

RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Sri Lanka Preparedness Partnership (SLPP)
August 2019



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Developed by National Disaster Relief Services Centre (NDRSC)



Under Sri Lanka Preparedness Partnership (SLPP)

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Forward

The immediate aftermath of a disaster is a critical period of time when the government and non-governmental organisations need to make key decisions on how to best support the affected populations. However, during that brief period, limited comprehensive information on the actual needs are typically available to support the identification of strategic priorities. Therefore, there is an immediate need for an initial assessment of affected population needs.

This manual describes how the Rapid Needs Assessment process is organized, activated and managed during disasters. It illustrates how assessment information is compiled and disseminated.

This RNA document has been written to support district and divisional disaster relief services officers and other stakeholders involved in Divisional Secretariat and Grama Niladari level to gather and share information in the initial stages of a response. Integration of the procedures of different agencies is critical to ensure resource available for need assessment are directed in the most effective and efficient way.

Comments, questions, and suggested improvements related to this RNA document are encouraged.

Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

CSOs	Civil Societies Organisations
CBOs	Community Based Organisation
DRSO	Disaster Relief Services Officer
DMC	Disaster Management Centre
EDOs	Economic Development Officers
GN	Grama Niladari
MoH	Medical Officer of Health
NBRO	National Building Research Organisation
NDRSC	National Disaster Relief Services Centre
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDNA	Preliminary Damage Need Assessment
RNA	Rapid Needs Assessment
UN	United Nations

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Following a major disaster, there is an immediate need for Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) in the affected areas. National Disaster Relief Services Centre (NDRSC) has developed the RNA capability, designed to determine the anticipated impact and determine the scope of immediate relief and response operation. This RNA guides support planning and operations conducted in accordance with the Disaster Contingency Plan developed by the NDRSC and is a primary tool for Disaster Relief Services Officers (DRSOs) attached to the District and Divisional Secretariats on post-disaster rapid needs assessments and reporting.

This manual describes how the RNA process is organized, activated, and executed immediately after the disaster. It illustrates how assessment information is compiled and transmitted. It also illustrates how the RNA process interacts with the other stakeholders, including Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Private Sector entities working for the rapid need assessment of communities affected by the disasters.

1.1 BACKGROUND

There had been efforts to develop tools including formats to conduct RNA in Sri Lanka by different organizations. However, it is highlighted the need of a common tool to be used by all stakeholders covering data relevant to all sectors and easy to understand and use for end-users. Therefore, this RNA guide is setting a common platform for NDRSC and partner agencies to work on a common platform. Furthermore, this document is fulfilling the need for acquiring data using the standardized methodology in line with 'Sendai Framework' reporting requirement, as well as in a standardized format, to enable effective data sharing using common terminology. This is enhanced when common data collection protocols described in this guide are used.

Therefore RNA aims to:

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Therefore RNA aims to:

- gather information to provide an early picture of the disaster situation.
- determine initial disaster response activities and direct the initial distribution of available resources within NDRSC and other disaster risk management agencies.
- serve as the first step towards a detailed response plan and the more detailed forms of assessments that will take place later in the response and in the recovery phase.
- obtain necessary data for fulfilling the reporting requirement of national agencies and Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction.

All disaster response agencies, including NGOs involved in initial need assessment are requested to follow the guide to avoid the duplication of the data collection process in the disaster- affected areas.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The overarching purpose of the RNA Guide is to provide improved support to the District, Divisional and grama Niladari level stakeholders in post-disaster impact and need assessments and planning through a more coordinated approach. The more immediate objective of the guide is to provide an agreed framework and predictable arrangements for effective and efficient coordinated support for the assessment.

