

# Collaborative Drought Planning Using Drought Scenario Exercises

**Collaborative Drought Planning Using Scenario Exercises** is an interactive website that provides information and tools to help plan drought scenario-based exercises — structured, interactive activities designed for engaging decision-makers, stakeholders, planners, emergency managers, and others in the process of planning and managing a hypothetical drought.

## *Presenters*

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### **Deborah Bathke**

Education and Outreach Coordinator,  
National Drought Mitigation Center,  
University of Nebraska – Lincoln

### **Tonya Bernadt**

Education and Outreach Specialist,  
National Drought Mitigation Center,  
University of Nebraska – Lincoln



**NORTH CENTRAL  
REGIONAL CENTER**  
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**WEBINAR • MARCH 6, 2024 • 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)**



# Climbing the IAP2 Ladder with Marketing Hometown America

**Marketing Hometown America (MHA)** is a community-based people attraction program that incorporates IAP2 levels of public participation. IAP2 is an internationally recognized framework that helps practitioners determine the public's role and level of participation in any deliberative engagement process. The MHA curriculum has integrated various engagement tools and tactics that move decision-makers through the IAP2 levels, from inform to empower.



*Presenters:*

**Lynn Adams**

Field Specialist, Community Economic Development, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

**Dr. Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel**

Extension Specialist, Rural Prosperity Nebraska, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**Marilyn Schlake**

Extension Educator, Rural Prosperity Nebraska, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln



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**WEBINAR • APRIL 29, 2024 • 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)**

# COLLABORATIVE DROUGHT PLANNING USING SCENARIO EXERCISES

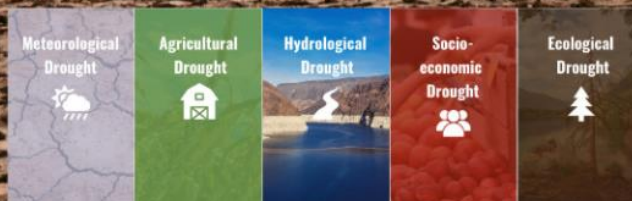
Overview

**Planning Worksheet #1**

**Select an Exercise Type**

This worksheet is intended to help you foster discussions with organizers and partners, weigh selection factors, and discover which exercise types are most compatible with your objectives, planning stage, and capacity. Please note: this worksheet can fully capture all of the unique needs and characteristics of your community or organization. This worksheet can help guide you when selecting an exercise.

Factors	Step 1: Using the results from your needs assessment, identify the factors that are relevant to and authority for your agency or organization.		Step 2: Which of the exercise types best address the identified factors?		
	Is this relevant and/or a priority? (Yes/No)		Workshop	Game	Tabletop
Collect or share information			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Define a component of your drought plan			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create consensus around a planning challenge			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage participants about the complexity of drought			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify challenges and response strategies			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop consensus, policies, or procedures			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Test plan			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discover gaps or resources			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve communication, collaboration, and/or coordination			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitate decision-making or implementing policies and procedures			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify strengths and weaknesses of an existing plan			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What do you want to accomplish with the exercise?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who do you want to participate in the exercise?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What level of interaction would you like participants to have with planning experts?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



