



National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan

National Emergency Management Organization

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Documentation Information

Validity Period

This plan remains valid for a period of 3 years (2026–2029) with annual reviews, as deemed necessary.

Distribution

[Insert the appropriate receiver(s) of the plan.]

Name	Position Title and Organization Name	Date Sent	Email Address or Postal Address

PURPOSE

To minimise the loss of life, suffering, damage, and disruption of societal and economic functioning triggered by natural and man-made hazards through effective disaster risk management that reduces risk, invests in resilience, communicates with a whole-community approach, and improves continuously on four phases: mitigation, response, preparedness, and recovery.

The NDPRP, from here onwards, “the Plan,” outlines four phases for managing disaster risk: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The Plan provides operational guidance with an all-hazards approach. Thus, it establishes the overall roles and responsibilities of the concerned public officers, Ministries and Departments of Government, statutory bodies, local government units, and persons or organizations who volunteer or are required by law to perform disaster risk management functions in some or all phases.

The Plan provides a framework for rapid response to emergency/disaster events by effectively using local, national, and international resources.

The plan's overall goal is to contribute to a culture of disaster risk reduction among all sectors of society within Belize, to avoid disasters or mitigate their impacts through substantial investment in resilience and preparedness to respond effectively and promptly recover.

The NDPRP:

- Establishes a comprehensive all-hazard approach to national comprehensive disaster management activities, including preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response, recovery, and rehabilitation.
- Facilitates inter-agency and inter-governmental emergency preparedness, planning, training, exercising, and coordination.
- Highlights and defines the means of government support in the form of resources during severe incidents.
- Defines policies, operational procedures, roles and responsibilities of the various line Departments / Ministries and other stakeholders/institutions; and
- Facilitates national emergency response communication links (internal and external) to build situational awareness across the public, private, and non-governmental organizational structures.

SCOPE

The Disaster Preparedness and Response Act, 2000, as per Section 8(2), provides for the development of a National Disaster Preparedness Response Plan, which includes:

- a. measures to be taken for the prevention of disasters or the mitigation of their effects.
- b. measures to be taken for the integration of mitigation measures in the development plans.
- c. measures to be taken for preparedness and capacity building to effectively respond to any threatening disaster situations or disasters.

ACRONYMS

BRCS	Belize Red Cross Society
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CDM	Comprehensive Disaster Management
CDM HIP	Comprehensive Disaster Management Harmonisation Integration Project
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment
DaLA	Damage and Loss Assessment
DANA	Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis
DDMC	District Disaster Management Committees
DEMC	District Emergency Management Committee
DEOC	District Emergency Operation Centre
DM	Disaster Management
DRA	Disaster Risk Assessment
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EOCs	Emergency Operations Centres
EWS	Early Warning System
GCM	General Circulation Model
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HFA	Hyogo Framework of Action
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ICS	Incident Command System
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDA	International Development Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSDCCDRM	Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NDPRAC	National Disaster Preparedness and Response Advisory Council
NEC	National Emergency Coordinator
NEEC	National Emergency Executive Committee
NEMO	National Emergency Management Organization
NEOC	National Emergency Operations Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHS	National Hydrological Service
NMS	National Meteorological Service
NPDM	National Policy on Disaster Management
OAS	Organization of American States
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
ROI	Return on Investments
SIDS	Small Island Developing States

UNDP
UNESCO
UNDRR

United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Foreword

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Name of the Plan

The Plan is known as The Belize National Disaster Preparedness Response Plan. In the document it will be mentioned as such, as “the Plan” or by its acronyms: Belize NDPRP or the NDPRP. The NDPRP provides a broad outline of how the nation manages disaster risk; it describes specific authorities and lays down practices for managing emergencies, disasters, and other severe incidents. The Plan is always in effect, and elements can be implemented as needed on a flexible and scalable basis in all phases of disaster management. The NDPRP will continue to evolve to the scale of an incident and be in alignment with the changing dynamics of frequency and intensity of disasters and practices in managing disasters. This Plan shall be updated every year or as often as required and after every major incident.

1.1.2 Intended Users

The Plan belongs to the National Disaster Management System that includes government ministries/departments/agencies/executives, the public & private sectors, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The NDMP is intended to provide guidance for the whole community as well. However, it focuses especially on the needs of those who are entrusted with discharging disaster management functions in Belize. All stakeholders (government/non-government) are required to be active, engaged, prepared, and integrated to respond to a major or catastrophic incident.

The Plan addresses specific needs/responsibilities of the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Advisory Committee (NDPRAC), National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), and District and Village Committees. Those Committees and Groups have a responsibility to provide effective disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, rehabilitation, and recovery in the country. At the same time, the NDPRP gives in detail the operating structures and tools used routinely by responders and emergency managers at all levels of government.

1.2 Signature Page

Section 8 of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act 2000 makes it mandatory to prepare the NDPRP for the whole country. This document complies with the above provisions. As per Section 8 (1) of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act, 2000, the National Plan is prepared by the National Emergency Coordinator (NEC), having regard to the National Disaster Management Strategy and in consultation with the Government and expert bodies or organizations in the field of disaster management.

The Belize National Disaster Preparedness Response Plan has been approved by the Honourable John Briceno, Prime Minister of Belize

1.3 Situation and Assumptions

1.3.1 Situation

Belize is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) located in Central America with a long, low-lying coastline that is vulnerable to natural disasters through tropical cyclones and flooding. Belize is a small nation, 151st in size in the world with an area of 22,966 square kilometres. Its landscape and geographic location provide an environment where many types of hazards can occur, such as tropical cyclones, floods, storm surges, landslides, wildfires, and extreme heat. The country lies in the hurricane belt and, on average, is affected by a hurricane every three years. A large section of the coastline has an elevation of less than one meter to several kilometres inland.

Exposure to multiple hazards is compounded by socioeconomic vulnerabilities in Belize. The poverty rate has increased steadily from 41 percent in 2009 to 52 percent in 2018. Urban areas especially had a significant rise in poverty during the same period, from 28 to 43 percent. The GDP dropped 11 percent from 2019 to 2020 due to the impacts of COVID-19, resulting in slowed economic development and increased poverty. The combination of multi-hazard exposure and vulnerability put Belize at increased risk of impacts from natural hazards. Belize is particularly prone to tropical cyclone impacts, floods, and wildfires. The scenario of a major disaster such as hurricanes Keith (2000) and Iris (2001) and, more recently, hurricane Lisa (2022) has highlighted the need for raising awareness about disaster risk reduction (DRR).

The country of Belize is exposed to multiple natural and anthropogenic hazards, including, but not limited to:

- Earthquakes;
- Tropical Cyclones: winds, storm surge and wave action;
- Floods;
- Droughts;
- Tsunamis;
- Cruise ship/maritime accidents;
- Oil and Hazardous material spills;
- Aviation accidents;
- Road transport accidents;
- Environmental hazards;
- Health and epidemic hazards;
- Marine accidents;
- Fire and explosion;
- Utilities shortages; and
- Security threats.
- Wildfires

The consequences of large hazard events, such as tropical cyclones impacting multiple districts or those of smaller intensity, such as a maritime accident or air crash, will always be of great consequence in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Belize is no exception. Relative isolation, limited redundancy in key facilities, and an economy predominantly driven by tourism make the country disproportionately vulnerable. The country is thus vulnerable to disasters, and an appropriate national disaster risk management plan to identify risks, mitigate, prepare, respond, and recover is necessary.

1.3.2 Policy Assumptions

To successfully implement this Plan, the following assumptions have been made:

1. The Government shall provide finances, trained human resources, equipment, and administrative facilities required for its implementation.
2. All identified agencies/organizations within this Plan will fully support comprehensive disaster management by executing their roles and areas of responsibilities.
3. The private sector, non-governmental organizations, and civil society support and contribute to the effectiveness and maintenance of the plan.
4. Each agency, organization, or individual tasked with a responsibility within the NDPRP will ensure adequate training and allocate resources to enable them to discharge that responsibility.
5. Each Ministry/Department will continue to develop their individual disaster management plans and operational orders in support of the NDPRP.
6. A continuous disaster management capability enhancement programme, incorporating training and resource allocation, will be coordinated by the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) to ensure that government agencies, the private sector, and communities are able to meet the Plan requirements.
7. Gender dimensions of disaster preparedness and mitigation processes and response will be adequately addressed.
8. The perspectives of children, migrants, refugees, and indigenous peoples will be reflected, empowering them towards resilience through capacity building, participation in decision-making, and protection of cultural knowledge.
9. Recognizing that persons with disabilities may face not only a physical or mental condition that limits their movements, senses or activities but also experience higher vulnerability due to their socio-economic conditions and access to mitigation and relief resources, the Government of Belize will plan ahead to provide accessible evacuation, response and recovery efforts to persons with disabilities (limited physical mobility & vision) that are more likely to be left behind or abandoned during evacuations;
10. That disaster management planning and risk reduction is a normative integral part of the national development effort; and
11. That community disaster management planning will become an integral and continuous element of the national effort.