Therefore, this guide serves two purposes:

1. to provide NDRSC and other disaster management stakeholders with a clear, common framework for undertaking RNA, and
2. to provide members of RNA team with necessary information and guidelines to conduct a reliable, high-quality needs assessment during post-disaster environment

1.3 WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

The RNA Guide is intended primarily to assist RNA team members specially the NDRS Officers and Grama Niladaries who participate in the planning, coordinating and implementation of needs assessment, and Divisional Secretaries and District Secretaries who are responsible for steering the RNA process. Specifically it is intended for the following members:

Table1 : Members of RNA team

Steering, guidance and Validation	Key members	Subordinate Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretaries • District Secretaries • Director – NDRCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District NDRS Officer • Divisional NDRS Officer • Designated Officer from District DDMCU • Designated Officer from NBRO • Grama Niladaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Officer of Health / Public Health Inspectors / Midwife • Supporting CBOs and NGOs Economic Development Officers • Child Protection Officers • Women Empowerment Officers • Police, Armed Forces and Civil Protection • Private Sector Organisations

The Guide may also be useful to other government staff, NGOs, Civil Societies Organisations (CSOs), local leaders, volunteers and village level officials involved in disaster relief and recovery management.

The involvement of key members of RNA process is described in section 2.4.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

This RNA guide is not intended to be broad and all-encompassing, nor is it a prescriptive document. Rather, it provides a primary approach and orientation towards assessment and initiating the relief planning process which would be of use to wide stakeholders.

The guide is not intended to replace the more elaborate assessment methodologies developed by Disaster Management Centre or UN agencies. It recognizes that a more in-depth assessment and planning, beyond the scope of a RNA, may be required for agencies, NGOs and donors to develop their individual recovery strategies and programs, particularly those which are sector-specific.

1.5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All RNAs would be guided by the following core principles:

- Adhere to the core humanitarian standards.
- Provide coordination at all stages of the process and at all levels, ensuring collaboration and partnership between donors, NGOs, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders engaged in the RNA.
- Adhere to the principle of 'do no harm' - ensuring that the process does not have a detrimental effect on life-saving relief to the affected population.
- Adopt a conflict-sensitive approach and ensure that the assessment does not exacerbate existing tensions and that the relief distribution strategy takes into account potential disaster-related conflicts.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in the RNA process as well as in post-disaster relief and recovery focus on the most vulnerable sections, including female-headed households, children, orphans, the landless, people with special needs, the youth and the aged.

1.6 CONTENTS OF THE GUIDE

Section 1 of the Guide is intended to give a general overview of the RNA guide. Following the sections on overview, and introductions the guide is presented in Section 2. Section 3 elaborates the corresponding steps for the RNA process and the assessment approach.

The Annexures provides practical instruments to support the RNA process. It includes a list of 'Roles and Responsibilities' of key members of RNA team and provides assessment templates that can be readily used for the assessment teams/ individuals involved in the RNA.

SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Carried out by key stakeholders during the first 72 hours following a disaster, the RNA aims to provide basic information on the needs of affected populations and to support the identification of strategic humanitarian priorities. Therefore, this enables all disaster management actors to reach, from the outset, a common understanding of the situation. This section provides a short introduction to the RNA including, its definition, timing and stakeholders.

2.1 WHAT IS RAPID NEED ASSESSMENT ?

Immediately following a disaster, the needs of the affected population must be assessed as part of the national contingency planning approach. Such an assessment will identify the immediate needs that require external intervention and the gaps to be filled. Undertaken immediately after a disaster, RNA provides information on needs, possible courses of action and resource requirements.

A RNA differs from a Preliminary Damage Need Assessment (PDNA). A PDNA is used to determine the amount of recovery assistance required by an affected sector in the district/ country, whereas a RNA is conducted to determine the immediate relief needs of the affected area along with the preliminary survival needs of affected people. While a RNA is conducted immediately following a major disaster, a PDNA may be conducted over a longer period of time and may not begin until after initial response operations have been conducted. However, the data gathered during a RNA may be used to assist with the PDNA process.

The RNA is separate from immediate life-saving activities of the search and rescue operation. As indicated in the Sphere Standards, the first step in humanitarian response is to assess the needs of the affected population, and design a prioritized plan of action based on those needs.

2.3 WHEN IS A RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT PERFORMED?

Assessing the impacts and needs of disaster victims timely is very important in providing the appropriate relief. A rapid impact needs assessment is conducted within 72 hours after the onset of a Rapid-onset disasters (except slow-onset disasters) included in the Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act no 13 of 2005), or when it is requested by the NDRSC in order to locally assess the disaster-affected areas and the needs of disaster victims.