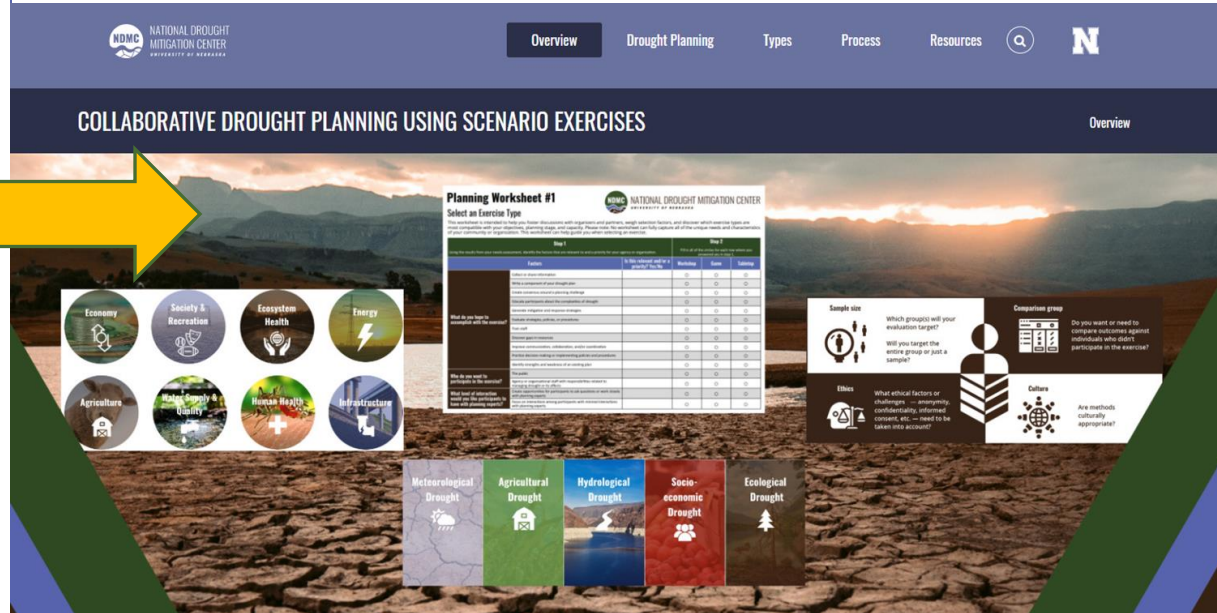
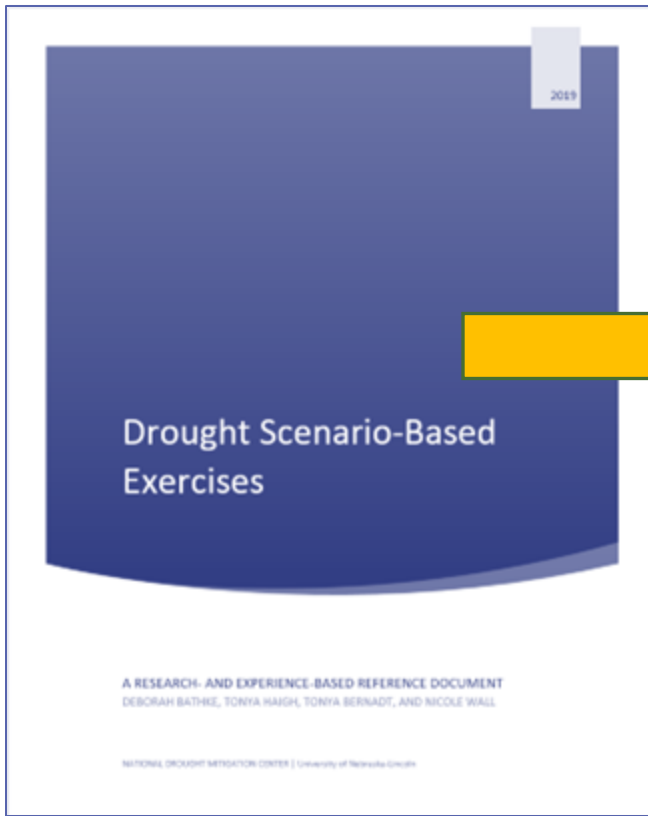
Deborah Bathke, Ph.D., Education Coordinator  
 Tonya Bernadt, M.S., Education and Outreach Specialist



Funding support provided by the North Central Region Water Network and North Central Regional Center for Rural Development

<https://drought.unl.edu/scenarioguide>





Funding support provided by the North Central Region Water Network and North Central Regional Center for Rural Development



# NCRWN & NCRCRD Project

## Interactive Extension guide on using scenario exercises for collaborative drought planning

NATIONAL DROUGHT MITIGATION CENTER



**Mark Svoboda**



**Miranda Meehan**



**Tyler Williams**



**Laura Edwards**



**Peter Tomlinson**



**Hans Schmitz**



# Project Team - Extension

# Question #1

**How familiar are you with drought-based scenario exercises?**

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# What are scenario exercises?

Activities used to plan & manage a hypothetical disaster



## Bridgelynn

**Challenge:** During a drought, the demand for water is higher than usual. As the drought progresses, the water demand increases and leads to a pump failure in one of your municipal wells, which leads to a reduction of water supply to some communities. The pump repair will take 3 days. Ensure that people will have enough drinking water during those days.

<b>Option A</b> <b>Decrease water demand</b> Implement conservation practices and decrease demand on other pumps in the city.	<b>Option B</b> <b>Increase water supply</b> Bring more water into the area affected by pump failure.
<b>MONITORING</b> <div>Water use maps</div>	<b>MONITORING</b> <div>Groundwater maps &amp; Information about vulnerable populations</div>
<b>PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNING</b> <div>Prepared public information messages OR Education on conservation practices</div>	<b>TRANSPORTATION</b> <div>Water supply tanks</div>



## COLLABORATIVE DROUGHT PLANNING USING SCENARIO EXERCISES

Overview



*Collaborative Drought Planning Using Scenario Exercises* provides information and tools to help plan drought scenario-based exercises — structured, interactive activities designed for engaging decision-makers, stakeholders, planners, and emergency managers in the process of planning and managing mitigation and response activities for a hypothetical drought.

The guide has been broken down into four sections, each with background information, tips, examples, and tools to help you understand roles that scenario-based exercises can play in reducing drought risk and to select and begin planning an exercise for your community or organization. Consider the information and approaches presented here as guidance based on research and experience rather than as a fixed set of steps and procedures. The goal is to present previously successful strategies you can employ to design the right exercise for your group.

Website  
sections



<https://drought.unl.edu/scenarioguide>



# Website sections

## Drought Planning



Introduces drought planning and the role that scenario-based exercises play in preparedness.

## Types



Describes the three forms of exercises and presents information to aid selection.

## Process



Lays the groundwork for designing a successful drought scenario-based exercise.

## Resources



Provides resources including case studies, research findings, a glossary, and references.

# DROUGHT PLANNING

Drought Planning

Whether they creep up on communities or take hold in a flash, droughts can lead to disastrous economic, environmental and human health consequences. The best way to prepare is to have a plan in place. The information presented in the sections below will help you learn more about drought, its potential effects on your community, and how you can use scenario planning and exercises to increase your community's preparedness.

