



Australian Institute for  
Disaster Resilience

# Handbook Collection

## Management Policy & Framework

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## Version control

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# Preface

## Purpose

This policy explains the framework of the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection (the 'Handbook Collection') and outlines principles and processes to support its ongoing management. It is designed to be validated in practice and reviewed and amended as required.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- clarify the purpose of the Handbook Collection
- clarify the fundamentals of the Handbook Collection
- describe the relationship between the Handbook Collection and national, state, territory and local policy, strategy, legislation, standards and procedures
- describe the relationship between the Handbook Collection and other disaster resilience and emergency management doctrinal collections produced by agencies, peak bodies and other jurisdictions
- clarify governance structures and responsibilities for ownership of the Handbook Collection
- define processes and responsibilities for management of the Handbook Collection and supporting companion publications through their lifecycles.

## Audience

This policy is intended for the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) as custodians of the Handbook Collection, as well as partners, individuals, organisations and groups with responsibilities and authorisation to support development and review of the Handbook Collection. This policy may also be used in development of other doctrine owned and managed by other agencies and organisations.

## Acknowledgements

- Emergency Management Australia, Department of Home Affairs
- AFAC
- Australian Red Cross
- Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre
- Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd

# Introduction

AIDR is contracted by Emergency Management Australia (EMA) to manage the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection ('Handbook Collection'), known formerly as the national disaster doctrine collection.

The Handbook Collection is owned by the Commonwealth of Australia and copyrighted as such, requiring all publications in the collection to be authorised by an appropriate Commonwealth officer. (Please note: this process excludes companion documents as these do not use the Commonwealth logo).

The Handbook Collection has been developed on an ongoing basis in response to the evolution of national emergency management arrangements, including priorities driven by the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*, the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*, *Australia's Vulnerability Profile* and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. The contemporary Handbook Collection expands the national disaster doctrine collection to more fully address considerations before, during and after disasters, and to include audiences beyond the traditional emergency management sector including non-government organisations/not-for-profits, the private sector, education, academic and research institutions, community groups and individuals.

Following a detailed audit of the existing collection, publications have been organised into several categories:

- publications to be retained in the handbook collection and positioned in relation to the collection framework
- publications to be retired and archived
- publications to be transferred to another custodian.

Retained publications will be entered into the lifecycle management program for review. This process will progressively align existing (retained) and new publications to the publication style described in the framework.

National consultative committees representing a range of state and territory emergency service agencies, governments, organisations, community groups and individuals involved in disaster resilience are involved in the review of the Handbook Collection.

The Handbook Collection and related publications and resources are freely available online through the [Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub](#) (the 'Knowledge Hub').

# Section 1: The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience

The 2011 *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience* (NSDR) emerged out of a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement to adopt a whole-of-nation resilience-based approach to disaster management. The NSDR recognised the need for a national, coordinated and cooperative effort to enhance Australia's capacity to withstand and recover from emergencies and disasters.

The NSDR exists to provide high-level direction and guidance to Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments, business and community leaders and the not-for-profit sector, on building disaster resilient communities across Australia.

## Connecting national strategy to local practice

The principle of shared responsibility is central to the NSDR; governments, businesses, communities, household and individuals all have a role to play in building resilience.

State, territory and local governments are expected to use the NSDR to inform local policies, strategies and actions. Businesses and community leaders, as well as the not-for-profit sector, are also advised to embrace this approach.

The Handbook Collection supports implementation of the NSDR by:

- providing the authoritative and trusted source of knowledge about disaster resilience principles in Australia
- aligning national disaster resilience strategy and policy with practice, by guiding and supporting jurisdictions, agencies and other organisations and individuals in their implementation and adoption
- highlights and promotes the adoption of good practice in building disaster resilience in Australia
- builds interoperability between jurisdictions, agencies, businesses and communities by promoting use of a common language and coordinated, nationally agreed principles.

The Handbook Collection provides a common frame of reference as a starting point for development of plans and operational and procedural documents to support implementation.

## National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

Reducing disaster risk is critical to supporting communities and economies to be resilient when a shock occurs. Recognising this, in early 2018 the Australian Government invited all states and territories, local government, and key private sector representatives to work together to co-design and develop the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework. The Framework was endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management (MCPEM) on 28 June 2019.

The *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework*, which is informed by the *Sendai Framework*, sets out the foundational work to proactively reduce risk now and into the future. It guides national,

whole-of-society efforts to proactively reduce disaster risk in order to minimise the loss and suffering caused by disasters.

## **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030**

The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015- 2030* was adopted by Australia and other members of the United Nations at the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Through the Sendai Framework, Australia recognise the importance of not only managing disasters, but managing disaster risk.

The *Sendai Framework* states that to strengthen resilience, countries must prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk. It also outlines four global priorities for action to disaster risk: understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to 'Build Back Better' in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.



**Figure 1** The Handbook Collection aligns national disaster resilience strategy and policy with practice, by guiding and supporting jurisdictions, agencies and other organisations and individuals in their implementation and adoption.

## Commonwealth emergency management responsibilities

The Handbook Collection is produced and managed as part of the Australian Government's responsibilities for emergency management. These responsibilities include:

- **Response and recovery**

Under the Australian governance arrangements, responding to disasters is primarily a matter for the state and territory governments. When the total resources (government, community and commercial) of an affected state or territory cannot reasonably cope with the needs of the situation, the state or territory government can seek assistance from the Australian Government. A range of recovery assistance is also provided by the Australian Government to help hardest hit communities recover from disasters.

- **Prevention and preparation**

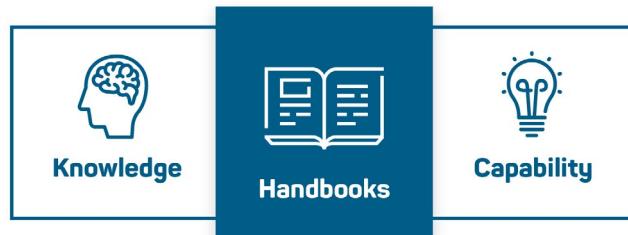
The responsibilities of the Australian Government in prevention and preparation include helping coordinate national efforts in disaster research, information management, and mitigation policy and practice to reduce the risks and costs of emergencies to the nation.