1.3.3 Planning and Critical Assumptions

1. All sections of the NDPRP will be informed by hazard, exposure, and vulnerability assessments and analysis as data and skills are available;
2. The Plan and its contents will be regularly monitored, reviewed, tested and updated by NEMO;
3. The Plan as approved by Cabinet will be publicized and made freely available within Belize, excepting the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) operating procedures and resource lists containing confidential content;
4. Each Ministry/Department will continue to develop their individual department business continuity plan and operational procedures in support of the NDPRP and provide tangible support to the NDPRP;
5. Each social sector Ministry/Department entrusted with the care and needs of children and overall development will incorporate the National Protocols for the Integrated Protection of Children and Adolescents as a guiding framework for the comprehensive protection of children in emergency;
6. That disaster management planning and risk reduction is an integral part of the national development effort;
7. Each disaster or hazard event impacts differently, requiring a different response. All parties are prepared for adaptation under disaster/emergency conditions;
8. External support may not be in the country within three (3) days after impact;
9. Primary communication links may be disrupted, and emergency communication mechanisms would be required within a period of five (5) days after impact;

10. The importation of food, water, fuel and basic welfare needs may not be available within a period of seven (7) days;
11. Plans will address for sheltering needs for approximately 10% of the population;
12. Power restoration would not be accessible within thirty (30) days after impact. Generators and solarized panels would have to be utilised;
13. Essential government services and resources (staff, equipment, facilities, and supplies) are available to implement this Plan during an incident.

1.4 Policy

1.4.1 The National Policy on Disaster Management

While the NDPRP is to be coordinated and prepared by the NEMO, the disaster and hazard-specific plans are to be made by the respective central ministries and departments. The line Ministries and Departments of the Government of Belize will continue to address specific incidents as assigned to them by outlining detailed, comprehensive plans, which will be a part and integrated into the NDPRP.

Accordingly, the Plan(s) articulate the:

- a. coordination mechanism along with roles, responsibilities and essential functions at all levels in the disaster management, including a sectoral and integrated approach to protecting children and vulnerable groups;
- b. mitigation and capacity-building measures; and
- c. strengthening of the core capabilities required for all phases of disaster, and all ministries/departments shall prepare their specific plan accordingly.

1.4.2 National Institutional Arrangements for Disaster Management

Major national-level agencies and committees designated to play a critical role in managing disasters are elaborated in Section 1.8.2. The sequence of agencies/committees is not in a hierarchical structure but as per the synergetic linkages for the flow of communication and coordination.

1.5 Concept of Operations

1.5.1 General

1.5.1.1 National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan Components

Part I—The NDPRP is an overarching document and organizational framework that is supported by further policies, plans and strategies for all phases of disaster management and for all hazard types.

Part II—The National Response Plan (NRP) ensures adequate capabilities and resources exist for timely and efficient emergency response. The NRP provides standard operating procedures, templates, and supporting documentation to facilitate tracking of incident status, recovery, response, and ongoing operations. Moreover, the NRP will integrate the response component of the National Protocol for the Integrated Protection of Children and Adolescents specific to line Ministries and departments. The NEOC is the central focal point for activities undertaken in response to all hazards by collecting and analyzing information, coordinating response planning, locating, accessing, and distributing resources, and communicating necessary directions to emergency responders.

Part III—Consists of phase-specific policies such as the National Mitigation Strategy outlining procedures and activities aimed at ensuring that risk reduction is an integral part of the sustainable development process in Belize and the National Recovery Strategy to facilitate the return to normal social and economic conditions as quickly as possible and to ensure more permanent protection and improvement to pre-disaster conditions.

Part IV—Hazard-specific contingency plans outlining mitigation, preparedness, and response activities to differing hazard scenarios. Some of these include, but are not limited to:

- National Hurricane Response Plan;
- National Tsunami Response Plan;
- National Oil Spill Contingency Plan;
- Plan for the Management of Incidents/Accidents involving Cruise ships and other Marine Vessels;
- Health Sector Mass Casualty Plan;
- National Search and Rescue Plan;
- National Wildfire Management Plan.

Part V—NEMO Operational Sub-Committee Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) for a variety of actions that may be applied to most hazard scenarios. Within each of these SOPs, those tasked with operational functions are expected to prepare standard operating procedures detailing how functions will be implemented under varying hazard scenarios.

1.5.1.2 National Disaster Management Structure

Comprehensive Disaster Management and the protection of the sustainable future of Belize are the responsibility of all Government agencies, the private sector, residents, and non-governmental sectors of the population. The Government of Belize is committed to a comprehensive disaster management strategy embracing an all-hazard risk reduction through all phases of the disaster management cycle.

Cabinet has the final responsibility for coordinating the general policy of the Government relating to the mitigation of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from any emergency/disaster events in Belize. This authority is exercised in consultation with the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Advisory Committee (NDPRAC).

1.5.1.3 The National Disaster Preparedness and Response Advisory Committee (NDPRAC)

In accordance with Section 6(1) of the 2000 Disaster Preparedness and Response Act, the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Advisory Committee (NDPRAC) is responsible for overseeing disaster preparations and policy decisions in an emergency. If a disaster/emergency threatens or has occurred, the Committee shall manage the disaster response and make strategic decisions by deciding on policy issues.

The NDPRAC is comprised of:

- a. Prime Minister;
- b. Minister or public officer appointed as Alternate Chairman;
- c. Commissioner, Belize Police Department;
- d. Commander, Belize Defence Force;
- e. Commandant, Belize Coast Guard;
- f. Fire Chief;
- g. Chief Meteorologist;
- h. Chief Hydrologist;

- i. Director General, Belize Red Cross
- j. Director of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Wellness;
- k. Chief Environmental Officer, Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Solid Waste Management;
- l. Chief Engineer, Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing;
- m. National Emergency Coordinator, as Secretary;
- n. Members of the National Emergency Executive Committee;
- o. Such persons or organizations as the Prime Minister thinks fit who volunteer or are required by law to perform functions related to the mitigation of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from emergencies and disasters in Belize.

General Responsibilities of the NDPRAC include:

- Ensure that the country is in a state of preparedness at all times.
- Have overall responsibility for disaster management irrespective of whether there is a disaster or not;
- Develop suitable strategies and policies for disaster mitigation and preparedness and for training, management and public education in disaster management;
- Prepare and implement adequate rehabilitation programmes following any disasters;
- Recommend policies, strategies and alternatives to Cabinet;
- Form Sub-committees to execute specific tasks to address specific fields of competence in addition to those mentioned in other sections of the Act.

Its areas of planning will, therefore, include:

- Advise the Prime Minister, through the National Emergency Coordinator, on the declaration of disaster or State of Emergency, as necessary;
- Drafting Statutory Rules and Orders under the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Act;
- Meet twice annually to review and provide disaster management policy and strategy directives for NEMO;
- Manage the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan;
- Ensure adequate manpower, training and physical resources for emergency operations before, during and after a national disaster;
- Ensure adequate public awareness programmes on disaster preparedness;
- Ensure that vulnerable areas are properly mapped and that a data base exists for effective management action;
- Monitor the activities of the annual disaster work program;
- Advise on the coordination of emergency activities by voluntary organizations, locally and internationally;
- Advise on the coordination and planning of disaster related activities.

1.5.1.4 National Emergency Executive Committee (NEEC)

The National Emergency Executive Committee (NEEC) is comprised of all CEOs with responsibility for operational Sub-Committees and the fourteen emergency support functions (ESFs). The NEEC is required to meet at least twice a year and within forty-eight (48) hours of the coming into existence of a threat of a disaster, a disaster, or an emergency. The primary purpose of the NEEC is to, in collaboration with the National Emergency Coordinator, coordinate and manage the disaster response as required. During non-emergency periods, the NEEC will build private and community involvement and contributions to national disaster management strategies and ensure these are inclusive and responsive to broad community needs. The committee reviews and offers advice on

disaster management initiatives, implementation mechanisms, and the activities of the NEEC and the NEMO.

