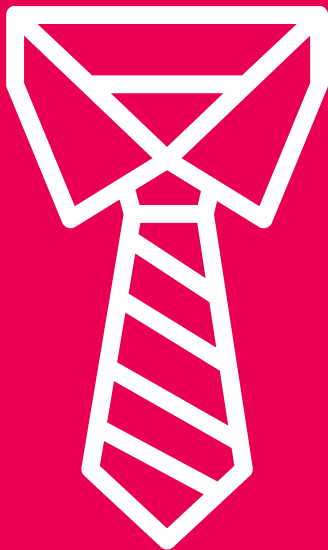


# Disaster management and recovery



## What is meant by post-disaster management?

The work of emergency and disaster management isn't over once the critical event ends. While disaster management (specifically) refers to the process of organising and directing resources to cope with disaster through the coordination of roles and responsibilities, the recovery phase of disaster begins immediately after the threat to human life (from said disaster) subsides.

What happens, then? Well, those responsible for post-disaster recovery seek to bring an affected area back to normalcy. Recovery, as defined by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, is the restoration and improvement (where appropriate) of facilities, livelihoods, and living conditions of disaster-affected communities, including efforts to reduce disaster risk factors.

Recovery doesn't always have to be a physical outcome, either. It can also be social process, encompassing decision-making about restoration and reconstruction activities. Through this prism, scholars advise leaders responsible for post-disaster recovery to look at the post-disaster period as an opportunity to upgrade the quality of construction to better resist subsequent events and begin to think through ways to mitigate future damage.

## What are the steps in post-disaster management?

Since disasters provide a unique chance to effect change – not only in building capacity for immediate recovery but also for long-term sustainable development, it's important to understand the steps involved in emergency and disaster management. Those stages include:



### Prevention.

Identifying potential hazards and devising safeguards to mitigate their impact. The earliest stage in the disaster management cycle involves putting measures in place to minimise disaster risk. Such activities might include:

- Evacuation plans for facilities, (e.g., schools, offices, and residential apartments)
- City planning and design with an eye to flood danger.



### Mitigation.

Like prevention, the mitigation stage aims to minimise loss of human life that would result from a disaster. Here, structural and non-structural measures may be taken. Structural measures involve changing the physical characteristics of a facility or larger environment, where non-structural measures tend to work through policy or regulatory processes (e.g., building codes) to precipitate structural changes that optimise safety.



### Preparedness.

An ongoing process of planning, training, and corrective action for what constituencies (be they individuals, communities, businesses, or organisation) will do in the event of a disaster, so that they are maximally prepared.



### Response.

What happens during the short-, middle-, and long term of the disaster. During the response, emergency and disaster management leaders coordinate the use of resources (physical assets, people, and facilities) to help in the restoration of personal and environmental safety, as well as the minimisation of property damage. The goal of the response stage is to remove the ongoing hazard (or its direct result) from the affected area.



### Recovery.

The final stage of the disaster and emergency management life cycle. Recovery involves stabilising affected areas and restoring essential services (e.g., food, clean water, utilities, transportation, and healthcare); efforts related to recovery can take days, weeks, months, years, sometimes even decades. Recovery efforts are prioritised based on level of criticality.

## Post-disaster reconstruction

Ultimately, post-disaster recovery and reconstruction is about helping individuals, entities, and community return to a level of normality. Given the stakes, reconstruction must be taken seriously. According to guidance from the UN, post-disaster recovery should be governed by the following principles:

- Ground recovery interventions in a thorough understanding of the context in which they take place
- Identify needs and priorities of affected populations by creating participatory processes that involve communities themselves in decision-making, service delivery, and recovery
- Promote gender equality and ensure recovery needs of women, children, and men are met across all sectors
- Assess vulnerability to non-recovery, based on factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, age, language, religion, political or other affiliation, national or social origin, disability, geography, poverty, etc.
- Integrate principles of development and secure human development gains
- Support spontaneous recovery processes, local networks, volunteerism, and self-sufficiency
- Ensure national ownership and leadership of the recovery process through the fullest possible engagement of national and local authorities in the planning, execution, and monitoring of recovery actions
- Rebuild people's livelihoods to ensure their capacity to recover and promote the acquisition of new livelihoods, taking the specific needs of women into account
- Support decentralised decision-making and management of recovery; build local-national coordination
- Strengthen monitoring systems and increase transparency so that affected populations can hold governments and local authorities accountable for recovery outcomes
- Integrate measures that reduce risk and vulnerability, prevent conflict, and build back better
- Safeguard *primum non nocere* (first, do no harm) in recovery interventions
- Promote human rights and other rights-based approaches in recovery

## Disaster recovery plan for natural disasters

Principles are one thing. But how do these principles filter into plans that will help communities bounce back?

