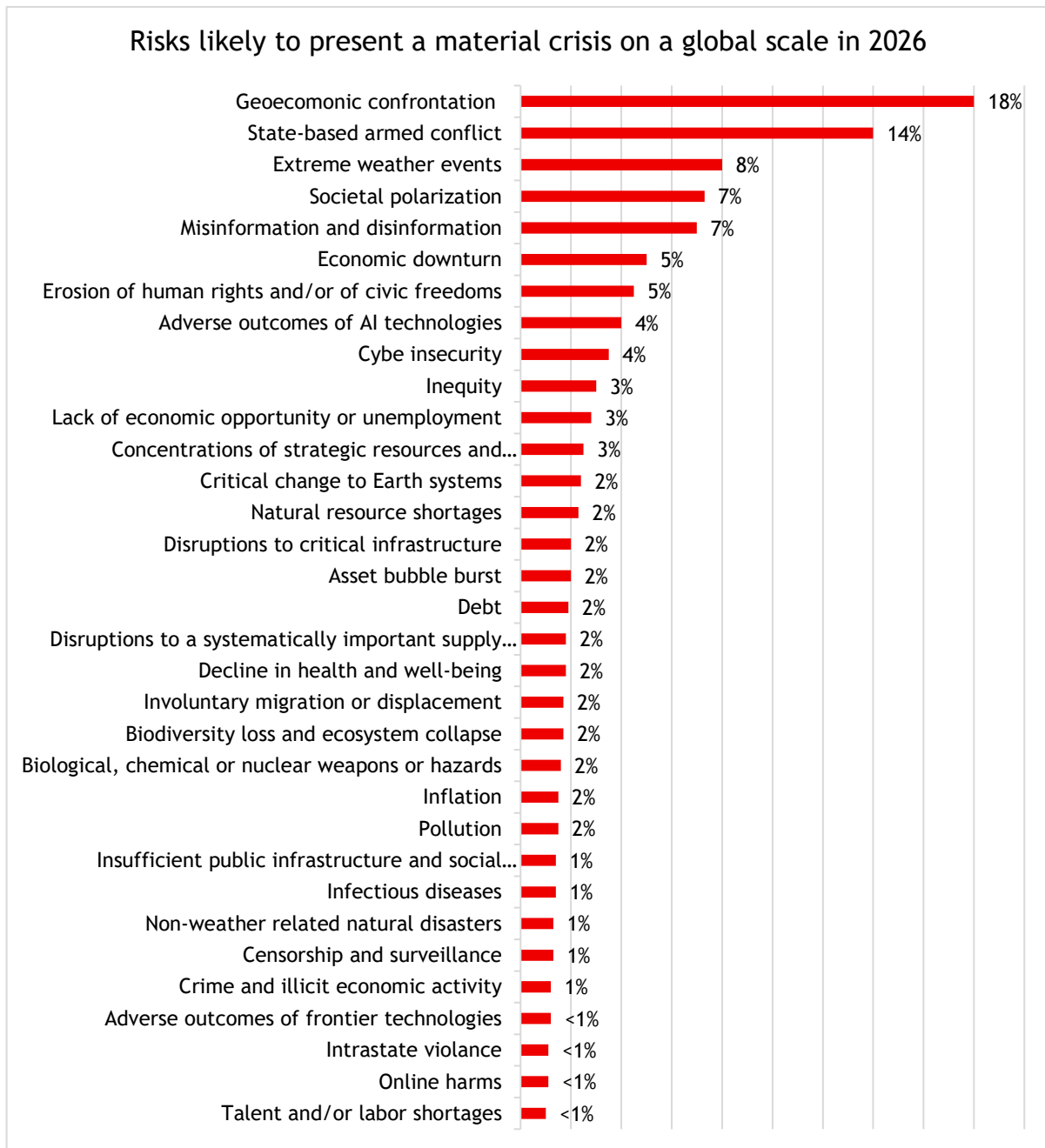


# Crisis and Operational Resilience: Building Immunity in a Polycrisis World

## Overview



Source: WEF global risks report 2026

In 2026, the global economic landscape is increasingly defined by what experts describe as a "polycrisis", a convergence of interconnected threats that transcend geographical boundaries. According to the World Economic Forum Global Risks Report 2026, geoeconomic confrontation and state-based armed conflict have emerged as the leading drivers of global instability, creating systemic shocks that ripple across international supply chains and financial markets far beyond the immediate conflict zones.