2.4 WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Divisional Secretary of the disaster-affected area will direct the RNA process and endorse the RNA report with the guidance of District Secretaries. District Disaster Relief Services Officer (DRSO) will act as the coordinator and in charge of the RNA data collection process. S/he will be coordinating with Grama Niladaries in through relevant divisional secretariats to obtain field level information. Local members of NGOs / private sector organization could provide coordination support for both parties if required.

Information obtained from sector-based organization will be furnished to assess the sectoral damages and needs identified in the RNA reporting format.

Depending on the scope, severity, and type of disaster, DRISO could request the services of other government staff or NGOs through respective divisional secretaries or district secretaries. Grama Niladari / village level government officials including Economic Development Officers (EDOs) and Samurdhi Officers may be requested to support Grama Niladaries on the data collection process during large scale disasters.

2.5 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

The government bears the responsibility of taking care of disaster victims, providing immediate relief including food and other necessary relief plus supporting early recovery. Management of natural, technological & man-made risks requires the systematic implementation of the provisions of the Disaster Management Act and the Disaster Management Policy of the country along with other relevant or complementary legislation, including National Policy on Local Government and National Housing Policy.

In respect of power decentralization, large part of administrations is carried out through the District Secretariat. Projects and programmes related to the Ministry of Disaster Management are implemented through the relevant District Secretariats and Divisional Secretariats. At the same time Development Assistants (Disaster Management) Development Officers (Disaster Relief Services) work as Disaster Relief Coordinators, under the supervision of the relevant District and Divisional Secretaries.

NDRSC was established in order to plan and implement relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. It has an objective to contribute to the national objective of sustainable development through minimized human suffering and loss and strengthening national capacities for Disaster Relief.

To achieve this objective, the institution has identified the following key programming activities:

- Provide short-term relief measures for affected peoples
- Support to implement programmes to rescue people from both natural and man-made disasters
- Plan and implement projects to minimize disaster impacts (construction of rainwater harvesting, etc)
- Implement rehabilitation programmes to restore livelihoods and the economy of people who were affected by both natural and man-made disasters.
- Collect, process and disseminate information on disaster situations
- Conduct awareness programmes for public officers and people on how to face disaster situations and relief mechanism
- Coordinate relief operation during emergency
- Provide logistics services

SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT PLANNING AND DATA COLLECTION

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the basic requirement for the RNA planning and data collection process. It also gives an overview of informing RNA members about the assignment of responsibilities.

3.1 THE CORE ELEMENTS OF THE RNA

At its core, the RNA consists of two main elements:

1. The assessment of disaster impacts.
2. The determination of relief needs.

These two main elements are elaborated in the following diagram:

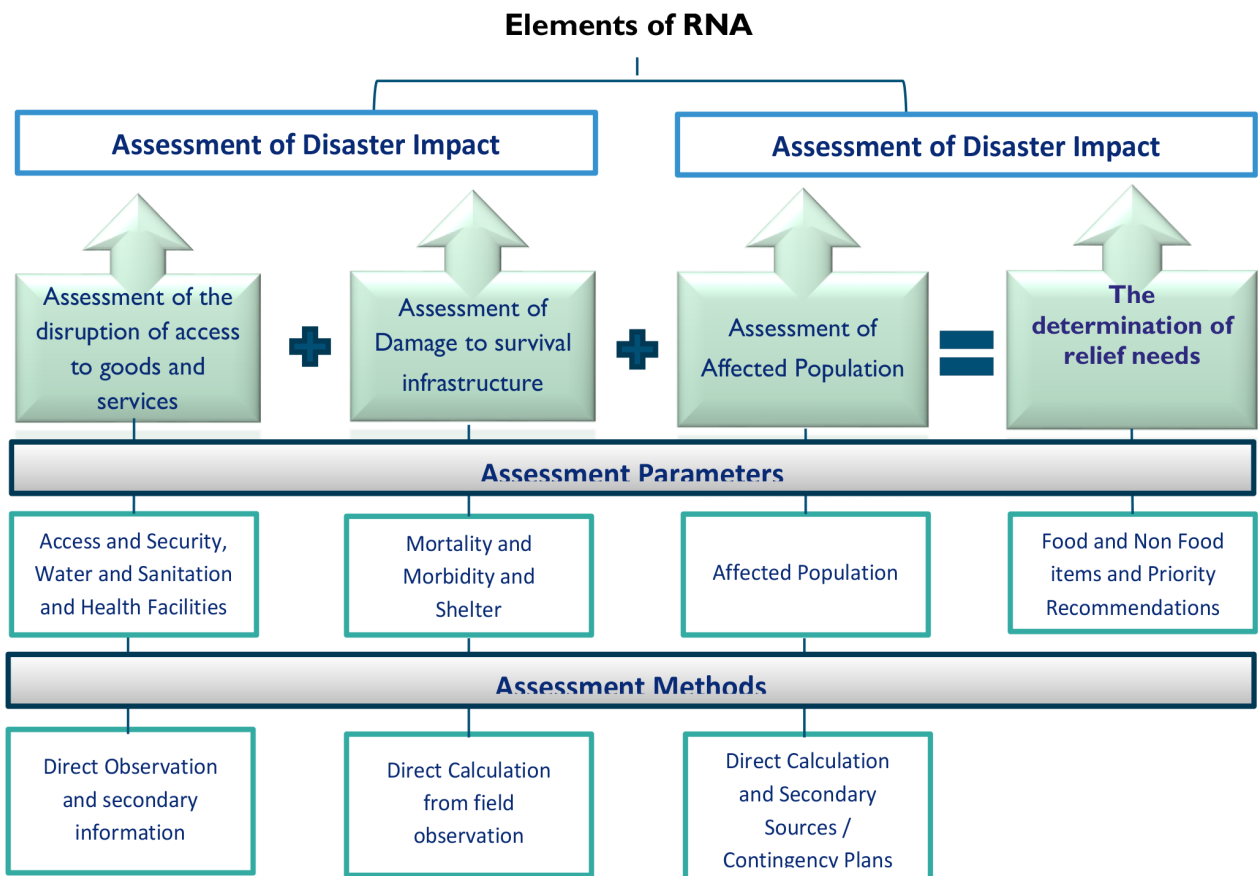


Diagram 1: Elements of Rapid Needs Assessments

Required assessment parameters were included into the RNA format given in Annex 1