Well, in the case of largescale disasters, governments and multinational actors often conduct rapid assessments meant to identify pressing needs in the disaster zone. These rapid assessments tend to be organised around clusters or sector teams; they also make use of sector-specific assessment methodologies and tools.

One of those methodologies is the PDNA (Post-Disaster Needs Assessment). The PDNA is a standardised methodology developed by the UN, World Bank, and European Union. It's intended to support governments to (1) assess disaster damages and losses across all sectors and social groups, (2) identify recovery needs, and (3) design an actionable and sustainable recovery strategy that can mobilise financial and technical resources.

What's in the PDNA? It comprises a participatory assessment and recovery planning process, not just building on earlier assessments but also providing a more comprehensive and stronger empirical basis for estimating recovery costs. Key deliverables of any given PDNA include:



A consolidated assessment report, based on sector reports, presenting the overall effect and impact of the disaster on each sector, the recovery needs for each, as well as the explicit impact on cross cutting themes.



A recovery strategy which defines the vision for national recovery; provides a strategy for recovery actions within each sector and affected region, armed with clear objectives and interventions; directs it towards expected results; and defines the timeframe as well as the cost for the recovery process.



Provides the basis for resource mobilization in support of the country's recovery, including a donor conference where required.



Provides an outline for a country-led implementation mechanism for recovery.

PDNA guidelines adhere closely to recovery principles outlined by the UN. The guidelines include:

- Adhere to the core principles of humanitarianism, impartiality, and neutrality
- Acknowledge the national ownership of PDNA and ensure that it is a demand-driven and country-led process, with the fullest possible leadership and engagement of national authorities in assessment, recovery planning and implementation, from the highest political levels to local levels, and at the level of technical expertise
- Support local ownership and the fullest possible engagement of local authorities and community-based organizations in the planning and execution of recovery, and building specific capacities where needed
- Provide coordination at all stages of the process and at all levels, ensuring collaboration and partnership between the UN, the WB, and the EU, as well as with the National Government, donors, NGOs, civil society, and other stakeholders engaged in the PDNA.
- Ensure one team, one process, one output
- Adhere to the principle of *Primum non nocere* (first, do no harm) ensuring that the process does not have a detrimental effect on life-saving relief to the affected population and on the country
- Adopt a conflict-sensitive approach and ensure that the assessment does not exacerbate existing tensions, and that the recovery strategy takes into account potential disaster-related conflicts
- Support and strengthen national and local capacities to lead and manage recovery and reconstruction
- Ensure transparency and accountability in the PDNA process as well as in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction
- Integrate DRR measures in the recovery process to enhance the resilience of affected populations and countries with regard to future disasters
- Develop a recovery plan that addresses the gap created by the disaster, and which effectively helps people in building back better and reduce future risks without expanding recovery needs and priorities into a full-fledged development plan that goes beyond the disaster
- Ensure the participation of the affected population in the assessment of needs and priorities and in the recovery process, at the same time providing support to their spontaneous recovery efforts
- With a gender perspective, focus on the most vulnerable sections, including female-headed households, children, orphans, the landless, people with special needs, the youth and the aged
- Promote equality to prevent discrimination of any kind on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ideology, sex, ethnicity, age, language, religion, disability, property, and birth, among others
- Mainstream cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, governance, human rights, HIV/AIDS, among others
- Ground recovery in the principles of sustainable development
- Build on national development strategies as required
- Monitor, evaluate, and learn from practice
- Complete the assessment in a timely manner to capitalize on the limited window of opportunity to start recovery, resource mobilisation, and resilience building initiatives.

Finally, disaster recovery not only sets the stage for restoration and rebuilding towards a new normal, but it also encourages the adoption of stricter mitigation efforts, to ensure that the new normal is more durable than ever. Only efficient planning integrated into emergency management processes, methodologies



## Citations

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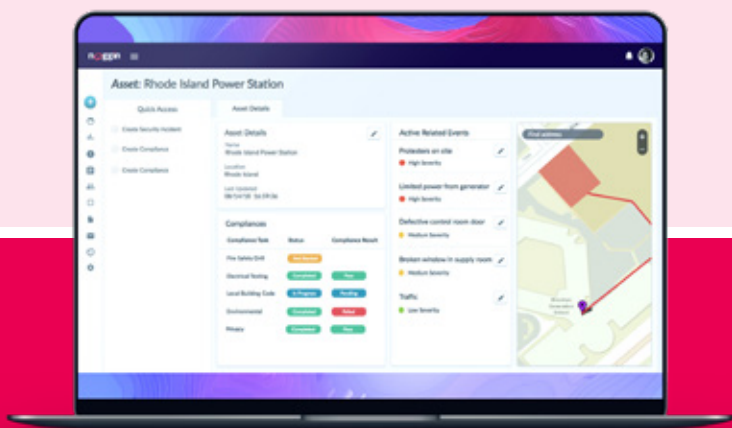
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