C2R – RESILIENCE RECOVERY TOOLKIT
Recovery Needs Assessment

What

The Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) is a comprehensive assessment methodology aimed at assisting local governments to critically evaluate the extent of the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis and their effects on their city. It is intended that on the basis of these findings local governments can produce practical recommendations to mobilise financial and technical resources.

The RNA is based on the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) methodology, an internationally accepted tool developed by the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union. PDNAs enable governments to establish the physical damages, economic losses, and costs of meeting recovery needs in the context of disasters through an inclusive, government-led and people-centric process. The PDNA has been applied in different post-disaster situations, such as after natural disasters, like Hurricane Matthew in Haiti in 2016\(^3\), or after political conflicts, like in Pakistan in 2010 during the crisis between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)\(^4\). PDNA methodology is increasingly applied in contexts where multiple emergencies (man-made and natural) are taking place, such as the 2017 Somali drought.

However, the context of a pandemic in a city differs fundamentally from the disaster situations in which PDNAs are commonly used: Covid-19 is a slow onset crisis that demands more agile and iterative processes.

The proposed RNA methodology adapts and localises the assessment, instigating the creation of local structures and processes to plan the city recovery process effectively and dynamically. Distinctive characteristics of the proposed RNA methodology include:

1. RNA is led and delivered at the local level (not national)
2. RNA provides the opportunity to create a monitoring scheme for the evolution of the effects and impacts
3. RNA enables the identification and explicit articulation of resilience value in the identified needs

It also recognises the systemic vulnerabilities that reduce a city’s ability to overcome current crises and future shocks, for example, because of overcrowded conditions in informal settlements or fragile health systems. By contemplating the particularities of each local context, it enables the creation of an actionable, multi-sectoral and place-based strategy for a resilient recovery.

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\(^2\) It takes into account the human development impact of disaster; the distinct needs and priorities of women, girls, boys and men of all ages and sub-groups of the affected populations through stakeholder engagement and participation; support and inclusion of affected communities; consideration of social-cultural aspects, aims at building resilient communities and societies.


Why

The RNA is adapted from a well-known and globally accepted methodology that recognizes the multi-sectoral nature of emergency response and recovery as well as the key role of evidence and data to support appropriate decision-making. In order to effectively plan for recovery, it is essential cities have sound knowledge and evidence of the damages and the needs.

The RNA is based on a methodology that has been widely studied and implemented all over the world, particularly in fragile contexts. Therefore, it is grounded in well tested methods, which have been constantly adapted to include lessons from implementation on the ground.

The suitability of the tool is based on its ability to respond to cities’ current challenges, particularly in the Global South. The extreme economic and living conditions associated with lockdown and social distancing measures demand for innovative approaches, methods and measures to understand deeply, and respond to, the tangible impacts in cities as a whole, and in poor and vulnerable groups in particular.

**WHY SHOULD MY CITY CARRY OUT A RECOVERY NEEDS ASSESSMENT?**
- Supports local governments in assessing and expanding their capabilities and practices for planning and implementing recovery strategies
- Enables and strengthens coordination between public, private, civic and international actors to exchange data and analysis, promoting the ability to monitor the situation
- Affirms and promotes the leadership of local governments
- Steers a comprehensive and resilient recovery that goes beyond a simple reconstruction back to ‘normal’

How

The Recovery Needs Assessment is a comprehensive process in which different quantitative and qualitative methods are used to generate an evidence base to articulate a framework for recovery and inform decision making.

The process of assessing the ‘needs’ emerging from the Covid-19 crisis starts with the identification and analysis on the effects of Covid-19. This includes both the economic and social losses resulting from the short-term measures (health emergency, lockdown measures, social distancing) as well as longer-term impacts the crisis will generate. The analysis should provide clear recommendations for resilient recovery.

Team and capacities

The direction for the RNA should be defined by a manager or a ‘management team’, led by a senior representative from the local government who will be in contact with national institutions and other key partners to obtain strategic guidance and make key management decisions.

The practical work is conducted by a ‘coordination team’ that will include governmental officials and representatives from key partner organizations (e.g. NGOs and international organizations). The coordination team’s role is twofold: to steer the planning and research process, and to integrate the sectoral findings with cross-cutting, human and development perspectives (e.g. governance, gender, environment etc.).

The Coordination Team can be subdivided into ‘working groups’, which will provide the technical inputs for each sector. Based on international best practice, we suggest the

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identification of four working groups (environment & DRR; production; infrastructure; and social). The data gathering process should be undertaken in collaboration with relevant municipal departments, as well as key stakeholders (such as from the private sector, NGOs, civil society etc.), which can participate in these working groups.

In the current context of social distancing policies, it is important to rethink the best way to deliver common valuable practices, such as field visits and workshops. In order to reduce the movement of people it is suggested that a strong multidisciplinary team from the municipality and key stakeholders from the public and private sectors, as well as civil society, should be defined at early stages and receive online training. Moreover, the duration of the exercise should be defined together with the local government, taking a minimum of three to six weeks to complete the assessment.