The NEEC is comprised of the Chairpersons for the Sub-committees with responsibility for the following Emergency Support Functions (ESFs):

1. Education, Information, Communications and Warning
2. Medical Care & Public Health
3. Transport and Evacuation
4. Search and Rescue
5. Housing & Shelter
6. Relief & Supplies
7. Restoration of Utilities
8. Damage Assessment & Needs Analysis
9. Foreign Assistance
10. Environment and Solid Waste
11. Human Resource Management
12. Recovery
13. Mitigation Access and infrastructure Works
14. Special Needs and Disability

In “normal,” non-disaster or emergency times, the NEEC provides guidance to the NDPRAC and other key government bodies on disaster and emergency-related issues. During hazard events or emergencies, members are responsible for emergency functions assigned to their Sub-Committees, the continuity of operations of their agencies or ministries, as well as providing support to the NEMO.

1.5.1.5 National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC)

The National Emergency Coordinator (NEC) is responsible for establishing a primary NEOC capable of serving and coordinating national disaster or emergency response activities to all hazard types should it be required. The Minister responsible for Disaster Preparedness will direct disaster operations through the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) located at the NEMO Headquarters Building in Belmopan. The National Emergency Coordinator will maintain the NEOC by ensuring that all policy decisions are properly executed. When, in the judgment of the NEC, an emergency situation is of such gravity and magnitude as to require centralised coordination and control of disaster response and relief operations, he/she will request that representatives from appropriate Government and Volunteer relief organisations report to the NEOC to coordinate the disaster operations of their respective disaster functions under his/her direction.

If the situation warrants, as an extension of the NEOC, District EOCs (DEOCs) may be activated in the affected area or at such other locations as may be designated and will operate under the overall direction of the District Chairperson. Appropriate Government and volunteer relief and response organizations will be requested to send representatives to the DEOCs to assist in the coordination of disaster relief and response operations within the District.

The functions of the NEOC are as follows:

1. The NEOC is the centralised management and information centre able to facilitate policy making, co-ordination and overall direction when responding to large-scale emergency or disaster situations;
2. To co-ordinate emergency control operations in a fashion that is timely, appropriate, effective and efficient; and
3. To gain and present a clear picture of the scope of the situation throughout Belize based on information received in the NEOC.

The NEMO is responsible for ensuring NEOC resources are suitable and in a state of readiness for all disaster/emergency requirements. The NEMO will prepare and update NEOC guidelines and operations procedures, ensuring training and familiarity with responsibilities of all NEOC Officers. Clear direction will be given on the organization, responsibilities, and management procedures for different hazard events.

1.5.1.6 District Emergency Management Structure

In order to provide the necessary direction, coordination and control facility during emergencies or disasters affecting a District, a District Chairman, District Emergency Committee (DEC) and a District Emergency Operations Centre (DEOC) shall be established.

District Chairperson

Each District shall have a District Emergency Chairperson, who shall be, in each case, appointed by the Minister responsible for disaster management in consultation with the National Emergency Coordinator. The District Chairperson shall be responsible to the National Emergency Coordinator for providing District Emergency Committees, government and private sector agencies and voluntary organizations, with the necessary advice and assistance in implementing disaster preparedness measures, and for ensuring that they are fully conversant with, and understand the sectors of the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan that relates to their particular organization or community.

The incumbent shall also be responsible for monitoring, on a continuous basis, existing disaster arrangements in his or her District to ensure adequacy of relief supplies in times of disaster; and to satisfy him or herself that there is readiness on the part of all concerned to cope with disaster situations.

District Emergency Committees (DEC)

The District Emergency Committee will have an incident command team and will be supported by District Sub-committees responsible for executing emergency support functions. District Emergency Committees provide the essential link between the National Emergency Management Organization and the communities which they represent.

1.5.1.7 Community Level Arrangement

The objective of the Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) Programme is to strengthen the disaster response capability of all communities and to develop Municipal Emergency Committees and Village Emergency Committees (VECs), which is the local response mechanisms within the framework of the District Emergency Committee. The CBDRM programme aims to identify and network with active community-based organizations and to sensitize and train community leaders (and through them the residents) on how to reduce damage and to protect themselves from natural and anthropogenic hazards through local efforts at being prepared, trained and properly equipped.

The programme will be executed by the National Emergency Management Organization in conjunction with the District Emergency Committees. Each District Emergency Committee through the appropriate Sub-Committee will identify a Community Emergency Headquarters, preferably at the City or Town Council or Village Council buildings, where community emergency response teams may be established.

1.5.1.8 Levels of Response

The extent of the National Emergency Management Organization's involvement in disaster response operations in Belize depends on the severity of the situation and the type of assistance required by the affected District or the State. Three levels of national response have been defined:

- **LEVEL 1:** A local event in which no external assistance is required is considered as Level 1. The country of Belize has adequate resources to manage the event. The CDEMA Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) is not activated for a Level 1 event. The CDEMA Coordinating Unit monitors and shares information with partners and other CDEMA Participating States.
- **LEVEL 2:** A Level 2 event is one in which the national capacity to respond is not overwhelmed but some external assistance is required. The country of Belize may or may not declare a disaster. In this scenario, the CDEMA CU may provide technical assistance, specialised equipment, support personnel and information sharing.
- **LEVEL 3:** A Level 3 event overwhelms the capacity of the country of Belize to respond. In such cases the RRM is activated and regional operations are mounted to support national response. Other support from international agencies may be required.

1.6 Emergency Management Structure

Under emergency or disaster conditions, the normal organizational structure of the NEMO dissolves upon activation of the NEOC. The Staff of the NEMO will then be embedded within specific roles of the NEOC and its functions. The NEOC SOP in Annex I provides details on the NEOC structure.

1.6.1 Roles and Responsibilities

1.6.1.1 Functional Roles & Responsibilities of Agencies/Organizations

The Ministry with responsibility for Disaster Risk Management, through the NEMO, is the line ministry with responsibility for comprehensive disaster management at a National Level and in which the NEOC is activated. For specific types of hazards, the concerned Ministries have the responsibilities for the management of those disasters and must perform their respective essential functions as provided in Table 1.

Figure 1: Functional Roles and Responsibilities of Agencies/Organizations

Ministry	Emergency Support Function	Purpose
Lead Ministry of National Defence and Border Security Supporting Ministry of Home Affairs	#1. Search and Rescue	To coordinate efforts and resources to ensure an effective response to all land and maritime search and rescue operations through a centralized command and control structure. To coordinate public safety and security operations through a centralized command and control structure.
Lead Ministry of Health and Wellness	#2. Medical Care and Public Health	To provide coordination of national medical assets to assist local communities in response to public health and medical care needs following a major disaster or emergency.
Lead Ministry of Infrastructure	#3. Housing and Shelter	To identify and select suitable safe buildings for use as emergency shelters and to coordinate efforts to provide sheltering for affected persons.

<u>Supporting</u> Ministry of Education Ministry of Human Development Ministry of Public Utilities		
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Infrastructure <u>Supporting</u> NEMO Ministry of Public Utilities	#4. Mitigation, Access and Infrastructure Works	To coordinate damage assessment activities and provide technical advice and evaluation, engineering services, contracting for construction management, and inspection of all public utilities and infrastructure To arrange for clearing of main roads for movement of emergency personnel and relief supplies as soon as possible after a disaster
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Natural Resources <u>Supporting</u> NEMO Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People Affairs	#5. Damage and Needs Analysis	To coordinate damage assessments and activities following a major disaster or emergency. To coordinate recovery and reconstruction efforts following a major disaster or emergency.
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Foreign Affairs <u>Supporting</u> NEMO	#6. Foreign Assistance	To coordinate and regulate the donation of emergency supplies, materials, equipment, and funds from foreign governments, international agencies, companies, and individuals.
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Sustainable Development <u>Support</u> Ministry of Natural Resources	#7. Environment and Solid Waste	To provide national support to government agencies in response to an actual or potential discharge and/or release of hazardous materials on land or sea. To coordinate solid waste disposal following a major disaster or emergency.
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Transport <u>Supporting</u> Ministry of Blue Economy Port Authority Airports Authority	#8. Transportation and Evacuation	To coordinate national evacuation efforts. To coordinate transportation services, equipment, and personnel. To coordinate the availability of airports and seaports.
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Human Development	#9. Relief and Supplies Management	To provide operational assistance in the management and coordination of relief supplies during a disaster.