These disruptions expose the fragility embedded in "just-in-time" logistics models. When instability threatens critical maritime chokepoints responsible for a significant share of global energy and commodity transit the consequences are felt almost immediately through rising insurance premiums, higher freight costs, and mounting inflationary pressure.

Traditional risk management was built for a more predictable world. Businesses have now entered an era where operational resilience and proactive continuity planning are not competitive advantages they are conditions for survival.

## The Impact of Crisis



When global disruption strikes, the effects move fast and wide. Businesses operating near affected regions face immediate operational stress employees unable to reach workplaces, transportation failures, facility closures, and the sudden loss of key personnel at precisely the moments when clear decision-making matters most.

The disruption rarely stays local. Critical industries semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, fertilisers, manufacturing – are exposed when shipping routes are blocked or rerouted. Longer transit times create shortages across multiple sectors simultaneously. Rising fuel costs and extended logistics distances push up production and distribution expenses, contributing to inflationary pressure that businesses and consumers absorb together.

If tensions persist, the cumulative effect compounds. Prolonged trade disruption, reduced investment, and financial market volatility can slow global growth and, in severe scenarios, tip economies into recession. The question for any organisation is not whether disruption will occur, it is whether they will be ready when it does.

## Operational resilience is no longer simply an operational issue, it has become a strategic priority

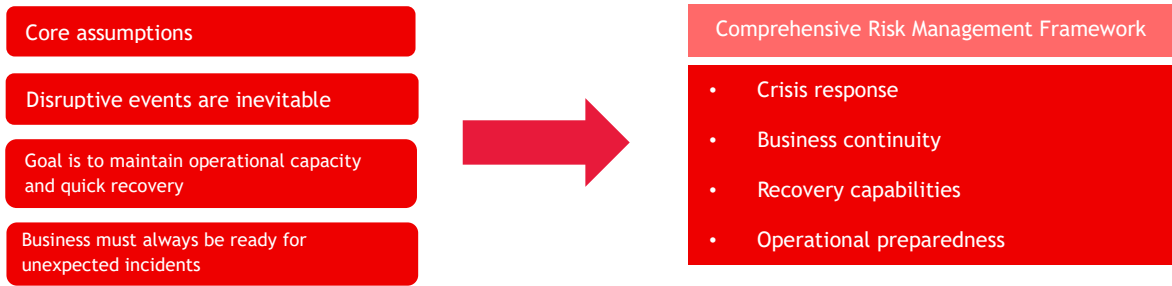
Operational resilience is no longer an operational issue. It has become a strategic priority that belongs in the boardroom.

Unlike traditional risk management, which focuses on prevention, operational resilience assumes disruption is inevitable whether from geopolitical instability, cyber incidents, maritime blockades, or regional conflict. Organisations must build internal immune systems: the capacity to absorb shocks, maintain critical functions, and recover without catastrophic loss. Business continuity planning is the backbone of that immune system.

## Why Business Continuity Planning Is No Longer Optional

For too long, Business Continuity Planning (BCP) was treated as a compliance exercise, a document produced, filed, and forgotten. That approach is no longer viable. Recent global disruptions have demonstrated how quickly regional instability can sever a company from its suppliers, logistics networks, or customer markets overnight.

Effective BCP is a living, event-driven strategy that evolves alongside emerging risks. It must account for severe scenarios: the sudden loss of a regional logistics hub, prolonged transportation failures, or the need to reroute entire supply chains across unfamiliar trade corridors. Static plans offer false comfort. Dynamic plans offer real protection.