## Relationship to state and territory doctrine collections

Policies are directions from government. National emergency management policies (which include the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*, *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* are authoritative and bind governments and their relevant agencies to the degree laid out in the relevant legislative documents, and arrangements. The Handbook Collection is an authoritative source, endorsed by the Government, and is a translation of these policies into principles (see [Australian Emergency Management Arrangements](#) (AIDR 2019)).

# Section 2: What is the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection?

## Fundamentals



The Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection provides guidance on national principles and practices for disaster resilience.

The Handbook Collection:

- is the authoritative and trusted source of knowledge about disaster resilience principles in Australia
- aligns national disaster risk reduction policy and resilience strategy with practice, by guiding and supporting jurisdictions, agencies and other organisations and individuals in their implementation and adoption
- highlights and promotes the adoption of good practice in building disaster resilience in Australia
- builds interoperability between jurisdictions, agencies, businesses and communities by promoting use of a common language and coordinated, nationally agreed principles.

The principles presented in the Handbook Collection are developed from expertise, experience, learning, theoretical analysis, data analysis, research utilisation and collaboration amongst agencies, organisations, governments and communities that provide and/or receive services and support before, during and after disasters.

The Handbook Collection is framed and organised in a way that links related content both within the collection itself and from other national and international collections. This facilitates knowledge sharing, adoption, implementation and distribution by users across a multitude of organisations, individuals, jurisdictions, disasters and contexts.

The Handbook Collection is managed through a program of collaboration, consultation and constant review to ensure it continues to be:

- an authoritative representation of national principles and guidance in disaster resilience as agreed by leading organisations and experts
- encompassing of the broader national disaster risk reduction, disaster resilience and recovery sectors, including content specific to the before, during and after disaster contexts
- a guide on the philosophy of why the principles exist to be applied to a situation, rather than a guide on how to apply the principles in a situation
- an outline of nationally agreed principles rather than mandated or required operational practice and procedures
- sourced by a broad national – and ideally international – audience beyond one defined group
- current, accessible and functional
- evidence-based
- adaptable to a broad range of circumstances and contexts
- organised through rigorous development and internal consistency
- structured and published to meet the needs of the intended audience.

## Scope of the Handbook Collection

### Purpose

The Handbook Collection is guided by national policy and strategy to support its audiences in developing capabilities to enhance disaster resilience across different disasters, jurisdictions, contexts and stakeholders.

The Handbook Collection does not purport to describe how to carry out operations in response to an emergency, nor does it provide prescriptive operational or practical guidance for different contexts. Rather, the collection is designed to support planning and operational decision-making nationally.

Based on identified needs and value assessments, companion documents will be developed for handbooks within the collection. These will provide additional guidance in the application and implementation of principles outlined in the corresponding handbook.

### Audience

The intended audiences for the Handbook Collection are those responsible for developing policies, capabilities and doctrine within their own jurisdictions, agencies, organisations, and communities. These agencies and organisations include Commonwealth, state, territory and local government departments, emergency management agencies and non-government organisations.

The audience also includes community groups, educators, planners, businesses and the private sector who may find content in the handbooks of value to them.

It is expected that international organisations involved in disaster resilience will also use or refer to the handbooks.

### Inclusion in the collection

Existing and future publications must meet one of two criteria to be retained or added to the Handbook Collection:

- The content provides a national perspective, focuses on principles, philosophies and guidance, and is relevant to more than one specific organisation or community of practice; or
- The publication is of national significance, is developed by a specific community of practice and is included into the collection for national visibility.

### Other doctrine publications

Other related national emergency management doctrine is owned by organisations such as AFAC, Australian Red Cross, emergency service agencies, government including police and health services and departments; and is managed according to their internal processes. Similarly, state and territory agencies and departments manage doctrine to meet their constitutional obligations. The following table provides guidance for determining the ownership of doctrine, which may or may not be owned by the Commonwealth of Australia.

**Table 1** Doctrine ownership guidance

Criterion	Ownership			
	Australian Government	National e.g. NGOs	State/territory	Organisation
<b>Implements policy</b>	Responds to policies and plans of the Australian Government	Aligns specific communities of practice with national doctrine	Responds to policy directions of a state or territory and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with other states and territories	Aligns with state or territory legislation, policy or agency decisions
<b>Breadth of application</b>	Impact of influence across multiple jurisdictions and communities of practice	Impact or influence across more than one jurisdiction and meeting the needs specifically of identified communities of practice	Impact or influence within a single state or territory	Impact or influence within a single agency
<b>Interoperability</b>	Impact or influence across multiple jurisdictions and communities of practice	Facilitating interoperability across state or territory boundaries within specific communities of practice	Facilitating interoperability between agencies within a state or territory	

## Handbook governance

As custodian of the Handbook Collection on behalf of EMA, AIDR is required to:

- define the principles for management and development of the national Handbook Collection
- ensure the Handbook Collection is up to date and reflects current nationally agreed principles
- define the scope for the Handbook Collection, including purpose and audience
- ensure the Handbook Collection is connected to other related collections and doctrine where relevant
- ensure the collection complies with the current policy framework and with Commonwealth doctrine to the extent directed by policy
- ensure that the collection is readily available and accessible through the Knowledge Hub.

The Handbook Collection governance arrangements are outlined in the following figure.



Figure 2 Handbook governance arrangements

### AIDR Governance Committee

EMA is the sponsor and doctrine authority for the Handbook Collection; the Director-General EMA (DGEMA) is responsible for authorising publication of each handbook and subsequent adoption into the collection.

Governance of the Handbook Collection is through the AIDR Governance Committee chaired by the DGEMA. The group includes representatives from AFAC and the Department of Home Affairs and is informed by input from AIDR's other consortium partner, Australian Red Cross..

The AIDR Governance Committee provides strategic guidance on the collection as a whole – its coverage, relevance and utility. As part of this role the committee:

- agrees on the need for new publications
- assigns priorities for their development
- accepts the published handbooks into the national collection
- approves the Handbook Collection management process
- accepts non-Commonwealth of Australia copyrighted documents into the national collection.

The committee ensures that handbooks are consistent with national disaster resilience and emergency management policy through endorsement of the process of review adopted for each handbook. The AIDR Governance Committee delegates oversight of the management and review of the Handbook Collection to the AIDR Handbook Advisory Group.