<u>Supporting</u> NEMO Ministry of Transport Ministry of Rural Development Ministry of Foreign Affairs		
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of the Public Service <u>Supporting</u> NEMO	#10. Human Resource Management	To coordinate public servants, volunteer organizations and services in times of disaster to allow for the most effective service delivery To coordinate volunteers and voluntary organizations and services in times of disaster
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Education Office of the Prime Minister <u>Supporting</u> NEMO National Met Service National Hydrological Service Press Office Belize Defence Force	#11. Education, Information, Communications and Warning	To coordinate the collection, analysis, processing, and dissemination of information about a potential or actual disaster. Warning dissemination and control of broadcasting To coordinate public communications before, during, and after major disasters or emergencies. To coordinate emergency communication personnel, equipment, and service capabilities used by other ESFs for internal and external departmental communication and for communication with the Districts and volunteer groups and regional partners.
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Human Development <u>Supporting</u> NEMO	#12. Special Needs and Disability	To coordinate support for the movement and care of the aged, persons with disabilities and incapacitated persons.
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Public Utilities <u>Supporting</u> NEMO	#13. Restoration of Utilities	To ensure that public utilities are in a state of readiness for rapid restoration of services after a disaster
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Finance Ministry of Economic Transformation <u>Supporting</u> NEMO	#14. Recovery	To develop strategies and plans that ensure economic stability during disasters Ensure that plans are made for the recovery of the economy at least to its original state after a Disaster.

There are international and regional bodies as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) and private sector entities, which have a role to play in disaster response and recovery. All private sector entities, international bodies, and CSOs shall coordinate their response, rehabilitation, and recovery activities with/through the NEOC when activated.

Coordination with the NEOC includes the ability to identify, locate, store, maintain, distribute, and account for resources used in disaster operations. No provisions made in the NDPRP supersede or circumvent existing Government of Belize ordinances, contractual obligations, or mutual aid provisions unless approved in Cabinet.

1.6.2 Responsibilities by Generic Function

The following responsibilities are assigned to functions that are “generic.” That is, they are generally required to mitigate against, coordinate, and respond to all disaster or emergency events. Where specific responsibilities, actions, and procedures are required to address the characteristics of all hazard types, the hazard-specific annexes shall provide such details.

1.6.2.1 Mitigation

A National Hazard Mitigation Plan—The NEMO is responsible, in concert with the NEEC, for developing a mitigation plan in support of the National Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Policy. The NEMO will provide advice on national planning and development programmes.

1.6.2.2 Hazard, Vulnerability and Risk Assessments

The NEMO, in collaboration with the NEEC, shall coordinate with relevant government agencies (e.g., the fire department for hazardous materials) to monitor all hazards that threaten Belize, their likely impacts, and the vulnerability to them. Government agencies or departments may be tasked with taking a lead role in the development of a section or study. These risk assessments will inform and guide the National CDM Policy, preparedness, and development planning.

1.6.2.3 Training

The NEMO is responsible for identifying training needs at the national level and formulating a CDM-specific yearly training programme for approval by NEEC. Government agencies retain responsibility for ensuring they possess the necessary capabilities to enable them to discharge their disaster management duties.

1.6.2.4 Legislation

The NEMO is responsible for ensuring the preparation of disaster preparedness legislation at national, district, and local levels and providing appropriate authority for the proper enactment of this legislation.

1.6.2.5 Public Education and Information

The NEMO, in collaboration with the Education, Information, Communications, and Warning Committee, is responsible for implementing public information programmes to build pre-disaster public awareness and self-reliance.

1.6.2.6 Finance

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for ensuring that financial provision is created through the national emergency budget to ensure effective disaster mitigation, preparedness, and response plans and the necessary implementation capability. Each government department should ensure adequate provisions are made in their annual budgetary submissions for preparedness, anticipatory, and response activities.

1.6.2.7 Preparedness and Emergency Response Responsibilities

The NEMO is responsible for overall coordination of preparedness and providing the guidance for response, recovery, and preparedness planning.

1.6.2.8 National Direction

In the case of a warning or occurrence of either a national emergency or disaster event, a decision will be taken by the Prime Minister, on the advice of the National Emergency Coordinator, to convene the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Advisory Committee (NDPRAC). If deemed necessary, the NEMO will be activated (either simultaneously or consequently). After the meeting of the NDPRAC, the Minister responsible for disaster management in consultation with the National Emergency Coordinator (NEC) may call a meeting of the NEEC.

1.6.2.9 Activation of the National Emergency Operations Centre

When the NEMO is activated, it follows the policy directions and priorities set by the NDPRAC, exercising overall direction, coordination, and control of disaster or emergency operations. The National Emergency Coordinator (NEC) does not automatically assume the role as NEMO Director. He/she fills a facilitation role and is not to be confused as the NEMO Director for disaster response. Leadership of the NEMO varies according to responsibilities allocated to different hazard types as established by the hazard-specific plans or annexes. Table 2 provides the responsible party for each hazard scenario.

Figure 2: Hazard Scenario in relation to Lead Agency/Department¹

Hazard Scenario	Lead Agency
Major Incident	NEMO
Oil Spill	Department of the Environment (DOE)
Hazardous Materials	Department of the Environment (DOE)
Air accident	Department of Civil Aviation
Marine and Ferry Boat Accident	Belize Port Authority
Hurricane	National Meteorological Service, NEMO
Flood	National Hydrological Service, NEMO
Earthquake	National Meteorological Service, NEMO
Tsunami	National Meteorological Service, NEMO
Land Search and Rescue	Belize Defence Force (BDF)
Marine Search and Rescue	Belize Coast Guard (BCG)
Mass Casualty	Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW)

First Responders to emergencies remain as the Fire, Police and Health Services respectively. When it is decided an incident requires a national coordinated multi-agency response the NEMO is activated as appropriate. Details on levels of response and specific operations are in Section 2 National Response Plan (NRP) of the NDPRP.

¹ As other hazards are identified, appropriate agencies will be assigned as Lead Agency.

1.6.2.10 External Assistance

The NEC, in collaboration with the Foreign Assistance Committee (during activation), is responsible for all external relationships and thus for all external assistance, no matter where from: the regional response mechanism, foreign governments, or foreign organizations such as

- The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) is the official regional disaster response mechanism for Belize, through their Regional Coordination Centre (RCC).
- Under the international disaster system, CDEMA and all external assistance will be coordinated via Jamaica; the subregional disaster support hub. This coordination embraces all resources (response teams and materials) offered by foreign governments, international agencies, NGOs, and the United Kingdom (UK) Government.
- The United Nations Emergency Technical Team is the entity responsible for coordination and emergency preparedness and response for the UN System in Belize. The UNETT mandate is to support national efforts to save lives and alleviate suffering through the provision of multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance (including technical assistance through staff surge) and re-establishing critical services.
- Belize has bilateral understandings and relationships with other countries. Offers of assistance can be requested and are anticipated from these sources. These should be coordinated with CDEMA. Support required includes military resources, emergency stockpiles, call-down arrangements with specialist agencies, and technical expertise. Depending on post-disaster needs, these resources may be made available to Belize after consultation with the Office of the Prime Minister, NEOC, and CDEMA.
- External NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) can make significant contributions when external assistance is needed. These should be coordinated with CDEMA.
- All requests to foreign governments or external agencies, or any actions proposed by foreign governments or external agencies, must be approved by the NDPRAC prior to implementation or agreement.
- The NEC is to inform the NDPRAC of contact with all external agencies, including the regional response mechanism—CDEMA.
- In the absence of NEOC activation, the National Emergency Coordinator must inform and seek approval from the Office of the Prime Minister for any external emergency assistance that falls outside of existing memoranda of understanding, bilateral agreements, or international protocols.
- Requesting assistance from CDEMA does not require a disaster declaration.
- The NEOC Director and/or National Emergency Coordinator shall maintain communications with the regional response mechanism and bilateral agencies.
- Once requests and actions are agreed upon by the NDPRAC, the NEOC implements the coordination of all external emergency assistance through the Foreign Assistance Disaster Subcommittees. For operational matters, there can be direct communication between the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and foreign agencies.
- The NDPRAC shall be regularly updated by the NEOC Director/National Emergency Coordinator regarding the status of all external emergency assistance.