## Necessity to implement a comprehensive framework of preparedness

### Crisis Response

#### A Framework for Resilience: Four Pillars

Building genuine resilience requires integrating four interconnected capabilities.

**Crisis response** is the immediate layer where the actions are taken in the first hours and days of a disruption. At its core is a Crisis Management Team (CMT): a designated leadership group empowered to make rapid decisions, coordinate communications, and activate contingency plans without delay. Clear escalation protocols and employee safety procedures remote working arrangements, emergency communications, evacuation procedures determine whether an organisation responds decisively or descends into confusion.

**Business continuity** is the operational layer, ensuring that essential functions keep running even when normal conditions are interrupted. This requires identifying which functions are truly critical, understanding how long the organisation can tolerate their disruption, and building strategies to maintain them when physical workplaces or normal systems become inaccessible. The goal is not perfection under pressure; it is sustaining minimum viable operations until recovery is possible.

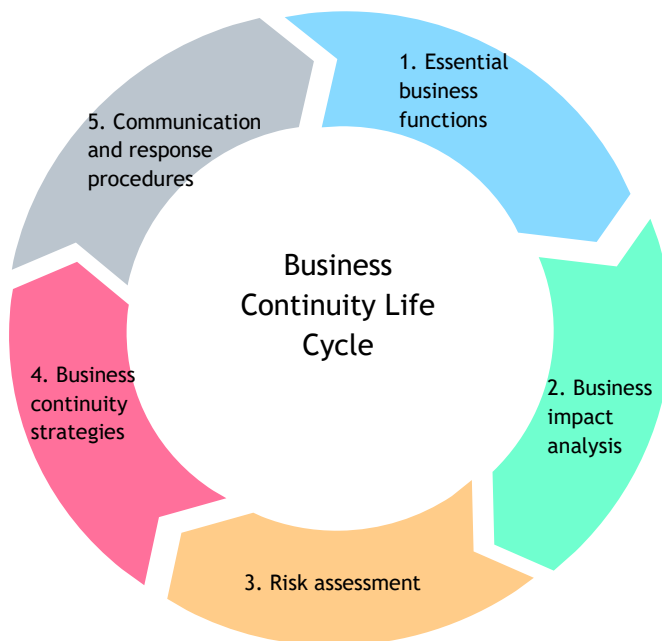


Figure: Business continuity life cycle

**Recovery capability** is the restoration layer; rebuilding as quickly and completely as possible once the immediate crisis stabilises. This means having clear procedures for restoring IT systems, recovering critical data, and reestablishing supplier and partner relationships. Critically, it also means ensuring that financial contingency arrangements – liquidity reserves or emergency funding access are in place before they are needed, not after.

**Operational preparedness** is the proactive layer of the work done before disruption occurs. Through regular scenario analysis, tabletop exercises, and vulnerability assessments, organisations can identify weaknesses, stress-test their plans, and give leadership teams the practice of making decisions under pressure. Plans that are never tested are plans that will fail. Preparedness is not an event; it is a discipline.

### **The Leadership Imperative**

Resilience does not build itself. Without clear ownership at the top, continuity plans remain shelf documents and crisis response defaults to improvisation. Boards and executive teams must treat operational resilience as a strategic priority one that receives dedicated resources, regular review, and visible leadership commitment.

This means appointing clear accountability for continuity planning, integrating resilience into strategic risk discussions, and ensuring that crisis response capabilities are tested at leadership level not just delegated to operational teams. Organisations where resilience is owned at the top respond faster, communicate more clearly, and recover more completely than those where it is treated as someone else's responsibility.

### **The Way Forward**

Operational resilience has become a defining capability of institutions that will endure. The polycrisis environment of 2026 will not simplify geopolitical tensions, climate-related disruptions, and technological vulnerabilities will continue to converge and compound.

Organisations that invest now in crisis response, business continuity, recovery capability, and operational preparedness are not merely protecting against downside risk. They are building the institutional strength to act decisively when others are paralysed and in doing so, they contribute not only to their own survival but to the broader stability of the economies and communities they serve. Resilience is a choice, one that must be made long before the crisis arrives.

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