### **AIDR Handbook Advisory Group**

The AIDR Handbook Advisory Group (AHAG) is responsible for overseeing management of the Handbook Collection and provides oversight for each publication through its lifecycle. This role includes advising the DGEMA on additions and revisions to, and deletions from, the national collection.

AHAG is chaired by AIDR's Executive Director. EMA is a permanent member and other members include as required, nominees from AIDR, AFAC and Australian Red Cross. Other additional nominees may form part of the AHAG from time to time. Members of AHAG are expected to have a solid understanding of both the policy and operational elements of disaster resilience.

The responsibilities of AHAG include:

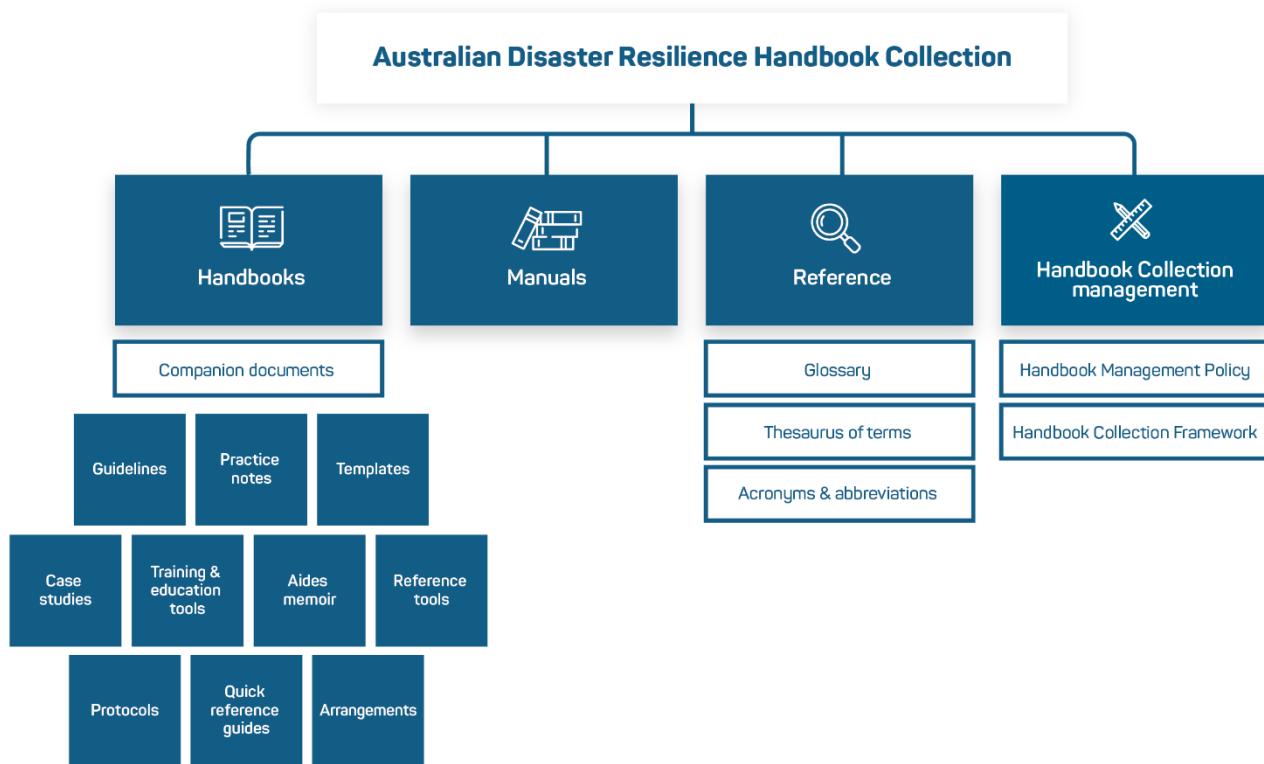
- Through the Chair, advise the AIDR Governance Committee on the development and management of the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection.
- Set the strategic direction for the review, publication and adoption of the Handbook Collection.
- Identify or agree the need for new and reviewed publications, and make recommendations to the AIDR Governance Committee.
- Work with and support AIDR in management of the handbook collection as requested.
- Foster and promote an integrated and collaborative approach to the development and management of the collection.
- Ensure handbooks complement and are consistent (without overlapping) with other existing or proposed handbooks or other doctrine collections.
- Resolve and determine (in consultation with AIDR) a position on any disparities of view within the handbook working groups in a timely manner in place of a Steering Committee, as needed.
- Endorse non-Commonwealth copyright handbooks and companion documents as outlined in the Handbook Collection Management Policy and Framework.
- Accept the final draft handbook by signing off on the Statement of Completion and submit for presentation and approval by EMA through the Director-General Emergency Management Australia.

(See Section 5: Managing the Handbook Collection; Appendix A: AIDR Handbook Advisory Group Terms of Reference.)

# Section 3: Handbook Collection Framework

The handbooks themselves are the core of the Handbook Collection.

Handbooks are supported by companion documents that assist with the adoption, implementation and teaching of the information in the handbook. Handbooks provide guidance and general understanding of national principles, while companion documents contain more detail to support application of the principles outlined in the handbooks. The Handbook Collection is also supported by reference tools (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3** The Handbook Collection Framework

Note: Manuals will be archived, or moved into either the Handbook Collection or other collections

The Handbook Collection Framework should not be perceived as a checklist that must be completed, or as a constraint on what can be contained in a handbook or companion document. Rather, the framework is an aid to ensure that specific purposes and intended uses of handbooks and companion tools are readily identified and understood, so audiences in turn can easily determine which document will best serve their needs in a given situation.

As they reflect national principles, the handbooks are unlikely to change as often as companion tools whose content is more organic and fluid in responding to changing needs, practices, learning and knowledge development. As such the companion documents do not have the Commonwealth Logo, and do not require endorsement from the Commonwealth. Handbook companion documents will develop and exist to meet the needs of intended audiences and to support the understanding, application and implementation of the principles outlined in the handbooks.

## Components of the Handbook Collection

### Handbooks

Handbooks are typically focussed around a specific theme and capture and explain the principles relating to that theme. They contain guidance on agreed and proven approaches to national disaster resilience principles and incorporate current research, knowledge and learning from operational experiences. They may include the theoretical foundations on which these principles are based to explain the rationale for the approaches described, but typically this is only to the extent required for that explanation.