Table 3 provides details on the external assistance actions required in relation to the response to a disaster.

Table 3: Levels for External Assistance Request

Level	Required action for requesting External Assistance
Level 1	An incident occurring at a local level in Belize for which local resources are adequate and available. The National Emergency Coordinator informs CDEMA of the occurrence of the incident and indicates that no response is required. CDEMA CU actions in response to the type of incident will include monitoring and information sharing
Level 2	An incident occurring at a local level in Belize, for which local resources and response capacity are limited. The National Emergency Coordinator (NEC) informs CDEMA of the occurrence of the incident, advises on the scope of the impact, and requests focused specialised national assistance. A state of emergency/disaster area may or may not be declared. CDEMA CU actions may include the provision of technical assistance, specialised equipment, emergency funds, and support personnel.
Level 3	An impact/incident occurring at a local level in Belize that clearly overwhelms the resources and response capability of local authorities. The National Emergency Coordinator informs CDEMA CU of the occurrence of the impact and requests that the Regional Response Mechanism be activated. A state of emergency/national disaster may be declared.

1.6.2.11 Emergency Communications

All members of the NEOC and tasked organizations within the National Plan are to have durable equipment and backup capabilities to maintain communications throughout Belize before, during, and after all potential hazard and emergencies. The NEMO is responsible for compiling, maintaining, and distributing a list of landline, mobile, and satellite phone numbers as well as radio frequencies. The NEMO also supports the Belize Defence Force (BDF), which is responsible for maintaining emergency communication links between the National EOC, the District EOCs, Fire Service, Hospitals, and all essential services.

The NEMO is responsible for monitoring and testing the effectiveness of existing emergency communication systems and recommending improvements.

The NEMO is responsible for the functioning and maintenance of the NEOC emergency communications networks and equipment, both internal and external (via satellite, VHF, and HF radio).

The NEMO is responsible for developing and maintaining an effective warning dissemination and call-out notification system for the NEOC.

The Education, Information, Communications, and Warning Sub-Committee is responsible for ensuring redundancy in national emergency communication and inter-agency operability among organizations tasked with duties within the National Plan have durable communications equipment able to maintain emergency links between the NEOC, the Police, Fire Service, Hospitals, and all essential services.

1.6.2.12 Early Warning

The National Emergency Coordinator (NEC) is responsible for developing and maintaining an Early Warning System. NEMO, or the lead agency for a specific hazard, in consultation with the Prime

Minister, is responsible for deciding whether and when to issue early warnings for any potential hazard to the public.

In the case of a hurricane, tropical storm, or extreme weather, the NEMO is responsible for the maintenance and functioning of the National Hurricane Plan and SOP.

The NEMO will maintain links with a variety of sources, such as the United States of America National Hurricane Centre, the Department of Civil Aviation, and Belize Meteorological Service.

Local media houses shall only broadcast official information and warnings received from and cleared by the NEMO or NEOC when activated.

1.6.2.13 Health and Medical Care

Direction and coordination for Health Disaster Planning rests with the Medical Care and Public Health Sub-Committee. The Director of Health Services of the Ministry responsible for Health of Belize is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of mass casualty, mental health, and psychosocial support services and health disaster plans outlining policies and procedures for mobilising and managing health and medical services (including environmental health, private medical practices, and Red Cross first aiders) under all emergency or disaster conditions. Plans will include provisions for:

Establishment of medical command posts at the emergency disaster site(s):

- Co-ordinating health and medical team efforts;
- Triage if appropriate;
- Medical care and transport for the injured;
- Identification, transportation and disposition of the deceased;
- Isolating, decontaminating and treating victims of hazardous materials or infectious diseases;
- Issuing health and medical advisories to the public;
- Epidemic or pandemic outbreak; and
- Mechanisms for treatment and transport overseas.

It shall be the responsibility of the Director of Health Services to examine by 1 April (of each year) the available stocks of drugs, dressings, beds, blankets, and food at hospitals and, subject to the availability of funds, to purchase reserve stocks of critical medical items as he considers in the event of a disaster/emergency. He/she should also ensure that emergency medical supplies are at district clinics, polyclinics, and hospitals.

The Ministry responsible for Health, using the services of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing (MIDH), is responsible for identifying suitable sites for emergency hospitals/clinics and for the provision of equipment, staffing, emergency power, water and sanitation to serve these hospitals/clinics.

The Ministry responsible for Health will ensure all medical facilities, equipment, and stores are suitably protected or resilient.

The Director of Health Services shall organise a Health Team to inspect public and private buildings and water supplies as a public health measure. The Director of Health Services shall ensure that all solid waste is disposed of properly to avoid an epidemic.

The Director of Health Services, in consultation with the Ministry responsible for Health, is responsible for deciding upon the distribution of medical supplies to all clinics, hospitals, and emergency shelters, together with the deployment of health personnel and volunteers.

It shall be the duty of the Director of Health Services to determine and ensure that stocks of drugs and resources are appropriate in the event of mass casualty scenarios.

Health-related plans include responsibility and procedures for coordinating the activities of private medical agencies and voluntary groups.

Measures will be taken to ensure that sufficient persons in the community are trained in First Aid by setting up First Aid training programmes among key responders, CSOs, and other community organizations.

The Ministry responsible for Health is to utilise policies such as the National Protocol for the Integrated Protection of Children and Adolescents in Emergency and Disaster Situations framework to create an intersectoral prevention, preparation, and response plan. The plan will guide actors in the medical sector with the responsibility of guaranteeing the rights of children, persons living with a disability and other vulnerable groups in situations of disasters, including follow up post-disaster.

1.6.2.14 Casualty Handling and Information

The Medical Care and Public Health (MCPH) Sub-Committee has the overall responsibility for casualty identification and for the provision of information to next of kin and to the public.

The MCPH will set up a Casualty Bureau (CB) if required by the scale of the disaster event, major incident, or emergency. These activities are informed by the Major Incident Plan.

The Ministry with responsibility for Health is responsible for the temporary/permanent disposal and the maintenance of records of victims of a specific disaster. The Ministry with responsibility for Human Development shall play a supporting role.

1.6.2.15 National Disaster Information and Media Handling

The Education, Information, Communications, and Warning Sub-Committee, in collaboration with NEMO, has direct responsibility for establishing systems for the coordination and dissemination of public information and communication with national and international media before (i.e., in a warning period), during, and after disasters and emergencies.

The Education, Information, Communications, and Warning Sub-Committee, in collaboration with NEMO, is responsible for the maintenance and implementation of the National Emergency Communications Plan, Media Engagement Strategy standard operating procedures (SOPs), and protocols. The Plan's primary purpose is to ensure the public and visitors to Belize receive appropriate warnings, instructions, and information within simplified, local languages before and throughout emergency or disaster events so precautions can be taken, damage and losses minimised, and recovery hastened.

When the NEOC is convened, the Education, Information, Communications, and Warning Sub-Committee is charged with ensuring the public receives information in a timely, simplified, and effective manner and serves as the official channel of information to local and overseas media throughout an emergency or disaster event.

The NEMO will manage a national disaster awareness programme to educate the public about natural and man-made disasters, safe practices, and the role the public can play in risk reduction.

In non-emergency or disaster periods, the Education, Information, Communications, and Warning Sub-Committee will assist the NEMO to coordinate the national disaster education programme so warnings and public information released in emergencies or disasters are consistent.

1.6.2.16 Evacuation

The Transportation and Evacuation Sub-Committee is responsible for maintaining evacuation plans and procedures for vulnerable areas and persons.

Evacuation plans will include provision for off-island evacuation of tourists or visitors. The NEMO will coordinate risk assessments to inform evacuation plans.

The Transportation and Evacuation Sub-Committee will take the lead operational role in organising the evacuation of populations living in vulnerable areas to designated shelters or safe locations.

1.6.2.17 Shelter

The Housing and Shelter Sub-Committee is responsible for ensuring the availability of Emergency Shelters in the event of a pending impact or post-disaster situation. This is to provide temporary protection for persons requiring shelter accommodation.