3.2 DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

Below diagram is summarizing the data collection and reporting process

Diagram 1: Flow diagram for Data Collection and Reporting

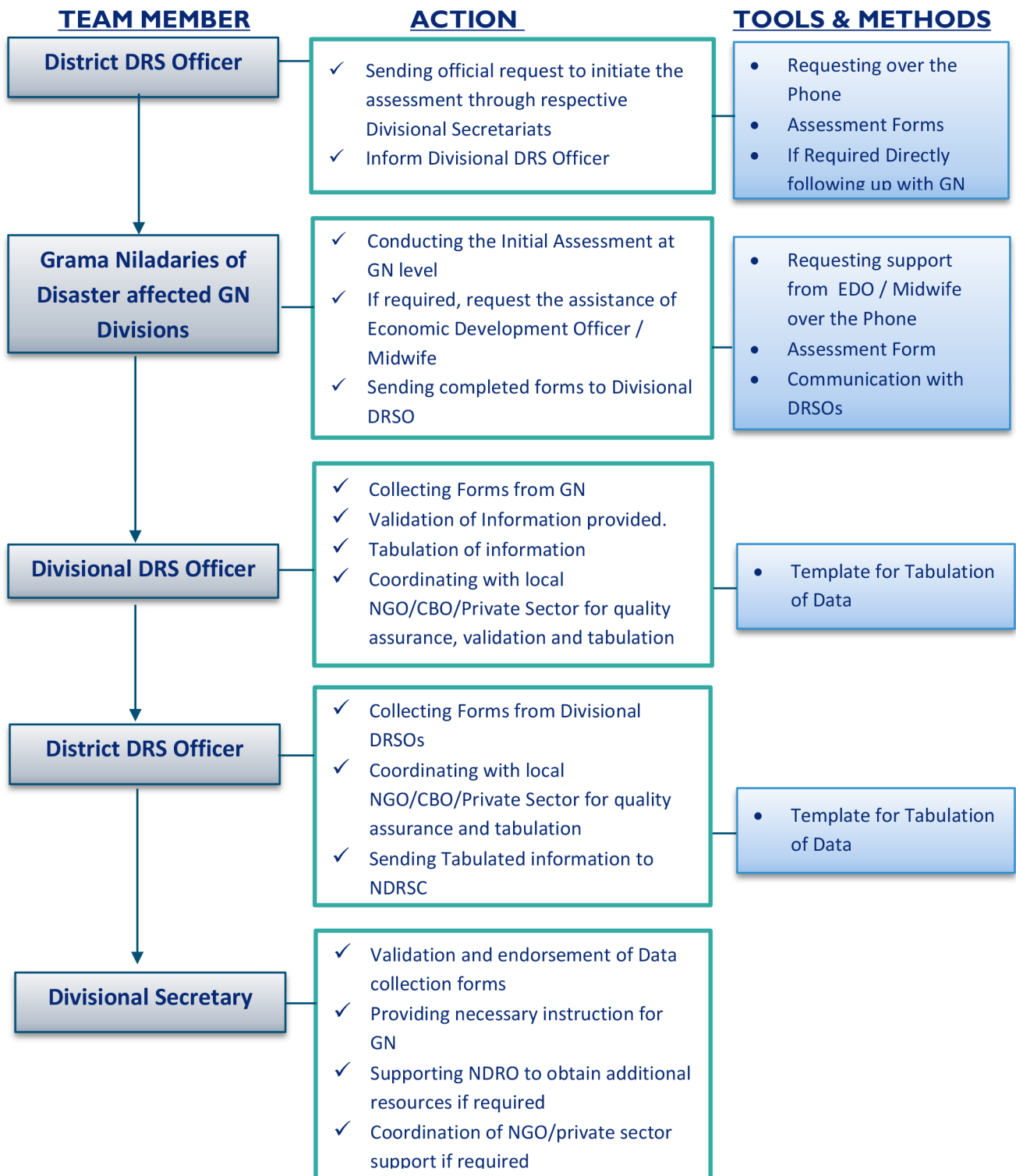


Diagram 1: Flow diagram for Data Collection and Reporting

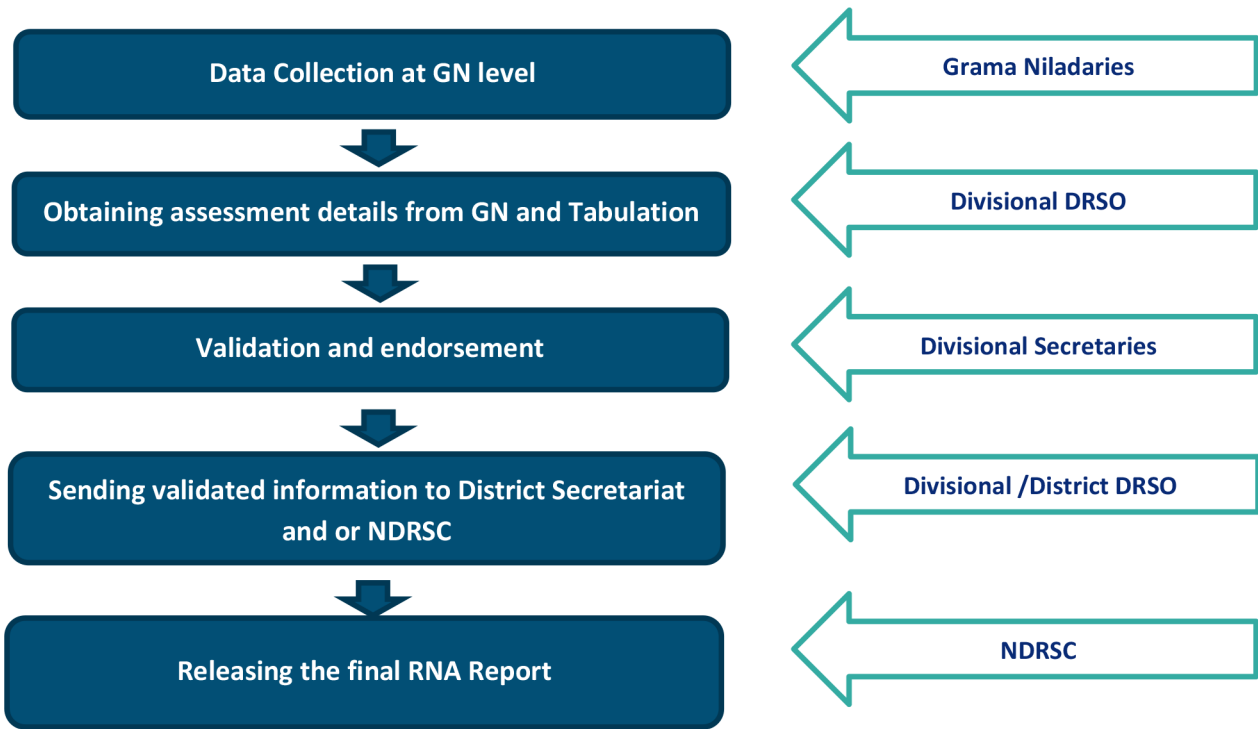


Diagram 3: Reporting Mechanism in the RNA process

3.3 SOURCE FOR INFORMATION

When performing the assessment, it is advised to perform direct observation in order to verify the data and collect information from as many sources as possible. Due to time, resource, and/or security constraints, Grama Niladaries is often forced to rely on reports from different sources. However, when S/he relies too much on secondary information, significant needs of disaster-affected populations can be missed. This is why it is important to perform direct observation and confirm with one's own eyes as much as possible.

Information for the format could be obtained from direct observation and as well as from interviewing affected people, first responders, relief workers and other means including existing professional networks such as Disaster Management Centre officials, Medical Officers of Health, Midwives and Public Health Inspectors, Private Institutions, NGOs, CBOs and as well as the from the media reporters available in the field.

3.4 COORDINATION WITH NGOs, CBOs AND RELIEF TEAMS

When conducting the RNA, it is important to involve the affected population from the beginning. Specially, the members of the Relief Management Committee, private and non-governmental relief teams that could support Grama Niladaires on the assessment process.

It is also important to collaborate with other relief teams in order to avoid repetitive or redundant activity and lessen the burden to the affected population.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION

The data obtained from the affected Grama Niladari divisions need to be recorded in the format and its contents should be cross-checked as much as possible prior to sending it to the divisional DRSO.

Information from RNA must be cumulated at the divisional / district level and stored in a dedicated server at NDRSC. This enables the assessments to contribute to overall situation awareness, as well as the generation of cumulative need assessment reports, response plans and maps.

The collected information should be triangulated from different sources as much as possible, and promptly reported to NDRSC headquarters. It is also important to recognize that the rapid assessment is not meant to be in-depth, and incomplete information is expected due to time and/or security and safety constraints. In addition to reporting back to the NDRSC, the results of the assessment must also be shared with relevant line ministries, other disaster relief organizations, District/Divisional Secretariats and relevant local governments to appropriately coordinate the response.