Handbooks are high level, providing the context in which operational activities are undertaken and are not intended to be used by practitioners in operational settings. They provide a foundational reference for building knowledge in disaster resilience.

### Companion documents

Companion documents are tools that support the adoption and implementation of the principles provided in the handbooks and the application of knowledge. They are intended to inform but not prescribe the development of procedures and plans for this with those jurisdictional responsibilities.

### Handbook Collection resources

These documents provide a reference point for the Handbook Collection, and for the disaster resilience sector broadly and include:

- Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary (the ‘Glossary’)
- Thesaurus of terms.

They can be used for guidance in the handbook review and writing process. For example, the Glossary should be used to inform terminology and definitions throughout the Handbook Collection. Likewise, updates to terminology through a handbook review should be reflected in the Glossary.

### Managing the Handbook Collection Policy

This policy provides the framework for the management and development of the Handbook Collection and forms part of the suite of tools that describe the framework and processes within which the Handbook Collection is managed and supported.



**Table 2** Companion document types

<b>Knowledge-into-Action Briefs</b>	The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience is developing Knowledge-into-Action briefs. These briefs highlight key guidance and expertise available in the <a href="#">Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection</a> .
<b>Guidelines</b>	Guidelines provide more specific knowledge and guidance material, detail and/or considerations on a specific subject area or topic. They should be used as a guide to action and may provide more detailed information about practices and procedures. They can be supported by templates, briefing notes or toolkits.
<b>Template</b>	Templates are usually presented as generic tools to be used in conjunction with associated guidelines. When used together, the template and the guide provide a consistent basis for the development of more technical specifications in consideration of best practice.
<b>Practice notes</b>	Practice notes provide a framework for understanding and gathering better information and how it can be developed to inform planning activities.
<b>Training tools</b>	Training tools provide a conduit between the principles in the handbooks and dissemination and sharing of knowledge. May include training manuals, training guidance notes, online training tools.
<b>References</b>	References may include resource kits, related reports or other documents.
<b>Case studies</b>	Case studies are particularly useful in taking knowledge and principles endorsed in handbooks and showing how they can and have been adopted and implemented in practice. Case studies should demonstrate both successful and unsuccessful studies so lessons and learning, both positive and negative, can be shared.
<b>Checklists</b>	A checklist is a list of items to be noted, checked or remembered, or a detailed process sequence to perform an activity.
<b>Factsheets/quick reference guides (QRG)</b>	Fact sheets/QRGs are presentations of simple, concise information on a topic of interest in a format suitable for all audiences, including the public.
<b>Aides memoir</b>	Aides memoir prompt the steps, action items or elements involved in carrying out a task to enhance performance success and consistency. They may be developed and presented in the form of a smartphone or tablet application.
<b>Handbook advice notes</b>	Occasionally, an urgent need might arise for a handbook to be produced or amended in response to significant event or experience, significantly changed circumstances or a transient need. If a new handbook is needed urgently, the standard handbook lifecycle management process described below may take too long. Handbook advice notes may be developed to advise of changes to

critical aspects of an existing handbook or comprise an entirely new publication (see Section 5: Managing the Handbook Collection).

## Other documents related to the Handbook Collection Framework

### National policies and strategies

Whilst national policies and strategies such as the NSDR and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework are critical to the development of the Handbook Collection they are not part of the Handbook Collection Framework. They will often be referenced in handbooks and companion documents.

### Policy guides

Policy guides describe how policies are intended to work, how they are accessed and how they can be included in planning and incident management.

### Authorising documents

Authorising documents include legislation, regulations and codes of practice.

### Research

Whilst not part of the Handbook Collection, research provides much of the evidence base and principles through which handbooks are developed and reviewed. Research can present a trigger for handbook reviews and, when handbooks are being produced, research can provide important contributions to its content. Therefore, research is closely integrated into the lifecycle management of the Handbook Collection but is not, of itself, an aspect of the Handbook Collection Framework.

# Section 4: Managing the Handbook Collection

The Handbook Collection is managed to ensure it remains the authoritative source of knowledge and guidance on nationally agreed disaster resilience principles. The collection must be correct, comprehensive and continue to meet the needs of its audiences.

Key stakeholder engagement in the handbook management process is critical given stakeholders are ultimately the source of a handbook's legitimacy. Handbooks draw their authority:

- through the strength of their content
- through representation of a nationally agreed view across multiple organisations and stakeholders.

The decision to adopt, produce or retain handbooks and companion documents ultimately rests with DGEMA.

## Handbook Collection lifecycle management

AHAG is responsible for recommending handbooks for review, development and archiving. AHAG conducts an annual audit of the Handbook Collection and applies a prioritisation and resource matching process to update the handbook review program of work and make recommendations to DGEMA on the program of work on a rolling two-year basis (see Handbook review request template; Handbook Collection – Rolling two-year program of work).



Figure 4 Handbook Collection lifecycle management process

## Review prioritisation process

The identification of handbooks for review or development is determined through a prioritisation process that combines a review of the age, relevance and currency of existing publications with requests and recommendations from stakeholders and users.

Recommendations to develop or review handbooks are based on factors including:

- known development(s) in practice
- knowledge produced through research that presents new understandings
- new directions from government
- needs identified by disaster resilience and emergency management communities of practice
- content that is frequently suggested for update by authoritative users who can demonstrate a clear need for review
- recent projects supported by the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) with content relevant to current and future publications
- known gaps in the collection
- the age and relevance of existing publications in the collection
- resources available to conduct the review.

## Scheduled review

Each handbook is subject to a scheduled review that is ordinarily every five years unless otherwise specified. Scheduled reviews are initiated by AHAG at the annual handbook review meeting. The prioritisation process will determine whether a recommendation for review is made to DGEMA.

## Handbook review/development proposal

Any handbook user can submit a proposal to have a handbook reviewed or archived, or a new handbook or companion document developed. In these instances, the user will be asked to complete a template outlining the rationale and urgency for their request (see Template 2: New handbook proposal; Template 3: Handbook review proposal).

At the annual meeting to review the handbook program of work (or more frequently if the AHAG Chair believes there is an urgent need), AHAG will consider proposals made to review or develop a publication in the Handbook Collection.

AHAG will consider the prioritisation, review and resource allocation process mentioned above to determine which handbooks will be recommended to be developed or reviewed.

