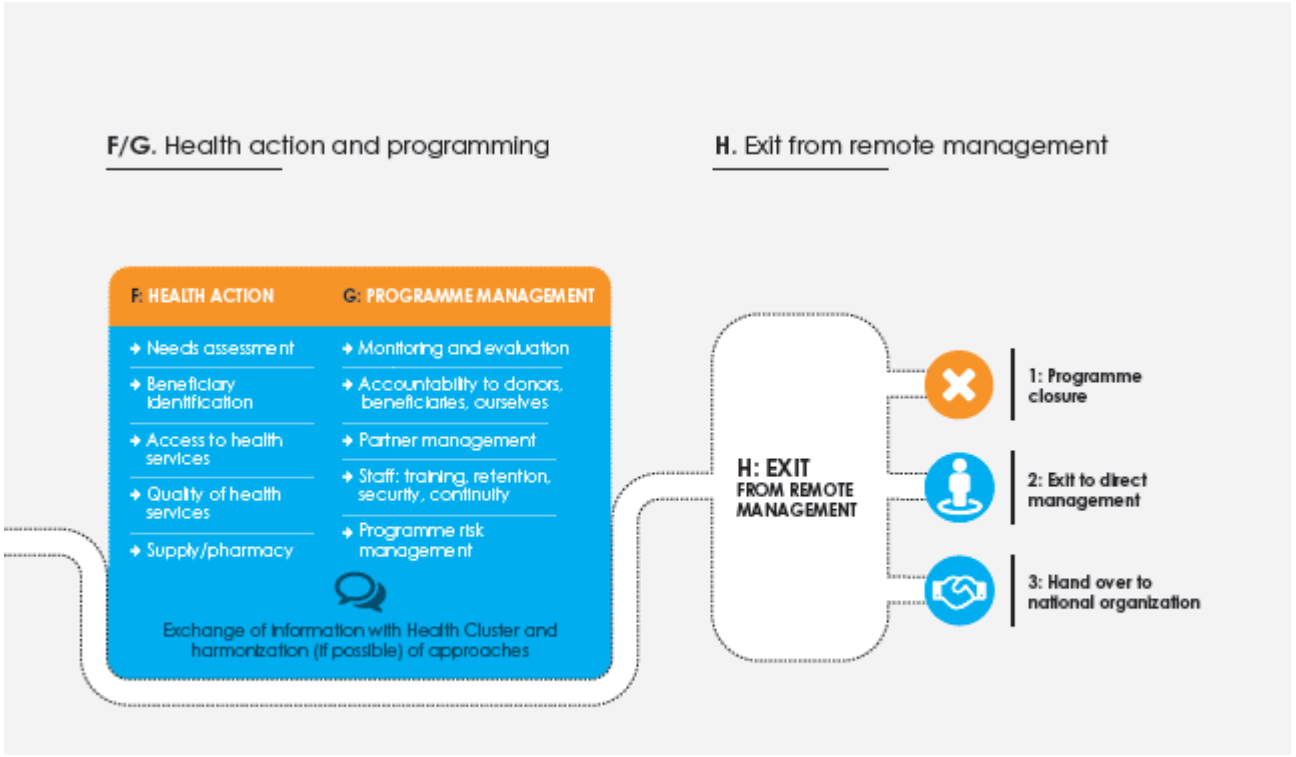


F. HEALTH ACTION

Each component of standard health programming is outlined and ways in which each are affected by the remote operation environment are highlighted. Potential adaptations are also noted. Components include:

- F.1 Needs assessment
- F.2 Beneficiary identification
- F.3 Access to health services
- F.4 Quality of health services
- F.5 Supply/pharmacy.

G. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT



G. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

- This section is one of the most comprehensive providing a detailed look at some of the critical elements of continuing programme management that are most affected in the remote operation context.

- Areas specifically included are:
  - Monitoring and evaluation - direct vs remote monitoring with best practices and examples
  - Accountability - to beneficiaries (and affected populations in general), to donors, and to the agency itself, while detailing how common practices around accountability must be adapted to work in remote environments.