Annex 1: TEMPLATES FOR RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Date & Time of the event:						
Type of Disaster: (Please select one)	Flood	<input type="checkbox"/>	District:			
	Landslide	<input type="checkbox"/>	Division:			
	High wind	<input type="checkbox"/>	Affected GN divisions: ¹			
	Cyclone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Camps in the DS division:			
	Fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Families affected:			
	Epidemics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of People affected:	Male	Female	Total
	Coastal erosion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Pregnant Women:			
	Tsunami	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Houses Damaged: Fully:		Partially:	
	Earthquakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Deaths:			
	Manmade	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Missing:			
Others (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Injured:				

I Accessibility

Current Situation:	
1.1 Disaster Situation	1.2 Weather Situation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaster still prevails <input type="checkbox"/> Flooded <input type="checkbox"/> Active Landslide <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High wind <input type="checkbox"/> Rainy /Cloudy <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Accessibility to the affected area:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please answer question 1.3:
1.3 Accessibility by:	Land <input type="checkbox"/> Water <input type="checkbox"/> Air <input type="checkbox"/>
Critical Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication - Landlines: Yes <input type="checkbox"/>/ No <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Health Facilities: Yes <input type="checkbox"/>/ No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication - Mobile: Yes <input type="checkbox"/>/ No <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Mode - Bus: Yes <input type="checkbox"/>/ No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity: Yes <input type="checkbox"/>/ No <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Mode - Train: Yes <input type="checkbox"/>/ No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Supply: Yes <input type="checkbox"/>/ No <input type="checkbox"/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Mode - Private: Yes <input type="checkbox"/>/ No <input type="checkbox"/>

