

# Assessment Into Action

*How ALIGN Applies the THIRA/SPR Methodology for Government Jurisdictions and Their Private Sector Partners*

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**T**he Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR) approach is the federal government's primary framework for community-level risk assessment and capability evaluation. Developed and administered by FEMA pursuant to the national preparedness framework established by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA), and required as a condition of HSGP, UASI, and EMPG grant participation, THIRA/SPR establishes how state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments identify the threats and

hazards they face, set capability targets based on realistic worst-case scenarios, assess current capability gaps, and report preparedness findings through the Stakeholder Preparedness Review.

The THIRA/SPR cycle is one of the most thorough risk assessment tools available. It is also one of the most underused as a driver of real preparedness program design.

Most jurisdictions finish the THIRA/SPR cycle, submit to FEMA, and return to business as usual, without consistently turning capability gaps into updated plans, exercises, and program investments. The THIRA identifies what the jurisdiction needs to be able to do. The SPR identifies how far short of that target it currently falls. What happens between those two data points, the actual program design work that closes capability gaps, is where the approach most frequently stalls.

ALIGN treats the THIRA/SPR as a complete preparedness cycle, not a compliance reporting event. The THIRA becomes the foundation of a planning architecture that drives capability building, exercise design, and continuous improvement, connecting the assessment findings directly to the program changes that THIRA/SPR identifies but does not cover.

## **THIRA/SPR: What the Methodology Requires**

The THIRA/SPR operates across four steps and two distinct analytical processes:

- **THIRA Step 1: Identify Threats and Hazards** — Select the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the community based on historical data, geographic vulnerability, and stakeholder input

- **THIRA Step 2: Give Threats and Hazards Context** — Develop specific scenarios for each threat or hazard that describe a plausible worst-case event, providing the context needed to set meaningful capability targets
- **THIRA Step 3: Establish Capability Targets** — Determine what each core capability must be able to accomplish to respond to the worst-case scenario, expressed as measurable outcomes within defined timeframes
- **SPR: Assess Current Capabilities** — Evaluate the jurisdiction's current ability to perform each core capability relative to its THIRA-established target, identifying the gaps that represent the highest preparedness priorities
- **Grant Reporting and Strategic Investment** — Translate THIRA/SPR findings into HSGP Investment Justifications and align HSGP, EMPG, and other preparedness grant investments to close identified capability gaps

The THIRA/SPR is designed to produce a comprehensive picture of a jurisdiction's risk environment and capability gaps. What it is not designed to produce is the planning architecture, exercise program, and continuous improvement cadence that turns those findings into operational capability.

# The ALIGN – THIRA/SPR Crosswalk

ALIGN PHASE	THIRA/SPR STEP	HOW ALIGN DELIVERS
<b>A — Assess</b> Diagnose	THIRA Steps 1–2: Threat and Hazard Identification; Scenario Development; THIRA Step 3: Capability Target Setting	Threat and hazard identification and scenario development covers THIRA Steps 1 through 3 within the ALIGN framework, producing risk findings structured to immediately drive planning priorities. The ALIGN Assess phase adds decision architecture mapping: understanding not just what the jurisdiction faces, but how it would currently make decisions under each scenario's operational demands.
<b>L — Link</b> Coordinate	SPR: Stakeholder Coordination; Whole-Community Integration; THIRA Private Sector and Whole-Community Input; ESF Stakeholder Mapping	Connecting THIRA/SPR findings to the community-wide stakeholder network applies THIRA's community-wide requirement, mapping how government agencies, private sector organizations, healthcare systems, utilities, and community partners contribute to and draw on the capabilities identified in the THIRA. The Link phase

## ALIGN PHASE

## THIRA/SPR STEP

## HOW ALIGN DELIVERS

converts the stakeholder inventory THIRA describes into an operational coordination architecture.