## Urgent review request

An urgent review can be initiated in response to a request made by a handbook user or stakeholder, when there are critical or substantive issues identified by the requester.

Triggers for urgent ad-hoc reviews can include:

- major events and after-action reviews
- changes to legislation and policy
- new evidence derived from research
- changing demographics.

Once the need for an urgent review is agreed by AHAG and recommendation approved by DGEMA, the project follows the same handbook review process outlined below. A project manager is appointed who will consider the urgency of the project in developing project plans and timeframes.

### **Handbook advice notes**

The decision to produce an advice note rather than review or replace an existing publication lies with AHAG, which considers the imperatives involved, and the resources and time available. The process to produce advice notes is a compressed version of that used for a normal publication; available resources and time are applied to meet the need identified. The specific process is decided on and managed in detail by AHAG. DGEMA is advised of the development of an advice note.

Handbook advice notes remain active for a defined period, after which they are archived. For this reason, as soon as possible after publication of an advice note, the related handbook should be scheduled into the program for review or development.

## **Handbook lifecycle management process**

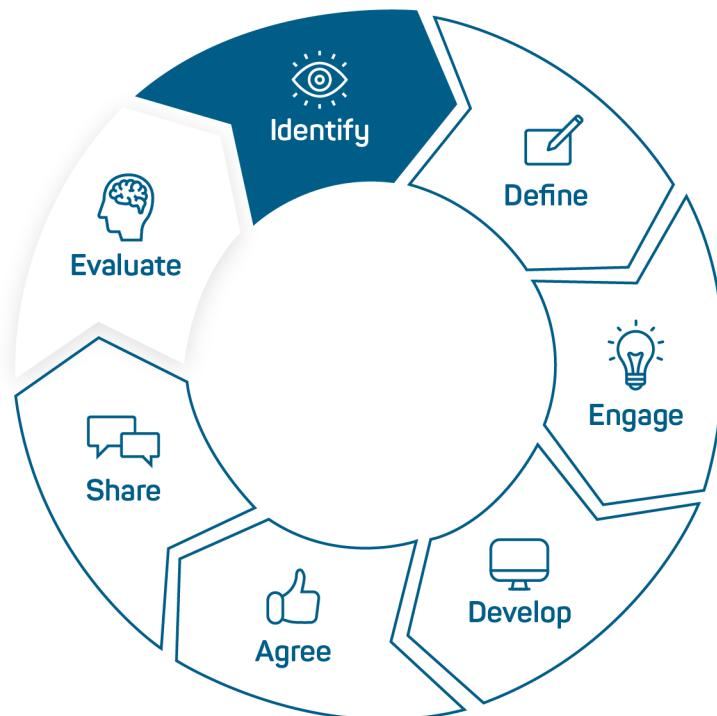


Figure 5 Handbook lifecycle management process

### **Identify the need**

Identifying the need (new handbooks) or the need for review (existing/retained handbooks) must be supported by a clear governance and decision-making framework with clearly defined authorities and processes for confirming that the need exists, and that the resources required to initiate the project are justified.

Both handbooks and companion documents should be closely managed to ensure they meet specific and current needs. The opportunity cost of developing and reviewing handbooks impacts both on the lifecycle management of other handbooks and on the people and organisations involved. It is important that only handbooks that have a clear need, purpose and audience are produced, or retained. Inclusion in the Handbook Collection is justified if it offers a net benefit to the disaster resilience community, taking account of the direct and opportunity costs involved.

### Define the need

Defining what is to be revised or improved includes identification and selection of the measures that are most likely to achieve the results being sought. The output of this phase is a detailed project plan outlining:

- project scope, purpose and objectives
- key project milestones
- timeframe for deliverables
- stakeholder engagement and communication plan
- risk assessment.

### Engage key audiences

The need to access the tacit knowledge distributed across the nation requires a thorough process of engagement across governments and sectors. Whilst a single subject matter expert might write the handbook, the development and review process should include targeted enquiry and consultation across a broad range of stakeholders, including users and beneficiaries of the handbooks, to ensure it remains the authoritative source of knowledge and an accurate and trusted reflection of national principles.

Tools used in this phase may include surveys, a literature review, stakeholder workshops and environmental scans.

### Develop

The review, writing, authorisation and validation of handbooks brings together working groups made up of appropriate subject matter experts. In the case of government representatives, they need to be senior and authorised to reach across government and the sector, and be able to obtain clearances as appropriate.

### National endorsement

Handbooks are intended to be authoritative. Endorsement authorises the handbook as correct, aligned with relevant policies and not in conflict with other handbooks in this or other collections.

### Dissemination

A critical element of managing the effectiveness of the Handbook Collection is ensuring that all the elements of the collection are readily available and accessible at reasonable or no cost to those who need them. For this reason, the Handbook Collection is published digitally and made available at no cost through the Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub.

Key to successful dissemination of the Handbook Collection is ensuring they are practically and culturally accessible to organisations and users. As some users prefer printed copies or may not have good access to the Internet or computers, printed copies are also available for purchase through AIDR (see Appendix B: Writing handbooks).

AIDR will disseminate information about new or revised handbooks through its communications channels.

### **Validation and evaluation**

Validation and evaluation is required to test a publication's effectiveness. As circumstances change and knowledge evolves, all handbooks will be validated and evaluated formally or informally through surveys, exercises or in practice. This is particularly important if a handbook addresses innovative approaches, new subject matter or new areas of responsibilities.

Validations and evaluations can be conducted formally as part of a regular review cycle, through a 'lessons learned' process, or informally via after-action reviews and from feedback. The process of validation and evaluation is critical to organisational learning and growth and should be the focus of sustained effort.

Handbook validation will provide answers to the following types of questions:

- Does the handbook describe the current understanding of best practice principles for its subject?
- Has technology, or some other change in context or higher-level strategy or policy, invalidated something contained in the handbook?
- Does the handbook, what it describes, how it is presented or how it is expressed, continue to meet the needs of the intended audiences?
- How will this handbook be incorporated in and support capability development?

The frequency and choice of methods used for validation will be based on the subject area, the accessibility of practitioners and the rate of change typical of the subject area. The outcome of validation is either:

- acceptance that the publication remains appropriate in its present form
- identification of specific updates or amendments
- identification of a need for a full rewrite of the publication.