## Drought Basics



## Reasons to Prepare



## Scenario Planning



# Scenario exercises and their contribution to drought planning

# Defining Drought

Key  
point

Drought can mean different things to different people.  
Click on a perspective to learn more.



## Agricultural Drought

Effects of rain/snow deficits on crop and forage growth

## Hydrological Drought

Effects of rain/snow deficits on streamflow, lakes and reservoirs, and groundwater

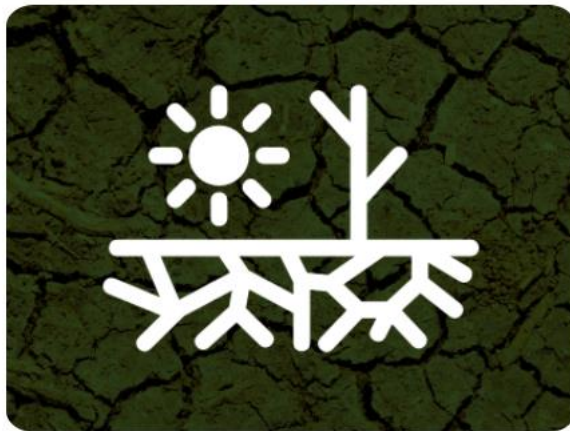


# DROUGHT PLANNING

Drought Planning

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## Drought Basics



## Reasons to Prepare



## Scenario Planning



# Scenario exercises and their contribution to drought planning

# Drought Impacts

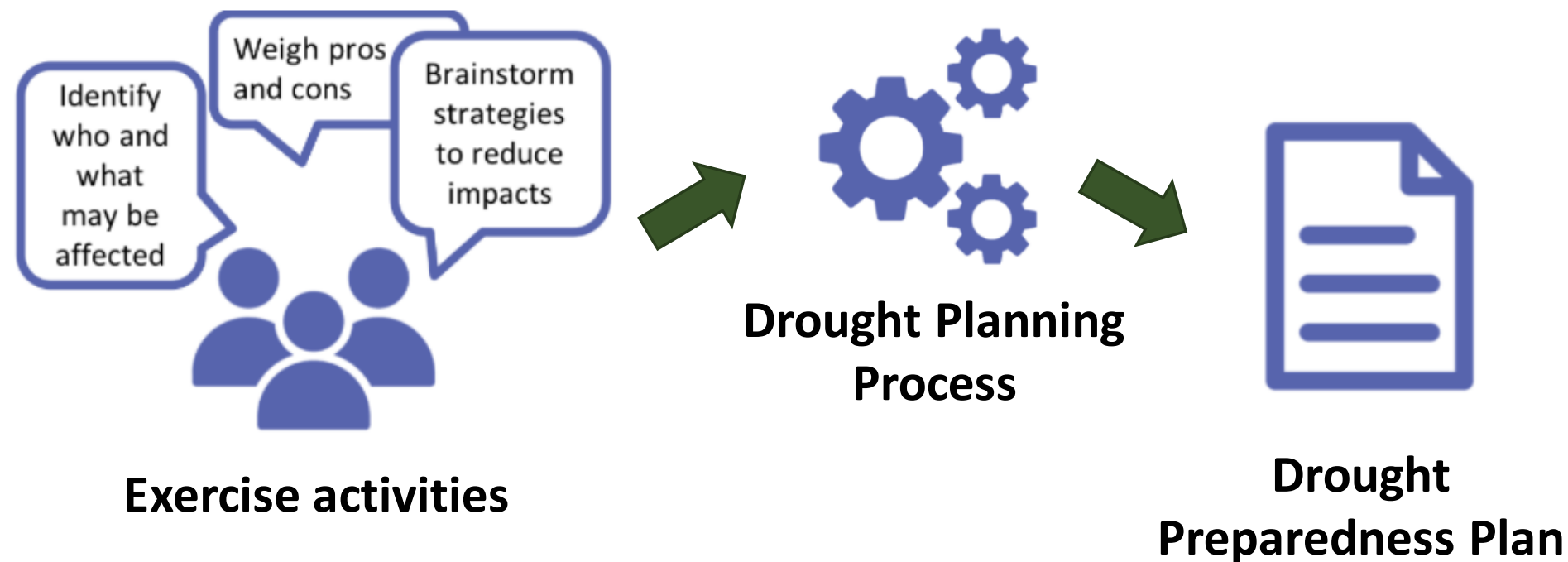
Click on a sector to see examples of recent drought impacts.



- Decreased air and water quality can cause respiratory issues, skin irritation, or gastrointestinal problems.
- Stagnant water can lead to increased West Nile case numbers.
- Financial burdens experienced during drought can escalate mental health issues.