The Housing and Shelter Sub-Committee, in collaboration with the NEMO, shall develop plans and procedures to govern the management of shelters across Belize in keeping with International and Regional guidelines. These will articulate measures required to provide food, water, emergency power, sanitation, health care, transportation, and security at these Shelters.

By June 1 of each year, an Official Shelter List, approved by the National Emergency Coordinator (NEC), shall be published. This is for preparation for the yearly Atlantic Hurricane Season.

All shelters are to have their own management plan outlining staffing (including a multi-sectoral team to ensure the protection of children and other vulnerable groups), materials, occupancy capacity, and room usage. These are to be reviewed yearly.

The Disability Sub-committee of the Relief and Supplies Management Sub-Committee (RSMC), in concert with the NEMO, is responsible for shelter care for the elderly and handicapped and is responsible for ensuring appropriate staffing of the shelters and necessary supplies.

The Department of Human Development assumes responsibility for organising rehabilitation and resettlement of homeless persons post-disaster or emergency and once the NEOC has been de-activated,

The Belize Police Department (BPD) and the Belize Defence Force (BDF) are responsible for providing security at each Shelter once activated.

1.6.2.18 Emergency Food Stocks

The NEMO is responsible for maintaining limited emergency food stocks to be used for emergency shelters. In the hurricane season, the Relief and Supplies Management Sub-Committee shall monitor food stocks held by commercial enterprises and NGOs. The RSMC, in consultation with the NEMO, is responsible for authorising the release and distribution of emergency food stocks.

1.6.2.19 Relief

The Relief and Supplies Management Sub-Committee (RSMC) is responsible for maintaining the National Relief Plan and appropriate resources for it to function effectively for all likely emergency/disaster scenarios. The RSMC, in collaboration with the NEMO, will be responsible for ensuring the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are in place to achieve the objectives.

The National Relief Plan will contain mechanisms that:

- Allow for the procurement and distribution of adequate supplies of food, water and essential materials;
- Ensure the availability of relief items throughout the year;
- Identify special needs before, during and after an emergency or disaster event;
- Outline responsibilities and procedures for the receipt, transport, storage and equitable distribution of relief items;
- Articulate the responsibilities and contributions of the Red Cross, Churches, Service clubs and community volunteers; and
- Allow relief to be coordinated within NEOC operations.

The National Relief Plan and supporting procedures shall be tested and updated on a yearly basis.

1.6.2.20 Relief Distribution

In conjunction with the Ministry responsible for Human Development and the NEMO, the RSMC will be responsible for coordinating and arranging national relief distribution of food and provisions. The Red Cross and other NGOs and groups shall work through the NEOC/NEMO in organising and distributing relief items.

1.6.2.21 Volunteer Management

The NEMO is responsible for coordinating all local, regional, and international volunteers in coordination with local and international NGOs and partners. The National Policy on Volunteer and Temporary Worker Management will guide operations.

1.6.2.22 Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA)

The DANA Sub-Committee is responsible for maintaining a Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis Plan and implementing procedures designed to enable government, NGOs, and local and international partners to implement a comprehensive damage assessment process that will meet the needs for emergency response and planning needs.

The Plan will be based on CDEMA's DANA Continuum. A Pre-Impact Data Analysis will be conducted by January of each year. Four stages of damage assessment are envisaged:

Stage 1: Initial Situation Overview

An initial assessment is required to inform immediate response and relief actions. Compiled from preliminary surveys or reports, it will allow a general understanding of damages, extent of any casualties, and initial needs of the population. An initial report should be generated by the NEOC within the first 24 hours. This report shall also be sent to CDEMA as a triggering mechanism for national and regional responses. Where level 2 and 3 responses are required, the initial assessment will be disseminated by the Foreign Assistance Committee for resource mobilisation.

Stage 2: Initial Damage Human Needs Assessment

To be conducted within the first seven (7) days after the all-clear has been given, the main objective is to obtain more detailed and specific information on damages and needs. A damage report is to be prepared and submitted through the NEOC to CDEMA after the first 48 hours. Daily updates are to be provided to the Foreign Assistance Committee for the remaining period of up to 7 days. A comprehensive report should be generated no later than 7 days to include detailed household and physical damage data, preliminary direct damage costs, and further response or specific specialised needs.

Stage 3: Detailed Damage Sector Assessment

To be conducted within fourteen (14) days of impact, the objective of this phase is to produce a detailed damage assessment report to include quantification of physical damage, direct damage

costs, and recommendations to inform the recovery process. This assessment, along with a quantification of indirect costs, may then be used towards macroeconomic assessments that are used to inform longer-term recovery planning.

Stage 4: Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)

A first objective for the PDNA is to support the elaboration of the Recovery Framework in time for the revision of a humanitarian flash appeal—normally within five (5) to six (6) weeks following the onset of a disaster. This provides the foundation for more in-depth assessments, ongoing recovery, and transition to development as the Recovery Framework continues to be more fully elaborated. Needs identified by the PDNA beyond national capacity may be used as an evidence base for the mobilisation of further international resources in support of recovery, e.g., in connection with an international donor conference in response to the disaster.

1.6.2.23 Restoration of Public Utilities, Road Clearance and Debris Removal

These actions are based on the situation report, damage and needs assessment, and prioritisation decided upon by the DANA Sub-Committee. The relevant subcommittees shall coordinate to:

- Ensure the restoration of roads, airports, ports and telecommunications;
- Allocate and supervise transportation resources;
- Restore all public utilities (water and sewerage, electricity, telecommunications);
- Co-ordinate the removal of debris, trees, boulders, collapsed buildings, etc., which may pose a danger or impede movement;
- Plans will give priority to restoring utilities and access to critical facilities, the NEOC, hospitals/clinics, shelters, ports (air and sea), etc. Where possible, clearance machinery will be kept safe and pre-positioned;
- The Transport and Evacuation Sub-Committee, in collaboration with NEMO, will prepare yearly lists of heavy equipment and agreements with contractors (e.g. payment schedules); and
- The Transport and Evacuation Sub-Committee is responsible for ensuring plans, resources, and MoUs are in place to achieve the objectives listed above.

1.6.2.24 Search and Rescue

The Search and Rescue Sub-Committee is tasked with implementing the National Search and Rescue Plan in the event of an emergency/disaster.

The Belize Coast Guard (BCG) has a specific responsibility for developing and maintaining maritime search and rescue procedures and resources.

The Belize Defence Force (BDF) is the lead agency with responsibility for the development and maintenance of land-based search and rescue procedures and capabilities.

The National Fire Service is the lead agency with responsibility for developing and maintaining Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) procedures and resources.

The Department of Civil Aviation is the lead agency responsible for developing and maintaining air search and rescue procedures and resources.

Lead agencies shall co-ordinate search and rescue operations with agencies/organizations such as:

- Department of Environment (DOE);
- Coastal Resources;
- Diving operators;
- SAR NGOs such as the Belize Institute for Search and Rescue Training (BISART).

1.6.2.25 Recovery

Post impact, the Ministry of Economic Transformation and the Ministry of Finance, supported by the National Emergency Management Organization, shall lead in the development of the hazard specific Recovery Plan. This Plan must take into consideration economic, social and environmental aspects to ensure the recovery process is sustainable and climate change sensitive.

1.7 Plan review, maintenance and revision

1.7.1 Training

The NEMO has the responsibility of developing a National Training programme. The NEMO shall also communicate with stakeholder agencies critical training that is required for specific hazards or capabilities. This will be useful in building their capacity to execute their mandate. The National Training Programme should be reviewed and updated if deemed necessary, annually.

1.7.2 Testing

Evaluating the effectiveness of a Plan involves a combination of training events, exercises, and real-world incidents to determine whether the goals, objectives, decisions, actions, and timings outlined in the plan led to a successful response. The purpose of an exercise is to promote preparedness by testing policy plans and training personnel.

1.7.3 Reviewing

Planning teams should establish a process for reviewing and updating the plan. Reviews should be a recurring activity, involving all key stakeholders. This shall be mandatory to consider reviewing and updating the plan after the following events:

- A major incident;
- A change in operational resources (e.g., policy, personnel, organizational structures, Management processes, facilities, equipment);
- A formal update of planning guidance or standards;
- Each and every activation;
- Major exercises;
- A change in the district's demographics or hazard or threat profile; and
- The enactment of new or amended laws or ordinances.