### **Project methodology**

The process to review or develop a handbook or companion document is managed using a standard methodology that promotes collaboration, engagement, consistency, consultation, expertise and good governance.

As far as possible, AHAG should seek to leverage existing communities of practice and similar groups to avoid duplication and gain the benefits of established networks that provide access to sources of knowledge, authority and expertise. Stakeholder engagement beyond the traditional emergency management sector is also important in the development and review of the Handbook Collection.

## Key considerations:

- Why are we producing/reviewing this handbook?
- What are its broad purposes?
- Does this subject/content belong in the Handbook Collection?
- Who are the key audiences?
- How will this handbook meet the needs of these key audiences?
- How will the handbook achieve the outcomes sought?
- How will it connect policy and procedures?
- How will the handbook adopt lessons learned and relate to research?
- How will it be validated, reviewed and refreshed?
- How will it be launched, promoted and disseminated?
- Is the cost to develop this handbook justified?

## The project team

The project team provides the knowledge, authority and support to the project. The key members of the project team and their broad responsibilities are as follows:

- **Project manager**

The project manager is appointed by the AHAG Chair and manages the project from initiation to publication and launch. The project manager is responsible for delivering the publication described in the project brief within the time and resources allocated. Responsibilities include the selection of the writer, convening steering committees and working groups, control and support of drafts, presentation of drafts for authorisation, final preparation for publication and dissemination of approved handbooks.

The project manager works closely with the steering committee and working groups to ensure that the publication is meeting its defined and agreed scope and purpose in accordance with the project plan. The project manager presents the completed publication to AHAG for recommendation for endorsement by DGEMA.

- **Writer**

The writer conducts necessary research and prepares successive drafts of the publication in accordance with a writer's brief. Generally, the writer will possess some expertise in the subject area but need not be the ultimate authority. Good research and written communication skills are the key imperative. The writer may also draft content outlines and framework documents and discussion papers (see Template 4: Writer letter of engagement; Template 5: Writer's brief).

- **Steering committee (as needed)**

Steering committee members ensure the project remains within scope and is meeting project key milestones and timeframes. Whilst the members of the steering committee may possess some expertise in the subject area, it is their authoritative role, ability to lead, influence and champion the project which are key in this role. They also assist in resolving any contentious issues that may arise. It is likely that senior leaders will form the project steering committee (see Template 9: Steering Committee Terms of Reference).

In the development process of some handbooks, a steering committee may not be deemed necessary, in this instance AHAG can perform the function of the steering committee.

- **Working group**

Working group members consist of individuals with appropriate subject matter expertise. They will review original content, inform development of the writer's brief and consider drafts. The working group members need to possess sufficient expertise to provide good input and to give the handbooks a degree of intellectual authority. They also need to be sufficiently senior to speak with the authority of their organisation or government. Well-engaged working groups are a powerful way to expose tacit knowledge – if the right people are present. Sub-working groups may be established to focus on specific areas according to subject matter expertise (see Template 10: Working Group Terms of Reference). Members of the working group may also be members of the steering committee (if applicable).

### The review process

The following stages for a handbook review project should be considered for all projects noting that the emphasis on specific activities may vary between individual projects. The outputs and outcomes for each of the broad steps are outlined below.

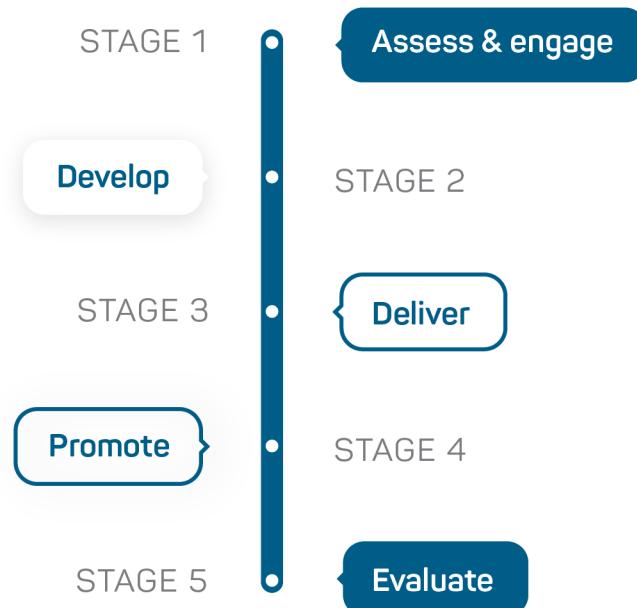


Figure 6 Handbook review process

### Stage 1: Assess and engage

- Once a handbook has been approved for review or development, a project manager is appointed, and project initiation meetings are conducted to define the purpose, scope, audiences and key

messages, and identify key stakeholders and potential content writers. An outline of project key milestones and timeframes is developed (see Template 7: Project key milestones and timeframes).

- Environmental scans and literature reviews will be undertaken to identify new knowledge and developments, specific issues requiring resolution, clarification or authorisation. This may include a research component.
- Socialisation of the project is important to ensure all handbook users and stakeholders are aware of the review and have the opportunity to contribute and input to the process.
- User engagement such as stakeholder workshops may be part of the project initiation to get input on key themes and areas for development.
- A project brief is a useful tool to share with audiences to provide a brief overview of the project scope and intended deliverables and timeframes (see Template 6: Handbook review project brief).
- A detailed project plan will be required which outlines project purpose, scope, milestones and timeframes, project methodology, stakeholders, risk management plan, budget and governance arrangements (see Template 8: Handbook project plan).
- A writer is appointed, and scope of engagement is agreed. The writer may attend meetings of the Steering Committee (if applicable) and Working Group as appropriate. This is a good way to share information and context and the writer engages firsthand with the groups to get insights into their approach (see Template 4: Writer's letter of engagement).
- The steering committee (if applicable) oversees and endorses the development of the project plan and project scope (see Template 9: Steering Committee Terms of Reference).
- The working group is responsible for developing the key elements of the writer's brief after conducting a review of the handbook content and developing issues (see Template 10: Working Group Terms of Reference).