# Prepare for impacts

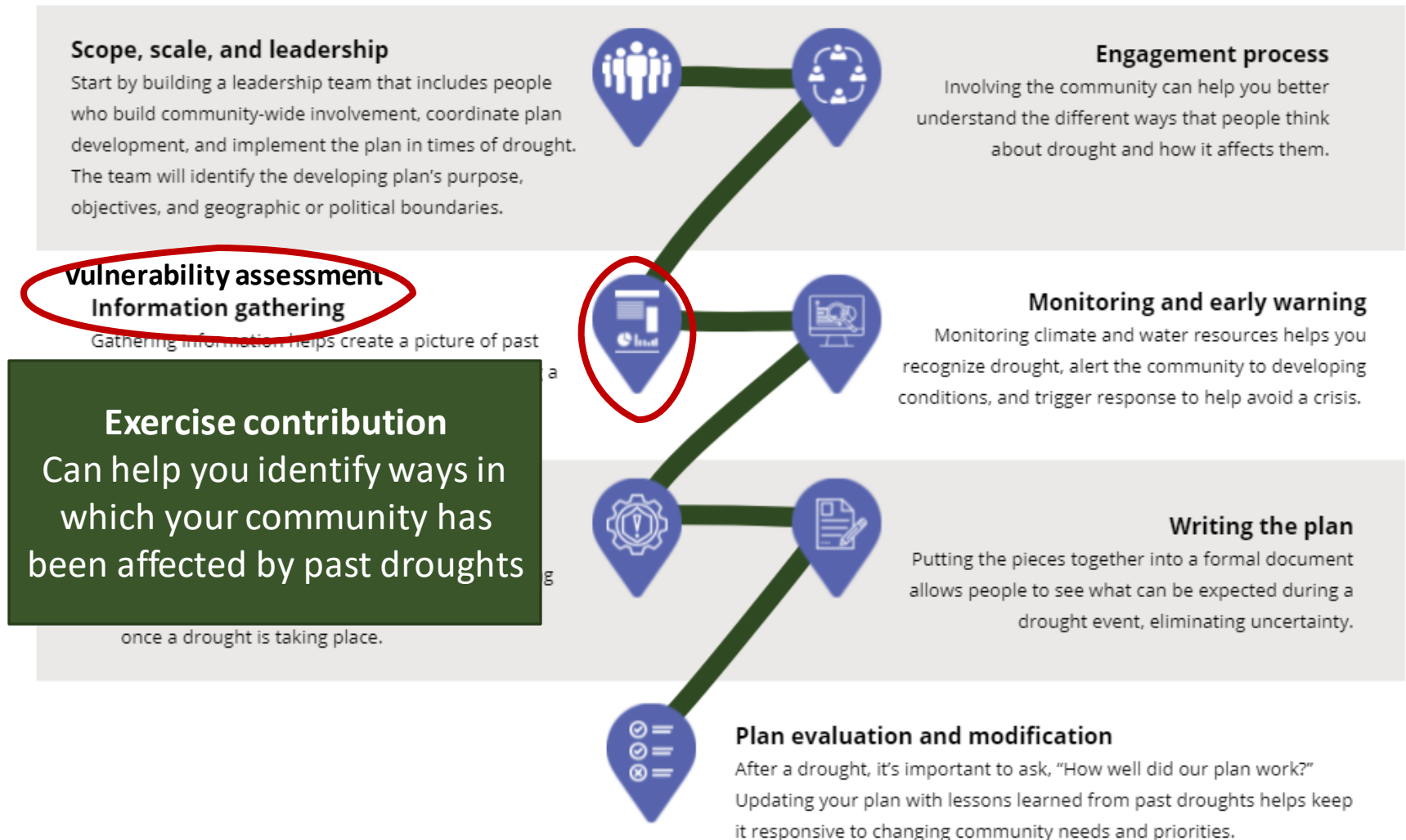
Scenario-based exercises offer opportunities to address and plan for drought impacts before they happen. Here's how:





# Drought Planning Process

No matter where you are in the drought planning process, scenario-based exercises can make a contribution.



## COLLABORATIVE DROUGHT PLANNING USING SCENARIO EXERCISES

Overview



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Website  
sections



<https://drought.unl.edu/scenarioguide>

## TYPES

Types

Discussion-based drought scenario exercises offer an innovative way to actively engage your community or organization in conversations related to planning for and responding to drought. They can take the form of a workshop, tabletop exercise, or a game. Explore how these exercise types are used.

### Workshops



Informal discussions with presentations and breakout groups.

### Games



Friendly competition with teams and interactive learning.

### Tabletop Exercises



Low-stress walk-through of plan implementation.

### Compare Exercises



Compare key characteristics of all exercise types.

3 types of discussion-based exercises

Comparison chart



# Workshops

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## Focus:

Gathering information, sharing or generating new knowledge, and building products.



# Workshops



## CASE STUDY: WORKSHOP

### North Platte River Basin Drought THIRA

Kearney, Nebraska • April 2017



NATIONAL DROUGHT  
MITIGATION CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA



TYPE	Workshop
DURATION	1 day
SCOPE	Sub-state, multi-sector
PARTICIPANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders and decision-makers in: natural resources energy, municipalities, emergency management, and recreation and tourism sectors</li> <li>Facilitators</li> <li>Coordinators</li> <li>Developers</li> </ul>
PARTICIPANT COUNT	40
PARTICIPANT ROLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion group member</li> <li>Facilitators</li> <li>Drought experts</li> </ul>
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hydrologic, climatic, and socio-economic data</li> <li>GIS</li> <li>Expert opinion</li> <li>Flipcharts</li> </ul>
DEVELOPMENT TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of Nebraska Public Policy Center</li> <li>National Drought Mitigation Center</li> <li>High Plains Regional Climate Center</li> </ul>
APPROXIMATE COST	\$3,000 for catering, facilities, and staff travel. Excludes staff time for exercise development
FUNDING SOURCE	NOAA Sectoral Applications Research Program (SARP)

## SCENARIO

The scenario was set in the North Platte River Basin with participants engaging in group discussions focused on 16 of the 32 core capabilities identified in the [National Preparedness Goal](#).