In exceptional circumstances where the magnitude of the incident or the situation demands/needs extra measures to be taken, appropriate authority will make necessary amendments. The responsibility for the coordination of the revision of the NDPRP, annexes, appendices, and implementing instructions is assigned to the National Emergency Coordinator, who is the officer to coordinate response operations for natural hazard impacts. The updated or reaffirmed document may also be used to summarise the accomplishments of the past year and help the administration to prioritise mitigation and preparation goals for the next year. The NDPRP is to be reviewed and updated annually. After each review and revision, the updated Plan will be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

PART 2—NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN

2.1 Introduction

The Belize National Response Plan (NRP) is a critical and supportive element of the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (NDPRP). The NRP outlines strategic elements necessary for the Government of Belize to effectively and efficiently conduct response, rehabilitation, and recovery. Each of these actions requires the coordination and collaboration of all ministries/departments/agencies/executives, public & private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGO). All stakeholders are required to be active, engaged, and prepared to carry out missions coordinated through the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) as a result of the impacts from a disaster or incident.

Part II of the NDPRP is specifically designed to address overarching strategies that address:

- Policies guiding operations required by/through Government of Belize;
- General requirements for all stakeholders;
- Organizational structures used for response, rehabilitation and recovery;
- Organizational roles and responsibilities
- Resource requirements and processes to address known needs and shortfalls; and
- Authorities and references used to guide the Government of Belize activities.

2.1.1 Purpose

The NRP is a dynamic planning document to guide coordinated and collaborative Government of Belize operations necessary for:

- life-saving actions;
- protection of critical infrastructure and the environment;
- rehabilitation of impacted areas and services provided to residents and visitors to Belize;
- implementation of recovery operations and programs to improve upon and re-establish a safe, viable Belize;
- integration and application of mitigation strategies to reduce or limit further impacts from natural and man-made disasters

2.1.2 Scope

The NRP addresses immediate response to a disaster impacting Belize and the short, intermediate, and long-term actions requiring coordination through the NEOC. This plan establishes the framework for coordination and collaboration between all ministries/departments/agencies, the public & private sector, and non-governmental organizations.

Implementation of the NRP and supportive plans and/or annexes is managed through the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) as a result of the impacts from a disaster or incident; however, the NRP does not supersede the authority or responsibilities outlined through the Government of Belize ordinance for ministries/departments/agencies, public & private sector NGOs.

Implementation of the NRP may be preceded or followed by activation of the NEOC. The NRP may be implemented in part or whole and be used for incidents not requiring activation of the NEOC. In these cases, implementation of a specific portion(s) of the NRP will be requested by a Government of Belize ministry, department, or agency to NEMO and coordinated accordingly. In all cases,

activation of the NEOC requires implementation of the NRP and any supportive documentation as appropriate to the hazard or threat.

2.1.3 Situation

Belize is vulnerable to a wide-range of potential natural, man-made, and technological hazards. Any of these events may require the implementation of the NRP, activation of the NEOC, and integration of all ministries/departments/agencies, public & private sector organizations, and NGOs. Response, rehabilitation, and recovery may be directed at one or more of the districts based on the scope or magnitude of an incident or disaster.

NEMO maintains the NEOC and district Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) in Table 4.

Figure 3: Locations for NEOC and District EOCs

National NEOC	Belmopan
Corozal	Corozal Town
Orange Walk	Orange Walk Town
Belize	Belize City, San Pedro Town, Caye Caulker
Cayo	Belmopan, San Ignacio
Stann Creek	Dangriga Town
Toledo	Machaca Forest Station

2.1.4 Assumptions

- The Government of Belize will provide finances, human resources, equipment, material and administrative facilitation required for implementation of the NRP and supportive documentation;
- All identified agencies/organizations within the NRP and supportive documentation will fully support response, rehabilitation and recovery by executing their roles and areas of responsibilities coordinated and managed by the NEOC;
- Private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations support and contribute to response, rehabilitation and recovery and coordinate activities/operations with the NEOC;
- Each agency, organization or individual tasked with a responsibility within the NDPRP will ensure adequate training is completed by personnel; resources are tested, maintained and available; plans and procedures are current and exercised; and the organization is capable of fulfilling responsibilities outlined in the NDPRP or directed through the NEOC; and
- EOCs will activate and operate in coordination with the NEOC.
- Operational coordination, communications, situational awareness, and intelligence/information sharing will be maintained.
- Alternate and ad hoc methods of maintaining operational coordination and communications will be implemented through the NEOC or through independent action to sustain response, rehabilitation, and recovery.

2.2 Policy

The line Ministries and Departments of the Government of Belize will continue to address specific incidents as assigned to them by outlining detailed comprehensive Plans which will be a part of and integrated into the NDMP.

NEMO is responsible for developing the NRP in coordination with external stakeholders from all ministries / departments / agencies, public & private sector organizations and NGOs having a role in response, rehabilitation and recovery.

Government of Belize personnel will be trained, to the extent possible, and fully aware of the risk involved with assigned missions for response, rehabilitation and recovery for the purposes of life, safety, and health accountability.

The Office of the Prime Minister, upon the request of the National Emergency Coordinator, in coordination with the NEOC, may authorize the use of all available Government of Belize personnel, equipment, material and facilities for response, rehabilitation and recovery necessary to address the elements identified in section 2.2, Purpose, of this Part.

2.3 Concept of Operations

The NRP supports implementation of all aspects of the NDPRP. The NRP serves as a strategic document outlining methods and coordination requirements to effectively and efficiently conduct response, rehabilitation, and recovery. The NRP is applicable to ministries/departments/agencies, the public & private sector, and non-governmental organizations. All stakeholders identified above are required to be active, engaged, and prepared to carry out missions coordinated through the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) as a result of the impacts from a disaster or incident.

Under emergency or disaster conditions, the NEMO dissolves when the NEOC is activated. NEOC operations, coordination, and management are outlined in the NEOC SOP in Annex 1.

The NEMO will coordinate with relevant government agencies to monitor all hazards that threaten Belize, their likely impacts, and the vulnerability to them.

Each Government Agency or Department tasked with taking a lead or supportive role in the development of a section of the NRP, or supporting documentation or study, are guided by the 2000 Disaster Preparedness and Response Act to provide the input and documentation as requested.

The National Emergency Coordinator, or designee, is the single coordination point for implementation of the national incident management system. Coordination includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- a. Notification of executive officials and key decision-makers of an incident or event that may require activation of the NEOC;
- b. Implementation of the NRP in part, or in whole;
- c. Direct and indirect coordination with ministries / departments / agencies, public & private sector organizations, and NGOs;
- d. Ensuring operational coordination, communications, situational awareness and information/intelligence sharing is maintained between the NEOC, district EOCs and government officials; and
- e. Coordinating development and implementation of strategies for response, rehabilitation and recovery consistent with NEOC and district EOC priorities.

The NEOC may use one or more planning groups, or National Sub-Committees, to develop strategies and priorities, establish consistent operational coordination with district EOCs, maintain situational awareness, and ensure reliable exchange of intelligence/information.

To manage critical response, rehabilitation, and recovery operations, the NEOC will develop Coordination (Action) Plans for use by all ministries/departments/agencies, public & private sectors, and non-governmental organizations having a role in the NEOC.

Coordination (Action) Plans will be used by the NEOC to identify specific tasks and priorities that need to be performed during a specific time period to address elements found in section 2.2, Purpose of this Part. These strategies and priorities will be disseminated to the NEOC, district EOCs, key decision-makers, and government officials.

The NEOC and District EOCs will utilise the Incident Management System (IMS) for all operations requiring the activation of either the national or district EOC.

In the case of a warning or occurrence of either a national emergency or disaster event, the National Emergency Coordinator or the lead agency for a specific hazard, in consultation with the Prime Minister, may activate the NEOC to co-ordinate emergency or disaster response, rehabilitation and recovery efforts.

Where different responsibilities, actions, and procedures are required by ministries/departments/agencies/executives, public & private sectors, and non-governmental organizations to address the varying characteristics of different hazard types, hazard-specific annexes found in the NDRP will be utilised.

The NEMO is responsible for ensuring NEOC resources are suitable and in a state of readiness for all disaster/emergency requirements.