**I — Integrate**

Build

SPR Capability Gap Findings; HSGP Investment Justification Planning; EOP/COOP Update Requirements; Capability-Based Planning

Translating SPR capability gap findings into updated plans, procedures, and decision systems is where THIRA/SPR findings most frequently fail to produce program change. ALIGN's Integrate phase treats SPR gaps as design inputs, directly driving EOP updates, COOP revisions, and decision architecture redesign aligned to THIRA-established capability targets.

**G — Generate Stress**

Test

SPR Capability Validation; HSEEP Exercise Design; Capability Target Performance Assessment; MYTEP Alignment

HSEEP-informed exercises built from THIRA scenarios and scored against SPR capability targets apply THIRA/SPR's capability validation function through structured exercise events. THIRA worst-case scenarios become the exercise driver; SPR capability targets become the performance benchmark; and after-action findings feed

ALIGN PHASE

THIRA/SPR STEP

HOW ALIGN DELIVERS

directly into the next THIRA/SPR cycle.

**N — Normalize**

Sustain

THIRA/SPR Annual Update Cycle; HSGP Performance Reporting; Grant Alignment; Continuous Capability Improvement

Aligning the preparedness program improvement cycle to THIRA/SPR reporting cadence ensures that corrective actions from exercises, updated hazard information, and changes in community capability are consistently reflected in the next THIRA/SPR submission, making ALIGN's normalize phase the bridge between the current cycle's findings and the next cycle's baseline.

# Five Ways ALIGN Transforms THIRA/SPR from Reporting Event to Operational Cycle

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## 1. Findings-Driven Planning Architecture

**M**ost THIRA/SPR cycles produce findings that inform the next grant application and satisfy grant reporting and performance requirements. ALIGN treats SPR capability gap findings as design inputs: each identified gap drives a specific planning, training, or exercise intervention that is tracked from finding to corrective action to resolved capability.

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## 2. Decision Architecture Mapping Beyond Capability Scoring

**T**HIRA/SPR evaluates whether capabilities exist at the required level. ALIGN's Assess phase evaluates how those capabilities would actually be coordinated and directed during a worst-case scenario, identifying decision architecture failures that exist at the operational level but do not surface in capability scoring.

### 3. Whole-Community Operationalization

**T**HIRA requires community-wide input and acknowledges private sector, healthcare, and utility contributions to community capability. ALIGN's Link phase operationalizes these relationships, mapping how each community-wide partner contributes to capability targets identified in the THIRA, and building coordination systems that function under the operational demands of the scenarios THIRA describes.

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### 4. THIRA-Informed Exercise Design

**H**SEEP requires that exercises be based on the jurisdiction's actual risk environment. ALIGN's Generate Stress phase uses THIRA worst-case scenarios as the primary exercise driver, ensuring that exercise complexity, resource assumptions, and performance benchmarks align with the capability targets the jurisdiction set for itself.

## 5. Grant Investment Alignment

**A**LIGN's Normalize phase produces the prioritized corrective action plan and capability improvement roadmap that connects THIRA/SPR findings to strategic grant investment decisions, ensuring preparedness funding addresses the highest-priority capability gaps THIRA identified.

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## Conclusion

The THIRA/SPR is the most thorough risk assessment and capability evaluation framework available to government jurisdictions. Its value is proportional to how well its findings drive program change, not how thoroughly the submission document is completed.

ALIGN applies THIRA/SPR as a complete preparedness cycle: from threat and hazard identification through capability gap closure through validated program improvement. The approach was designed to produce capable jurisdictions. ALIGN builds the program architecture that delivers that outcome.

### ABOUT SENTINEL RESILIENCE PARTNERS

**S**entinel Resilience Partners directly supports THIRA/SPR cycles for state, local, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions, including threat and hazard identification, scenario development,

capability target setting, SPR facilitation, and HSGP grant reporting alignment. ALIGN engagements are structured at four tiers: Audit, Build, Validate, and Sustain.

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