Participants could attend four groups, with each group focusing on a different core capability. Based on a scenario consisting of a 5-year drought with challenges such as wildfires, dust storms, West Nile, water supply and quality, decreased agricultural production, heatwaves, and power outages, participants identified desired preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities.

## OBJECTIVES

- Determine the usefulness of the Department of Homeland Security's THIRA process for drought planning
- Educate participants on the multi-sector impacts of drought
- Identify drought preparedness capabilities and required resources
- Increase collaboration in the planning process



# Games

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## Focus:

Collective learning in a friendly, competitive environment.





# Games



## CASE STUDY: GAME

### Iowa Multi-hazard Tournament

Cedar Rapids, Iowa • September 2016



NATIONAL DROUGHT  
MITIGATION CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

TYPE	Game
DURATION	1 day
SCOPE	Sub-state, multi-sector
PARTICIPANTS	Representatives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal, state, and local governments</li> <li>Non-governmental organizations</li> <li>Farmers</li> <li>Academics</li> </ul>
PARTICIPANT COUNT	60
PARTICIPANT ROLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-sector team player</li> <li>Team facilitator</li> <li>Announcer</li> <li>Referee</li> </ul>
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hydrologic, climatic, and drought impact data</li> <li>Hydrologic model</li> <li>Web based decision-support system</li> <li>Expert knowledge</li> <li>Play book</li> <li>Computers and monitors</li> </ul>
DEVELOPMENT TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Institute for Water Resources and Rock Island District</li> <li>Iowa State University, University of Iowa, University of Nebraska, Lincoln</li> <li>Natural Resources Conservation Service</li> <li>USDA, NOAA, USGS</li> <li>The City of Cedar Rapids</li> <li>UNESCO HELP</li> <li>The Nature Conservancy</li> <li>Sandia Labs</li> </ul>
APPROXIMATE COST	\$200,000
FUNDING SOURCE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of City of Cedar Rapids, IA

## SCENARIO

Participants worked within teams to select appropriate adaptation options for the scenarios under the constraints of time, budgets, state and municipal regulations, and technical aspects.

Game challenges took place over four rounds and included: (1) the selection of water management strategies and adaptation options for a 20-year planning period for a (2) flood, (3) drought, and (4) climate change. The scenario was set in the Cedar River Basin and was based upon hydrologic modeling and climate information.

## OBJECTIVES

- Increase the participants' awareness of policies, strategies, and resources to reduce drought, flood, and water quality risks
- Evaluate the impacts of mitigation strategies for different climate conditions
- Build relationships and potential partnerships between stakeholders



# Tabletop exercises

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Focus:

Low stress walk  
through of an existing  
drought plan



# Tabletop exercises



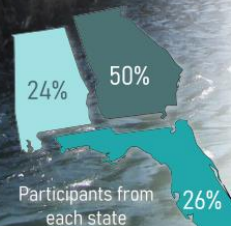
## ACF River Basin Drought Tabletop Exercise

*"We're all in this together!"*

Droughts are not discrete events, making it challenging to determine when drought starts and when it ends. The Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint (ACF) Basin covers 19,600 square miles across Alabama, Florida, and Georgia and is home to nearly 6.8 million people. Water management in the basin is critical in both wet and dry years however, water stress becomes much more prevalent in the ACF during times of drought. The availability of ACF water resources can be limited during times of drought, and a variety of economic and environmental impacts can result. Water management in the ACF is a shared responsibility between federal, state and local governments and ultimately every entity that consumes or uses water in the ACF.

To facilitate interstate and interagency interactions on ways to address drought, the ACF Stakeholders (ACFS) and National Drought Mitigation Center hosted a drought tabletop exercise on March 1, 2023 in Eufaula, Alabama. This exercise brought together sixty participants from federal, state and local governments and utilities gathered to have an open dialogue about how they respond to different stages of drought. The exchange encouraged the sharing of ideas and opened the door to future collaborations in drought management. Most importantly, the workshop provided an opportunity to bring together stakeholders from across the region to work toward a more resilient future from the ACF Basin.