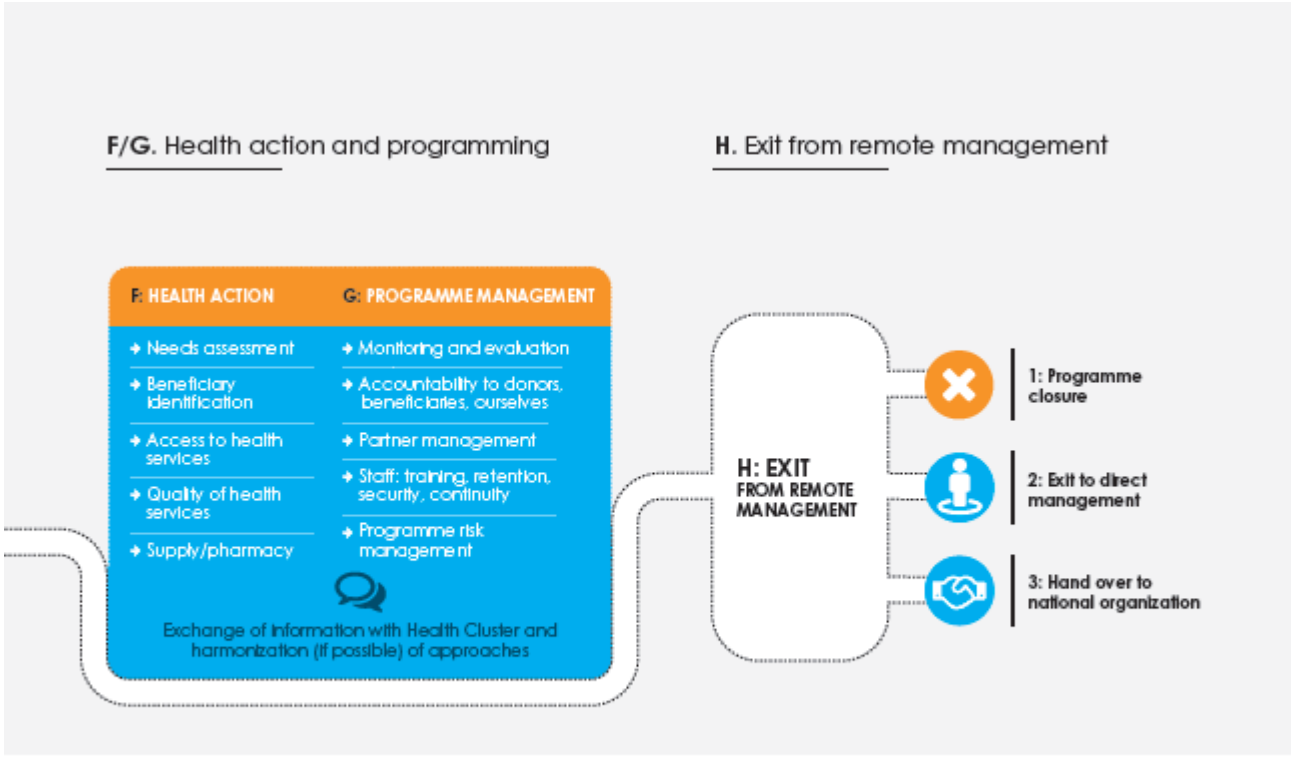
G. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT cont…

- Staff training, retention, security and continuity, looks at some issues surrounding the management and training of national and local staff with particular emphasis on security management, trust-building, methods for training and capacity-building, and promoting sustainability.

- Partner management - specific practices for developing productive relationships with national and local partners.

- Programme risk management, outlines the requirements for a continuing review of risks, which will feed into the adaptation of programming, and ensure that the agency is ready to react to changes in security or access that could necessitate ending remote operation.

H. EXIT FROM REMOTE OPERATION



H. EXIT FROM REMOTE OPERATION

Three options for exiting remote operations , and the conditions that lead to them are presented:

- return to direct implementation (when access is restored);
- programme closure (when security or access unacceptably deteriorates);
- handover of programming to national or local organization (when capacity is high enough).

The section also offers some concrete tips on managing the exit process.