

METHODOLOGY

This Lessons Paper follows [ALNAP's Lessons Papers: A methods note](#) and combines a systematic evidence review with a structured Delphi panel process (see [Annex](#)) to identify and validate lessons from humanitarian responses to drought.

The study began with a scoping phase to refine research questions, informed by consultations with humanitarian practitioners working directly on drought response. The scope focused on humanitarian responses to drought between 2012 and 2024, covering preparedness, response, recovery and resilience, as well as cross-cutting themes such as gender, protection and localisation.

We conducted a systematic search of more than 20 humanitarian, academic and institutional databases, including ALNAP, Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), ODI Global, ReliefWeb, UN Evaluation Group and World Food Programme (WFP). Using defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, we screened over 1,000 documents, selected 224 for detailed analysis and assessed each one for relevance, methodological rigour and scope, enabling weighted analysis of the evidence. We then extracted, thematically coded and synthesised findings, lessons and recommendations through a structured analytical process. This generated an initial longlist of lessons, which we refined and consolidated into a focused set of drought-specific lessons. Finally, we validated these lessons via a two-round Delphi panel process in which panel members reviewed, verified and refined the findings, assessed their relevance and clarity, and identified gaps or missing perspectives. Where gaps were found, the long list of lessons were reviewed and relevant lessons 'lost' during consolidation were added in. If there was no supportive evidence but a Delphi panel member contributed an important view, this was added as well but indicated as a perspective from the Delphi panel not from literature.

Please see the [Annex](#) for a detailed methodology, including evidence-scoring frameworks and inclusion and exclusion criteria.