### **Stage 2: Develop**

- The working group or other review group meets to review content of the existing handbook or develop a chapter outline for a new handbook. This process guides the development of the writer's brief. Sub-working groups may be established to focus on specific areas according to subject matter expertise. The members of the working group are expected to canvass their organisations for feedback on the publication being reviewed and provide comments in the content review template (see Template 13: Content review template).
- A detailed writer's brief is an expansion of the publication outline detailing the proposed contents, down to section and possibly paragraph headings with supporting text. The brief should be sufficient for the content writer to understand and assess what is intended to be developed or reviewed in the draft. The writer's brief is based on the issues listed in the content review. The brief should give the writer detailed guidance on what is to be written, including style, level, tone and language (see Template 5: Writer's brief).

- Drafting is the process of developing a draft document ready for presentation to the working group. Drafting is managed by the project manager and executed by the content writer in consultation with the project team. The writer will develop the document based on the outline presented in the writer's brief and consult with the project team and any relevant authorities, examine references and conduct any other research required. At the conclusion of this step, the writer will have developed a first draft and issues papers.
- After the writer produces a first draft, it is circulated to the members of the working group for draft review and formal comment. The draft and the formal comments are considered and noted in a marked-up draft of the publication and direction is provided to the writer to develop an updated draft.
- There may be several draft and review phases but only as necessary.
- The working group considers whether the draft conforms with the writer's brief; that the content is correct and unambiguous; and that the language and expression are correct, clear and concise.
- Approvals may involve circulating a draft for broader stakeholder input and feedback. This consultation should include appropriate levels of clearance within agencies or government.
- Additional stakeholder feedback is collated and shared with the writer for inclusion in the final draft as part of the editorial review process.
- Following the final consultation and feedback, the writer finalises drafting and presents the final draft to the working group and steering committee (if applicable). The project manager then takes the publication into the authorisation stage.

### **Issues resolution**

- It is possible that some issues may not be resolved by consensus. In this case it is the responsibility of the steering committee (if applicable) or AHAG to arrive at a determination by one of the following:
  - negotiate a consensus position
  - commission a focused study by external experts
  - make an executive decision.
- It is important that the issue and its resolution are specifically considered by AHAG when they are deciding whether to recommend authorisation of the publication to DGEMA. AHAG should explicitly support the determination made by the steering committee.
- If specific issues remain in contention that cannot be resolved by the steering committee (if applicable), AHAG will present the draft to DGEMA with a detailed explanation of the outstanding issues and a description how they have been accommodated in the draft (see Template 14: Handbook review issues paper).

### **Stage 3: Deliver**

- Authorisation is the process by which a completed publication, still formally a draft, is accepted as being complete, accurate and fit-for-purpose as a publication in the Handbook Collection. There will be a series of draft publication sign-off processes through the working group, steering

committee (if applicable) and AHAG before EMA endorses the draft and authorises its inclusion in the Handbook Collection – or directs any necessary amendments or actions.

- There are three stages of authorisation for publications in the Handbook Collection:

- **Statement of Completion**

The members of the steering committee (if applicable) and working group confirm that the draft has addressed the agreed purpose, is technically accurate and is ready for approval. If there are any matters that were resolved through the ‘Outstanding Issues’ process, a member will still be required to sign off but will be able to note any areas of concern (see Template 15: Statement of Completion).

- **Authorisation for use**

The project manager presents the final draft to AHAG. AHAG signs off on the process of the handbook. If AHAG is satisfied that the draft appropriately responds to the project directive created at initiation, and is complete, accurate and fit-for-purpose, it recommends the draft to DGEMA for inclusion in the Handbook Collection.

- **Acceptance into the Handbook Collection**

The publication is sent to EMA with a recommendation that it be authorised by DGEMA (or their delegate) and accepted into the Handbook Collection (see Template 16: Recommendation to EMA).

- It is possible, but unlikely, that at either of these stages a need could be identified to change the document. If this is the case, the authorisation will not be granted, and the procedures described for the evaluation and review stage will be followed.
- The draft is subjected to final copy and sub-editing, and design and layout in preparation for publication in the approved format.

#### **Stage 4: Promote**

- The project manager arranges for handbook dissemination. The steering committee (if applicable) and working group give guidance on the dissemination of the publication, confirming that any companion documents have been prepared to an appropriate standard, or make recommendations for the development of companion documents.
- All publications are published electronically on the Knowledge Hub and made freely available for download. Printed copies will be printed on demand for a fee. Costs of print on demand publications together with an order form will be available via the Knowledge Hub.
- Companion documents will be disseminated under the same arrangements.
- A handbook promotion and communication plan will be developed in conjunction with the AIDR Communications Team and in consultation with EMA.
- The plan will include identification of primary and secondary stakeholders and relevant communication mediums including electronic direct mail, newsletters, print and social media, publications, event presentations, national roadshows.

### Stage 5: Evaluate

- The handbook drafting and authorisation stages encompass processes to provide confidence in the accuracy and utility of the handbook. However, following publication, circumstances change, knowledge evolves, and handbooks need to be continuously reviewed to ensure that they remain valid. Handbook evaluations seek to provide answers to the following types of questions:
  - Does the handbook describe the current understanding of good practice for its subject and does it accommodate experience gained since its publication?
  - Has technology, or some other change in context or higher-level doctrine or policy, invalidated something contained in the handbook?
  - Does the handbook, what it describes, how it is presented or how it is expressed, meet the actual needs of the intended audiences?
- Evaluation is a continuing process managed by the project manager. Formal evaluations will be scheduled; users are also able to request ad hoc reviews at any time with sufficient justification.

### Timing

Indicative timings for handbook projects and reviews are shown in Figure 7 below. The figures are indicative. If, for some reason, the production of a publication is considered urgent, it is possible to contract the timings; this requires all the people involved in the review to be able and willing to commit the time and effort required to meet an accelerated schedule.