**Key steps in the process**

The following table suggests the main steps towards defining and implementing the RNA, following WB, UN and EU definitions. In the context of a slow onset crisis such as Covid-19, Steps 3 - 5 could be delivered iteratively to better capture new and changing effects and impacts of the crisis.

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<th>Key Steps and Outputs of the RNA</th>
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<th>Main Process and Outputs</th>
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| 1. Inception                      | • Demand: Local government creates a mandate for the RNA  
• Team setting: Definition of a high-level management team, RNA coordination team and working groups  
• Stakeholder analysis: Determination of key stakeholders from the local level, including key departments, NGOs, civil society, and private sector (if applicable)  
• Work plan: Identification of objectives, scope, timeline and resources  
• Resource mobilisation strategy: Development of strategy to secure funds for recovery | |
| 2. Preparing the RNA              | • Team setting: Consolidation of RNA coordination team and working groups  
• Training: Training the RNA team to conduct the assessment | |
| 3. Data collection and validation | • Desk review: Collection of secondary quantitative data on social and economic losses and pre-Covid-19 baseline information for each sector  
• Interviews: Sample collection of primary data, and validation of data from affected areas; this can include surveys and other data collection methods through interviews  
• Field assessment: Visits to key locations based on preliminary data on most affected or relevant areas or sectors (include different methods such as satellite imagery)  
• Stakeholders’ consultations: Broader consultations | |
| 4. Consolidation and analysis     | • Data analysis at the sector level: The consolidation, processing and analysis of data that illustrates the effects of the crisis as collected by the team; this includes the analysis on previous vulnerabilities that were exacerbated by the crisis, data points that are likely to change over time and thus should be revised regularly, and identification of emerging trends or phenomena  
• Needs analysis: Identify sectoral recovery needs and priorities and synthesise into sector reports  
• Inter-sector data analysis: Cross-check findings across sectors to achieve a common understanding of the crisis; identify common priorities across sectors and geographic areas, vulnerable groups, cross-cutting issues; and establish a common basis for recovery programming; identify timeline for future iterations | |
5. Formulating the Integrated Framework for Recovery

- **Feedback and validation process:** Confirm timeline for future iterations
- **Conclusion of Assessment Report and definition of key recommendations**

6. Resource mobilization and implementation mechanism

- Organize donor/pledging conference to present RNA and Recovery Strategy
- Consolidate monitoring mechanism for recovery, respecting and strengthening local institutional organization

Adaptation of key steps towards the Recovery Needs Assessment

**Suggested outputs**

After the conclusion of the whole process, there are four outputs that should be ready (which should be updated frequently):

- **Pre-crisis context and baseline information**
  - Summary of competences and capacity of local government (in order to determine the scope of the analysis).
  - Summary of the pre-crisis conditions for key social, economic, cultural, financial and political local issues. This is a relevant data gathering exercise which can help identifying opportunities for communication and future monitoring.

- **Assessment of crisis effects**
  - It evaluates both the physical damage, if any, and the estimated losses, from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. This document should be updated if evidence and data changes substantially. Where possible the analysis shall include monetary and economic value estimations. Key considerations for the assessment are:
    - Access to goods and services – lockdown measures impose a reduction on services such as transportation and retail, while also increasing services related to the digital economy. At the same time, basic services, such as water and sanitation, may have been subjected to emergency regulations to guarantee its access to the population or may have suffered cuts. Assessing these effects shall include an estimation of current and future losses for people, households, firms, companies, utilities and public service providers.
    - Governance and decision-making processes – citizen rights such as elections, beneficiary assistances, services for homeless population and many others may have suffered delays and/or cuts during lockdown or social isolation measures. At the same time, the scope of actions for local governments may have altered during the crisis, creating new demands for local authorities.
    - Increased risks and vulnerabilities – previous vulnerabilities (e.g. such as overcrowding of households, lack of safe access to basic services, weak safety net for informal workforce) may have increased the exposure of vulnerable populations to Covid-19-related health and economic risks. These include potential infection outbreaks or uncertainty for economic recovery. Moreover, other hazards such as flooding, droughts etc., can further exacerbate the effects of Covid-19.

**Assessment of crisis impacts**

The analysis of impacts shall summarize and articulate the city’s pre-crisis challenges, the effects of the Covid-19 crisis and explore their long-term implications in the context of the

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city’s development plans, past experiences and emerging concerns. It should help local civil servants and external donors understand both the human development and economic impacts of the Covid-19 crisis. It should be based on a long-term perspective so it can provide an evidence-based picture on how pre-crisis vulnerabilities exacerbated risks during the crisis and how this can play out in the future.

**Key recommendations**

To synthesize and create clear messages, key recommendations should be articulated within an integrated framework for recovery. It should provide a comprehensive definition of needs and propose a resource mobilization strategy to leverage on investment and financing options towards generating resilient value for the city’s recovery.
| Author:    | Luciana Cardoso                     |
| Reviewer: | Braulio E Morera                    |
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