The NEMO will prepare and update NEOC guidelines and operations procedures, ensuring training and familiarity with responsibilities of all NEOC officers. Clear direction will be given on the organization, responsibilities, and management procedures for different hazard events.

All members of the NEOC Operations Group and tasked organizations within the NDRP are to have durable equipment and backup capabilities, to the extent possible based on administrative and operational constraints, to maintain operational coordination, communications, situational awareness, and intelligence/information sharing throughout and after all potential hazards and emergencies.

2.3.1 Organizational Structure

The Minister with responsibility for disaster management is responsible for all disaster response, rehabilitation, and recovery in Belize. This responsibility includes maintaining external relationships and thus, for all external assistance, no matter where from the regional response mechanism, foreign governments, or foreign organizations.

The national disaster management structure is currently coordinated by the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO). The NEMO is structured around 13 Sub-committees which implement 14 emergency support functions. Each Sub-committee is chaired by a line Ministry or government department. Disaster response is further facilitated at the District through the District Emergency Operations Centre, at the municipal level through Municipal Emergency Management Offices managed by City and Town Councils, and at the Village level through Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

2.4 Alert and Warning Mechanism

2.4.1 Plan Activation

The Plan shall be activated by the Prime Minister on the advice of the National Emergency Coordinator (NEC) and after consultation with the Belize National Meteorological Service (BNMS). In the case of a slow-onset hazard where there is a warning, the National Emergency Coordinator shall consult with the BNMS. Based on those discussions, it will be determined if there is a need for the full activation of the NEOC. The National Emergency Operations Centre will be notified and, in conjunction with the NEMO, establish emergency operations.

2.4.5 Levels of Disaster Emergency and Emergency Response

Level 1 Disaster Emergencies

A Level 1 Disaster Emergency is a localised incident, affecting one community or District. Notably, disaster emergency coordination for all incidents in specific districts rests with the District Emergency Coordinator, unless the nature of the incident or impact can be managed by one public body or agency. This responsibility applies specifically to disaster emergencies triggered by natural hazards and events that meet the legal definition of a “disaster emergency” under the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act. Smaller-scale incidents, such as house fires, traffic collisions, or other localised events, remain under the jurisdiction of the relevant emergency service or agency and do not fall within the mandate of the National Emergency Management Organization.

For Level 1 Disaster Emergencies, the nature and scope of actual or potential losses are within the scope of District administration and emergency management systems or can be addressed with support from one or two public bodies. The affected District may determine whether to activate their Local Disaster Emergency Plan, depending on the scope and type of impact. At this Level, the District Emergency Coordinator shall coordinate disaster response activities, unless, at the determination of the Prime Minister (or at the request of the National Emergency Coordinator), the requirements are deemed to exceed local capacity. In such instances, the National Emergency Management Organization will assume the responsibility of coordinating disaster response activities. District Emergency Coordinators are to be equipped to coordinate lower-level incidents, with support from the NEMO and selected entities. The District Coordinator will activate the District's DRM coordination mechanisms, and will be in continuous communication with the NEMO to report on progress. Prior to the event, the NEMO will determine what emergency communications and measures are needed and will communicate their recommendations to the Prime Minister.

Post-event, if necessary, the District Coordinator will work with the NEMO to prepare a Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis report and develop a Humanitarian Needs Assessment and Recovery Plan to outline any support needed at the community or individual level. The District Coordinator may request support from another District or a public body, depending on the nature of the damage or loss. If a disaster emergency is declared, the NEMO shall have responsibility for coordinating post event rehabilitation and recovery activities and will do so in collaboration with the District Coordinator and relevant public bodies.

Level 1 Disaster Emergency Measures - Checklist

For a Level 1 Disaster Emergency, selected disaster emergency measures may be necessary, particularly at the local level. These may include the following (as needed):

- District Emergency Operations Centre(s) are activated.
- Communication channels established between District Coordinators and the NEMO.

- Selected ESF groups are contacted and placed on alert.
- Public alerts and disaster communications should be issued but should be targeted primarily at the communities likely to be affected.
- Voluntary evacuation measures may be required for selected locations.

Level 2 Disaster Emergencies

A Level 2 Disaster Emergency requires resources beyond the scope of a single community or District.

This may mean that the level of impact and type of response required is beyond the capacity of the affected community or District and/or that multiple Districts are affected. It is expected that in a Level 2 Disaster Emergency, the NEMO will assume Incident Command and one or more ESF groups may be activated to address specific issues. The NEMO will coordinate the efforts of District Emergency Coordinators, ESFs and Public Bodies, as needed. The NEOC may be activated to coordinate these efforts.

Depending on their levels of capacity and the nature of the hazard, the NEMO may delegate leadership to District Coordinator to coordinate emergency response at the local level. Where the District Coordinator plays the lead role, they may require technical support from the NEMO and other Public Bodies.

Level 2 Disaster Emergency Measures Checklist

For a Level 2 Disaster Emergency, selected disaster emergency measures may be necessary. These may include the following (as needed):

- The National Disaster Preparedness and Response Advisory Committee will be notified, and may or may not convene the National Emergency Executive Committee, depending on the scope of response and recovery efforts.
- The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) may be fully or partially activated, depending on the recommendations of the NEMO and the scope of expected impact.
- The NEMO is partially activated and selected ESF groups are placed on alert.
- A declaration of disaster emergency or disaster alert may be required but would be restricted to a targeted disaster zone.
- Evacuation orders may be required for selected zones (e.g. coastal or flood prone communities, or communities affected by wildfires).
- Public alerts and disaster communications should be issued but should be targeted primarily at the communities or Districts likely to be affected.
- If the National Emergency Executive Committee is called, initial meeting(s) between them and the NEMO will be held, to facilitate GoB coordination of disaster response, rehabilitation and recovery activities.

Level 3 Disaster Emergencies

A Level 3 Disaster Emergency is one that requires the activation of the National Emergency Executive Committee and the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC). The level of pre- and post-event activities requires the activation of a wide range of ESFs, and the impact of the event is expected:

- To affect multiple Districts;
- To include significant risk of loss of life;

- To disrupt or damage multiple industries or key services, such as water supply, electricity health services/facilities and airports/port facilities;
- To displace multiple communities;
- To result in significant damage to infrastructure and public and private property.

Level 3 Disaster Emergency Measures Checklist

For a Level 3 Disaster Emergency, all relevant disaster emergency measures are activated. These should include the following:

- The NEOC and DEOCs are fully activated and all ESF groups are alerted and activated, as needed;
- Initial meeting(s) between the National Emergency Executive Committee and the NEMO shall be held, to facilitate GoB coordination of disaster response, rehabilitation and recovery activities.
- All District and Public Bodies are alerted, and those most likely to be affected are required to engage local and institutional Disaster Emergency Plans.
- A declaration of disaster alert and/or disaster emergency will be needed.
- Evacuation orders are issued, as needed, and the National Mass Evacuation Plan is activated.

PART 3—PHASE SPECIFIC PLANS

- [National Hazard Mitigation Policy](#)
- [National Response Plan](#)
- [National Recovery Plan](#)

(Hyperlinks to be updated.)

PART 4 – HAZARD SPECIFIC PLANS

- National Hurricane Response Plan;
- National Dam Failure Plan
- National Tsunami Response Plan;
- National Oil Spill Contingency Plan;
- Plan for the Management of Incidents/Accidents involving Cruise ships and other Marine Vessels;
- Health Sector Mass Casualty Plan;
- National Search and Rescue Plan;
- National Wildfire Management Plan.

(Hyperlinks to be updated)

PART 5—NATIONAL COMMITTEE STANDARD OPERATION PROCEDURES

Ministry	Operational Committee	Standard Operational Procedure
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of National Defence and Border Security	Search, Rescue and Security	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Health and Wellness	Medical Care and Public Health	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing	Housing and Shelter	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining	Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Foreign Assistance	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change	Environment and Solid Waste	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Transport	Transport and Evacuation	Link

<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Human Development	Relief and Supplies Management	Link
Ministry of Human Development	Special Needs and Disability	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Public Service and Disaster Risk Management	Human Resource Management	Link
<u>Lead</u> Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Education	Education, Information, Communication and Warning	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing	Mitigation, Access and Infrastructure	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Public Utilities	Restoration of Utilities	Link
<u>Lead</u> Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Development	Recovery	Link

Hyperlinks to be updated.