*"I learned that there is already a tremendous amount of communication and coordination that is happening at multiple levels. It was very inspiring!"*



### Exercise objectives were to:

1. Increase awareness of roles and responsibilities for drought planning and response
2. Increase awareness of drought challenges and resources
3. Increase collaboration for drought planning, mitigation and response







Workshop



Games



Tabletop Exercise

<b>Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a plan component</li> <li>Education or training</li> <li>Knowledge sharing</li> <li>Build consensus</li> <li>Improve collaboration and communication</li> <li>Generate mitigation and response strategies</li> <li>Identify resource needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage a wide variety of individuals in the planning process</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Knowledge sharing</li> <li>Build consensus</li> <li>Improve collaboration and communication</li> <li>Explore and evaluate mitigation and response strategies</li> <li>Practice resource and/or budget allocation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote plan familiarity</li> <li>Training</li> <li>Information sharing</li> <li>Practice group problem solving and decision-making</li> <li>Evaluate mitigation and response strategies</li> <li>Identify gaps in resource or staff allocation</li> </ul>
<b>Format</b>	Informal discussion with presentations and breakout groups	Friendly competition with teams and interactive learning	Low-stress walk through of plan implementation
<b>Participants</b>	Single- or multi-sector Stakeholder or agency	Multi-sector stakeholder	Anyone with a policy, planning or response role
<b>Time</b>	4 hours to multiple days	2–8 hours	1–4 hours
<b>Planning stage</b>	Developing or existing plan	Developing or existing plan	Existing plan

## COLLABORATIVE DROUGHT PLANNING USING SCENARIO EXERCISES

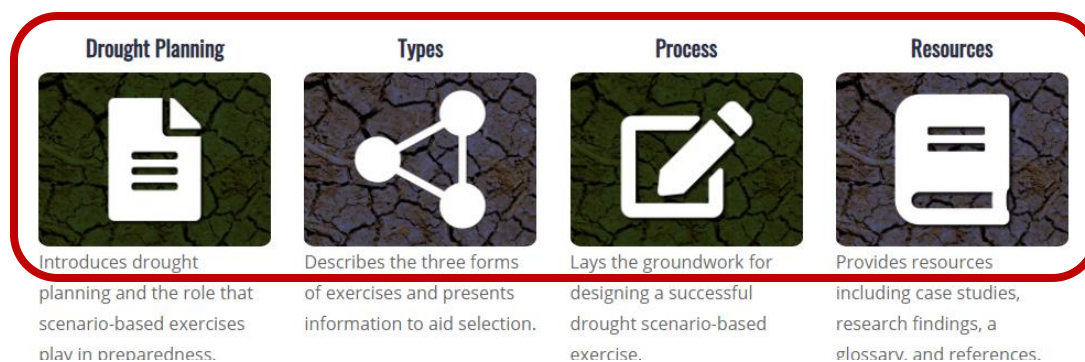
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Website  
sections



<https://drought.unl.edu/scenarioguide>

## EXERCISE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Process

You'll need to consider a wide range of aspects in the design and development of the scenario-based exercise to ensure that it produces the results, findings, or changes that you hope to achieve. To help approach this complex task, this section breaks down the process into five phases, each with information, tools, and resources to assist you with this process.

### Foundation



Lay the groundwork for your exercise by assessing your needs and capabilities, establishing partnerships, and defining the scope and objectives.

### Planning



Create a roadmap for design by selecting an exercise type, estimating costs, gaining support, and building work teams.

### Design



Transform your plans into the products and materials that will be used to deliver the exercise and assess its effectiveness.

### Implementation



Ensure the exercise goes smoothly by holding a pre-event orientation, managing logistics, setting expectations, and collecting data.

### Impact



Get the most out of your exercise by assessing what went well and what didn't, planning your next steps, and help others by sharing lessons learned.





**Consider your  
needs**

**Assess your  
capacity**

**Establish a  
development team**

**Define the  
scope**

**Set goals  
and objectives**

## Consider Your Needs

The needs assessment is arguably the most important step since it builds the foundation for your entire drought scenario-based exercise. This assessment will help you define the problems, establish the reasons to conduct an exercise, and identify the challenges, functions, or tasks that you will address during the exercise.

### Where are we?

- No drought plan
- Lack of coordination among agencies
- Insufficient response actions
- Conflict among users during water shortages



### Where do we want to be?

- Up-to-date drought plan
- System to facilitate coordination among agencies
- Strategies to help lessen negative drought impacts
- Buy-in among water users



[Foundation Worksheet #1: Consider Your Needs \(pdf\)](#)

# Questions #3

**What are your community's main drought concerns?**

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**Consider your  
needs**

**Assess your  
capacity**

**Establish a  
development team**

**Define the  
scope**

**Set goals  
and objectives**

## **Assess your capacity**

Planning, developing, delivering, and evaluating a drought scenario-based exercise takes a commitment of time and resources. Capacity can affect complexity & potential outcomes.