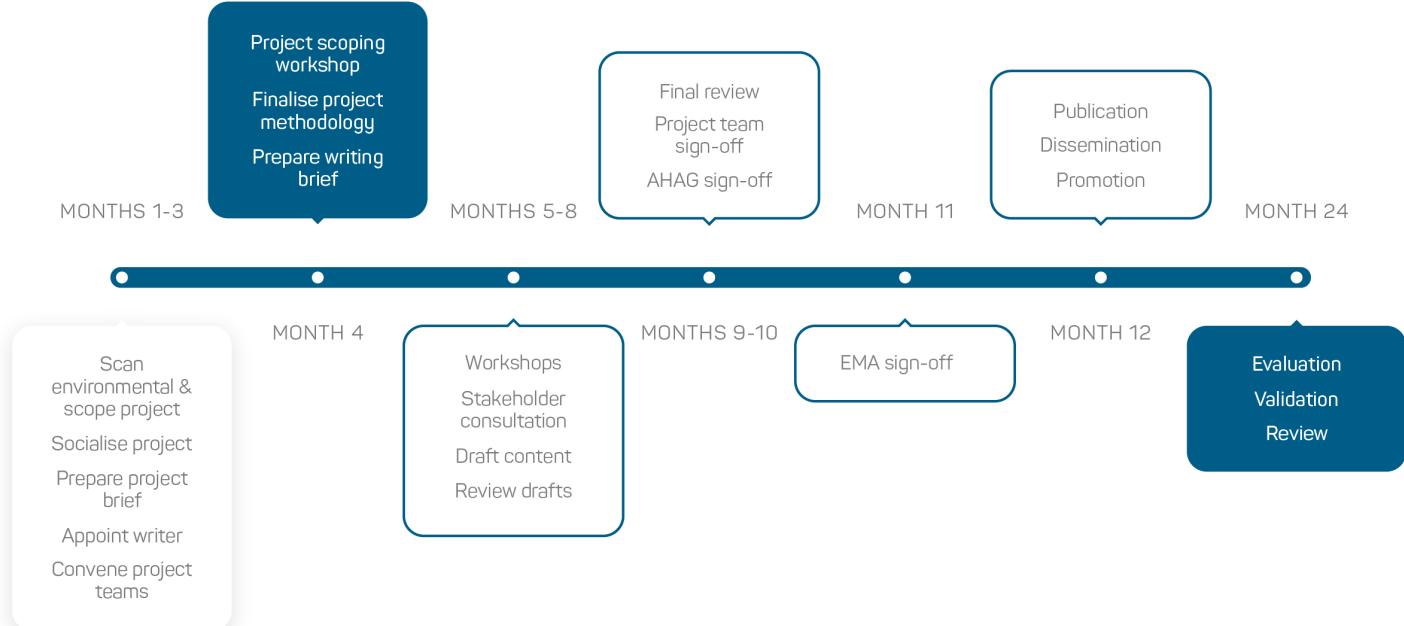


Figure 7 Indicative timings for handbook projects and review

## Key milestones and timeframes

Table 3 Suggested timeframes for key milestones

Suggested timeframe	Milestone
Through the annual review cycle or out of session	Handbook review or development proposal submitted
	Handbook approved for review or development by DGEMA
	Project start date
Months 1-3	Project scoping; socialisation; environmental scan; literature review; needs and gap analysis; user surveys; appoint writer; develop writer's brief; convene steering committee (if applicable) and working group
Month 4	Project planning; project brief and plan; stakeholder workshops (in various cities)
Months 5-9	Content drafting; stakeholder engagement; review workshops
Months 10-11	Final review; project team sign-off; AHAG sign-off
Month 12	DGEMA sign-off
Months 13-15	Publication; launch; promotion
Ongoing	Implementation support
+ 12 months	Validation and evaluation

Not all handbooks in the collection need to have been developed in-house by AIDR. The emergency management community includes authoritative groups, such as AFAC, which produce industry-focused doctrine, some of which could be adopted into the Handbook Collection. Examples include the Incident Management Handbook and the Public Information and Warnings Handbook. In addition, other national authoritative groups like NFRAG and ATAG may take lead project management role in development or review of handbooks with support from AIDR.

## Authority to approve changes to handbooks

Table 4 Authority required for various changes to handbooks

Scope of change	Authority to approve
Minor amendments e.g. grammatical, editorial, layout	AIDR Executive Director
Minor updates to handbook references, external links, data etc.	
a. For © Commonwealth of Australia doctrine	a. Assistant Secretary EMA
b. For other doctrine	b. AHAG
New or updated companion documents	
a. For © Commonwealth of Australia doctrine	a. Assistant Secretary EMA
b. For other doctrine	b. AHAG
New handbooks (including companion documents) or major revision to existing handbooks	
a. For © Commonwealth of Australia doctrine	a. Director General EMA
b. For other doctrine	b. Head of sponsoring body

## Handbook status

All handbooks and manuals are listed with a status indicator.

Table 5 Descriptions corresponding to various statuses for handbooks

Status	Description
Current	Reviewed within last five years and no urgent need for review identified
Under review	Approved for review or development and entered into the Handbook Collection review program of work schedule
Due for review	Need for urgent content review identified or last review over five years ago
Archived	Content no longer current, watermarked 'not current' and filed in the Handbook Collection Archive section on the Knowledge Hub

# Handbook Collection document library

## Documents

- Managing the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection Policy
- Handbook Collection Fundamentals (one-page summary)
- Handbook Collection Framework (one-page summary)
- Current listing of handbooks and manuals
- Historical listing of handbooks and manuals
- Handbook Collection – rolling two-year program of work
- Proposed new handbook collection listing
- AIDR Editorial Style Guide
- AIDR Stakeholder Engagement Framework

## Appendices

Appendix A: AIDR Handbook Advisory Group (AHAG) Terms of Reference

Appendix B: Writing handbooks

Appendix C: Sample handbook user survey

Appendix D: Generic outline of handbook

Appendix E: Handbook Collection Terminology Guide

## Templates

Template 1: Handbook identification, review and approval (AHAG)

Template 2: New handbook proposal

Template 3: Handbook review proposal

Template 4: Writer letter of engagement

Template 5: Writer's brief

Template 6: Handbook review project brief

Template 7: Project key milestones and timeframe

Template 8: Handbook project plan

Template 9: Steering Committee Terms of Reference

Template 10: Working Group Terms of Reference

Template 11: Meeting agenda

Template 12: Meeting minutes

Template 13: Content review template

Template 14: Handbook review issues paper

Template 15: Statement of Completion

Template 16: Recommendation to EMA

## Planning and reporting tools

- Handbook Collection review – rolling two-year program of work (e.g. 2017-18)
- Handbook progress report
- Project tracking Gantt chart
- Project steering committee and working group member lists and meeting dates
- Project stakeholder list and plan

## Communication tools

- Handbook Collection factsheet
- Handbook Collection newsletter
- Handbook Collection presentation pack – PowerPoint
- Handbook Collection map