¹Attach GN division wise situation reports

2. Mortality and Morbidity

Age Category	MALE				FEMALE				TOTAL
	below 5	6-17yrs	18-64yrs	65 & above	below 5	6-17yrs	18-64yrs	65 & above	
1. Deaths									
2. Missing									
3. Injured									
TOTAL									

3. Details of Affected Population:

3.1 Number of affected families living in the following:									
1. In Safety Centres									
2. With Friends and Relatives									
3. Own house									
4. Other:									
Total									
3.2 Details of Affected Populations									
Age Desegregation	Safety Centre		Friends & Relatives		Own House		TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
# of Children between 1 - 5 yrs:									
# of Children between 6 – 17 yrs									
# of People between 18 – 64 yrs									
# of People above 65 yrs above									
SUBTOTAL									
# of Pregnant women:									
# of Lactating women:									
# of Disabled									
# of other Vulnerable									

4. Affected Household and Industries

Residential Building or Properties	number	Micro Small & Medium enterprise ²	number	large scale industries	number
Fully damage		Fully damage		Fully damage	
Partially damage		Partially damage		Partially damage	

² Defining MSMEs in Sri Lanka (National Policy Framework for Small Medium Enterprise Development)

Sector	Size	Criteria	Medium	Small	Micro
Manufacturing Sector	Annual Turnover		Rs Mn 251 --750	Rs Mn 16 --250	Less than Rs Mn.15
	No of Employees		51-300	11 -50	Less than 10
Service Sector	Annual Turnover		Rs Mn 251 --750	Rs Mn 16 --250	Less than Rs Mn.15
	No of Employees		51-300	11-50	Less than 10

Food:
Health and Nutrition:
Water and Sanitation:
Security/Protection:
Gender-Based Violence:
Waste Management:
Other:

10. Priority Recommendations and other requirements:

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Reporting Officer:

Name	Designation	Signature and Date

Certifying Officer:

Name	Designation (NDRSC)	Signature and Date

Endorsed by:

Signature of Divisional Secretary

Date:

Annex 2 : ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RNA TEAM MEMBERS

Responsibilities of National Disaster Relief Services Centre

Management of RNA

- Manage national RNA process
- Maintaining standardized RNA policies, operational procedures, and documentation
- Develop notification/activation of RNA process during disasters
- Coordinating with Divisional Secretaries and District Secretaries

Staffing and Capacity Development

- Designating and informing and training DRSO on RNA process
- Ensuring the availability of designated Team members to participate in RNA training, exercises, and execution
- Supporting RNA training for Grama Niladaries and other stakeholders at district and divisional level
- Develop RNA support agreement with respective Non-Governmental Organisations and private sector organisations
- Coordinate with respective district secretaries / divisional secretaries to ensure staffing for the RNA team during disasters.

Logistic Support

- Provide necessary logistic support for DRSOs to conduct RNA in the field.
- Collect and tabulate the data collected through the RNA process.
- Maintaining budgetary responsibility for the

Responsibilities of Divisional Secretaries

- Validation and endorsement of data received from DRSO
- Supporting DRSO on additional resource requirement
- Providing necessary instruction for Grama Niladaries
- Facilitating the NGOs and private sector organisations involved in the RNA process

Responsibilities of Grama Niladaries

- Collection of data from affected GN division using assessment template
- Ensure timely collection, tabulation and submission of required data
- Informing about additional human resource support if required

Responsibilities of Disaster Relief Services Officers

DRSOs are responsible for the following:

- Keep their respective Grama Niladaries informed on their availability status
- Participate in the RNA training programme and periodic refresher training programmes
- Provide training programmes for Grama Niladaries on RNA process
- Maintain a state of readiness and ensuring the availability of assessment templates at GN level
- Contacting designated Team members with appropriate notification/activation information, as requested by the NDRSC.
- Perform their assigned duties during RNA process as described elsewhere in this manual
- Validating information received from Grama Niladaries
- Ensure timely collection, tabulation and submission of required data as per the RNA assessment template (Annex I)

Responsibilities of Participating Non-Governmental Organisations

- Supporting Data Collection and tabulation process at GN / Divisional / District level
- Provision of necessary resources for the above process through Divisional Secretaries



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