### **Example capacities for developing, convening, and evaluating a drought scenario-based exercise**

#### **Financial**



Money that you  
can commit,  
leverage, or raise

#### **Knowledge & Skills**



Staff expertise,  
competence,  
and experience

#### **Time**



Preparation time  
and staff  
availability

#### **Culture & Climate**



Values, attitudes,  
and  
relationships

#### **Facility & Materials**



Concrete  
resources

**[Foundation Worksheet #2: Assess Your Capacity \(pdf\)](#)**







## EXERCISE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Process

### Foundation



### Planning



### Design



### Implementation



### Impact



Select an exercise  
type

Estimate costs

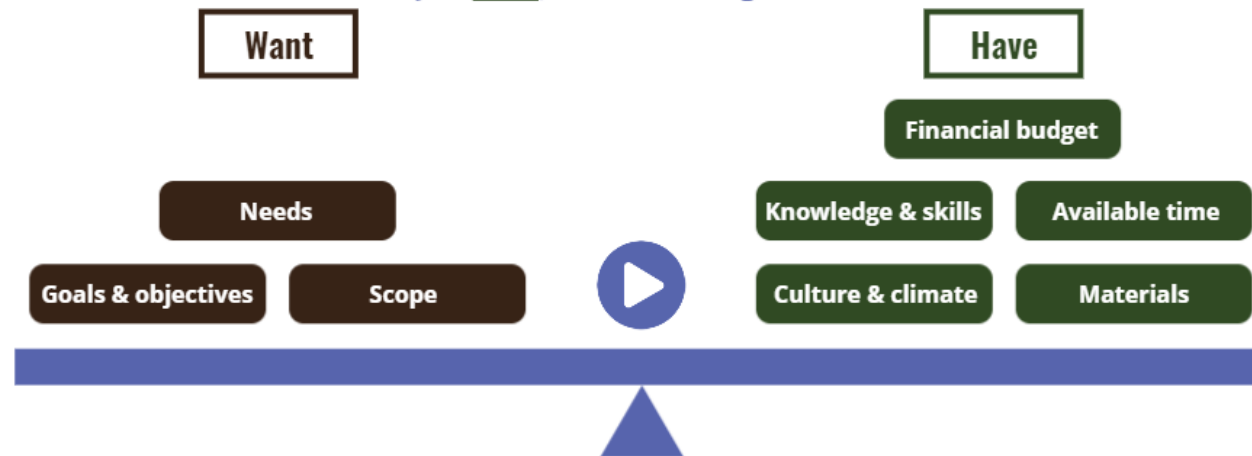
Gain support

Identify working  
groups

## Select an exercise type

There's no single, "best" exercise.

Selecting the "right" exercise involves determining what you want, assessing what you have, and balancing the two



## Planning Worksheet #1: Select an Exercise Type

# Planning Worksheet #1



**NATIONAL DROUGHT MITIGATION CENTER**  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

## Select an Exercise Type

This worksheet is intended to help you foster discussions with organizers and partners, weigh selection factors, and discover which exercise types are most compatible with your objectives, planning stage, and capacity. Please note: No worksheet can fully capture all of the unique needs and characteristics of your community or organization. This worksheet can help guide you when selecting an exercise.

Step 1			Step 2		
Using the results from your needs assessment, identify the factors that are relevant to and a priority for your agency or organization.			Is this type of exercise compatible with the relevant factor? Circle YES responses and cross out NO responses.		
Factors	Is this relevant and/or a priority? Yes/No	Workshop	Game	Tabletop	
<b>What do you hope to accomplish with the exercise?</b>	Collect or share information		YES	YES	NO
	Write a component of your drought plan		YES	NO	NO
	Create consensus around a planning challenge		YES	YES	NO
	Educate participants about the complexities of drought		YES	YES	YES
	Generate mitigation and response strategies		YES	YES	NO
	Evaluate strategies, policies, or procedures		NO	YES	YES
	Train staff		YES	NO	YES
	Discover gaps in resources		YES	NO	YES
	Improve communication, collaboration, and/or coordination		YES	YES	YES
	Practice decision-making or implementing policies and procedures		NO	YES	YES
	Identify strengths and weakness of an existing plan		NO	NO	YES
<b>Who do you want to participate in the exercise?</b>	The public		YES	YES	NO
	Agency or organizational staff with responsibilities related to managing drought or its effects		NO	NO	YES
<b>What level of interaction would you like participants to have with planning experts?</b>	Create opportunities for participants to ask questions or work closely with planning experts		YES	NO	YES
	Focus on interactions among participants with minimal interactions with planning experts		NO	YES	NO





## Estimate costs

Costs vary depending on your capacity, the type of exercise and its complexity, your desired outcomes, and the technology and materials used

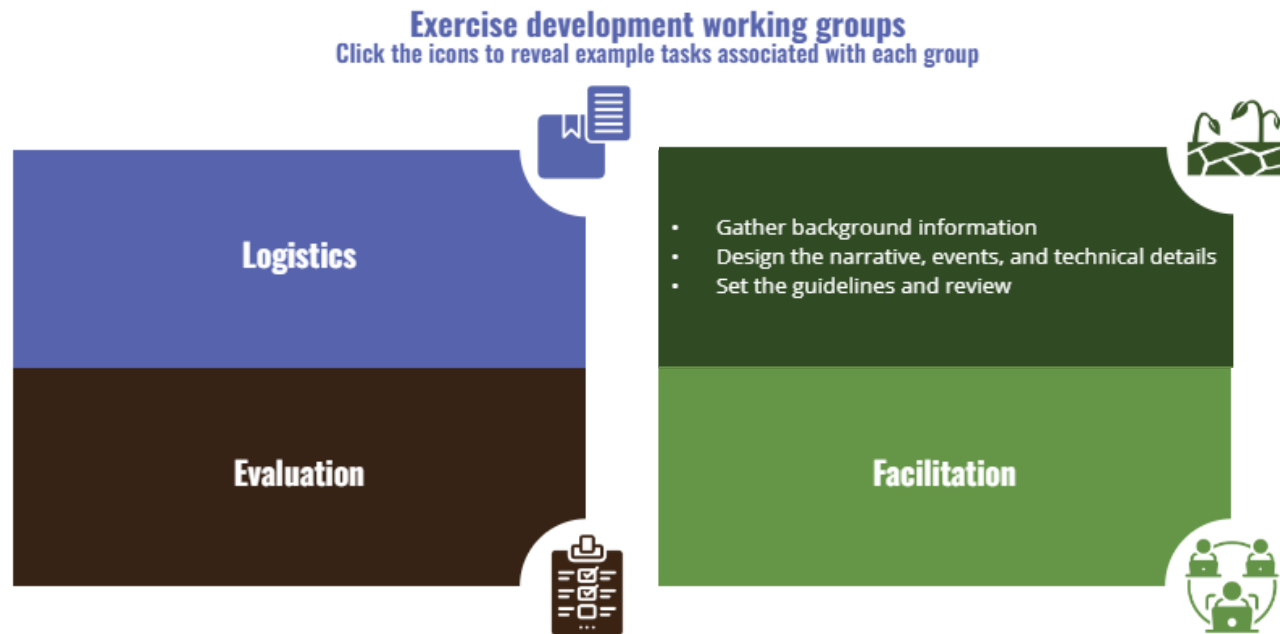


## Planning Worksheet #2: Estimate Costs



## Identify Working Groups

People who create the products needed to design, deliver, and assess the impact of the exercise.



## Planning Worksheet #4: Identify Working Groups



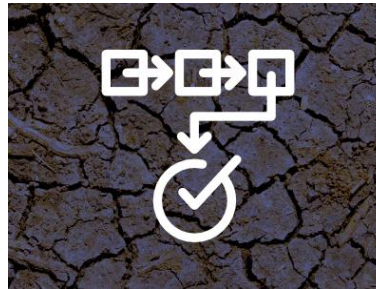
## EXERCISE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Process

### Foundation



### Planning



### Design



### Implementation



### Impact





**Organize the  
logistics**




**Build the scenario**

**Write the  
evaluation plan**

**Outline the  
facilitation methods**

## **Build the scenario**

Practical details that help ensure you exercise runs smoothly

	<b>Scripted</b>	<b>Diagram/storyboard</b>	<b>Animation/simulation</b>
<b>Types</b>			
<b>Definition</b>	A text that describes the scenario, providing basic information about a drought and its effects.	A sequence of diagrams or other images that supplement the narrative.	A computer-based display of the behavior of multiple variables during a drought.

# Collect background information

# Outline the narrative

# Identify events (challenges)

## Step 2: Background information for the scenario.

Question	Answer
When did your most recent drought occur? What was its severity and duration?	
What is your drought of record? That is, what is the worst drought, in terms of severity and duration that has been recorded in climate or hydrologic data?	
What were the priority impacts that you addressed in <i>Foundation Worksheet #4: Define the Scope?</i> In your research, did you find any other impacts that surprised you or that were particularly difficult to manage?	
What did your exploration of related information reveal that could help you focus the scenario?	

2

## Task 2: Design the scenario components.

**a. Outline the narrative.** An easy way to accomplish this and ensure that you don't forget key information is by writing down short responses to questions below.

Question	Answer
What is the length and severity of the drought that you want to depict in the scenario?	
How fast does the drought develop?	
Where does the drought take place?	
In what season does the drought begin, peak, end?	
What are the relevant weather and hydrologic conditions?	
Who and what does the drought affect?	
How will participants find out about the drought?	

3

**b. Identify the events.** Create an event list by completing the table below. Basing the events on your priority impacts will make them relevant to your participants and ensure that you meet exercise objectives (see *Foundation Worksheet #5: Set the Goals and Objectives*).

Event #	Event Description What is the situation or problem that you want participants to address?	Corresponding objective What objective does this event help you achieve?	Expected participant action What will participants do to respond to the event?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

4

# Build the scenario

*Following these steps can help ensure your exercise goes smoothly. Click on a step to learn more.*



## Pre-event preparations

In the final two weeks leading up to the exercise, a number of tasks need to be completed to make sure everything is ready to go. Some tasks may be completed much earlier, depending on your overall timeline.

### Final Tasks

*Click on a task to learn more*

[Create materials](#)[Engage participants](#)[Finalize the logistics](#)

# Implementation



*Now that you've held your exercise, it's time to evaluate it and reflect on the experience; identify, prioritize, and plan next steps; and summarize and share findings. Click on a step to learn more.*



## Finish the evaluation

Start by reviewing your **evaluation plan** to remind yourself what you hoped to learn. Next, prepare, analyze, and interpret your data so that you are able use your results.

### Tasks for finishing the evaluation

*Click on a task to learn more*



# Impact

# Question #4

**What type of exercise would you be interested in learning more about?**

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## RESOURCES

Resources

This section offers additional material to build your knowledge about drought planning and scenario exercises. Explore past exercises, case studies, a glossary of terms and a list of references used to create this guide.

### Past Events



### Worksheets



### Glossary



### References





# Thank you!

dbathke1@unl.edu  
tbernadt5@unl.edu

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[DROUGHT.UNL.EDU/SCENARIOGUIDE](https://drought.unl.edu/scenarioguide)

